

The Parish Visitor



December 2018

Visit us at myaledoumc.com

The State of the Church Address

by Rev. Mark

It has been QUITE a year! 2018 began with a time of prayer and fasting. That culminated in the 24-Hour Prayer Vigil. That Sunday, we celebrated Commitment Sunday- the day we had the opportunity to make our financial pledge for the year. Confirmation class started in February with young people spending Sunday afternoon deepening their faith!

The Easter season started with our Fat Tuesday on Ash Wednesday pancake dinner followed by the Ash Wednesday worship service. Then, on March 18, we celebrated Confirmation Sunday, baptizing students and bringing them into membership. Easter was celebrated on Sunday, April 1. Between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, nearly 1,200 folks worshiped with us!

April included The Journey Women's Event- a massive success. The rest of the second quarter saw the Survivor's Dinner and the Relay For Life event, among other things. Rhubarb Fest broke every record we had regarding number of meals served, number of pies sold and amount of money raised.

The third quarter saw the second anniversary of one of the most ambitious things a church can do- a third Sunday morning worship service. The Rock & Worship service has CLEARLY found an "audience" and averages just about 80 folks/week in attendance. Earlier in the 3rd Quarter, we had a building full of people as we held Vacation Bible School!

The fourth quarter has seen more amazing things. Wednesday Night Fellowship growing and strengthening. A record-breaking Trunk or Treat. An awesome year of Operation Christmas Child Shoebox collection. An incredible Follow the Star Holiday Bazaar. As of this writing, with December still to go, we have brought in SEVERAL new members and performed SEVERAL baptisms. More than 50% of the United Methodist churches in this country will bring in NO new members this year! We will end the year with a weekly average worship attendance of about 285 and a weekly average Christian Education attendance of 125. Both of those numbers are AMAZING!

AND... there was the continuation of our Funding Our Faith Capital Campaign. After years of conversation and planning and months of dedicated HARD work, It finally happened. We continue to focus on pledging to support the plan and get construction on Phase Three started as soon as possible.

This was just a partial list of all the things we did this year. I could fill this entire newsletter with the ministries this church offered this year. We are doing more and more things that connect people to Jesus Christ. And that means that more and more people are stepping up in powerful ways to help make that happen. Thank you for that!

The truth is that, as a church grows, one of two things will happen: they will either continue to adjust to handle the growth or they will contract back to what they can handle. We have experienced both realities in our 22 years of ministry and I simply don't have a gear for a church to pull back from doing God's work.

That means we have some stretching to do. The 2019 budget features a modest 2.84% increase over 2018. That represents one of the smallest increases we've had in a few years. But coupled with the Capital Campaign, we have an "uphill battle" ahead of us. But I know that, with God's help, it's a hill we can climb...and crest! I invite you to pray about the future of our church. Challenging days are ahead. And yet, we stand on the threshold of even more amazing things. And I, for one, can't WAIT to see what God has in store for us! It is truly an honor to be your pastor!

SPECIAL DATES:

- Dec 2 Communion & Food Pantry Sunday
- Dec 2 Children's Christmas Pageant 10:30AM
- Dec 4 UMW Fellowship Christmas Baskets 5:30PM
- Dec 6 UMW Exec meeting 4:15PM
- Dec 6 Holiday Bazaar Follow-up Meeting 5:30PM
- Dev 7 Holly Days Electric Light Parade & Live Nativity 5:30PM
- Dec 9 Chancel Choir Christmas Cantata 8AM, 10:30AM, and 6PM
- Dec 9 United Methodist Men Sponsored Lasagna Luncheon 11:45AM
- Dec 13 Caring Hearts Food Prep 9AM
- Dec 16 CIA Luncheon 11:30AM
- Dec 16 All-Church Caroling 2PM
- Dec 16 Trustees Meeting 6PM
- Dec 16 Finance Meeting 6:45PM
- Dec 17 United Methodist Men Meeting 6PM
- Dec 18 Parish Visitor Deadline 8AM
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve Services 7PM and 11PM
- Dec 24 & 25 Office Closed for Christmas

