

# The Parish Visitor



## January 2022

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### Looking Back

2021 was my first full year as your pastor. It was also my first full year serving one church during a global pandemic, and as 2021 drew to a close, I marveled at how far we'd come in just a year. I'd like to share some of the highlights of the past year with you.

We began January huddled around cell phones and computer screens because we were not able to hold in-person worship; we had to rely on streaming our services live over Facebook. Fortunately, we were able to resume limited in-person worship on January 24. For the sake of social distancing, we resumed with three identical services. Between the three identical services we had a total of 67 worshippers participating. Since the Conference had advised us not to sing, Mike Millar shared a hymn story to maintain a connection with our worship, and then Katie Moran played a verse on the keyboard. They continued that practice for a couple of months.

Although we couldn't sing, that didn't stop our bell choir from sharing in song, so on March 21, Nicole Taylor and Katie Moran performed a bell duet in all three services, a most welcome blessing!

My memory tells me that we began singing in church the following Sunday which was Palm Sunday. I never thought I would see the day when I would say, "Gee, it sure feels funny to be singing in church!" That's how many of us felt, but it still felt good.

Our average attendance climbed steadily throughout the year, from 68 in February to 92 in March, and then to 117 in April. Those increases coincided with the spread of the vaccine: I received my first dose on January 11, and by the end of February, I was fully vaccinated. I am blessed to be serving a church that has minimized the politization of the vaccine. Thanks to what I believe is a fairly high rate of vaccinations plus a willingness to wear masks in worship, Aledo UMC has not been a super-spreader of the coronavirus, and I pray that our church remains a safe place for us to connect with Jesus.

Easter Sunday was on April 4, and though our chancel choir wasn't able to present a cantata, Mike, Kathleen Bashem, and I were able to dramatize the story of the resurrection in three dramatic readings. One of the blessings I've enjoyed as your pastor is the support of an excellent staff!

### SPECIAL DATES:

- January 2 Communion & Food Pantry Sunday
- January 6 Caring Hearts Food Prep
- January 11 Loving Hands Food Prep 1:30PM
- January 12 Wednesday Night Fellowship Meal 5:15PM
- January 16 Safety Meeting 5:15PM
- January 16 Trustees Meeting 6PM
- January 16 Finance Meeting 6:45PM
- January 16 Administrative Council Meeting 7:30PM
- January 17 Office Closed for Martin Luther King Holiday
- January 17 United Methodist Men 6PM
- January 20 Parish Visitor Deadline 8AM
- January 20 Caring Hearts Food Prep 1PM
- January 22 Stamping Workshop 1-5PM
- January 25 Loving Hands Food Prep 1:30PM
- January 27 Women's Bible Study 6PM

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The following Sunday, Shawna Bunell, outreach director for Chaddock, was our special guest, sharing with us the ministry of that impactful Conference ministry to children.

Our church grew by four on Pentecost Sunday, May 23 as Natalie Thomson, Jaiden LaDue, Sophia Latko, and Josie Brown were confirmed, thanks to Kathleen's ongoing ministry with our youth. We grew by another five on June 13 as Keith and Shari Chandler, Denise Patterson, Joe Reusch, and Jane Williams joined our church. Average attendance also grew, from 120 in May to 121 in June and 166 in July.

One of the most long-lasting highlights of 2021 came on May 30 when both of our praise bands, Connection and Forgiven, resumed playing in our worship services, and they've been playing ever since.

On July 11, Ruth Dulaney safely reopened our Fellowship Café. It was just one of many food ministries in which she was so deeply involved this year as we continued learning how to live in our new "pandemic normal." Other memorable food ministries included our Rhubarb Festival meals, and our Wednesday evening pre-Thanksgiving and pre-Christmas dinners.

I've never seen a year in which a church I served had a higher worship attendance in July than in April, but that was the case at Aledo UMC this past year. Our July average got a big boost from "Christmas in July" on July 18 when we had 249 in worship! It gave me a chance to hear our chancel choir sing for the first time, and it gave the choir an opportunity to sing in the choir loft before we began our renovations of that space. The bell choir and both praise bands also ministered that day, and renovation of the chancel began a week later and continued for four weeks with minimal impact on our worship experiences.

