

# The Parish Visitor



## January 2025

Visit us at [myaledoumc.com](http://myaledoumc.com)

### Five Moments of Wonder

As I reflect on the year just past, five related moments stand out. It just so happens that all five occurred recently.

The first moment came on a reasonably warm day a couple of weeks ago. It was lunchtime and I went home to take our dog Addie out for her midday walk. I've heard our church bells on many, many days, but on that day, they struck me as particularly beautiful as they rang out from our carillon. Two or three hymns ring out every day at noon and 6 pm, testifying to our neighbors of the love of God. They also testify to the diversity of musical expressions we offer here at Aledo UMC.

The second moment came at the 10:30 service on Sunday, December 15 when Anita Heard sat at our grand piano to accompany our children as they sang carols during their annual Christmas program. The kids were wonderful, of course, and they stole the show from Anita, but her presence on the piano was a reminder of just how much wonderful talent we have in our congregation.

All that amazing talent formed the third moment a week earlier on December 8 as our chancel and bell choirs ministered with their annual Christmas music festival. The bell choir ministered first, and it was so good to see that at least two new ringers had joined. Then, later in the service, the chancel choir presented a brand-new mini-cantata, "Love Is Born for Us." They performed it with half a dozen new voices. Nicole Taylor and Katie Moran have shown their creativity by not only selecting a new cantata, but also by encouraging singers to join the choir just for that cantata. They'll likely do the same for Easter.

Incidentally, a portion of "Love Is Born for Us" will also be featured during the 10:30 service on Sunday, January 12. Also, speaking of new performers, Mike Millar has incorporated Finn Tatum into the Forgiven praise band where he plays bass guitar.

That brings up a fourth moment which happened a couple of weeks ago as Forgiven offered "Shine" during a 9:15 Rock and Worship Service. It was their cover of a song made famous by Collective Soul in the 1990s. I've always loved that song, and I love the way that Forgiven has interpreted it for worship. I remember listening to "Shine" on the local rock stations back in the day, and as I sang it during that Sunday morning worship service, I breathed a prayer of

### SPECIAL DATES:

- January 1 Office Closed for New Years Day
- January 2 Caring Hearts Food Prep 9AM
- January 5 Communion All Services
- January 7 Loving Hands Food Prep 1PM
- January 7 work at the food pantry
- January 10 work at food pantry 8 till noon
- January 16 at 1 PM Caring Heart food prep
- January 20 Office Closed for Martin Luther King Holiday
- January 20 United Methodist Men Meeting 6PM
- January 17 Parish Visitor Deadline 8AM
- January 30 Caring Hearts and Loving hand Food Prep 1PM
- January 25 Stamping Group 1-5PM
- January 25 Walk to Emmaus meeting 9 to noon
- January 19 Trustees Meeting 6PM
- January 19 Finance meeting 6:45PM
- January 19 Ad Council Meeting 7:30 PM

*Continued from page 1*

gratitude for the opportunity. I never thought I would have the privilege of pastoring a church that had so much musical talent, so much creativity, and so much musical diversity—from the electronic bells of our carillon to the electric guitar of Cliff Anderson. And so much besides!

A fifth moment came about when my wife Candice read an article to me about why so many churches are struggling today. According to the article, it's because folks are tired of simply being entertained at church with rock music, light shows, and more. They want to hear and sing the traditional hymns of the church. My immediate response to Candice is that we have that as well, right here at Aledo UMC. Many of the hymns featured at our 8 am Contemporary worship service and all the hymns we sing at our 10:30 Traditional worship service come from our *United Methodist Hymnal*. We also incorporate songs from *The Faith We Sing* in our 10:30 service.

Music is such an important part of our worship of God as well as the success of our church in fulfilling our mission of connecting people to Jesus Christ. So whether you worship with the Connection Praise Band at 8 am; the Forgiven Praise Band at 9:15; or Katie Moran and the bell or chancel choirs at 10:30, there is a service for you. And they all minister with one common mission: to connect you to Christ.

Connecting People to Jesus Christ with you,

*Pastor Dave*

### 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 2025 as Epiphany Sunday is January 5. 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 12. Scriptures include Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; and Luke 3:15-17, 21-22.

Scriptures for Sunday, January 19 include Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; and John 2:1-11.

On Monday, January 20, 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 Sunday, January 26 include Nehemiah 8:1-10, Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; and Luke 4:14-21.

### Sponsors for our January Radio Broadcasts

January 5- Carol Hess/in loving memory of Ben Hess

January 12- Anonymous

January 19- General Fund (available to sponsor)

January 26- Mary and Paul Flint/ Philippians 4:13



## January Volunteer of the Month: SCOTT SPENCER

Sometimes he dresses up as a chicken, and when he does, it's because he loves our church, and he loves our United Methodist Men. As 6-foot tall chicken, he claimed to be Col. Chuck Fillet, but we all knew he was our own Scott Spencer, dressed to promote an omelet breakfast served by our United Methodist Men for our annual Christmas Music Festival.

As an active member of United Methodist Men, Scott has grilled pork chops at Mercer Market and helped provide meals at the church.

Dressing up as a chicken is not the only reason Scott Spencer has been named our January Volunteer of the Month. Scott also serves on our missions committee, where he has worked closely with Habitat for Humanity of the Quad Cities.