THE CHRISTMAS CANTATA

Not once, not twice but THREE times on Sunday, December 9th, our Chancel Choir will present their Christmas Cantata- **Jesus: the Advent of the Messiah**. Celebrate His arrival and worship the Holy Child with this exciting musical for choir, soloist(s), and two narrators. A collaborative work by Mary McDonald and Rose Aspinall, "Jesus!" glorifies the Son of the Most High with both familiar melodies and new songs of praise. And whether sung with Ed Hogan's moving orchestration or with piano alone, it will take your Christmas experience beyond the manger as congregations and performers will learn anew the story of the birth of our Savior, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus. **At 8AM, 10:30AM and 6PM, they will lift their voices as they use their gifts to sing praise to God. The 9:15 Rock and Worship service will happen as always.** Here's a marvelous idea- attend one of the morning services to enjoy this beautiful cantata. Then, come back at 6PM and bring someone with you who wouldn't otherwise come. It is a safe, low-risk opportunity to invite someone to come to church with you!

ALL-CHURCH LUNCHEON

On Sunday, December 9th at 11:45AM, the United Methodist Men are hosting their annual All-Church Christmas Luncheon. GREAT food will be offered- and ALL are welcome! Please come for the Christmas Cantata and then stay for a great lunch and great fellowship! What a GREAT way to get into the holiday spirit!

ALL-CHURCH CHRISTMAS CAROLING

On Sunday, Dec. 16th at 2PM, we will have our annual All-Church Christmas Caroling event. Every year, we gather at the church and head out to spread a bit of Christmas cheer to folks in our church who are no longer able to make it on Sundays. We will carpool to Brookstone, Genesis Senior Living and Aledo Rehab. Mark your calendar and plan on being a part of this great event! This is a wonderfully simple, inexpensive way to let other people see the love of Christ through you at Christmas. Join us as we carol for Christ!

AN OUTREACH IDEA

Here's a low-risk, easy way to introduce others to faith- share Rev. Mark's website with them. Described as "a daily look at life as a shaved-headed, earring-wearing, rock-drumming United Methodist minister", www.stickwithjesus.com features a "thought for the day", written by Rev. Mark- a new one is literally added daily! There is also a daily Bible verse AND a Prayer Request page, where you can (anonymously if you want) ask for prayer! Check it out- if you would like to subscribe and receive a daily email link, email Rev. Mark at revmark@myaledoumc.com and let him know.



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

On Sunday, December 2nd at the 10:30AM worship service, the children of our congregation will present their annual Christmas Program. Featuring costumed angels, shepherds, wise men, animals and the Holy Family, this program will be interactive- the congregation will "sing through" the presentation as we lift up the classic carols of the season. Plan on having YOUR child or grandchild at the church at 9:15AM that day to participate. Also, plan on coming AND bringing someone with you to experience this wonderful event!

HOLLY DAYS/FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS PARADE

Surely you have attended Aledo's Holly Days and the Festival of Lights Parade that kick off the holiday season in town? Well...now you have a chance to be IN it! On Friday, December 7th, we will be participating in two separate yet connected ministries associated with the event.

From 5PM-6:30PM, we will feature a live Nativity uptown. Complete with costumed actors representing the characters from the first Christmas, a group of carolers singing Christmas songs and...**BRAND NEW COSTUMES**, thanks to Martha Rittenhouse and her Sewing Team, this is a **GREAT** way for us to reach out to the community. At 5:30PM, we will also be hosting an entry in the parade. Our church bus will be decorated with lights. Up to 14 people are invited to ride on the bus and wave at those in attendance!

If you would like to be a part of either of these fun activities, contact the church office or watch for sign-up sheets in worship to get your name on the list! Let them know if you want to be in the Nativity...or the bus!

JANUARY- A SEASON OF PRAYER AND FASTING

A great thing will happen in January! On Sunday, January 6th, we will begin a 2-week period of prayer and fasting. Everybody in the church will be encouraged to participate as God leads you.

