

THE SQUEEK

JULY 2026 Volume 26, Issue 7

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*Open Hearts,
Open Minds,
Open Doors*



Aldersgate Church...United Methodist

Andy Gloor, *Lay Leader*

Jane Nihan, *Organist*

Mary Jensen, *Secretary*

Rev. Sarah Hong, *Pastor*

Church Office Hours
8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Website: <https://aldersgaterkfd.org>

Check us out on Facebook: Aldersgate Church

*The Church Office will be closed on Monday, July 6th
in honor of Independence Day*

WHAT'S INSIDE ?

Item	Page
Pastor's Letter	2
Pastor's Letter (cont.)	3
July Helpers Pictures	
July Birthdays	4
July Anniversaries	
Keep us informed	
Corn Boil 2026	
Wesley Willows Meet & Eat	
Noisy Can Sunday	
Remember in your Prayers	
Squeek Deadline	
UM Men's Baseball night	
Mission Report	5
Mission Report (cont)	6
Toy Ministry	
Story Telling Workshop	
You are invited to pray	7
July AWED Dinner	
Join "The Chosen"	
New Book Study	
Safe Sanctuaries	

ALDERSGATE BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER

Aldersgate family and friends, You are invited to pray together (with other Aldersgate folks) the prayer below (Aldersgate's Breakthrough Prayer) at least twice a day (6:03am and 6:03pm) remembering

Aldersgate's anniversary, June 3rd. In your prayers, please imagine open gates through which the Holy Spirit pours upon us. We will pray that Aldersgate will celebrate many, many more anniversaries with open hearts and minds to serve our community. When you sense, hear and feel nudges of the voice of God as you recite Aldersgate's Breakthrough Prayer, do not hesitate to share with others in Aldersgate. Contact Jenny Graham, Shary Stelter and Pastor Sarah for any questions. Thanks be to God for the gift of our church, Aldersgate!

*God of renewal, open the gates!
We are your church longing for
a new path forward. You are the
God who restores what is weary
and breathes new life into what needs to live again.*

We open our hearts, and our ministries to you.

Amen.

PASTOR'S LETTER FOR JULY 2026



“Note from the Pastor’s Desk” (July 2026)
“*But let justice flow down like waters, and
righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.*”
- Amos 5:24



Facebook posts ‘now and then’ flash back memories. They show pictures of significant moments that were forgotten. While I was at the NIC Annual Conference, a picture from six years ago popped into my Facebook post. It was a group picture of a “Black Lives Matter” protest. At the time, I was teaching a Confirmation Class online due to pandemic restrictions. My confirmands wanted to march in this protest. I remember that it was very humid and hot day. I was by the local police officers, who checked on the protesters to make sure they were hydrated. They were handing out water bottles. At one point, police officers blocked the street so that everyone could take a group picture. The crowd consisted of people who were young and old, brown, black and white, women and men. Those of us from the church wore our United Methodist t-shirts. We wanted to be present and offer support as our neighbors called for justice and peace for all.

Six years later, our neighbors are calling for justice and peace in the midst of the chaos. There are protests around the actions of ICE, the war in Iran, and attempts to undermine voting rights. During the Annual Conference, delegates were invited to be part of a “Faith Action Rally” to show that United Methodists care for our neighbors, particularly those who are mistreated and harassed by ICE agents. I was proud to be part of a body that has the courage to speak up against injustice and stand up against racism.

Other highlights of Annual Conference were the Memorial Service (6/16) and Ordination Service (6/17). During the Memorial Service, we honored the life of Rev. Donald Keck, who served Aldersgate UMC. During the Ordination Service, we celebrated Rev. Sungja Lee Moon, who served Aldersgate UMC. As we celebrated the 70th anniversary of clergy women’s ordination, Rev. Moon was the first non-white women ordained in the Northern Illinois Conference.

I praise God for the United Methodist Church, which calls Christians to be diligent in pursuing both social holiness and personal holiness. Bishop Schwerin reminded the Church to be “refugia” – a pocket of safety/security for our neighbors. As followers of Jesus, we are called to offer comfort, help, solidarity, and companionship with our neighbors, who are hungry, thirsty, grieving, and outcast. I pray that Aldersgate will embrace our call as we follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit. I remind us to keep praying the Breakthrough Prayer (on Sunday morning 8:40 am, every 4th Tuesday 10:30 am, and on your own at 6:03 am and 6:03 pm). Let’s respond to God’s call to serve as Jesus’ hands and feet – to break the chains of fear and silence – to be part of the solution and not the problem. I am grateful to Shary & John Stelter who faithfully attended all sessions of the Annual Conference. Faithful laity is the great inspiration and encouragement for clergy.

