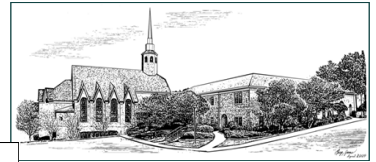




Aldersgate In Motion



ALDERSGATE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors
The People of the United Methodist Church

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Mini Issue

A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

The Three* Kings

The coming of the Wise Men is celebrated on the Christian calendar on Jan 7 or Epiphany.” They are sometimes called "Magi." The word "magi" come from the Greek word used in the New Testament "magoi" which means magician. But the "magic" that these wise men practiced was probably closer to natural science than magic. The Magi are sometimes called Kings or Wise men because Magi were often hired by Kings because of their great wisdom to administer their kingdoms.

The Bible simply says that wise men came from the east following a star. Many ancient peoples believe that a new star in the sky signaled the birth of a great king (Matthew 2:1-12). Somehow these scholars concluded that the Star of Bethlehem signaled the birth of the King of Kings, Jesus. Where the Bible leaves off, tradition fills in the gaps.

First of all there is no mention of camels in Matthew (Of course it doesn't say they weren't riding camels either). Here tradition has taken its cue from other scriptures. Many believe that Isaiah was foretelling these kings arrival when he said, "the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring Gold and Frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord." Of course Matthew reports that the wise men brought gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Whether they actually came from Midian and Ephah and Sheba on camels or not is unclear. Because Sheba was in north Africa, one of the kings is often depicted as being African. *How many kings were there? Tradition says three. The Bible however doesn't give us a definite number. Three is often the assumed number because three gifts are mentioned. Tradition even gives these three kings names: Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. What is clear is that they had come from foreign lands in a day when long distance travel was not easy.

Finally, the wise men are usually depicted as arriving on the night that Jesus was born. In truth they probably arrived a few years after Jesus' birth. Matthew says that they went to a house not a stable to bring their gifts. It also says that Herod ordered all the children two year and under killed based on when the magi said the star appeared. So based on this we can guess that Jesus was about two years old when the kings came.

Don't run to your Nativity scene to throw your kings and their camels away! The truth that Jesus is the King of Kings is what is important about the story of the Three Kings so their statues deserve to be at the manger. They represent all the Gentiles that have come to believe in Jesus. Ponder these things as you put your nativity sets away this year.

The first Sunday after Epiphany, Jan. 7, is the Sunday that the church celebrates Jesus' Baptism. This event is important to Christians because it helps define who we are and whose we are as believers in Christ. At Jesus' baptism God said, "This is my beloved son." At our baptisms God says through the church "This is my beloved child." That word of God defines who we are. On Baptism of Our Lord Sunday it is traditional for churches to celebrate a congregation reaffirmation of baptism. This is a moving service of rededication! Baptism of Our Lord Sunday is Jan. 7, this year. Come and rededicate yourself to live as a child of God!

Human Relation Sunday is the Sunday before Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, **January 14**. Your gifts to **Human Relations Day** provide avenues to restore relationships through ministries like Youth Offender Rehabilitation, Community Developers self-improvement programs and United Methodist Voluntary Services community advocacy programs. We will receive a special offering on Human Relations Day. To find out more about the programs supported by the Human Relations Sunday offerings go to: **http://www.umciving.org**, click on "**Special Sundays**," then on "**Human Relations Day**."

UPCOMING SERMONS

Jan. 14: John 1:43-51
"Seeing and Believing"

Jan. 21: 1 Samuel 3:1-10
"A World Without Vision"

Jan. 28: Mark 1:21-28
"Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Devil"

The Pastor's Wednesday Morning Bible Study will begin a study of Daniel on **Wednesday, January 10, 2018**. We meet at 10 am on Wednesdays in the Mac Vinson Companions classroom. The lessons for the next few weeks are:

Jan. 10: Daniel Chapter 1 - Daniel's Training in Babylon

Jan. 17: Daniel Chapter 2 - Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Jan. 24: Daniel Chapter 3 – The 3 lads and the Fiery Furnace

Our Child Development Center registration for the 2018-19 school year is now underway! Church members have priority placement over others on our waiting list. Church members can register beginning Tuesday, January 16th. We have classes for children who turn 1 by September 1, 2018 all the way through K5. If you or someone you know would like more information about our 2018-19 program, please contact Jennifer at 268-5028 or jnelson@aumcsc.org. For more information about our registration process, please [click here](#)!

DISCIPLES FAST TRACK, part of the Disciple family of Bible studies, provides an option for busy people who seek to gain a better understanding of the bible and want to grow as disciples. **On January 14, 2018**, all are welcome to come at 9:45 am in the Library for an overview and class organization for the 12 week study "*Into the Word, Into the World: Genesis/Exodus*." Then, those who wish to attend can sign up and receive their books. Class begins the following Sunday, January 21, 2108 in the Library at 9:45am. Contact Susan Smith at 864-268-6602, or Johannah Myers at 864-244-1820 ext. 211.

CONNECT 2018

Connect on Wednesdays begins on January 10.

Dinner is \$6 for adults, \$4 for children. As always, reservations are required. Please contact Susan Hamilton (shamilton@aumcsc.org or 244-1820 ext 210) before noon on Mondays to make or change your reservation. Dinner is served from 5:30-6:20pm.

American Sign Language

Facilitated by Melissa and Mary Stevenson Location: Kingdom Classroom

Have you ever wanted to learn sign language? Now is your chance! Mary and Melissa Stevenson will be teaching a class during Connect each week beginning Wednesday, Jan. 10th through March 21st from 6:30-7:30. We will take a break for Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14th. This class is for beginners as well as those who need a refresher. Please sign up by calling Susan Hamilton at 244-1820 ext. 210 or e-mailing Melissa Stevenson at melissa2@uscupstate.edu There is a limit of 25 so sign up today! If you have any questions, please e-mail Melissa.

What's Next? A Way of Life

Facilitated by Johannah Myers Location: Mac Vinson/Companions Classroom

After spending the fall talking about 2000 years of church history, the next question may be "Where do we go from here?" Way of Life is a 5-week study (January 10-February 7) based on Brian McLaren's book *The Great Spiritual Migration*. McLaren is a leader in the emergent church movement and his book presents possibilities for the post-modern church. You do not have to read along in McLaren's book to participate in this study, however please come with an open mind to hear his perspective on the future of the Western church. Participant guides are available for \$9 – please let Johannah know (jmyers@aumcsc.org) if you'd like a participant guide.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Facilitated by Debbie Williams Location: Library

If you'd like to learn to crochet, this group will be glad to help you! The Prayer Shawl ministry at Aldersgate makes shawls for people in need of a little extra prayer. They also make graduation blankets for our high school graduates and our Child Development Center kindergarten graduates. No experience necessary!

Menus for January 2018

Jan 10 – Chicken casserole, rice, green beans, salad, fruit, dessert

Jan 17 – Baked spaghetti with meat sauce, garlic bread, salad, and dessert

Jan 24 - Turkey Soup, vegetable soup, salad, fruit, dessert

Jan 31- Roasted pork loin with apple walnut chutney, collard greens, mashed potatoes, dessert

Call Susan Hamilton in the church office if you do NOT have a standing reservation for dinner. You will need to get your name on the reservation list in order to eat each week.