That time of prayer and fasting will be brought to a close in a powerful way. From 5PM, Friday January 11th through 5PM Saturday, January 12th, we will host our 6th annual 24-Hour Prayer Vigil. You will be given the opportunity to sign up to lead and/or attend one or more hours of prayer. The hours will rotate back and forth between the sanctuary and the chapel. Communion will be available each hour.

Then, on Sunday, January 13th, we will celebrate Commitment Sunday. Late this month, each household will receive a packet about committing our time, talent and tithes to God. And on Commitment Sunday, at all three services, we will all have the opportunity to bring our Commitment Card and place it on the altar. Please keep this powerful and important time in the life of our congregation in your prayers!

CURRENT/NEW SERMON SERIES

by Rev. Mark

Our Christmas season sermon series will be **Silent Night, Holy Night**. This year marks the 200th anniversary of the beloved hymn that has become a bedrock of the Christmas season. We will spend the weeks leading up to Christmas looking at this hymn and how its words impact our holiday season! The weeks of the series look like this:

Sunday, December 2- All is Calm, All is Bright (Luke 2:1-5)

The stage is set.

Sunday, December 9- Shepherds Quake at the Sight (Luke 2:8-12)

The Word goes out

Sunday, December 16- Son of God, Love's Pure Light (John 1:1-5)

Her is is Emmanuel- God with us.

Sunday, December 23- Wondrous Star, Lend Thy Light (Matthew 2:1-12)

A star lights the way

Monday, December 24- Christ the Savior is Born (Luke 2:6-7)

The Word becomes flesh.



All-Church Christmas Baskets & Cheer Plates



Sponsored by Caring Hearts and Visitation Teams

We will be making Cheer Baskets and Plates again this year for those in need of some Christmas Cheer on December 12th at 6:00 PM after Wednesday Fellowship Meal.

You can help by supplying:

- **Monetary Donations (to buy meat and sides for baskets)**

Leave money in church office by Wed. Dec. 12th OR Offering plate - Marked "Baskets" -OR at Donation Board

- **Homemade Cookies**
- **Apples, Oranges, Grapes, Cuties** [Sign up on Donation Board in Café]
- **Homemade Sweet Breads**

You can share Christ's by DELIVERING Cheer Plates December 13th – 14th 1 PM or 5 PM

Connection Coins For December

The Connection Coins (or as Rev. Mark calls them, the "thinly-veiled Pringles cans"!) are doing great things in the life of the Aledo UMC! On the 2nd Sunday of each month, during the Children's Moment, the ushers pass around those cans. 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 (December 10th), the Connection Coin offering will go toward an awesome ministry— our Helping Hand Fund. This fund has a very specific reason for being— to help folks who are in need. Over the years, it has provided gas money for people to get to work or the doctor, helped pay an electric bill or a rent payment, and helped get food in someone's refrigerator.... to just name a few. It is an anonymous fund— no one but Rev Mark knows who receives help. 100% of the money that you put in the cans that day will go toward helping this ministry continue to reach more people in the name of God! What a GREAT way to help connect people to Christ. So bring your change on December 10th!



NEW/CURRENT BIBLE STUDIES

Grace: More Than We Deserve, Greater Than We can Imagine

WHAT: Mike Millar's current Tuesday morning Bible Study

WHEN: Tuesdays @ 9AM

WHERE: In the Fellowship Cafe'

WHY: Have you been changed by grace? Shaped by grace? Strengthened by grace? Emboldened by grace? Softened by grace? Snatched by the nape of your neck and shaken to your senses by grace? Grace is the voice that calls us to change and then gives us the power to pull it off. Let's make certain grace gets you.

WHAT ELSE: A new study will begin on January 8th.

Ten Men of the Bible: How God Used Imperfect People to Change the World

WHAT: Current Wednesday morning MEN'S Bible Study with Gary Heard

WHEN: Wednesdays @ 6:30AM (Coffee, breakfast pizza AND donuts EVERY week!)

