

Radiating Christ's love in the community.

The Advance

February 2012 edition

WALKING THE WILDERNESS

I've been walking with some companions through the wilderness lately. Depression, divorce, detachment from society have put my travel companions in some difficult places.

Part of the heartache of traveling with friends through these times is that you often feel so helpless, so unable to do anything to bring them along, to help them see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Jesus had wilderness experiences, many of them to rest and rejuvenate as he nurtured his connection to God through prayer. But one wilderness experience in particular came right after he was baptized by John in the Jordan River. Here he was in this pinnacle moment, baptized by John and the Spirit descended in the form of a dove and a voice from the heavens declared, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." And then, seemingly the next moment, he was in the wilderness being tempted and tried by Satan.

It must have felt a bit like whiplash to have such extreme experiences so close to each other. It reminds me that things can change at a moment's notice.

One of the things that wilderness walkers have going for them is that even though some of the times feel lonely and frightening, we are never alone. Though we may not always remember, God walks with us, alongside of us, as a companion on the journey. Another thing that we can be assured of is that when we are in the wilderness it is not through our strength alone that we are going to get out.

In an article by preacher and author Barbara Brown Taylor, she writes, "When we agonize too much over [the choices we make]...we fall into the ancient trap of works-righteousness—that comfortable old delusion that we can, by our good decisions and good deeds, save ourselves." These people that I've been walking with through the wilderness are good people, upstanding people, people you would never suspect are going through a wilderness period. They are doing and saying good things, yet their wilderness journey goes on.

The good news is that the wilderness journey isn't forever. It always lasts longer than we would like and sometimes longer than we think, but at some point we find ourselves bathing in the light and we realize that the disease or malaise that held us back then has dissipated.

Never underestimate the power of God to pull you through those wilderness times to, as Taylor puts it, "invade the most hapless lives and fill them with light; to sneak up on people who are thinking about lunch, not God, and smack them up side the head with glory."

On the journey,

Holly

Aldersgate UMC Staff

Pastor: Rev. Holly Aastuen

Christian Education/

Youth Director: Marjie Brodersen

Office Manager: Serena Steffenhagen

Financial Secretary: Judy Chirpich

Parish Nurse: June Sand **Parish Visitor:** Lois Rene

Handbell Choirs Director: Sandy Stoneking

Music Director: Serena Steffenhagen

Organist: Becky Kristensen

Custodians: Becky & Kent Kristensen

Contact Information:

Aldersgate United Methodist Church
3801 Wooddale Avenue
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday
9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Office: 952-929-6725

Fax Number: 952-929-8620

E-mail: aldersgate@aldersgatemn.com

Web site: www.aldersgatemn.com

The Advance is a monthly publication of Aldersgate United Methodist Church.

WORSHIP SERVICES IN FEBRUARY:

Sunday, February 5

Communion Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship

“Silencing the Demons”

Mark 1:29-39

Rev. Holly Aastuen

Sunday, February 12

10:00 a.m. Worship

Youth Sunday

Sunday, February 19

10:00 a.m. Worship

“Take in the View”

Mark 9:2-9

Rev. Holly Aastuen

Sunday, February 26

New Spirit Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship

“Leaving the Wilderness”

Mark 1:9-15

Rev. Holly Aastuen

LECTIONARY READINGS

FOR FEBRUARY:

February 5: Isaiah 40:21-31, Psalm 147:1-11, 20c, 1 Corinthians 9:16-23, Mark 1:29-39

February 12: 2 Kings 5:1-14; Psalm 30; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Mark 1:40-45

February 19: 2 Kings 2:1-12 Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

February 26: Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15



ASH WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 22 Our Ash Wednesday service is February 22 at 7:00 p.m. This will include the opportunity for Imposition of Ashes and communion. Rev. Holly Aastuen will be delivering the message.

PRAYER CONCERNS *Prayer does wonders...for our friends who are facing health issues and other challenges:*

Den Hoffmans is recovering from a hospitalization

Bud Kraemer is recovering from a hospitalization

Phoebe Mikkola was at Chapel View for rehab

Jan McElfish is facing health challenges



OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY is extended to Becky & Dee VanBlaricon, their family and friends, on the death of Becky's mother and member of Aldersgate, Lorraine Dungan, on Saturday, Jan. 21. Arrangements are pending; please call the church office for more information.

