

Hello Beloved Community of Aldersgate Church,



Wow, what a year it has been. The November 2019 campaign, “All Hands on Deck, All Resources In”, was an effort to move us forward in our mission. Just a few months later COVID-19 wreaked havoc on plans and operations for every industry in the country. The truth is, all across the nation, everything has changed. It’s as though our foundations have been swiftly taken right out from under our feet. We’ve all faced our many and varied life changes and personal responses, but regardless of the manifestations and nuances, it’s safe to say that it’s been hard on everybody.

But here’s the good news: God is moving. The American Church has very much been in a rut for decades, and with a shaky foundation beneath us, something has broken open and the reality of God moving among us has never been more clear. Yes, we’ve had to shut down in many ways, but God is moving among us and the opportunities in 2021 are endless. As our District Superintendent encouraged we pastors in a recent message, “I don’t want you to think about re-opening, I want you to think about re-launching”. Beloved, in 2021, we are headed into the Great Wide Open.

That can be (and is!) a scary place, but it’s also an exhilarating place. Over the years we have struggled to reimagine ourselves for the 21st century, but now, we’ve been thrust into it. God is at work in the Church today just as God was with the Israelites in the wilderness and as God was with the original disciples: After Jesus ascended, the Holy Spirit fell, and God said, “just keep moving” (my paraphrase of the Book of Acts). The only thing for certain was that the future was uncertain! That is where we are now, and it is going to be up to us all to step into the Great Wide Open that is 2021.

There is a lot of uncertainty for Aldersgate, from whether we will still be in our building at the end of 2021, to eliminating the financial deficit we’ve been carrying for years and can do so no longer than through 2021, to how and when we will relaunch our ministries for all ages. But not everything is uncertain. There are a few things we know:

1. The Church has left the building, but The Church is still The Church. The Church is you all, and you all are what matters more than anything. So wherever 2021 takes us, it’s about us. All of us. You are what matters!
2. God is with us. And God has never left us. As our Fall Study indicates, the challenge is that God is moving, and we just need to catch up! So rest assured that no matter where 2021 takes us, God will be with us in it.
3. God has work for us to do: Whether it’s gathered in pews, scattered at home, or gathered in a whole new kind of space, the work to foster spiritual connection, healing, and growth for the sake of justice and peace in the world will continue. We may not know exactly how, when, or where our work will get done, but we know what our work is.

As we head into the Great Wide of Open of 2021, we’re asking you, Beloved, to consider how you will contribute to these wild new days through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your

service, and your witness. What is especially helpful, is getting a picture of what financial contributions will look like. The best that you can predict, can you let us know about how much you plan to contribute to our work financially in 2021? Attached to this letter is an Estimate of Giving Card for you to fill out and mail in or drop off in the office. If you'd rather, you can also do your estimate of giving online via the link on our website.

But we need not only your financial contributions in 2021. We need your prayers. We need all of us lifting up Aldersgate in prayer in 2021. Also included in this letter is a prayer card to help guide you in your prayers for our church. It's just a simple prayer, that if prayed consistently, could reap a great harvest. And we need you to be thinking about how you can contribute to our work: Are you interested in leading a small group? Serving on a team? Starting a new ministry? We encourage you to wonder and pray about how you will contribute to the Great Wide Open that will be 2021 with your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

As I said, it's been a hard year, but a new year is coming. We will have some of the same cultural challenges before us (those don't reset with the turn of calendar), but we do have a Great Wide Open future to step into. So what do you say? Climb aboard, and let's head into the Great Wide Open together. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. We want to keep the line of communication is open!

God bless you all, be safe, mask up, and be loved!

Pastor Paul

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Name (Please Print): _____

Email: _____ Home Phone: _____



_____ I'm a first time pledger! _____ I'm happy to be a repeat pledger!

Indicate your amount below and return your card to the church office by November 30th to the office or in the offering plate in worship. Thanks for pledging! Or fill out an E-Card via the "Great Wide Open" link on our website (www.aldersgatemn.com).

Choose One: \$ _____ monthly OR \$ _____ yearly

Would you like a form for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) OR continue EFT? _____ Yes _____ No

If paying by cash/check would you like offering envelopes for next year? _____ Yes _____ No