

The Parish Visitor



January 2024

Visit us at myaledoumc.com

Christmas Is Over. Now What?

I think it was the day after Halloween that Mix 96.1 FM began playing wall-to-wall Christmas music. By that time, Hallmark was already deep into his trove of Christmas movies. As a society, we were deep into Christmas for two months. But here are only so many bells we can jingle, and only so many trees we can rock around. So on December 26, we were kind of glad to tune into 96.1 and hear Taylor Swift sing about her love life. And as the *Golden Girls* reappeared on the Hallmark Channel, it hits you: Christmas is over. But now what? There's got to be more to the story than just taking down our Christmas tree.

That's where Epiphany comes in. This year Epiphany falls on Saturday, January 6, and it marks the arrival of Magi from the East. Their story is recorded in [Matthew 2:1-15](#). Despite what we've captured in our nativity crèches, the Magi never met the shepherds because the Magi probably arrived a year or more after the birth of Jesus. In Matthew's account, Jesus is referred to as a child, rather than a baby. He may have been as old as two.

The Magi find Jesus in a house, rather than a stable. Apparently, Mary and Joseph had settled down in Bethlehem. After all, Joseph would've been welcomed in Bethlehem because we know he had kinfolk there. And because he was a carpenter, his work could easily travel with him.

The story of the Magi, then, is an "after Christmas" story, so it can help us answer the "Now what?" question. There are many truths I could draw out of the story of the Magi, and many of those truths would answer that "now what" question. However, I would like to highlight just two challenge questions as we reflect on the year just past and stand on the brink of a new year.

The first challenge question is, **ARE YOU ON A JESUS JOURNEY?** This challenge is presented to us by the wise men. I find them to be incredibly interesting. We know that they came from the East, possibly Persia, and we knew that they were influenced by Jewish traditions and beliefs. They likely had some Jewish blood in them, thanks to the deportation of the Jews from Israel some 700 years earlier. In other words, I believe that the Magi had descended in part from the ten lost tribes of Israel.

(continued on page 2)

SPECIAL DATES:

- January 1 Office Closed for New Years Day
- January 4 Caring Hearts Food Prep 9AM
- January 7 Communion All Services
- January 9 Loving Hands Food Prep 1PM
- January 15 Office Closed for Martin Luther King Holiday
- January 15 United Methodist Men Meeting 6PM
- January 18 Caring Hearts Food Prep 1PM
- January 19 Parish Visitor Deadline 8AM
- January 20 Stamping Group 1-5PM
- January 21 Assemble Rice Meals 10:30AM and noon
- January 21 Trustees Meeting 6PM
- January 21 Finance meeting 6:45PM
- January 21 Administrative Council 7:30PM
- January 23 Loving Hands Food Prep 1PM

(continued from page 1)

We also know the Magi were stargazers who looked for meaning in the heavenlies. We also know that what they saw in the heavens was so subtle that virtually the entire world missed it. At least if anyone else saw it, they didn't act on it. But the wise men saw the star and did the only thing which they deemed appropriate. They packed for a Jesus Journey of perhaps 1,000 miles or more.

Where did your Jesus Journey take you in 2023? Did it take you to Milwaukee, as it did for nine youths who joined Evelyn and me for a mission trip? That was a journey of 240 miles; but a Jesus Journey doesn't have to be that long. Some Jesus Journeys will take you all the way across the street to share God's love with a lonely neighbor.

Where will your Jesus Journey take you in 2024? Will your Jesus Journey take you on a Walk to Emmaus or a half-day mission trip? Or will your Jesus Journey take you deep into the Word of God, or into your prayer closet, or into a Bible study?

The second challenge question is, **ARE YOU GIVING YOUR BEST TO JESUS?** Matthew tells us the Magi gave Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Admittedly, those are curious gifts for a toddler, but they are gifts fit for a king. Each gift symbolized a different aspect of Christ's future life and ministry. Gold represented his kingship, frankincense represented his priestly ministry, and myrrh, which was used in burial rites, looked ahead to Christ's sacrificial death.

No doubt those gifts were used to save the life of the child Jesus because Mary and Joseph almost certainly used them to finance their flight into Egypt to escape Herod's wrath.

The gifts of the Magi challenge us to ask ourselves, "Am I giving my best to Jesus?" That's a question that certainly includes our wealth, but it goes far beyond money. Part of the gift of the magi was the trip itself, including the time and ability it took for them to make the journey.

Am I giving Jesus the best of my time? The best of my talent? The best of my energy? Am I giving Jesus the best of my life? After all, Christmas reminds us that God gave his best for us.