Christmas In July kicked off a hectic week for Kathleen, as she conducted a hybrid Vacation Bible School, as it was held both in-person as well as remotely.

One of my most treasured events in 2021 came in July as Kathleen and I led eight young ladies on a YouthWorks mission trip to Louisville, Kentucky, beginning on Sunday, July 25. I am still overwhelmed by the support this congregation gives to our youth missionaries—and to the welcome we received on our return home on July 31.

A month later, Kathleen organized a wonderful outdoor concert with the Harvest Ministry Team on Sunday evening, August 29.

I had hoped that "Christmas in July" would further boost our upward trend, but that trend was interrupted by the Delta variant. As a result, our attendance averaged 153 in August; 161 in September; and 155 in October.

As a worshipping community, we experienced a significant change on September 12: not only did we resume children's Sunday school that day, but we created a distinct identity for each of our three services, with Contemporary worship at 8 am; Rock and Worship at 9:15; and Traditional at 10:30. That arrangement helps us to be the most effective stewards of the various talents of all our musicians.

After ten years as our worship director, Mike took a step back in October to become our director of our praise bands, and Quinton King was hired to serve as our director of technology. Thank you, Mike, and welcome, Quinton!

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## Our Capital Campaign and Endowment

You may have noticed that even though we've completed all the renovation projects which were a part of our Capital Campaign, we are still receiving funds for the Campaign. That is because the final project in our Campaign was to repay our Endowment Fund \$150,000 which we borrowed from ourselves many years ago to fund some major projects, including tuckpointing and installing our elevator.

Thanks to action which you as a congregation took this past November, we have now created a new funding stream for our church. Our Endowment Fund has been repurposed to create a corpus of money which will generate interest income for the church every year until Christ returns.

Early in January, you will receive a letter in which you will be asked to make your financial pledge to the church for 2022. However, you will notice a new line on your pledge card where you will be given the opportunity to indicate that you will include Aledo UMC in your estate planning. We do not want to know either the amount or the percentage which you hope to gift to the church; nor do we want to negatively impact your heirs. But we do want to encourage you who love this church to include a "final tithe" to Aledo UMC in your estate.

All funds given to our Endowment Fund, whether through estate planning or through the remainder of our Capital Campaign, will remain as part of the principle, forever generating interest income for our church. Even before your pledge letter arrives, please prayerfully consider how you might support our church in 2022 and beyond.

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After consistently drawing 160 for months, our November average attendance grew to 181, due in part to some special events such as welcoming seven new members: Wayne and Vi Darsnek; Paula Hevland; Ray and Betty Leng; and Jon and Chris Swanson. One week later, they were able to participate in a Church Conference in which we revised our Endowment Policy, giving us the opportunity to create a new, permanent revenue stream for our General Fund. The revised policy was adopted unanimously in a 77-0 vote. The change creates a way for our church to receive estate and other gifts which will generate interest income for us until Christ returns.

December has been filled with highlights, including our children's Christmas program, an omelet breakfast, and our chancel choir's presentation of the Christmas story by way of Pepper Choplin's, "Lead Me Back to Bethlehem." Including the 6 pm service, we achieved our high attendance mark for the year with 369 worshippers.

You may wonder why I've mentioned attendance so much: I've also held the opinion that if people come to worship, the finances of the church will follow. Besides, I'd rather count noses than nickels.

As we look ahead to 2022, I realize that coronavirus mitigations may be with us for the foreseeable future. As much as I hate some of those mitigations, I'm willing to live with them if they help us to stay safe and healthy—and if they help us to get to a new normal that looks a lot like our old normal. I may hate my masks, but I'll continue wearing them if that's what it takes to love my neighbor. And I'm thankful for all of you who likewise have been actively loving your neighbor—and not just by wearing masks.