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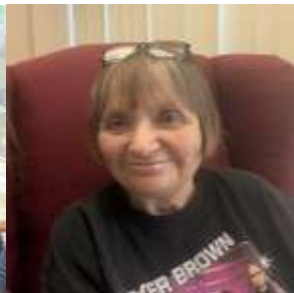
(Continued from Page 2) **PASTOR'S LETTER FOR JULY 2025**

Friends, July is a busy month. It's nearing the date of our annual Corn Boil. If you haven't already, contact Monica Glennly or the church office to see how you can help us feed and connect with our neighbors. Thank you all for your dedication and love for Aldersgate. Let's continue to love God and love one another. Let's continue to follow Christ in caring for our neighbors. Let's be a church that brings people to Jesus Christ through our (breakthrough) prayers, mission, outreach and fellowship.

God loves you and so do I.
Pastor Sarah

JULY 2026 HELPERS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lay Readers</u>	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>A/V Technicians</u>
July 6	Jenny Graham	Barb Pefley	Andy Gloor
July 13	Deb Alms	Thurmans	Jay Alms
July 20	Jay Alms	Sue Pedersen	Coralee Hardwick
July 27	Theresa O'Hea	Bill Rhodes	Mike O'Hea



JULY BIRTHDAYS

02 Mason Alms	13 Renea Swartout	23 Lilyana Waugh
06 Tom Moore	13 Huntar Franklin	24 Bev Hollar
07 John Goranson	14 Lu Franseen	24 George Franklin
08 Bill Gridley	18 Ruth Wood	25 Reed Sohner
09 Haiden Franklin	18 Rachel Baskerville	25 Susan Bernasek
09 Holden Franklin	18 Brianna Swartout	26 Alice Jene Beard
10 Zachary Connor	19 Gia Alongi	29 Hailey Wilson
11 Patti Wilburn	23 Joyce Brown	29 John Ruhl

NEXT NOISY CAN SUNDAY

Save your change to bring on Sunday, July 19 for local missions. Contact Sue Murr for any questions. Thanks to all at AUMC who help Noisy Can Sunday make a difference for local agencies.

Remember In Your Prayers

Those in the congregation who are experiencing physical or emotional distress:

- Congratulations to Jamie Weisse and Keith Elmer who were married on June 20th at Aldersgate outdoor.
- Congratulations to Anika Ewaldz & Alex Ludwig for their wedding on June 20th in Machesney Park, IL. Anika is a granddaughter to Mary Ewaldz.
- Healing prayers for Bernice Johnson
- Safe travel and great family reunion time for Deb & Jay Alms
- Happy 102nd birthday to June Foster (Mary Ellen Francis's mother)
- ComEd workers and all who are impacted by recent tornadoes and storms (Tom Fisk)
- Continued healing prayers for Ruth Wood, Rachel Baskerville, Deb Alms, Karin & Chad



SQUEEK DEADLINE

Thursday, July 16th is the deadline for the August, 2026 Squeek. Please have your articles in by this date. Any and all help is appreciated. Thank you.

UMMens BASEBALL NIGHT: On Thursday, July 2 at ABC Supply Stadium in Beloit. \$45 for tickets and food. RSVP to Rich Thurman at 815-871-2624.



JULY ANNIVERSARIES

- 05 Mark & Shelly Fridley
- 05 Retha & Jack Alongi
- 06 Mark & Janice Ingham
- 07 Jim & Patty Wilson
- 11 Doug & Cathy Anderson
- 13 John & JoAnn Goranson

REMEMBER: If you want the Pastor to know about a sick family member, or if you want news of a sick church family member relayed to the congregation for their prayers and support, **please make sure to let the Pastor or Mary know.** Mary will then send out the info via email and post on the AUMC FaceBook page in a timely fashion.

CORN BOIL 2026!!

The annual Corn Boil will be Sunday July 26th, from Noon to 3:30pm. All you can eat Corn plus one Hot Dog, one Dessert and one Beverage for \$10 per adult, \$5 per child, free for ages 4 and under. And we will need lots of volunteers. Contact Monica Glennly (815-988-0913) or (monicaglenly@gmail.com) if you can help. Or call the church office and it will be forwarded to Monica.