Connecting People to Jesus Christ with you,

Pastor Dave

Luke 6:38, New Living Translation

³⁸ Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.

Sponsors for our January Radio Broadcasts

January 7- Carol Hess in memory of Ben Hess

January 14- Bill & Carolyn Pollock as a thank you to all volunteers
in 2023

January 21-Available

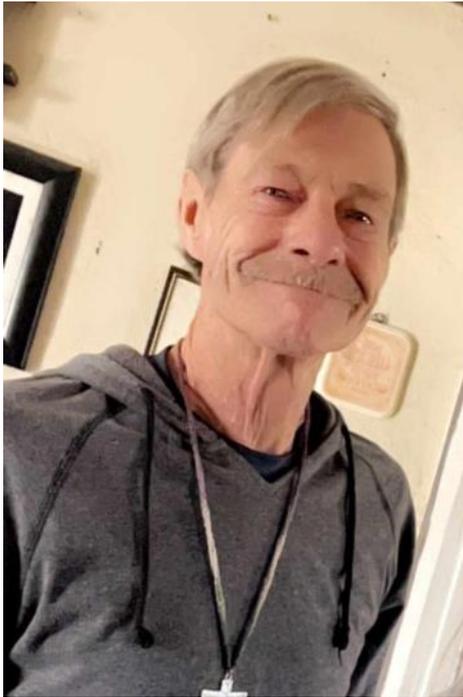
January 28- Available



JANUARY *EVANGELIST* OF THE MONTH

Scott Guyton

God's word calls us to "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have." 1 Peter 3:15.



We're mixing up our **Volunteer of the Month** program just a bit to honor our *Evangelist of the Month*, Scott Guyton. If you attend the 9:15 a.m. service on Sundays at AUMC, the first two rows of pews where the congregation sits are filled with family and friends who have seen the love of Christ through Scott and want to experience that love first hand. Scott shows that hope to his family and friends daily and he always has a smile on his face, a kind heart, and a positive, faith-filled attitude. And Scott is one of the reasons why our church is growing!

Scott's prayers help, too. Every day he walks or bikes past the church and when he does, he stops and prays by the cross that is located on the outside of our building. That is a powerful and private moment to all who have experienced it. Scott is always willing to share his love of God and his connection to AUMC.

Of course, Scott is a wonderful volunteer as well as an evangelist. He serves on our board of trustees and is always ready to share his gifts, time, and talents with our church and church family. Any project that has to do with flooring, Scott is willing to help. Scott has completed many tasks for the church, parsonage, and church members. His care and expertise make sure that each

flooring job is completed perfectly. You can also find Scott working in the kitchen of our church too. If there are dishes to be washed, Scott will be there. He is always willing to assist in what needs to be done and does it with a cheerful disposition.

One of the things that we are expected to do as a follower of Jesus Christ is to share the good news about Jesus and to live a life that is a witness to the world about how Christ has changed us. Scott Guyton certainly does that each day. We are so grateful that Scott is a member of our AUMC family!

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

Whether you're a volunteer or a "voluntold," you are special and you help Aledo UMC to fulfill its mission of connecting people to Jesus Christ. This is a time of year when individuals and organizations often reflect on the previous year. With that in mind, we give thanks to God for *all* our 2023 Volunteers of the Month:

January: Bill Glenn

February: Ruth Dulaney

March: Rick Newswander

April: The Chancel Choir

May: Mary Anderson

June: Paul Flint

July: Paula Nelson

August: Vacation Bible School Team

September: Bill Joseph

October: Amy Studer

November: Homecoming Float Team

December: Nicole Taylor

JANUARY IS OUTREACH MISSION MONTH

Our Mission Committee has designated January 2024 as Outreach Mission Month with three great projects. Join us in these activities as “We Connect People to Jesus Christ”!

RICE MEAL PACK IS BACK

Our church packed 500 Rice Meals for Midwest Mission Distribution Center on Feb. 19, 2023 and we are going to do it again on Sunday, Jan. 21, 2024. In order to involve the most people, we are having two different assembly times – 10:30am and 12:30pm. There will be a job for everyone -men, women, youth, standing and sitting. A signup sheet will be available in the Fellowship Café beginning January 7th. Our Rice Packs from our first event, along with those of 23 other Methodist churches were sent to Poland for distribution to Ukrainian refugees. Just ask anyone who helped in our first packing event – it was fun and very rewarding.



FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION

We have an opportunity to work together to support the Churches of Mercer County Food Pantry during January in this new year. Food items may be brought to AUMC throughout the month. Shopping lists will be provided that reflect specific needs. You may shop, donate from your own pantry, or give a cash donation. Checks may be made payable to “Churches of Mercer County Food Pantry”. The mission team will transport all donations to the food pantry as they are received. Live in the love of Christ! Share the love of Christ!

