



**Happening This Week:** December 17-23

**Cookie Walk today after worship, fellowship hall**

Monday: Small group, 6:30pm, Sanctuary

Tuesday: Tuesday Testaments, 10:00am, Sanctuary

Christmas Eve Ringers rehearsal, 6:45pm, Sanctuary

**NO morning service next Sunday**  
**Christmas Eve Service at 8:00pm**

Aldersgate Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 9:00am-3:00pm  
952-929-6725; [aldersgate@aldersgatemn.com](mailto:aldersgate@aldersgatemn.com)  
Pastor Christy: [pastorchristy@aldersgatemn.com](mailto:pastorchristy@aldersgatemn.com)

*Aldersgate Church is a Creator-centered, Jesus-shaped, Spirit-led community seeking to create atmospheres 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, judgment, hate, or discrimination. We hope you find spiritual connection, healing, and growth in worship today. Thanks for joining us!*



**Sunday, December 17, 2023**

*Third Sunday of Advent*

**Order of Worship**

Gathering

Welcome & Announcements

Special Music: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Jubilee! Bell Choir

Lighting the Advent Candles

Opening Carol: "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

(UMH #218, vs. 1, 2 & 4)

Children's Message

Cleo Bonham

Special Music: "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

Jubilee! Bell Choir

Prayer Requests (raise your hand if you have a prayer request)

Prayer Song: "What Child Is This"

(UMH #219, vs. 1 & 3)

Morning Prayer & the Lord's Prayer

Children dismissed to Kids' Time

Message: "John the Baptist"

Pastor Christy Key

*John 1:6-8, 19-28*

Closing Carol: "Joy to the World"

(UMH #246, vs. 1, 2 & 4)

Blessing

## Advent Candle Lighting

Reader 1: When God's people were surrounded by hardship, suffering, and grief, Isaiah proclaimed, "The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit." (Isaiah 61:1-3a).

Reader 2: We come today as people who are also surrounded by suffering and grief. And yet, the Spirit hovers among us, tending and anointing, inspiring freedom where there is captivity, declaring blessing in places the world has cursed, and igniting fierce joy where mourning and heartache prevail.

**Congregation: We wait as people who experience hardship and pain, yet we are called to witness to the persistent joy that sustains our life as God's people.**

Reader 1: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, just peace, and fierce joy. May our lives shine with the fierce, tenacious joy of the Light who lives in our hearts as we wait and work for the coming of God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Opening Carol: "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

Verse 1: It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold: "Peace on the earth, good will to all from heaven's all-gracious King." The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Verse 2: Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled, and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world; above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing, and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

Verse 4: For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old, when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling, and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

Children's Message Song: "This, This is Where Children Belong"

This, this is where children belong welcomed as part of the worshiping throng. Water, God's Word, bread and cup, prayer, and song. This is where children belong.

Prayer Song: "What Child Is This"

Verse 1: What child is this who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain: This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

Verse 2: So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own him;  
the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.

Closing Carol: "Joy to the World"

Verse 1: Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Verse 2: Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Verse 4: He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.