WHERE: In the Fellowship Cafe' next to the sanctuary

WHY: The men of the Bible aren't depicted there because they were perfect, but to highlight their faithfulness to God! In this 10-session study guide, Max Lucado looks at the stories of some of these Scriptural characters, pointing out key decisions they made - and the good or bad consequences that resulted. Each session includes discussion questions.

WHAT ELSE: This study is concluding soon. Watch for info on the new upcoming study!

Max Lucado's Unshakable Hope: Building Our Lives on the Promises of God

WHAT: Current Wednesday Evening Bible Study with Tim Hay

WHEN: Wednesdays at 6PM

WHERE: In the Fellowship Café, next to the Sanctuary

WHY: What feels shaky in your world? Are you overwhelmed by the problems you're facing or the pain you're feeling? Maybe you feel hurt by the past. Disappointed by the present. Worried about the future. If so, you are not alone, but there is hope. You can live with security and purpose.

WHAT ELSE: The books are \$10

UMW FELLOWSHIP CHRISTMAS BASKETS

UMW Fellowship will be having our annual Christmas Basket event on Tuesday, December 4th at 5:30. We will wrap gifts and put together baskets for families in need. We invite all women of AUMC to participate. There will be a light meal provided. We ask for donations of toiletry/hygiene items and laundry detergent/fabric softener. Donations of Christmas wrap and bows are appreciated as well. Please come and enjoy a night of fun and fellowship and help brighten Christmas for these families.



Do you want to take some food to a friend who is ill or in need? Our Caring Hearts freezer, in a new location by the elevator doors in the basement, has a variety of soups, casseroles, fruit, and desserts. *A group of dedicated ladies prepare the delicious homemade food twice a month for anyone who is in need of cheer.*

Please help yourself!

Dear Church family,

I thank you for the recognition for being the busman. I have to say I'm not in this alone. First, it was an idea that came to me and without all of you it could not have happened. Also, I have to thank all the other people who help on the bus and drive the bus. Adam is always there to help, Hal is my co-driver, and Dwight is always there when I need him. He also drives for special events anytime he is asked. Hal and Dwight even drive the youth group to the cities for different events. That in itself is above and beyond, not that kids are bad, but they can be loud, they're kids. Also, George Korn and Johnnie McCrae are always ready to help me when I need them.

My other co-driver I had was Gary Olson. He helped me even going thru cancer treatment. There were days when I could see him struggling to get up the steps, but all he could say was "It's all good". So please thank them when you see them. And thank you again!

Greg Cobert

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School is off to a great start! Sunday School is held from 9:15 am – 10:15 am and includes the following groups:

Grades K-1	Grow, Proclaim and Serve
Grades 2-3	Grow, Proclaim and Serve
Grades 4-5-6	Undercover Heroes of the Bible
Grades 7-8	Adam Hamilton's Unafraid
Grades 9-12	Adam Hamilton's Unafraid

Join us Sunday mornings!



AUMC LIBRARY NEWS

There are currently three new books to choose from in the Church library. #1- "What Prayer Can Do for You" is a group of 40+ true stories compiled by Guidepost editors. The book reveals, through Scripture and even science, amazing real-life stories of the power of prayer to transform our lives and the world. #2- "Wrestling with Wonder" is a journey through the life of Mary, Mother of Jesus, from the time of Jesus' birth to her kneeling at the base of the cross at his death. #3- "Waiting for Wonder" examines the life of Sarah, who knew what it means to wait. Discover God through disappointment, doubt, detours, and the "not yet" places of life. Give these books a try!