Connecting People to Christ with you,

*Pastor Dave*

## NEW/CURRENT BIBLE STUDIES

### **Beloved Disciple: “The Life and Ministry of John” by Beth Moore**

**WHAT:** Wednesday morning MEN’S Bible Study with Gary Heard

**WHEN:** Wednesdays @ 6:30AM

**WHERE:** In the Fellowship Café, next to the Sanctuary

**WHY:** John's legacy was love. Perhaps like no other disciple, John understood that relationship is the point. Every command of Christ and call to obedience is to enhance relationship and place the recipient in a posture the Giver can bless.

**WHAT ELSE:** Books are \$16

### **“Beginnings” By Pastor Dave**

**WHAT:** Wednesday evening Bible Study with Pastor Dave

**WHEN:** Wednesdays at 6PM

**WHERE:** In the Fellowship Café next to the Sanctuary

**WHY:** Our Wednesday evening Bible study continues December 1 at 6 pm. Rather than purchasing a Bible study, we will be studying a book as it’s being written. I have had an interest in writing but have never taken the time to actually write a book. That changes this fall. Every couple of weeks I will present the rough draft of a chapter to a book that I am writing which is called, “Beginnings.” My rough draft is already 80 pages long. Each week we’ll not only discuss each chapter, but you’ll also be able to help me fine-tune each chapter.

*Pastor Dave*

## YOUTH AND CHILDREN’S SUNDAY SCHOOL – HELP NEEDED

Sunday School is in session!

All students, kindergarten through senior in high school, are invited to attend Sunday School at 9:15 am, Sunday mornings (during the 9:15 am Rock ‘n’ Worship service). Younger students have a Bible lesson, a craft or game and Melody Bells lesson. Older students study Christianity in action, have a Beginning Bells lesson and play games.

Sunday morning is for learning - and fun!

**We are still in need of one more Sunday School teacher, especially during the second semester for the K-5 class, when Confirmation classes begin.** All materials and lesson plans will be provided for the K-5 Sunday School class. If you are interested in helping our youth grow in Christ, please contact Kathleen.





January 12th Wednesday  
Night Fellowship Meal  
**Warm Your Soul  
with Soup!**

**Chili or Ham and Beans with Cornbread  
Sandwiches, Fruit, and Dessert**

Come eat and enjoy the Fellowship with your Church family  
anytime between 5:00 to 6:15 PM  
No reservations needed this time.

**Donations will go to UMCOR**

(If you would like to help prepare, serve, or clean up, it would be greatly appreciated. Contact Ruth Dulaney)



**Wednesday, February 9, 2022  
Special Valentine  
Dinner at AUMC**

Future Dates for AUMC Monthly Wednesday Night Meals are  
March 9<sup>th</sup> and April 13<sup>th</sup> to complete this season of the 2022 meals.

**For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are  
plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.  
Jeremiah 29:11**

*The Aledo United Methodist Men*

*Say*

*Thank you for supporting our Omelet Breakfast.*

*Because of your support it was a very successful event!*

**To those men & women who helped put this event together I cannot say thank you enough. To see the fellowship shared among you as you worked was heartwarming.**

**Thank you all!**  
*Doyce Hiscocks*



To the UMC & UMW,  
Thank you for the Christmas blessings I have received. It is very comforting to feel the kindness and caring from all of my church family during this past year. God is good!  
*Connie Alexander*

Thank you for the lovely Christmas plate. It was delicious and greatly appreciated. Also, thank you for all the prayers shown to us at this time.  
*Bill & Carolyn Pollock*

United Methodist Church,  
We would like to thank all of the thoughtful hard-working people who remembered us with such a beautiful (yummy) Christmas tray. Also for all the beautiful cards. Enjoyed reading all of them over and over. It was good to hear from all of you and we wish you a Merry Christmas and a blessed new year.  
Sincerely,  
*The Luallens*



**Thank You!**  
Thank you so much for the monetary gift I received as staff of this wonderful church and congregation! I appreciate it and each of you!  
*Debbie Swank*

**Thank You!**  
A big thank you to all that helped me earlier this year when I broke my shoulder and was in a wheelchair. Special thanks to Mary Anderson, Jodie Andress, Cheri Bloomfield, Cheri Brown, Sinjia Fell, Lyn Franks, Sue Galambos, Karen Greer, Susie Kenney, Sharon Mayhew, Lois Ricketts, Ann Runyon, Barb Runyon, Joan Stroud, Debbie & Garry Toops, Elene Waters.  
God is good!  
*Kathy Haney*