THANK YOU The education committee would like to thank **Ann Wood, Roxanne Daire, Nancy Ebner** and **Sheri Manning** for leading workshops and **Cleo Bonham, Judy Chirpich, Gail Miller** and **Joey Wagner** for acting as Gospel Guides in Church House Rock Sunday school. We would like to thank **Jay Brodersen, Pete Chirpich, Mary Hinz** and **John & Linda Sams** for leading Grapple. We would also like to thank **Holly Aastuen** and **Marjie Brodersen** for leading Adult Christian Education and **Mark Daire, Duane Googins, John Sams,** and **Sid Wood** for being Confirmation Guides.



LOIS RENE APPRECIATION SUNDAY February 5th there will be a celebration of Lois Rene's ministry: past, present and future! Index cards (4x6) are available to express your individual good wishes. The Staff-Parish Relations Committee is gathering these cards and would appreciate them by Sunday, January 29. If you are unable to do that please bring them on Sunday, Feb. 5. Please plan to attend coffee hour after worship that morning to express your appreciation for all that Lois has done and help make this a special day for her.

Staff-Parish Relations Committee



YOUTH SUNDAY Come and enjoy the special treat of having the youth of our congregation provide our entire Worship experience on Youth Sunday February 12. Their theme will be the *Imagine No Malaria* initiative and they'll be providing the music, the liturgy and message. We have many talented and special youth here at Aldersgate, come and appreciate their gifts.

NURSING NOTES: Traditionally February is National Heart Month. The "Go Red" campaign is promoted to raise consciousness about woman and heart disease. It is sponsored by the American Heart Association. According to the Wheatridge Health Notes "A normal heart is a strong hard-working pump made of muscle. About the size of a person's fist, the heart has blood vessels that provide the heart itself with the blood supply it needs to be healthy and work hard. It is continuously pumping blood throughout the body to feed our organs with nutrition (absorbed from the digestive tract) and oxygen (collected as blood circulates through the lungs). It also pumps the blood through the body's filters, the liver and kidneys, to remove waste products that accumulate as a result of normal body functions." You can see why it is so important that you take good care of this muscle.

There are several risk factors that each of us can reduce to keep our hearts healthier. These include: obesity, high blood pressure, cigarette smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol/high triglycerides. If I can be of any help with information or referrals to help you in any of these areas, give me a call. Watch your diet, increase your activity and make sure that you are getting the rest that you need.

Look for other heart healthy information in the Parish Nurse Nook as across from the church office, at the top of the stairs. Remember that a heart filled with loving relationships is the best medicine of all! Happy Valentine's Day to each of you. Call me anytime 612-669-3803
June

MISSION MINUTE: *Imagine No Malaria* is an effort of The United Methodist Church to eliminate malaria deaths in Africa by 2015. Achieving this goal will require a comprehensive approach to fighting this disease, on a larger scale than all previous efforts. To truly overcome malaria we must work in all of these emphasis areas:

- **Prevention** – bed nets, pesticides and drainage of standing water
- **Treatment** – medical supplies, medication and rapid diagnoses
- **Communication** – hand-cranked and solar-powered radios; broadcasts of prevention information
- **Education** – volunteer training

Come to learn more about the *Imagine No Malaria* initiative on Sunday, February 12, when the Youth Group will be leading worship with this initiative as their theme and on February 19 Leia Williams, the *Imagine No Malaria* liaison to the MN Annual Conference, will be speaking here at Aldersgate.



SEND YOUR CHILD TO CHURCH CAMP THIS SUMMER! Believe it or not, it's time to start thinking about summer! Swimming, crafts, canoeing, campfires and making new friends are just a few of the fun things kids can do at camp. The Minnesota Annual Conference Summer Camping Brochures are available on the table outside the office or you can view it on line at www.campminnesota.org. There are lots of great camping opportunities for kids, youth and adults. Please talk to Marjie about available scholarship funds if the cost of camp is a hardship. We don't want anyone to miss a camping opportunity because of finances.