VASHTI OUTREACH

We will serve a Valentine Meal February 7th for Vashti Residents.

ALSO, WE SEND A MONTHLY LUNCH FOR HABITAT FOR HUMANITY WORKERS IN THE QUAD CITIES.

Youth News

- Youth Sunday School for grades 6-12 meets every Sunday at 10:30 in the youth lounge and is taught by John Taylor.
- Mark your calendars now for next year's mission trip, July 21-26, 2024. Details will be announced in January.

The Forge

- Forge is the youth ministry of Aledo UMC and is designed for youths grade 6 through 12. Friends are always welcome.
- Forge meets most Sunday evenings at 6 pm under the direction of Kaitlyn Marceleno.
- This month Forge will meet on Sunday, January 7, 14, 21, and 28. (We're meeting four times this month because we missed some meetings over the holidays).
- Extended Forge on January 14! We'll meet from 6 to 9:30 pm for our regular activities and fun plus a movie!

Confirmation

- AUMC is offering Confirmation classes using the *CoLABorate Methodist Confirmation* series. Pastor Dave is the teacher. Classes continue on Sunday, January 7 and 21 as we focus on "Methodist History & Doctrine" in an 18-session course. We begin with a light meal right after the 10:30 worship service. Confirmation then begins at noon and lasts until 1 pm.

Thank you!

I want to thank the church for the food that was brought to me as a Christmas gift. It was nice you thought of me.

Ruth Smock

Thank You!

Dear Church family,

Thank you for remembering us at Christmas. We are most grateful for you thinking of us and ALL the food.

Bud & Kay Laubach

Thank you!

Thanks to AUMC for the Cheer Basket. It's very much appreciated.

Connie Alexander

Thank You!

Thank you for the Christmas basket. It was much appreciated. Thanks to Ray & Betty Leng for delivering to me.

Kathy Haney

Thank you!

Thanks to Ruth and all of her elves for the wonderful food and goodie packages that we received. They were much appreciated. Thanks to all in our church & Merry Christmas.

*Amy Studer
Carole Korn*

Thank You!

Thank you so much for your donation to the Y. We served 212 meals in November! Because of your donation we can serve more meals to the youth of Mercer County.

Thank you!
Mercer County Family YMCA

Thank You!

Thanks so much to the church for my food basket.

Jane Williams

Thank You!

Thank you for the lovely tray of fruit, cookies, and other goodies. It is so good to be remembered and loved. God is good all the time. Merry Christmas to each one of you, and a prosperous New Year.

Darlene Jones

Thank You!

Many thanks for the food and cookie plate brought to me. It was very much appreciated and enjoyed. It is good to be remembered. God bless you all.

Barb Runyon

Thank you!

Thank you, Church family, for the treats I received. Thank you, Betty & Ray, for delivery.

Happy Holiday
Bill Ricketts

**Tuesday Morning Bible Study**

This September, our Tuesday morning Bible study launched a new study of the Book of Hebrews. Our primary resource will be Life Lessons from Hebrews by Max Lucado. Books are only \$10. Pastor Dave leads this 90-minute study every Tuesday morning beginning at 9am. You are welcome to join us for this faith-forming weekly event.

**Aledo UMC offers two
Bible Studies for Men**

- **Men's Bible Study of 1st & 2nd Thessalonians Wednesday Morning at 6:30AM .** Come for breakfast and a time of studying God's Word.
- **Saturday 8-9:15AM Men's Bible Study.** We are studying the Book of Acts.



**OUR USUAL
WORSHIP TIMES:**

Sundays
8AM Contemporary
9:15AM Rock & Worship
10:30AM Traditional

End Of Year Giving

The office will be accepting 2023 giving through the Church Office or through Vanco until January 8th. Please clearly mark your offering as 2023 Giving, or it will be credited for 2024.

I HAVE A DREAM

On Monday, January 15th, 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. 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 the teaching of Dr. King. Tell your kids or grandkids about him. His prayer should be our 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 character.

A huge thank you to all who helped prepare and deliver the 55 Holiday cheer plates and baskets!



The United Methodist Men meet on January 15th. There will be a meal, a short business meeting, and lots of fellowship. Join us, and bring a friend!



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

01/03/1998– Blair & Sara Blaser

01/30/1988– Randy & Jennifer Mattson



UM Women Golden Age Birthdays

01/01– Jeannine Kenney



The deadline for the next Parish Visitor is **Wednesday, January 19th at 8am.**
All articles must be submitted by this date!

