

INTRODUCING ALDRSGATE'S EMERGING VISION

Early this year, leaders from Aldersgate UMC assembled a Task Force to envision the congregation's preferred future and respond to the following questions:

- Who are we (identity)?
- Who are we called to serve?
- What is our primary purpose?
- What is God calling us to be and do, right now, as we move forward in faith?

STAGE 1: REVIEW - *Describe what is*

Once the Task Force was formed, it spent 5 months gathering information about the church and its local community, striving to articulate what's present, what's real, and what energizes our faith community. This involved listening to members, listening to local community leaders, and identifying the societal shifts are changing the ministry landscape in light of the "The Great Commission" (Matthew 26:16-20) and the "The Great Commandment" (Luke 10:27). In the process of reviewing the congregation's unique identity and context, the task force has affirmed the congregation's current identity statement which describes Aldersgate United Methodist Church as a Christ-centered, Jesus shaped, Spirit-led community seeking to create an atmosphere of spiritual connection, healing and growth. We are an inclusive community believing that God loves, honors, and celebrates all people regardless of age, race, nation, gender identity, background, sexual orientation, abilities, or socio-economic position. We believe that God calls us to embody God's radical love by cultivating a space free from harassment, judgement, hate, or discrimination.

STAGE 2: RETHINK - *Dream about what might be*

With a clearer understanding of Aldersgate's identity and purpose, the Task Force spent 3 months rethinking and reimagining the church's mission and ministry. Guided by the identity statement and the four marks of discipleship (worship, devotion, compassion, and justice), the Task Force explored ways to make the church's future mission and ministries simple, nimble, impactful, and scalable. The desire was to streamline the structure, partner with others when appropriate, and to repurpose plans, programs, and content in ways that would reach more people at and beyond the church.

The task force embraced the Methodist process of discipleship that moves people beyond not just being learners in a classroom but rather learning a new way of being. This apprenticeship model invites people to follow Jesus, that includes "...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded..." This act of obedience is not a list of "dos and don'ts", but rather a call to be a particular kind of person and community. One way of understanding this is through the basics of the "method" that makes us Methodists, which essentially calls us to two kinds of works in this world: Works of piety and works of mercy. And it is these two works that inform our Rule of Life as Methodists, which is our General Rule of Discipleship: "To witness to Jesus Christ in the world and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

Putting all four practices together (Matthew 28:16-20)

Acts of Mercy are displayed toward our fellow humans. Acts of Piety are between us and God. Justice and Worship practices are more public while acts of Compassion and Devotion are more private. The four practices describe a way of being and serve as a rule of life. Our mission as a church is to live them and call others into them. The preferred future envisioned by the Task Force was not to build a big church nor add more programs. Future initiatives would focus on bringing wholeness to the world. The activities we would create or enhance would be simple, life-giving, slow, and liberating.

STAGE 3: REINVENT - *Design a map for moving forward*

The Task Force began the Reinvention stage, focused on defining what our congregation needs to consistently say, do, measure, and celebrate in the future. Our emerging ministry road map lists goals, projects, and tasks we need to address this year to ensure a viable future for the congregation. Once the road map is presented to the Council and members, it will

continue to be a working document that is updated at least once a quarter. We invite church leaders and members to give feedback about the road map and to explore ways to engage members with helping fulfill its goals.

Sincerely,

The Visioning Task Force

Pastor Paul Baudhuin, Cleo Bonham, Katie Hinz, Kristian & Stephanie Lund, Serena Steffenhagen, and Ann Wood

MINISTRY ROAD MAP

GOAL 1 | Enhance WORSHIP as an event and a way of life

Overview of the First Work of Piety: Worship (Exodus 14:26-31, 15:19-21)

Worship is central to the Christian life. But why do we do it? Who is it for? It's where we celebrate victories, heal wounds, step into God's story, and learn to follow in the way of Jesus. Worship is where the whole community comes together as one, therefore it serves as a hub for all other aspects of who we are (devotion, compassion, and justice). Worship is a means to an end, not an end itself, and that end is a kind of spiritual connection, healing, and growth that breeds disciples of Jesus.