WESLEY WILLOWS MEET AND EAT will be July 3, 2026, Friday 11:30 in Bistro.

UPDATES - AUMC MISSION COMMITTEE

This is the first “Squeek” article for 2026, so pardon the length.

- Noisy Can Sunday Giving – This is a once a month activity, it happens third Sunday of each month. All funds collected from Noisy Cans goes directly to Rock River Valley Pantry (RRVP).
- Voices-Of-Inspiration (V-o-I):
 - V-o-I is a 501-c3 not-for-profit organization that operates a no-charge pantry located in the Rockton Ave. Centre at 3112 N. Rockton Ave, Rockford, IL 61103. Starting in the 3Q 2023 AUMC continues to be involved with, and support, V-o-I.
 - Every Monday and Thursday throughout the year volunteers from AUMC join V-o-I volunteers from other organizations to support a Northern Illinois Food Bank Pantry Express event that occurs from 5:30 – 6:30 PM at the Walmart in Loves Park located at Riverside and Northridge. This is a hands-on volunteer experience. Your Mission Committee urges you to consider joining this hands-on activity – see Mike O’Hea for details.
 - V-o-I has graciously extended an offer to AUMC. V-o-I will provide “food baskets” to any AUMC members/church attendees needing support. FYI – over the past several months V-o-I, via Mike O’Hea, has provided this support. If you wish to receive food support via V-o-I please contact Mike O’Hea or Pastor Sarah Hong.
- As part of AUMC’s recent Rummage Sale, AUMC Mission Committee hosted a second annual Rockford Rescue Mission / Thrift Store Trailer Drive event. The overall event loosely followed the “AUMC Rummage Sale of old”, but at a much smaller scale as the RRM trailer space was limited. The event generated a lot (ok, it was a truck full) of usable items which were then donated to the RRM Thrift Store.
- We continue to support Rockford Rescue Mission (RRM) by donating non-perishable food items donated by AUMC and friends of AUMC. The donated items are collected at AUMC, and then delivered, once a month, by AUMC volunteers to RRM. Thanks to all who have provided donated items and/or funds for this activity, which will continue throughout 2026.
- We held two “first of kind” events:
 - Brooke Road UMC Community Center Baby Bank was strongly supported by AUMC and friends of AUMC who worked together, under an AUMC Mission Committee lead event, to donate a significant amount of disposable diapers and wipes for the Baby Bank organization. All donated items were delivered to the Baby Bank late spring of this year.
 - Prairie North District / Dakota-Rock Grove “Mission of Love” event; which was undertaken, together, by Mission Committees from Beth Eden UMC and Aldersgate UMC. For this event BEUMC provided Student Kits consisting of school supplies, and AUMC provided “Personal Dignity Kits” consisting of hygiene items.
- AUMC congregation supported, for a second consecutive year, the West View Elementary School STEM event which occurred February 2026. This was a great opportunity for AUMC to interact with students and their parents living within our local community.

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(Continued on Page 6)

UPDATES - AUMC MISSION COMMITTEE

(Continued from Page 5)

- From the end of May thru early June we held our second annual Peanut Butter and Jelly drive for the Rock River Valley Pantry (RRVP). For three (3) weeks AUMC and friends of AUMC donated peanut butter and jelly products and/or funds. The final tally (including some last minute additions) was (65) jars of peanut butter and sixty-five (65) jars of jelly (a total weight of over 300 pounds!) with all delivered by AUMC to RRVP.
- Toy Ministry AND Prayer Shawl Ministry Update – These are both very strong outreach ministries at AUMC, with each having their own leadership team. Purpose of including them in this Mission Report is to remind all of this ministry and its continued great work for our community.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the AUMC Mission Committee please speak with committee members Jan Weller, Pete Weller, Steve Wirtz, Michele Wirtz, Lu Franseen or Mike O’Hea.

Thanks to all for the support these events received, and thanks for your continued and expanded support throughout the remainder of 2026.

Respectfully, Mike O’Hea, Mission Chairperson

TOY MINISTRY NEWS FOR JULY 2026

We are almost through June and almost halfway done on the cars. Wesley Willows Wood Shop has delivered all the cars to Aldersgate. There are about 425 waiting to be painted and then assembled, get stickers and bagged. We had the first bagging event in the first part of June when we bagged 350 cars. We are waiting to hear from Rev. Sheets for the Indian Reservation in Arizona about getting toys again.

As always, we are in need of painters!!