Special Observances in December

Bet you didn't know that December is Hi Neighbor Month! What about Read a New Book Month? Safe Toy Month? Write to a Friend Month? Bingo Month? In addition, here are some special days in December: The 1st- Eat a Red Apple Day, the 2nd- National Fritters Day, the 3rd- Roof over Your Head Day, the 4th- Wear Brown Shoes Day, the 5th- Bathtub Party Day, the 6th- Put on your own Shoes Day, the 7th- Pearl Harbor Day, the 8th- Brownie Day, the 9th- Pastry Day, the 10th- Human Rights Day, the 11th- Noodle Ring Day, the 12th- Ding-a-Ling Day, the 13th- Violin Day, the 14th- Bouillabaisse Day, the 15th- Lemon Cupcake Day, the 16th- Go Caroling Day (see accompanying article), the 17th- Maple Syrup Day, the 18th- Bake Cookies Day, the 19th- Look for an Evergreen Day, the 20th- Chocolate Covered Anything Day, the 21st- Look on the Bright Side Day, the 22nd- Date Nut Bread Day, the 23rd- Festivus (for the rest of us!) Day, the 24th- Egg Nog Day, the 25th- The Birthday of Christ, the 26th- Boxing Day, the 27th- Make Cut-Out Snowflakes Day, the 28th- Card Playing Day, the 29th- Pepper Pot Day, the 30st- National Bicarbonate of Soda Day, the 31st- New Year's Eve (see accompanying article)

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

12/02/1972– Neil & Pamela Truman
 12/07/1991– Tim & Jennifer Thompson
 12/22/1973– Charles & Connie Alexander
 12/23/1954– Earl & Barbara Etheridge
 12/31/1949– Charles & Ella Luallen



UM Women Golden Age Birthdays

12/07– Renee Forber
 12/07– Marge Lloyd
 12/08– Verla Thompson
 12/18– Rita Haizlip



The deadline for the next
 Parish Visitor is
Tuesday, December 18th @ 8am.
 Please have all articles submitted
 by this date!

THOSE WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

Betty Allan	Paul Fuchs	Allison Kuk/remission	Tedia/healing
Sandy Anderson/health	Gail/chemo & radiation	Jon Lee/cancer	Joe Thibedoux/lymphoma
Sharon Andress	Gavin/healing	Kelly Mack/cancer	Neil Truman/healing
Ella Mae Baker/health	Bill Glenn	Carol McAtee/health	Pam Truman/health
Bentley/6yrs/cancer	Rodney Glidden/lung cancer	Henry Leichty/9 yrs old/ health	Nena Visser/health
Bob Bocox/cancer	Angel Goben/health	Mary Louck	Arlene Walthall/heart
Brian Boenkamp/coma	Rita Haizlip	Barb Manthe	Chris Waters
Holden C/heart	Mary Hall & family/loss/ health	Eric Matich/6yrs/leukemia	Rebecca Weihler/brain tumor
Carol	Susie Hall/breast cancer	Tyler Mattson/decisions	Gage Welch
Robin Ciccotelli/chemo	Rev Mark and family	Carol McAtee/health	John Young
Julia Cirks/cancer	Michael Harris	Penny Meskan	Dick Zimmerman
Tricia/Rory Conway/Lymes	Gary Heard/healing	Violet Meskan/Lyme disease	Eric Zimmerman family
Hurley Crossman/cancer	Pam Heath	Mary Millar family	Shut-ins/Nursing Home residents
Brian Day/leukemia	Sheryl Hodges	Mike Newsom	Military & families
Jim & Dee Dellitt	Parker Hopkins/2yrs/cancer	Joel Noe/health	All ill/in hospitals
Stacey DeSpain/6yrs/health	Darrell Jackson	Bev Palmer/health	Our world leaders
Jim Droste	Janet Jenson/cancer	Ember Pappas/cancer	Those suffering depression/substance abuse
Lauren Eggen/cancer	Carol John	Connie Parkinson	Hurricane Victims
Ruth Engle	Debbie Jones/heart	Patrick/surgery	California Fire Victims
Chris Engstrom	Terry Jones/cancer	Maddie Perry/cancer	
Soni Engstrom	John Karwath/cancer	Angela Rebello/cancer	
Evelyn/1yr old/cancer	Annabell Kell/healing	Elizabeth Schroeder	
Bob Fausett/heart	Aubrey King/cancer	Ann Sedam	
Janifer Franks family	Chad King/brain tumor	Rich Stirn	
Carol Freeman/cancer	Martha King/heart	Bryce Rathje	
CJ Friedel	Danny Kistler	Dick & Martha Rittenhouse	
John Frost family			