PROJECT 1: ENHANCE THE SUNDAY WORSHIP EXPERIENCE

1. Experiment with fresh ways of celebrating communion 2-4 times a month at the discretion of the pastor. Q1
2. Increase engagement of online worshippers (sermons/prayers/storytelling/Facebook host). Q2
3. Posting "sermon only" links on our website or list sermon time stamps on weekly YouTube videos. Q1
4. Highlight ways that households are using weekly take home resources with family members and groups. Q2
5. Create 3-minute kid's video messages as part of weekly worship. Q3

PROJECT 2: EXTEND HOSPITALITY BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER WORSHIP

1. Explore ways to invite members/guests to linger onsite or online following the worship service. Q1
2. Update website information to enhance hospitality to onsite and online guests. Q2
3. Ask task force/Council to complete Hospitality Audit; share feedback & suggestions at 2/10 meeting. Q2
4. Create a welcome packet/flier for first-time guests; highlight ways guests can participate in current ministries Q2

PROJECT 3: EXTEND WORSHIP INTO PEOPLE'S DAILY LIVES

1. Highlight every Sunday 3 ways to extend Worship, Devotion, Compassion, and Justice into people's daily lives. Q1
2. Introduce/demonstrate spiritual practices during worship and via e-news and social media. Q2
3. Create scripts to support members with sharing their faith stories during weekly worship services. Q2
4. Recruit person to coordinate schedule for having members share their faith stories during weekly worship. Q2

GOAL 2 | Equip people to practice DEVOTION in their daily lives

Overview of the Second work of Piety: Devotion (Acts 2:41-36, Hebrews 10:19-25)

Devotion speaks to how we "devote" ourselves to a way of life, or rule of life, that include practices (means of grace) and accountability (a community of mutual trust and integrates personal and social holiness are. Social holiness is the ways in which we engage being together in addition to our own personal acts of piety. We invite everyone who views Aldersgate as their church home to be a part of a group of some kind, preferably a life group. This is Aldersgate's primary vehicle for helping people give and receive care, pray for one another, search the scriptures, and do acts of compassion and justice in the world.

PROJECT 1: PILOT THE LAUNCHING OF 3 LIFE GROUPS

1. Define what LIFE GROUPS are, how often they meet, and when people can join. Q1
2. Create an initial list of people to invite to Monday night, Tuesday morning and other Life Groups meeting dates. Q1
3. Create list of resources and links to post on church website to support Life Group facilitators. Q1
4. Demonstrate ways that households can use devotional resources individually, and with their family. Q2

PROJECT 2: IDENTIFY EXISTING SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES; CLARIFY THEIR UNIQUENESS

1. Create contact lists to be used for inviting people into small group activities. Q3
2. Write 3-5 sentence descriptions for each one of Aldersgate's small groups. Q3
3. Provide small group facilitators with training, a leadership guide, and resources to access online. Q3

PROJECT 3: INTRODUCE SPIRITUAL PRACTICES TO ALDERSGATE'S MEMBERS/FRIENDS

1. Curate initial list of resources to be posted on our Aldersgate's website. Q1
2. Introduce and demonstrate a new spiritual practice for members "try on" once a quarter. Q2
3. Introduce members to 2 new online, app-based, or printed faith formation resources every month. Q2

GOAL 3 | Extend COMPASSION to each other and our neighbors

Overview of the First Work of Mercy: Compassion (Matthew 25:32-46, Matthew 9:35-38)

Compassion speaks to the works that we do that heal and restore. It means that we feel the suffering of others and we act. Aldersgate already does quite a bit in the area of compassion throughout monthly outreach focus. We need to keep doing this, evaluating which ones are fruitful and which aren't, and change them accordingly. Where we need to grow is getting the congregation to be more active in compassion, for which Life Groups can be a great mechanism. Compassion also speaks to the ways in which we care for another. Our Congregational Care Team is a core group in leading in these efforts, but Life Groups can and should be places where deep care for one another takes place.

PROJECT 1: EXTEND CARE, CONNECTION AND COMPASSION TO OUR MEMBERS

1. Create/update annual calendar of community outreach activities. Q1
2. Update directory; share with members/community leaders. Q1
3. Describe ways that small groups will lead to deeper connection and care among members. Q1
4. Consider having an annual leadership calendar that lists key projects/events. Q1

PROJECT 2: EXTEND CARE, CONNECTION AND COMPASSION TO OUR NEIGHBORS

1. List what's currently happening to connect with, care for, and collaborate with people from our local community. Q1
2. Support Community Outreach Team as outlined in their 2022 priorities and goals. Q1
3. Create a list of additional ways to extend compassion to our neighbors; review on a quarterly basis. Q1

GOAL 4 | Promote JUSTICE to foster equity and wholeness for all people (should this be combined?)