**Thank you!**  
Thursday, December 9th, we had a wonderful surprise. One of Santa's helpers, Pastor Dave, came to visit. Thank you isn't enough. We are so blessed to be thought of this Christmas season. Your kind, compassionate, caring ways just melt our hearts. God bless Pastor Dave and every and anyone who had a hand in this.  
Love and hugs,  
*Charley and Connie Thomas*

**Thank You!**  
Thank you so much for all the cards and wonderful treats. Your kindness is greatly appreciated!  
Merry Christmas!  
*Wendell Harroun*

# Youth & Children's Page

## CONFIRMATION 2022

Confirmation, 2022 is coming soon! Here's what you need to know:

Who: unconfirmed students in 7<sup>th</sup> (or 8<sup>th</sup>) grade

Where: Aledo United Methodist Church, Education Wing

Day and time: Sundays, 9:15 am – 10:15 am (During Sunday School time)

Dates: February 6, 13, 20, 27; March 6, 13, 20, 27; April 3, 10, 24, 2022 (No class on Easter)

Confirmation Sunday: Sunday, May 1, 2022 at the 10:30 am service

Are you ready to explore your faith, but not ready to commit to being confirmed? That's okay. Join us for the classes and find out! Are you excited to be confirmed? Great! These classes will get you ready for May 1! Pastor Dave Schultz and Youth Director Kathleen Bashem are here to guide you through the classes and answer your questions.

For more info, please contact Pastor Dave or Kathleen at the church, 309-582-2169.

## YOUTH MISSION NEWS

Watch for more fundraising announcements for the July, 2022 Mission Trip to Lake Traverse/Sissiton, South Dakota.

We are working on a Hot Dog Bar fundraiser and a Baked Potato Bar fundraiser. You do not want to miss these opportunities to support our youth missionaries and have a great meal!

More details will be in the February Parish Visitor!

## SECOND SUNDAY SPECIAL

Second Sunday Special will be held on January 9 at 1 pm. We will meet in the Sanctuary to watch a movie (ask Kathleen which one) and have snacks and fellowship.

Happy New Year!

See you in January!

## YOUTH MISSION TRIP MONTHLY MEETING

Those going on or interested in going on the 2022 Mission Trip to South Dakota are needed at the monthly meeting, held every second Sunday after the 10:30 service. We discuss updates, answer questions and distribute monthly statement reports during this meeting time.

This month's meeting will be on January 9. See you there!

## FORGE

The Forge youth group meets on Wednesdays from 6 pm – 7 pm. Forge is open to students in grades 6-12 and is a time for fun, fellowship, games, snacks – and even escape room challenges!

Wednesday nights are for fun! Bring a friend and check it out!

## KIDS' CLUB

Kids' Club meets on Wednesdays from 6 pm – 7 pm and is open to students in grades K-5.

Join us Wednesday evenings – don't miss a minute of the fun, fellowship time, games, snacks and crafts! Bring a friend! All are welcome!

## NURSERY NEWS – IMPORTANT! WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We need YOU!

Natalie Nelson, nursery director, is expecting baby #3 and is due the end of February. We are in need of someone to cover her maternity leave. She will be out when she has the baby, through Easter. If you are interested in helping during this time or need more information, please contact Natalie or Kathleen.

## JANUARY

01/03/1998– Blair & Sara Blaser  
 01/30/1988– Randy & Jennifer Mattson



## UM Women Golden Age Birthdays

01/01– Jeannine Kenney  
 01/10– Gloria Morgan



The deadline for the next  
 Parish Visitor is  
**Thursday, January 20 @ 8am.**  
 Please have all articles submitted  
 by this date!