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

Youth & Children's Page

CHECK OUT THESE FORGE ACTIVITIES:

Operation Christmas Child

Members of the Forge collected items to be put in the Operation Christmas Child boxes and on November 4, we packed 47 boxes and sent them on their way around the world. Everyone had fun packing the boxes and sharing fellowship. A big shout out to our adult volunteers: Scott Spencer, Joan Reynolds, Denise Patterson, Laura Patterson and Nicole Taylor. Thank you all for your donations and for helping us help others!

Gratitude Pumpkins

During our meeting on November 11, we shared our gratitude by decorating pumpkins with all of the things for which we are grateful. Thank you Bill and Molly Joseph for providing us with pumpkins!

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU!

During this holiday time of year, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas! Thank you for all of the many ways you help me and the youth and children in this congregation every week. Thank you Sunday School teachers, nursery workers, Forge volunteers, Study Hour tutors, Power Pack donors and volunteers, FUEL and Bible study teachers, and all of you who help us to grow in Jesus Christ! May you be blessed this holiday season with love and peace, and may those blessings continue into the new year!

Thank you and Merry Christmas,
Kathleen



SERVICE HOURS

Do you, or someone you know, need service hours? Opportunities for service hours exist through participation in the Forge service projects. See Kathleen and get signed up for service hours!

WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP

We continue our youth programming during Wednesday Night Fellowship with FUEL and Bible study. Join us Wednesdays and enjoy a meal with your church family, then attend one of the following groups:

Grades K-1 Super Bible Games and Kids' Travel Guide to the 10 Commandments
Grades 2-3 Super Bible Games and Kids' Travel Guide to the 10 Commandments
Grades 4-5-6 Super Bible Games and Kids' Travel Guide to the 10 Commandments
Grades 7-8 Wild Truth Bible Lessons
Grades 9-12 **New Study!** Inside Out, a Merge study

Join us!

FORGE COMING EVENTS:

Sunday, December 9, 6 pm - Aledo United Methodist Church Christmas Cantata

Sunday, December 16, 2-4 pm - Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 16, 4 pm - Forge Christmas Party (grades 6-8)

Sunday, December 16, 6:15 pm - Forge Christmas Party (grades 9-12)



THE FORGE

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." --- Proverbs 27:17

Enter The Forge and burnish yourself into the living Christ! Burn away the old as you grow into the new at The Forge! That's right! You do not want to miss this exciting teen opportunity for fellowship on Sundays!

Schedule:

4 pm – 5:15 pm The Forge (grades 6-8)
5:15 pm – 6:15 pm Study Hour (a quiet place to study or get homework help)
6:15 pm – 7:30 pm The Forge (grades 9-12)

CHRISTMAS SEASON WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Advent, the time of waiting that leads to Christmas Day, officially begins on Sunday, December 7th this year. Here are all of the special Christmas opportunities that will be offered during December:

Sunday, December 2- The 1st Sunday of the Christmas season

The church will be decorated and the first Advent Candle- symbolic of the season of Christmas- will be lit at all 3 morning worship services- 8AM, 9:15AM & 10:30AM. At the 8AM and 9:15AM worship services, we will focus on **All is Calm, All is Bright** as we begin our new sermon series **Silent Night, Holy Night**. Communion will be offered at all 3 services. At the 10:30AM service, the children of the congregation will bring the message for the day as they present their annual Nativity play.

Friday, December 7, 5:30PM- The Aledo Main Street Electric Parade/Live Nativity

Our church will once again offer a live Nativity uptown AND have our bus driving in the parade!