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN “6 WEEKS OF STORYTELLING WORKSHOP” (9AM-10:15AM SATURDAY, AUGUST 8 TO SEPTEMBER 12 IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM (TIME AND DATE ARE TENTATIVE)).

All material will be provided. This is Pastor Sarah’s Doctoral of Ministry (with United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH) practicum (required assignment). Join to build Aldersgate’s future together. Your story matters! Contact Pastor Sarah (pastorsarahhong@gmail.com, 815-212-5166) for more information.

Week 1: Stories of Hearing and Responding to God's Invitation

Week 2: Stories of Repairs and Opposition

Week3: Stories of Serving the Poor and Spiritual Reformation

Week4: Stories of Key Spiritual Leaders in your Life (in our Church)

Week 5: Stories of Spiritual Homecoming

Week 6: Stories of Future Residents of God's House

Informative Session: Mark your calendars for our informative session on Sunday, July 12 at 8:20am in the conference room

YOU ARE INVITED TO PRAY at least twice a day (6:03am and 6:03pm remembering the date when Aldersgate started its ministry on June 3rd of 1961). Set a phone alarm to remind you. Put the prayer card nearby you. Start all gatherings (worship, committee meetings, get-togethers) with Breakthrough Prayer. Be expectant of what God would give you in your personal life and Aldersgate's future."

THE JULY AWED DINNER will be on Wednesday, July 29, 5:30 at The Backyard Bar & Grill in Loves Park. Attendees should RSVP to Monica at 815-988-0913.

JOIN 'THE CHOSEN' watch/ discussion on every Wednesday morning at 10am

THERE IS A NEW BOOK STUDY CALLED, "BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY" at Beth Eden UMC on Wednesdays at 5:30pm,. You are invited to join. This book is written by United Methodist bishops to share some wisdom and guidance to live through difficult times possibly like now. Contact Pastor Sarah or Kim Emery (Beth Eden) if you would like to join.

SAFE SANCTUARIES

From the Northern Illinois Conference website:

Safe Sanctuaries® (or "Safer Sanctuaries® ") in The United Methodist Church is a comprehensive policy and commitment designed to prevent the abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults within church ministries. It creates a "safe space" for ministry through screenings, training, and strict supervision protocols for volunteers and staff. **Safe Sanctuaries® is a commitment that allows our sanctuaries, classrooms, mission encounters, camps and retreats, and all spaces where we gather to worship and serve God to be places of trust.**

In August of 2024 our Church Council adopted a Safe Sanctuaries policy. A copy of this policy is available from the Church Office.

As today's climate has changed and as insurance companies are struggling with lawsuits, this is a way the church and other institutions are dealing with the issues. Several of our members have received the training and are certified for 3 years. We are planning for an in house training session in August. Be watching for more information on this.

Who should receive certification? All those who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults in ministries on behalf of our congregation. Besides a 3 hour training session, to be certified you have to submit to a background check. Questions? Contact Pastor Sarah or Coralee Hardwick.

July 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Special Music some Sundays TBD ROMEO = Retired Old Men Eating Out AWED = Aldersgate Women Evening Diners <i>Please submit dates for August to John Ruhl by the 10th or write them on the calendar in the office</i>			1 Fellowship/The Chosen 10am	2 5pm Baseball in Beloit – see Rich	3 WW Meet & Eat?	4 Independence Day
5 6 th Sunday after Pentecost Communion 8:00 Trustees 8:40 Powerful Prayer 8:50 Service 10:00 Coffee	6 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	7 8am ROMEO at Sunrise	8 Fellowship/The Chosen 10am	9	10	11
12 7 th Sunday after Pentecost 8:40 Powerful Prayer 8:50 Service 10:00 Coffee	13	14 8am ROMEO at Geno's	15 Fellowship/The Chosen 10am Church Council 4:30pm	16 Squeek Deadline	17	18
19 8 th Sunday after Pentecost 8:40 Powerful Prayer 8:50 Service 10:00 Coffee	20	21 8am ROMEO at Swedish Pancake House	22 Fellowship/The Chosen 10am	23 Squeek goes out	24	25
26 9 th Sunday after Pentecost 8:40 Powerful Prayer 8:50 Service 10:00 Coffee	27	28 8am ROMEO at Gill's 10:30 am Prayer Meeting	29 Fellowship/The Chosen 10am 5:30 pm AWED at Backyard Bar & Grill in Loves Park	30	31	