THOSE WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

Alek and Luke
Alicia/healing
Jodie Andress/health
Family of Mary Etta Baxter
Bishop and Melissa Beard
Ayden Bennett/deployed
Davis Biddle/injuries
Bill Breeden/loss/health
Family of Debby Breeden
Joalice Bresson/health
Renae Brown/mental health
Bryan Breuer/liver transplant
Steve Brown/health
Bessie Bruce/health
Alice Cantwell/healing
Dawn Chapel
Betty Clark/healing
Brian Coe/health
Cody Comer/healing
Family of Vivian Couer
Charlie David/healing
Neil David/hospice
Connie Dellitt
Jim Droste/health
Brenda Dunn/loss
Family of Mark Dunn
Faith/chemo, radiation
Ruth Ann Farrier
Jayne Fitzsimmons/healing
Renee Forber/health
Don Franks/covid/cancer
Marie Fredrickson/InterVarsity
Ashlie Dellitt Fuller/health
Bobby Furr/health
Luella Giles/cancer
Terry Glenn/health

Gerri Harmon/hospice
Scott Guyton/health
Wendell Harroun's family
Andrew Hofer/FCA
Linda Hall/health
Tony Hanson/health
Family of Keith Harrison
Family of Wendell Harroun
Stan Hunt/health
Roger Kidoo/cancer
Marcia Kelly/health
Jim Kernan/cancer
Carole Korn
Family of George Korn
Family of Marge Lloyd
Mason's family
Family of Arlene Landis
Jaiden LaDue/recovery
Ella Luallen/loss
Laura McGinnis/health
Connie & Jessie Midkiff/health
Kirk Minter/cancer
Linda Morrow/health
Gena Nelson/health
Natalie Nelson/healing
Mike Newsom/healing
Pam O/heart surgery
Family of Sara Ott
Paul & family/addiction
Family of Molly Paulsgrove
Sharon Peterson/healing
John Pierce/health
Janice Pollock/cancer
Don Rice/cancer
Chrissy Riddell/cancer
Tad Robinson/cancer



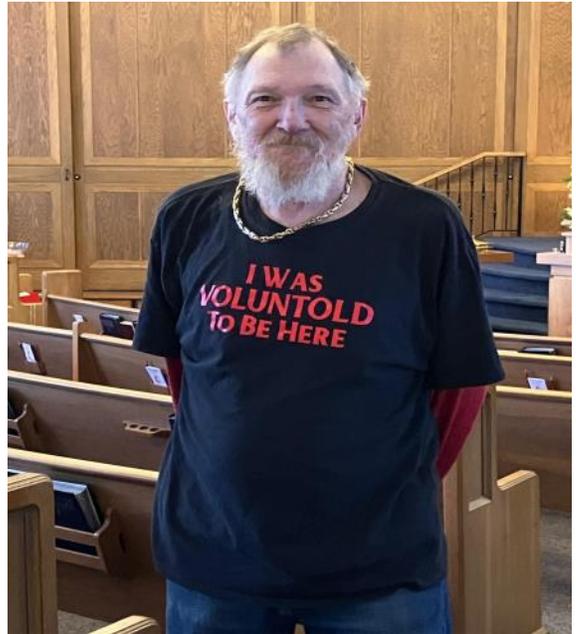
Family of Monte Sackville
Mike Schalk/brain cancer
Don Schroeder/health
Trevor Schroeder/RSV
Pastor Dave
Candice/ healing
Ted Short/cancer
Arlene Shotwell/hospice
Derek Schroeder/health
Jon Swanson/healing
Family of Roger Tharp
Connie Thomas
Dale, Debby, Ashley Thomas
Andy Vipond
Nena Visser/health
Kim Watkins and parents/health
Dick Zimmerman/health
Liz Zimmerman/health

Respect, Dignity, Equality
AUMC Family
Brookstone, nursing home and
Vashti residents
Maui, Russia, Ukraine, Syria,
World
The United Methodist Church
*Please pray for our church and
all of the committees*

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



**Madison Lake singing a solo
on Music Sunday**



**We love our volunteers
and voluntolds!**

Thank you

Whether it was a card, a prayer, or a kind word, thank you for your expressions of support which were extended to us during the Christmas season! It is a joy to serve Aledo UMC!

Pastor Dave and Candice

Thank you!

Thank you so much to the AUMC congregation, the United Methodist Women, and the United Methodist Men for the monetary Christmas gifts. It was much appreciated!