Sunday, December 9- The 2nd Sunday of the Christmas season

The second Advent Candle will be lit at all 3 worship services. At 8AM, 10:30AM and 6PM, our choir will present their Christmas Cantata- **Jesus: the Advent of the Messiah**. Celebrate His arrival and worship the Holy Child with this exciting musical for choir, soloist(s), and two narrators. A collaborative work by Mary McDonald and Rose Aspinall, "Jesus!" glorifies the Son of the Most High with both familiar melodies and new songs of praise. And whether sung with Ed Hogan's moving orchestration or with piano alone, it will take your Christmas experience beyond the manger as congregations and performers will learn anew the story of the birth of our Savior, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus. At the 9:15AM worship service, we will focus on Shepherds Quake at the Sight as we continue to walk through **Silent Night, Holy Night**. Communion will be offered at 9:15AM. A Luncheon, sponsored by our United Methodist Men, will be offered at 11:45AM.

Sunday, December 16- The 3rd Sunday of the Christmas season

The third Advent Candle will be lit at all 3 worship services. We will focus on **Son of God, Love's Pure Light** as we continue to walk through **Silent Night, Holy Night**. Communion will be offered at 9:15AM. **At 2PM, we will have our annual All-Church Christmas Caroling event.**

Sunday, December 23- The 4th Sunday of the Christmas season

The fourth Advent Candle will be lit at all 3 morning worship services. We will focus on **Wondrous Star, Lend Thy Light** as we continue to walk through **Silent Night, Holy Night**. Communion will be offered at 9:15AM.

Monday, December 24- Christmas Eve

That evening, we will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with 2 very special Candlelight Services.

At 7PM, we will light the Christ candle and sing LOTS of great Christmas carols!

At 11PM, BOTH the Chancel and Bell Choirs will share their marvelous gifts with us. In addition, we will light the Christ candle and sing LOTS of great Christmas carols! Both services will end with a candle-light singing of "Silent Night". Communion will be offered at both evening services.

Christmas Eve is truly a night that changed the world. Please take an hour out of your holiday schedule to join your church family in celebrating the arrival of a baby in a manger who offers us grace, hope, peace, and love! Come to worship throughout the Christmas season, expecting God to show up in and touch your life in powerful ways!

May God Bless Us, Everyone! (A Thank You from Operation Christmas Child)

Once again, your love and generosity has shown as bright as the noon-day sun. No, we did not quite make the stated goal of 260 boxes, but **236** boxes is no small feat. In fact, it is the second highest total this congregation has ever achieved. We knew that during a time when there is so much competition for your hard-earned dollar, that this mission might have been impacted. Instead, you have proven once again that God's love has no limits.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this mission in some way. Whether you donated boxes, items, or money...thank you. If you assembled, packed, and delivered boxes...thank you. We extend a special thanks to Laura Patterson, Denise Patterson, Kathleen Bashem and the members of the Forge whose hard work and loving dedication helped to make this year's mission a success. We would also like to thank the United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, Missions Team, and Endowment Committee for their gracious monetary donations. It truly takes the entire congregation to make this mission a success.

If you will now pray that these boxes reach their final destination, (a child's eager and loving arms)...thank you, thank you, and thank you! It is easy to feel this mission is complete once the boxes leave the church. The truth is the mission now just goes to the next level. There are many hurdles that these boxes must clear on the way to their final destination, but when they do, these boxes have the potential to change the lives of the children who receive them...as well as their families, and their communities...and that's no "humbug".

May you all have a blessed Christmas and "thank you" once again for making a difference in the lives of children around the world.

The Operation Christmas Child Committee



Wednesday Night Fellowship December Schedule

Wednesday Night Fellowship is going GREAT! Offered every Wednesday night throughout the school year, the evening begins with dinner at 5:15PM, with FUEL Children's Ministries (for kids Pre-School through 6th Grade), a Youth Bible study (for grades 7th through 12th), an Adult Bible Study (see accompanying article) and Bell Choir rehearsal from 6:PM-7PM. The Chancel Choir rehearses from 7PM-8PM. The nursery is also available. In December, Wednesday Night dinner and ministries will be offered on December 5, 12, and 19. We will then be on "vacation" for the rest of the month. Starting back up on Wednesday, January 10. Pray about your commitment to Wednesday Night ministries. If you or your group would be willing to provide a Wednesday Night Fellowship meal, please contact Ruth Dulaney (309-738-6151 or ruth-dulaney@gmail.com) We would love to have you for dinner...and more!