HERE AT ALDERSGATE

MUSIC

SANCTUARY CHOIR This is a great time to join the choir! We will be learning new music for winter and the Lenten season and would love to have new faces (and voices) singing with us. Here at Aldersgate we have an open invitation to anyone interested in singing regardless of skill level. There



are no auditions involved; we do a variety of music styles, and sing 2-3 times per month and for special services. Simply let me know of your interest and we'll take it from there, Serena Steffenhagen, Director of Music, 952-929-6725.

BELLS There are three bell choirs at Aldersgate, none of which require an audition. **Holy Tollers** is the bell choir for youth in grades 5 – 8. Holy Tollers rehearse on Wednesday evenings. Older youth in grades 9 – 12 are in the **Chapel Chimers**. This choir rehearses on Sunday mornings at 11:15 a.m. **Jubilee!** is an adult bell choir for anyone interested in ringing, no prior experience necessary. They rehearse on Wednesday evenings at 6:15. If you have any questions please feel free to call Sandy Stoneking, director of bells, at 952-929-6725 or email at bells@aldersgatemn.com.

SUPPORT GROUPS

CARING FRIENDS Put this on your calendar. CARING FRIENDS meets the third Thursday of every month, 10:00 a.m. in the Parlor. We share whatever is bothering us over a cookie and coffee, usually with a few laughs, and leave smiling.

HEALTH EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE Remember to check out our HEALTH EQUIPMENT CLOSET if you have a need. We have had a small shower/bath chair donated and toilet arm rests returned, adding to our collection. Just call Ardy Brower for more information, 952-924-0320.

STUDY GROUPS

Women's Book Club will meet on Thursday, February 9, at 7:00 p.m. in the parlor. They will be discussing *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* by Kim Edwards.

In a tale spanning twenty-five years, a doctor delivers his newborn twins during a snowstorm and, rashly deciding to protect his wife from their baby daughter's affliction with Down Syndrome, turns her over to a nurse, who secretly raises the child.

Even if you haven't had a chance to read this selection, come and join us for fellowship and fun. Treats will be provided.

The remaining schedule of books for 2012 is:

March 8	<i>To Kill a Mocking Bird</i> by Harper Lee
April 12	<i>Sister</i> by Rosamund Lupton
May 10	<i>Blind Your Ponies</i> by Stanley Gordon West



EDUCATION

ACE ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION (ACE) During the month of February we'll have a variety of topics in Adult Christian Education. We will not meet on February 5 so that we can all be at the celebration of Lois Rene's ministry here at Aldersgate. On February 12 Marjie Brodersen will be teaching a Confirmation lesson so that adults can see what the Confirmation Students experience on Wednesday evenings. On February 19 we welcome guest speaker Leia Williams from the MN Annual Conference. She'll be speaking about the *Imagine No Malaria* initiative. We will begin our Lenten Study on Feb. 26. More information about this will be forthcoming in Sunday morning worship bulletins.

CHURCH HOUSE ROCK— *A Rotation Model Sunday School* — Children from age 4 through grade 4 experience fun and learning in Church House Rock on Sunday mornings after worship. Workshops are offered for a specific unit of study during a month and rotate each week. Units of study may include workshops in Games, Cooking, Science, Storytelling, Music and Movement, Theater, Art, or Movies. Sunday School meets after worship on Sunday morning. See the Education SCOOP for more details.

GRAPPLE – *v. to seize or grasp firmly, as in wrestling.* Grades 5 -8 at 11:15am on Sunday mornings in the Youth Room - A time of fellowship, fun and grappling with what Faith looks like in our everyday lives.

CONFIRMATION Aldersgate's Confirmation program is for 7th and 8th grade students and meets at 6:15 p.m. on Wednesday evenings during the school year. We study the Bible and discuss issues that teens face today – how to make and keep friends, how to make healthy choices, how to follow God in today's world. The curriculum uses drama, music, art, games, small group discussions, service opportunities and more to help students understand the material and grow in relationship with Christ. See the Education SCOOP included in this mailing for more details.