Overview of the Second Work of Mercy: Justice. (Luke 4:14-21, Exodus 3:7-10)

Justice speaks to the work that we do, not to respond to suffering, but to prevent it. It is the work of dismantling systems of oppression and rebuilding them as systems of equity and wholeness. Our next focus in this area could be the MNUMC's "Build a Beloved Community" groups. Aldersgate will continue to advocate for marginalized groups in the St. Louis Park area, will collaborate with the city and local organizations on projects (i.e. Just Deeds project), and will be a catalyst for connecting local faith communities around works of justice.

PROJECT 1: Pilot an initial Building a Beloved Community training event involving 3-5 members

1. Invite lay and elected leaders to watch the "Beloved Community" videos. Q1
2. Ask Community Outreach Committee leaders if they'd like to host Beloved Community conversations. Q2
3. Assist with planning and promoting a Beloved Community training and discussion event for all members. Q3
4. After training, list ways to engage Aldersgate's members in building a beloved community in St. Louis Park. Q4

GOAL 5 | Design plans for moving to a new ministry site

Overview & Outcomes

The Trustees will research new sites and prepare for moving to a new ministry location in 2022. In addition, decisions will be made regarding what equipment, furniture, and supplies will be brought to the new ministry site and what items need to be sold, donated, or discarded in preparation for the move.

PROJECT 1: CONTINUE TO INQUIRE ABOUT SPIRIT OF CHRIST AS A VIABLE NEW MINISTRY SITE

1. Describe space, technology, and facility needs to support Aldersgate's current and future ministry needs. Q1
2. Meet with Serena and Pastor Paul about office space and equipment needed at the new site. Q1
3. List what's present and what's lacking regarding Spirit of Christ's ministry setting. Q1
4. Prepare a draft contract to submit to Spirit of Christ to review outlining agreements related to sharing space. Q1
5. Provide a list of recommendations for addressing storage, technology and facility needs at Spirit of Christ. Q1

PROJECT 2: DETERMINE WHICH ITEMS WITHIN THE CHURCH NEED TO BE SAVE, SOLD, OR DISCARDED

1. Develop criteria for what will be saved, sold, or discarded. Q1
2. Decide who will make decisions regarding what is saved, sold, or discarded. Q1
3. Find out which items from Aldersgate that Spirit of Christ may find useful in their ministry setting. Q2

GOAL 6 | Rethink staffing, structure, and systems to support missional goals

Overview & Outcomes

Invite people into conversations related to current and future staffing needs to support ongoing mission and ministries. Review church structures and communications to increase clarity of roles and responsibilities, right-size structural needs, speed up decision-making and execution, and communicate more clearly, consistently, and impactfully with the congregation.

PROJECT 1: DETERMINE CURRENT AND FUTURE STAFFING NEEDS TO SUPPORT MISSION

1. Identify staffing needs related to coordination of Life Groups and small group ministries. TBD
2. Identify staffing needs related to expanded use of communication platforms. TBD
3. Explore outsourcing options related to administrative and programmatic activities. TBD
4. Explore ways to use Breeze to manage small group/Life Group communications. TBD

PROJECT 2: REVIEW CHURCH STRUCTURE AND SUGGEST CHANGES IF NEEDED

1. Identify how decisions are made, who makes them, and how they're communicated. TBD
2. Identify the purpose, activities of all committees and work groups. TBD
3. Update leadership directory that includes all committees, teams, task forces, etc. TBD
4. List ways that leaders are on-boarded and learn how to best collaborate with each other. TBD

PROJECT 3: ENHANCE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT & GROWTH OF MEMBERS

1. List changes to be made to the website based on feedback from ministry leaders. Revisit site with new eyes? TBD
2. List changes to be made for using [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) to support ministry goals. TBD
3. List changes to be made in when, where, and how info is shared among leaders. TBD
4. Explore ways to use Breeze to manage small group/Life Group communications. TBD

Invite Task force to

1. Identify who has a story to share
2. Identify who can help update and maintain the church website
3. Invite Task Force members and Council to watch [Becoming a Beloved Community](#) videos.
4. Invite Task Force members to offer suggestions for making home page less cluttered.