THANK YOU!

The Power Pack Ministry gratefully acknowledges all who continue to contribute to this ministry. We could not run this program without your generous donations. Thank you!



Wednesday Night Fellowship December 2018 Meals

Come join us for FREE homemade meals on Wednesdays at 5:15 PM.

- December 5th Chicken and Noodles, Mashed Potatoes, Veggies, Jello Salads,
Desserts - *WNF Volunteer Group*
- December 12th Sloppy Joes and Sides – *Fans in the Stands*
- December 19th End of Season Potluck – Christmas Ham and Sweet Potatoes provided
If your last name starts with A – C, please bring a vegetable salad
If your last name starts with D – H, please bring a fruit salad
If your last name starts with I – R, please bring a dessert
If your last name starts with S – Z, please bring a vegetable casserole.
- December 26th No WNF – Christmas Break

Enjoy the food and fellowship!

CHURCH WEBSITE

Have you looked at your church's website? If not, go to www.myaledoumc.com and see what's going on! Not only can you see the "basics" about the Aledo United Methodist Church, you can find the most church current calendar. Also, the monthly newsletter can be found on our website. Stop by and check it out!

FOLLOW THE STAR HOLIDAY

BAZAAR THANK YOU

A HUGE thank you to all who prepared food, donated money, made craft items, provided nativities, set up or cleaned up areas, and served in any way at the Follow the Star Holiday Bazaar. We connected hundreds to Jesus Christ through our love and fellowship. All are invited to attend our follow-up meeting December 6th at 5:30 PM to review areas for improvements and determine how to distribute our profits to local missions. A complete summary of the Holiday Bazaar activities will be reported in the January Parish Visitor.

Heartfelt 
THANKS
TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!



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

Need a ride to church?

Contact Greg Cobert at 309-737-5621, or the office at 309-582-2169 to make arrangements to be picked up.



**WORSHIP
TIMES:
Sundays 8AM,
9:15AM,
10:30AM
Sunday School
9:15AM**

DID YOU MISS SUNDAY'S SERMON?

If you miss church on Sunday, you can STILL experience the sermon. You can go to the church's Facebook page OR the church website to watch a video of any sermon you missed. You can also go to www.stickwithjesus.com and choose "read my blog" to read a transcript of the sermon! If you would like to subscribe and receive a daily email link, email Rev. Mark at revmark@stickwithjesus.com. Please share these links with your friends and family.

ONLINE GIVING

by Rev. Mark

More and more of you are now making your weekly/monthly/yearly offering to your church online! If you go to the home page of the church website (www.myaledoumc.com) and choose "giving" from the Navigation Bar near the top, it will take you to a page that will provide the opportunity for you to give electronically. You can either do a one-time gift or a recurring monthly gift.

"Pastor, why would that be good for the church?" Thanks for asking! It's SO easy to forget your checkbook at home one week. It's also so easy to forget to give your offering when you are out of town. But the truth of the matter is that the financial commitments of the church...the bills, if you will...don't decrease on those weeks when people forget to tithe. Our financial commitments are steady all year long. Therefore, having a steady, dependable stream of giving helps us better plan for next week, next month and next year!

In addition to setting it up through our website, MANY banks now offer online "bill pay". With that service you can set up your church giving for whenever and however much you want it to be. Either way, it's simple, easy and dependable. Won't you consider electronic giving?

FINANCIAL MATTERS

(WEEKLY NEED \$6,689)



Date	11/04/2018	11/11/2018	11/18/2018	11/25/2018
Attendance	300	263	272	205
Receipts (Toward Budget)	\$9,652.00	\$3,705.00	\$6,497.79	\$2,593.00