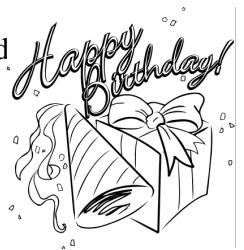


ALDERSGATE YOUTH GROUP Open to all youth in grades 7 – 12, the youth group meets on Sunday after the education hour for lunch, faith development and fun! As well as a weekly meeting, the youth also attend lock-ins, events with other church youth and participate in mission projects. See the Education SCOOP for more details regarding February programming.

PLEASE NOTE: Transportation will be provided for ANY of the above mentioned programs. Call the church office at 952-929-6725 and arrangements will be made. **CHILDCARE** arrangements can also be made by calling the church office.

HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY TO:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 2/3 – Ally Haslerud,
Danny Mack,
Tiffany Mack and
John Radosevich | 2/11 – June Folland
2/12 – Roy Falness
2/15 – Betty Johnson and
Jennifer Wood | 2/25 - Shirley Fohner and
Dorothy Williams |
| 2/6 – Michael Davis | 2/19 – Shirley Billbe | 2/26 – Lottie Shultz |
| 2/7 – Paul Anderson | 2/20 – Dan Schulz | 2/27 – Shelby Mack and
Allen Zehlke |
| 2/8 – James Eyres,
Bill Rainey and
Peter Young | 2/24 – Gerry Hill and
Merlin Pickle | 2/28 – Nancy Ebner and
William Huber |
| 2/9 – Carol Kvale | | |



OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

DRIVERS needed for Dinner At Your Door. If you have any questions or can help, please call Gene Cordes at 952-546-1772.

WEST METRO BUILDERS You are invited to the Metro West Builders Annual Celebration to be held at Good Samaritan United Methodist Church on Sunday, February 19. The theme of this year's dinner and program is "Sowing Seeds for a New Season" and will feature a panel discussion led by Rev. Dan Johnson, Conference Director of Congregational Development. The panel will be composed of pastors from our newest churches in Minnesota, and will explore the great variety of models for reaching out to those who have no church home. We will gather at 3:30, with the program to begin at 4:00. A buffet dinner will be served at 5:00. The cost of the dinner is \$12, and can be paid at the door with a check or exact change. To register, you may call: 612-615-6102 or e-mail: pathinker@metrowestbuilders.org. Please register by February 15



