

THE SQUEEK

October 2026 Volume 26, Issue 10

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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.com/>
Check us out on Facebook: Aldersgate Church

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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 MESSAGE OCTOBER 2026

"Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." (James 1:4)



"It takes both rain and sun to make a rainbow." This beautiful proverb sums up both Beth Eden and Aldersgate's experiences in 2026. This year has been a mix of sunshine and rain. In the beginning of this year, both churches were divided about our denomination's perspectives on current political issues, specifically around immigration and ICE. I am grateful for our church leaders who remained strong and helped us navigate this time by listening and responding to our congregants' comments and questions. Starting in March and April, both churches experienced resurrection hope as they joined the MCCI (Missional Church Consultation Initiative) program to seek spiritual revival. Soon, we started the Breakthrough Prayer Initiative, which has blessed both congregations. Even in the midst of older buildings, aging congregation and financial challenges, I invited both churches to keep our eyes fixed on the rainbow of God's promises.

In James 1:4, the Bible reminds us to be patient. God shapes us while we wait. God does some of God's best work as we wander through the wilderness. *"Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."* Friends, let's continue to be faithful and patient as we trust God's perfect timing.

Here are some highlights from 2026.

- **The More, the Merrier** – I am proud of the leadership of Beth Eden and Aldersgate for serving together throughout this year in mission, fellowship, music and small groups. We supported each other's ministry and found common ways to serve our community with Christ's love. When we worked together, we discovered that we are stronger and more confident in our witness of the gospel. The ecumenical Gratitude Pie event in November of 2025 was special as we experienced the core of Christian koinoia. I am grateful for our choir & ensemble, bell choirs and puppet ministry for supporting each other. As we start the new school year, I look forward to working together in new partnerships that minister to the needs of our community.
- **Opening Gates and Breaking Down Walls** – As part of the MCCI program, both churches came up with their unique communal prayer called the 'Breakthrough Prayer'. Both congregations have been diligent in praying the Breakthrough Prayer daily. Since this time, our congregations have experienced answered prayers and God opening new opportunities to share the gospel.

Beth Eden has been praying for God to break down the walls preventing them from connecting with their neighbors. Aldersgate has been praying for God to open the gate of new ministries to reach out and share God's love in the community. As we've engaged with MCCI, Aldersgate and Beth Eden have rededicated ourselves to the practice of prayer and relying on God's direction for the future. I look forward to seeing God's ongoing work in both Beth Eden and Aldersgate as we continue with MCCI and the Breakthrough Prayer.

(Continued on Page 3)

PASTOR'S MESSAGE FOR OCTOBER 2025 (Continued From Page 2)

- **Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing** – In the midst of new ideas and new beginnings, I remind us of those things that do not change. God's love for us does not change. God's calling (for Aldersgate and Beth Eden) does not change. In the Storytelling workshop and "Building Beloved Community" book study, both churches confirmed how blessed they are by the faith passed down to them from previous generations.

As the bearers of this faithful legacy, I invite us to remember our calling to love God and serve others in the name of Jesus Christ. Let's praise God for the ongoing ministries that allow us to love God and love our neighbors. Over the last few months, both churches have been very active serving our community with numerous mission and outreach projects. We welcomed new members, offered Sunday School, and gathered in Small Groups for Bible study and fellowship. We remained faithful and invited others to experience the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Change takes time. So, let's remain patient and focused. Let's continue to preserve and rely on God's grace and provision for each day. In the face of sun or rain, let's remain faithful and keep looking at the rainbow that points us to God's faithfulness and unwavering love. In doing so, we can remain steadfast in our journey TOGETHER.

I want to thank our exceptional administrative staff, Mary Jensen and Pam True; accompanists, Erica Kessler and Jane Nihan; and Beth Eden custodian Ray Covart. I am grateful for our amazing church leaders and volunteers, especially in Church Council Chairs, Rich and Scott; SPRC Chairs, Barb and Andy; Finance Chairs, Deb & Kim; and Trustee Chairs, Joan and Jay. Thank you all for your faithfulness and perseverance. No matter what challenges we face in the journey, let us continue to follow the footsteps of our gracious Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who invites us to keep following and keep trusting Him.

In Christ, Pastor Sarah

Sarah Hong

OCTOBER HELPERS

Lay Readers

October 5	Jay Alms
October 12	Theresa O'Hea
October 19	Rich Thurman
October 26	Jan Barrett

A/V Technicians

Mike O'Hea
Jenny Graham
Andy Gloor
Jay Alms

Greeters

Jean Carruthers
Andy Gloor
Marylon Cole
Barb Pefley

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS FOR 2027: *Anyone interested in lay reading or greeting in 2027, please contact Andy Gloor in person or via email. Anyone interested in working the AV booth in please contact Mike O'Hea in person or via email.*





OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

01 Breanna Wilburn
04 Loretta Glenney
05 Wes Franklin
06 Marilyn Lang
07 Clay Sohner
09 Bill Brown
09 Rich Thurman

10 Linda Ruhl
11 Diane Helsel
15 Ryan Alms
16 Alice Rice
17 Ray Prentice
17 Ramona Barker
18 Tammy Bartolomei

18 Mindy Ambrose
20 Kitty Ganzel
21 Vanessa Thurman Monson
23 Alice Nelson
24 Mike O'Hea
25 Joe Tanaglia
31 Melissa Hoey



OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

04 Doug & Jenny Graham
06 Bob & Pat Shaw
07 Jonathon & Kristen Oldenburg
08 Kyle & Abbey Alms
13 Steve & Michele Wirtz
16 Reed & Paige Sohner

Remember In Your Prayers

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

Sympathy for the friends and family of

Rev. Shirley Wooden(Wesley Willows resident) who passed away on Sep. 15th. Rev. Shirley was an active member of PEO who meets at Aldergate monthly.