## THOSE WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

Alicia/healing  
 Amelia/breast cancer  
 Cliff Anderson/healing  
 Karen Ashton/cancer  
 Shelly Atkinson  
 Bishop Beard/eyesight  
 Bill & Debby Breeden  
 Renae Brown  
 Greg Comer  
 Susan DeBlock/cancer  
 John & Angie DeBlock  
 Brandon Dennison  
 Desi/4yrs old/tumor  
 Ashley Dewitt/health  
 Jim Droste/health  
 Weslyn Fisher/5 yrs old/  
 cancer  
 Jayne Fitzsimmons  
 CJ Friedel  
 Lorena French/health  
 Jim Hanson/cancer  
 Gerri Harmon/health  
 Dane Hartman  
 Rebecca Heick/health

Laura Hopkins family  
 Angela Hudson  
 Kyeleigh Hunn/13yrs  
 old/cancer  
 Jerry/cancer  
 Gilbert Johnson/cancer  
 CeCe Jordan  
 Pat Lafferty/cancer  
 Eric Lewis/health  
 Nadine Liby  
 Dee Lundberg  
 Maddie/3yrs/cancer  
 Marlene/cancer  
 Bill McCann/cancer  
 Larry McCreight family  
 Sylvia McEwen/cancer  
 Gaynor Meredith  
 Linda Morrow  
 Jane Mumm  
 Brad & Janean Ottoson  
 Max Paulsgrove  
 Jerry Pearson family  
 Bill Pollock/health

Esther Rechkemmer/health  
 Diane Richardson's sister  
 and niece/healing  
 Martha Rittenhouse/health  
 Andy Rutledge/cancer  
 Gary Schiefelbein/health  
 Linda Schrock/healing  
 Alex Shinn/sugery  
 Arlene Shotwell  
 Pastor Dave & Candice  
 Damon Seys/healing  
 Rett Sheffield  
 Ashley & Lea Sty/health  
 John Taylor  
 Charley Thomas  
 Neil & Pam Truman  
 Dick Zimmerman  
 Brookstone residents  
 Shut-ins/Nursing Home  
 residents  
 Military & families  
 All ill/in hospitals  
 Our world leaders  
 Our Church/congregation

Marriages in crisis  
 Our denomination/peace  
 Our country/world  
 Covid 19 pandemic  
 Flooding around the nation  
 People of Afghanistan  
 People of Haiti  
 Victims of tornadoes



Mercer County Schools  
 Administration, Teachers,  
 Students and Staff  
 National and Local Governmental  
 Leaders



## I HAVE A DREAM

On Monday, January 17th, we celebrate the anniversary of the birth of slain civil rights leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. For our kids, it's a day off from school. My experience is that for many of them, that's all it is. Why DO we celebrate this man's birthday?

Although he is often labeled as simply an advocate of African-American rights, Dr. King's message truly transcended any notion of merely being a spokesman for a particular group. His was NOT simply a message of race and color; his was a message of hope- grounded in strong Biblical principles. When he delivered what was arguably his most famous speech, he said, "I have a dream." His dream was NOT that we would let ethnicity separate us. His dream was NOT that people of a particular skin color would strike out against those of another color. His dream was NOT that children would learn to hate others because of their physical appearance. His dream was that ALL people could live together in peace and harmony, regardless of the color of their skin. When that glorious day happened, he said, we would be able to quote the old spiritual and exclaim, "Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

We are all unique and we are all different. That's NOT our weakness- it's our strength! Our diversity makes us strong. We are all children of God- made in His image. This month, take a moment and reflect on Dr. King. Tell your kids or grandkids about him. My prayer is his prayer- that one day we will live in a world where people aren't judged by the color of their skin, but the content of their heart.



### UMCOR Disaster Response



UMCOR is responding to the deadly tornadoes that moved through several states. We ask for your immediate response in prayer and financial support.

Please *be there* for survivors by supporting UMCOR US Disaster Response with a gift today. Mark your contributions for UMCOR and the office will get them where they need to go.

Thank you for your support

## CONNECTION COINS FOR JANUARY

The Connection Coins (the "thinly-veiled Pringles cans"! ) are doing great things in the life of the Aledo UMC! On the 2nd Sunday of each month, those cans are set out. You are encouraged to drop your change in- although we WILL accept "folding money"! And that change goes toward helping fund a ministry within the church.