COMMITTEE MEETINGS COMING UP

MISSIONS will not meet in February

WORSHIP will meet **Monday, Feb. 13**, at 7:00 p.m. in the parlor

EDUCATION will not meet in February

SPRC will meet **Tuesday, Feb. 14**, at 7:00 p.m. in the library

MEMBER CARE will meet **Tuesday, Feb. 21**, at 7:00 p.m. in the parlor

TRUSTEES will meet **Tuesday, Feb. 21**, at 7:00 p.m. in the library

HOSPITALITY will meet **Sunday, Feb. 26**, at 8:45 in the library

FINANCE will meet on **Tuesday, Feb. 28**, at 6:30 p.m. in the library

AD COUNCIL will meet on **Tuesday, Feb. 28**, at 7:30 p.m. in the parlor

LEADERSHIP
LEADERSHIP



AT ALDERSGATE FEBRUARY 2012

*FH – Fellowship Hall

*EBS – Evidenced Based Specialist

Wednesday, February 1

10:30 a.m. Staff meeting – Parlor

6:15 p.m. Confirmation – Parlor

6:15 p.m. Jubilee! – Bell room

7:30 p.m. Choir – Sanctuary

7:30 p.m. Holy Tollers – Bell room

Thursday, February 2

4:00 p.m. Dollies – Bell room

6:30 p.m. EBS – Library

Friday, February 3 – office closed

Saturday, February 4

9:30 a.m. TOTS rehearsal – Sanctuary

Sunday, February 5 Communion Sunday

9:15 a.m. Choir – Sanctuary

10:00 a.m. Worship Service – Sanctuary

followed by coffee in the parlor

hosted by Trustees committee

11:15 a.m. Chapel Chimers – Bell room

11:15 a.m. Education Hour: ACE – Library

Grapple – Youth room

Church House Rock – Room 16

12:15 p.m. Youth Group – FH

Monday, February 6

6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts – FH

6:30 p.m. EBS – Library

Tuesday, February 7

Wednesday, February 8

10:30 a.m. Staff meeting – Library

12:00 p.m. Doers Circle – Parlor

6:15 p.m. Confirmation – Servant Event

6:15 p.m. Jubilee! – Bell room

7:30 p.m. Choir – Sanctuary

7:30 p.m. Holy Tollers – Bell room

Thursday, February 9

4:00 p.m. Dollies – Bell room

6:00 p.m. Troop #14177 – FH

6:30 p.m. EBS – Library

7:00 p.m. Women's Book Club – Parlor

Friday, February 10 – office closed

Saturday, February 11

9:30 a.m. TOTS rehearsal – Sanctuary

Sunday, February 12 Youth Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship Service – Sanctuary

followed by coffee in the parlor

hosted by Hospitality committee

11:15 a.m. Chapel Chimers – Bell room

11:15 a.m. Education Hour: ACE – Library

Grapple – Youth room

Church House Rock – Room 18

12:15 p.m. Youth Group – FH

Monday, February 13

6:30 p.m. EBS – Library

7:00 p.m. Worship committee – Parlor

7:00 p.m. Sharers Circle – Youth room

Tuesday, February 14

7:00 p.m. SPRC – Library

Wednesday, February 15 Advance deadline

10:30 a.m. Staff meeting – Library

6:15 p.m. Confirmation – Parlor

6:15 p.m. Jubilee! – Bell room

7:30 p.m. Choir – Sanctuary

7:30 p.m. Holy Tollers – Bell room

Thursday, February 16

10:00 a.m. Caring Friends – Library

4:00 p.m. Dollies – Bell room

6:30 p.m. EBS – FH

Friday, February 17 – office closed

Saturday, February 18

9:30 a.m. TOTS – Sanctuary

Sunday, February 19

9:15 a.m. Choir – Sanctuary

10:00 a.m. Worship Service – Sanctuary
followed by coffee in the parlor
hosted by Worship committee

11:15 a.m. Chapel Chimers – Bell room

11:15 a.m. Education Hour: ACE – Library
Grapple – Youth room

Church House Rock – Room 16

12:15 p.m. Youth Group – FH

Monday, February 20 ~ Office Closed

6:30 p.m. EBS – Library

Tuesday, February 21 *Advance mailing*

7:00 p.m. Trustees committee – Library

7:00 p.m. Member Care committee – Parlor

Wednesday, February 22 *Ash Wednesday*

10:30 a.m. Staff meeting – Library

6:15 p.m. Choir – Sanctuary

7:00 p.m. Service – Sanctuary

Thursday, February 23

4:00 p.m. Dollies – Bell room

6:00 p.m. Troop #14177 – FH

6:30 p.m. EBS – Library

6:30 p.m. Faith Alive rehearsal – Sanctuary

Friday, February 24 – office closed

6:00 p.m. Troop #10297

Saturday, February 25

9:00 a.m. Aldersgate Foundation – Parlor

9:30 a.m. TOTS rehearsal – Sanctuary

Sunday, February 26 *New Spirit Sunday*

8:45 a.m. Hospitality committee – Library

10:00 a.m. Worship Service – Sanctuary
followed by coffee in the parlor
hosted by Education committee

11:15 a.m. Chapel Chimers – Bell room

11:15 a.m. Education Hour: ACE – Parlor
Grapple – Youth room

Church House Rock – Room 10

12:00 p.m. Youth Group – FH

Monday, February 27

6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts – FH

6:30 p.m. EBS – Library

Tuesday, February 28

7:00 p.m. Finance committee – Library

Wednesday, February 29

10:30 a.m. Staff meeting – Library

No confirmation – Family night

6:15 p.m. Jubilee! – Bell room

7:30 p.m. Choir – Sanctuary

7:30 p.m. Holy Tollers – Bell room



PLANNING AHEAD

Friday, March 2 - St. Olaf Hand Bell Choir Concert

Friday, March 16 - Opening night of *Working*, Theatre of the Spirit spring production