Sympathy prayers for Olivia Johnson (Bill & Rhonda Hooker) family on the unexpected loss recently.

Congratulations to Sue Pedersen who celebrated her 90th birthday on Aug. 23rd.

Healing for Jason (Ray Prentice)

Healing for Sue Sarauer, Lori(Jane), Adam & Mary(Rich Thurman)

Congratulations to Beth Boettner and the Toy Ministry for a Child Advocacy award from "Every Child Every Voice Every Future".



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.

IF YOUR MAILING ADDRESS, email address or cell phone number has changed, please inform the church office. If you know any of our church members who moved, or changed their contact information, please let Aldersgate know

JOIN "MEN SUPPORTING MEN" GROUP to share your struggles, hopes and prayers -Every Wednesday 7pm at Beth Eden UMC Fellowship. All ages and walks of life are invited. Contact Bill Hooker if you have any questions. It will be combined with Beth Eden and open to the whole community.

WESLEY WILLOWS MEET AND EAT will be October 2, 2026, Friday 11:30 in Bistro.

THE OCTOBER AWED DINNER will be on Wednesday, October 28, 5:30pm at Giuseppe's, 950 Halsted Road in Rockford Wednesday,. Attendees should RSVP to Monica at 815-988-0913.

NOISY CAN SUNDAY will be October 18th.

THE ROMEO GROUP

The Romeo Group meeting is a weekly breakfast on Tuesdays at 8am. ROMEO originally was “Retired Old Men Eating Out”, but now not exclusively. Don’t be surprised if you encounter a working young man or even a woman there. A rotating schedule of restaurants is published in the bulletin and online in the church calendar. It’s all about the fellowship.

FINANCE COMMITTEE Y-T-D REVIEW

The Finance Committee would like to share our January – August 2026 financial situation. Below is our year-to-date income vs expenses.

Income: \$102,960.89

Expense: \$108,286.45

Deficit: \$ 5,325.56

The income figure above includes a quarterly contribution from the Trustees of \$1,800/quarter. The above figure also includes income from the space sharing of our parsonage in the amount of \$1,500/month.

If the Trustee and Parsonage contributions were not received, our financial situation would show an increase in our deficit of \$17,400. This would put our deficit at \$22,725.56.

There are some expenses we have no control over. The Trustees are active in assisting to reducing expenses where appropriate. There are some expenses that we can control and these will be addressed during our budget process.

We continue to be mindful of this deficit situation. The excess funds that we have retained in previous fiscal years are slowly dwindling to cover our deficits. Our financial situation is shared on a regular basis with our congregation.

The 2027 Budget process will begin shortly. We will develop a conservative budget and make any needed adjustments as the year progresses.

ATTENTION ALL KNITTERS AND CROCHETERS!

We will have a Prayer Shawl Blessing on November 22nd during the service. Please bring any finished shawls on or before that date to be included in the blessing. If you need yarn to make a prayer shawl, check out our beautiful supply in fellowship hall.

Also be on the look-out for an exciting new group starting in 2027! Barb Stenger, Jenny Graham, and I want to start a combined church (Beth Eden and Aldersgate) knit/crochet get-together. More details coming later.

Theresa O’Hea, Prayer Shawl Coordinator



2026 Worship Committee Report

Live-streaming our Worship Service every Sunday to our Facebook page continues to be appreciated by our members and attendees who cannot attend Worship in person, in addition to posting a Worship video to our YouTube channel.

During the warmer months, we enjoyed an outdoor Worship Service on Aug. 23 and have another scheduled for Sept. 27 in front of the Church, enjoying the beauty of God's creation while worshipping our Creator. Jay provided a sound system on loan, which solved our sound volume problem from previous outdoor worship services.



The Aldersgate Ensemble will resume singing in Worship once or twice a month, after taking a Summer break.

We enjoyed the special music of the volunteers and the Beert Family during the Summer months.

Advent 2026: Our 2026 Christmas Eve Worship will be at 4:00pm on Dec. 24. Plans are being made for a special music-centered Worship Service on Dec. 27

Upcoming Worship and music collaborations with Beth Eden include a combined bell choir on Feb. 14, and a combined vocal choir in a Cantata for Palm Sunday. A combined Ash Wednesday service will be on Feb. 10 at Beth Eden, Maundy Thursday service will be on March 25 at Beth Eden, and Good Friday service will be March 26 at Aldersgate.