This month (January 9th), the Connection Coin offering will go toward an awesome ministry! The HyVee Bread Ministry touches so many in our congregation and beyond. Bill, our bread delivery man, does this as a mission, asking for nothing in return. We help with the fuel expenses of this valuable ministry, giving him \$15 a week for gas. So, 100% of the money that is collected in the cans on the 9th of January will be used to help fund this valuable Ministry. What a GREAT way to help connect people to Jesus Christ. So, remember to bring your change on Sunday, January 9th.





## The Nursery kids decorated!!



## EPIPHANY

January 2<sup>nd</sup> is Epiphany (Greek for “appearance or manifestation”), also known as the 12<sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas or Three Kings Day. Epiphany is a Christian feast which celebrates the revelation of God to mankind in the person of Jesus Christ. According to various traditions, it recognizes both the coming of the Wise Men to Jesus and the baptism of Jesus- both revelations of God in their own way.

WISE MEN +  
STILL SEEK  
HIM



Thank  
You

## To Everyone Who Helped Make the 2021 Christmas Baskets Possible

I truly appreciate anyone who donated money, wrote loving Christmas cards, obtained and unloaded Riverbend and Mercer Market groceries, baked home-made cookies, organized the supplies, put together the Cheer Plates and Food Baskets, and, of course, delivered them!

We shared our AUMC love with 41 people by providing Cheer Plates of fruit and cookies and gave 20 families large Food Boxes of groceries and a ham.

Thank you, *Ruth Dulaney*

## Connecting with the Word

Epiphany celebrates the arrival of magi from the East who came to pay homage to the newborn king of Israel. Epiphany is also a celebration of light because those same magi found Jesus because they followed the light of a star. In turn, they paid homage to the One who is the Light of the World.

Epiphany also marks the beginning of 2022 as Epiphany Sunday is January 2. Scriptures include Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72; Ephesians 3:1-12; and Matthew 2:1-12.

Baptism of the Lord Sunday follows on January 9. Scriptures include Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; and Luke 3:15-17, 21-22.

On Monday, January 17, our nation will pause to remember a preacher of the gospel who helped transform our society for the better. That preacher, of course, is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scriptures for that Sunday include Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; and John 2:1-11.

Scriptures for Sunday, January 23 include Nehemiah 8:1-10, Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; and Luke 4:14-21.

We wrap up the month with a fifth Sunday. Scriptures for Sunday, January 30 include Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71; 1 Corinthians 13; and Luke 4:21-30.

Connecting People to Christ with you,

*Pastor Dave*

## With Deepest Appreciation

Thank you, friends, for your many cards, prayers, and well wishes throughout December as Candice and I not only celebrated Christmas, but I also celebrated my birthday. I may be getting older, but your prayers are keeping me young!

Blessings,

*Pastor Dave*


**PRAYER WALK  
THROUGH THE  
CHURCH  
EVERY  
SUNDAY  
MORNING  
AT 7AM.**

**Need a ride to church?**  
Contact the office at 309-582-2169 to make arrangements to be picked up.



**OUR USUAL  
WORSHIP TIMES:**  
  
Sundays  
8AM,  
9:15AM,  
10:30AM

**United Methodist Men Meeting**



The UM Men will meet Monday, January 17th at 6PM. A meal will be served, there will be a short business meeting and lots of fellowship. Invite a friend to join you!

**Sponsors for our January Radio Broadcasts**

**January 2**

**January 9**                      We have no sponsors at this point for the radio broadcast in January. If it is not sponsored, it will be paid for from the General Fund. If you would like to sponsor a broadcast, let the office know.

**January 16**

**January 23**                    We need to know by Tuesday to have it announced on Sunday.

**January 30**

**End Of Year Giving**

**The office will be accepting 2021 giving until January 10th. Please clearly mark your offering as 2021 Giving, or it will be credited for 2022.**

**FINANCIAL MATTERS**  
(WEEKLY NEED \$6,993.29)

Date	12/05/2021	12/12/2021	12/19/2021	12/26/2021
Attendance	204	369	145	NA
Receipts (Toward Budget)	\$8,224.00	\$7,334.00	\$3,162.00	NA