Debbie Swank

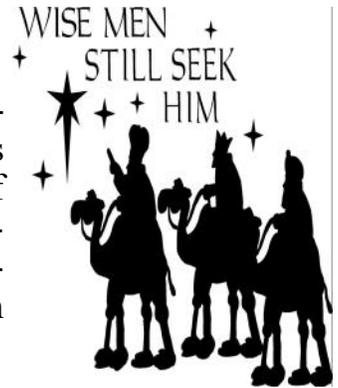
CONNECTION COINS FOR JANUARY

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 14th), the Connection Coin offering will go toward an awesome ministry! The Rice Meals ministry through Midwest Mission Distribution Center sends meals all over the world to those who need a meal due to disasters or poverty. On January 21st, we will be assembling 500 rice meals to be taken to Midwest Missions for distribution. 100% of the money that is collected in the cans on the 14th 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 14th.

EPIPHANY

January 6th is Epiphany (Greek for “appearance or manifestation”), also known as the 12th Day of Christmas or Three Kings Day. Epiphany is a Christian feast which celebrates the revelation of God to humankind 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.



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 current church calendar. Also, the monthly newsletter can be found on our website. Stop by and check it out!

Thank You!

Thank you for your generous donation of \$50 to Mercer County High School. We appreciate all you do for our community.

MCHS Staff and Faculty

Dear United Methodist Church,
Thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus in 2023. We look forward to partnering with you in the coming new year.

Midwest Mission Distribution Center

Mercer County Junior High thanks you for the \$50 contributed from your “Connection Coins”. This will help towards students in need for school supplies or clothes.

Thank you, Pastor, for weekly working with our Jr High boys. What a positive impact you are making in our community and we thank you. God bless.

Donna Boswell, MCJH School Counselor

Connecting With the Word

Suggested readings for Monday, January 1: Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Psalm 8; Revelation 21:1-7, and Matthew 25:31-46.

This year, Epiphany Sunday and Baptism of the Lord Sunday both fall on January 7. Readings for Epiphany include Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72; Ephesians 3:1-12, and Matthew 2:1-12. Readings for Baptism of the Lord include Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Mark 1:4-11 and Acts 19:1-7. Communion will be served at all services.

In the United Methodist Church, Sunday, January 14 is Human Relations Day because it ties in with Dr. Martin Luther King Day. Scriptures include 1 Samuel 3:1-20; Psalm 139; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and John 1:43-51.

Scriptures suggested for Sunday, January 21 include Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, and Mark 1:14-20.

We wrap up the month on January 28 with readings from Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 and Mark 1:21-28.

It was a very merry Christmas at AUMC



Starting at top left, and going clockwise:

- December 3rd Children's Christmas Pageant
- December 17th Chancel Choir on Music Sunday
- December 7th Ruth preparing for Christmas baskets
- December 1st our float in the Holly Days parade
- December 17 Bell Choir on Music Sunday



Need a ride to church?

Contact the office at
309-582-2169 or
Jon Swanson at
309-371-9501 to make
arrangements
to be picked up.



Sunday Evening Women’s Bible Study

After a successful Advent Bible study, our Sunday evening women’s Bible Study will continue in January with a study of “Bad Girls of the Bible (and What We Can Learn from Them)” by Liz Curtis Higgs. This study will feature ten chapters, one each on the following Bible characters: Eve, Potipher’s wife, Lot’s wife, the Woman at the Well, Delilah, Sapphira, Rahab, Jezebel, Michal, and the Sinful Woman of Luke 7:37. The study includes a video presentation about each character.

Liz Curtis Higgs combines contemporary fiction with biblical commentary. A good bit of humor is thrown in for good measure in Liz’s unique brand of “girlfriend theology.” More than three million copies of her various books are in print.

Natalie Nelson leads this study which is held at 6 pm most Sundays, but not every Sunday. Interested persons may contact her for details.

Caring Hearts Food Ministry

The food is free to anyone who is in need of food or needs some cheer.

Our Caring Hearts Food Freezer is located in the basement by the elevator door.

**Those obtaining food from the freezer need to observe
our guidelines for picking up food only during office hours**

8:00 AM – Noon Monday through Friday.

Pick up a pamphlet with our guidelines listed as well as other food sources in Mercer County.

Pamphlets are on the basement bookshelf near the Caring Hearts Freezer



FINANCIAL MATTERS

(WEEKLY NEED TO HOLD STEADY \$6,018.00)

Date	12/03/2023	12/10/2023	12/17/2023	12/24/2023
Attendance	219	185	174	306
Receipts				
(Toward Budget)	\$6,289.00	\$6,413.00	\$3,780.00	\$4,448.27