Coralee Hardwick joined the AV Tech Team, so now we have five available for rotation.

Jenny Graham
Worship Committee Chair

TOY MINISTRY NEWS FOR OCTOBER 2026:

We are getting close to meeting our goal for 2026. The goal is 1,530 completed toys!

We have approximately 400 cars that will soon be ready to bag. These cars need wheels and stickers, and then they will be finished. We have 880 already bagged plus the 400 needing wheels for a total of 1,280 so far.

Many thanks to our painters and all others who are involved in the Toy Ministry.

Beth Boettner 815-633-6416



*Want to help the **TOY MINISTRY** but do not want to take "the work" to your home? Come and work downstairs (Toy Ministry Room at Aldersgate UMC) every Tuesday 9:30-11:30am. Contact Beth Boettner (815-633-6416) if you have any questions on Toy Ministry*



WOULD YOU LIKE TO dive in joining a small group to change your life, your loved ones and your community? Starting the week of September 14th week, there will be several groups you can choose from. Sign up today and experience what genuine friendships can impact you!

Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets - Uncover the five key questions that can change everything about your decision-making process and rewrite the story of your life...one decision at a time.

Our decisions don't just affect our present circumstances; they radiate into our future. Most of the time, it's impossible to know what will come of the decisions we make. But this doesn't have to paralyze you. You can train yourself to ask well-placed, appropriately timed, thought-provoking questions that will result in stronger decisions and fewer disappointments down the road. In this six-session study, author and pastor Andy Stanley gives you five key questions to ask when you have a decision to make and you're not sure what to do (or even if you think you do know what to do!). These five simple questions will empower you to: Pause when feeling tension over a decision, Take the long view, Look for the wise option, Focus on the relational impact of decisions.

Every decision we make impacts our stories and the stories of those closest to us. It's time to start deciding with our heads instead of with our guts.- Sessions Include:

1. More Than a Decision
2. The Integrity Question
3. The Legacy Question
4. The Conscience Question
5. The Maturity Question
6. The Relationship Question

It is not too late to join a small group (Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets)- Choose the one works best for you (time and location).

*Rockford West - Wed. 5:30pm at Beth Eden UMC conference room (Leader: Rhonda Burrigitt)

*Wesley Willows - Tue. 10:30am at Wesley Willows Towne Center (Leader: Shary Stelter)

*Rockford East - Tue. 6pm at Christ UMC (Door 6- conference room) (Leader:Dana Meacham)

*Machesney Park/Rockton - Monday 6pm at Kim & Moe's residence (Leaders:Kim & Moe Emery)

*Roscoe/Rockton - Monday 10am at Barb's residence (Leaders:Barb Stenger & Nancy Todor

ROCKFORD'S CROP HUNGER WALK.

Become a walker in person or in spirit. On Sunday, October 18

Rockford area residents will join together to fight hunger around the world and in our city through the Rockford Pantry Coalition. The Riverfront Museum Park, 711 N. Main, is the site. Registration begins at 12 noon. The walk steps off at 1 PM. Thanks for helping feed the hungry – both in the Greater

Rockford area and throughout the world. Contact Mike O'Hea

CROP HUNGER WALK DONATION ENVELOPES are available at the usher's table starting today (Sep.13) to Oct.18th. Let us bless those who are in need with our prayerful donation. Contact Mike O'Hea for any questions. You can give online as well.



October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<u>Sunday Mornings</u> 8:40 Powerful Prayer 8:50 Announcements 9:00 Service 9:15 Sunday School 10:00 Coffee	ROMEO = Retired Old Men Eating Out AWED = Aldersgate Women Evening Diners Please submit dates for November to John Ruhl by the 10th or write them on the calendar in the office			1	2 WW Meet & Eat 11:30am	3 The Chosen at WW 10am
4 19 th Sunday after Pentecost Communion Sunday Discipleship 3 Bible Study	5	6 ROMEO at Geno's 8am	7 The Chosen 10am Men Supporting Men at Beth Eden 7pm	8	9 Scotty Inman concert at Beth Eden 5:30pm	10 The Chosen at WW 10am Deadline for November Calendar dates
11 20 th Sunday after Pentecost Family Meeting Discipleship 4 Bible study	12	13 ROMEO at Swedish Pancake House 8am	14 The Chosen 10am Men Supporting Men at Beth Eden 7pm	15 Squeek Deadline	16	17 The Chosen at WW 10am
18 21 st Sunday after Pentecost Noisy Can Sunday Discipleship 5 Bible Study CropWalk at 1:00pm	19	20 ROMEO at Gill's 8am Finance Meeting 4:30pm	21 The Chosen 10am Men Supporting Men at Beth Eden 7pm	22 Squeek sent out	23	24 The Chosen at WW 10am WW Trunk or Treat 2- 5pm
25 Reformation Sunday Discipleship 6 Bible Study Community Trunk or Treat at Beth Eden 1-3pm	26	27 ROMEO at Full Plate 8am Prayer Meeting 10:30am	28 The Chosen 10am Men Supporting Men at Beth Eden 7pm AWED 5:30pm at Giuseppi's on Halsted	29	30	31 The Chosen at WW 10am