This fall, Scott helped lead our church in our annual drive to distribute, fill, and collect shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Thanks to that effort, AUMC collected 126 shoeboxes this year which Scott loaded into his van and delivered to our local collection station at First Baptist Church.



This year, many of you received a letter from Scott along with your quarterly giving statement. That's because Scott also serves in the critical role as the chair of our finance committee, providing excellent leadership of our financial resources.

Congratulations to Scott Spencer, our January Volunteer of the Month



## 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: Scott Guyton

February: Mike Millar

March: Folding Team

April: Education Wing

May: Mary Flint

June: Travis Parker

July: Nancy Robinson

August: Wayne and Vi Darsnek

September: "Forgiven"

October: Dwight Reynolds

November: Stan and Debbie Swank  
(Honorees of the Month)

December: Jon Swanson

## Ladies, Save the Date



*(Just for the “Gals” to Celebrate Valentine’s Day)*

“Galentine” Tea Party

Sunday, February 9, 2025

2:00 – 4:00 PM

AUMC Dining Room

Food, Fun, Fellowship

100



**FORGE IS OUR YOUTH FELLOWSHIP FOR GRADES 6 THROUGH 12.**

- Forge will meet at 6 pm Sunday, January 12 and 26 at the church.
- Please contact Pastor Dave or Kaitlyn Marceleno to make sure you are receiving text messages about our gatherings and activities.

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS.**

Monthly Saturday Morning Men’s Bible Study will meet at 8 am January 11

Pastor Dave will conduct worship and serve communion at Brookstone at 10 am Thursday, January 9.

The Education Team has planned a gathering for children at 2 pm Sunday, January 19; they will be watching a movie together.



## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

### Share the Harvest

- If you purchased a cup of coffee during the Christmas Marketplace—
  - If you bought a chicken salad sandwich and a slice of rhubarb pie at our church during Rhubarb Festival—
  - If you enjoyed an omelet served by our United Methodist Men during our Christmas Music Festival—
  - If you purchased a pork chop sandwich at Mercer Market when either our United Methodist Men or United Methodist Women were grilling—
- You helped us **SMASH** two of our Share the Harvest goals thanks to generous donations from our United Methodist Women, our United Methodist Men, and our Christmas Marketplace Committee.



You helped us smash our Bronze Goal of \$10,000 on Sunday, December 8. Then, just a week later you helped us smash our Silver Goal of \$20,000. Total giving to Share the Harvest is \$21,023 as of this writing on Monday, December 16. Thank you! Of course, that total may increase after this edition of the Parish Visitor has been printed. And once we've met all our 2024 financial obligations, if we receive any gifts marked for Share the Harvest, they will give us a head start on our 2025 financial obligations.

Of course, those organizations are only part of the story; the entire congregation has helped us to meet all our financial obligations for 2024, including our apportionments to the Illinois Great Rivers Conference of the United Methodist Church. This year, our apportionments total \$33,864 and they are a critical part of our witness and mission to the world. Thanks to your help, we have paid our apportionments in full.

### Roof Project

As of this writing (Monday, December 16), we have received \$15,650 toward our new roof. Total cost was \$47,550, which we have paid thanks to a three-year loan. Interest on that loan is just 2.15 percent, so we are in good shape. If you would like to give toward this project, please indicate "roof" on your check.

### AUMC Endowment

**\$8,000.**

That's the interest check we received from our Endowment Fund, and those proceeds were divided between "Share the Harvest" (\$1,000) and the Building Fund (\$7,000) to help pay for our new roof. That's \$8,000 that you don't have to put in the collection plate

The primary way we are growing our Endowment is through estate planning. Won't you consider leaving a "final tithe" to Aledo UMC through your estate or life insurance policy? Your gift will become part of the principle of our endowment, generating income for the church every year until Christ returns.

## **Thank You for Helping with Spreading Christmas Cheer**



Thank you to our newly formed Outreach Team: Wayne Darsnek, Vi Darsnek, Joanne Harris, Mike Millar, Paula Nelson, Vicki Palmer, Candice Schultz, and Pam Truman who lead the formation and distribution of the 2024 Christmas food boxes. 62 food gifts were given to our friends and members who were in need of some Christmas cheer this season. We appreciate all who also volunteered their time to organize and deliver the food: Connie Alexander, Jeff Barton, Bill Breeden, Paul and Mary Flint, Barb King, Barb Millar, Dennis Palmer, Denise Patterson, Chris and Jon Swanson, and Pastor Dave. And a

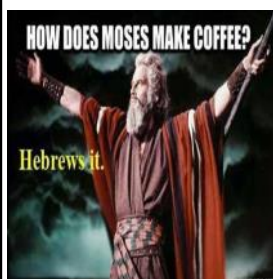
big thanks to those who made the delicious handmade candies and cookies for the cheer plates.

**Ruth Dulaney,  
Outreach and Nurturing Ministries**



## **A Generous Anonymous Gift**

We have been blessed through our partnership with River Bend Food Bank, and also from a generous donor who gave a large donation, to our account, to be able to provide numerous food items for those receiving Christmas boxes this year.



## **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 Wednesday Morning at 6:30AM** . Come for breakfast and a time of studying God's Word.
- **First Saturday of the Month Men's Bible**
- **Study 8 to 9 M**



**OUR WORSHIP**  
**TIMES:**

**Sundays**

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

**End Of Year Giving**

**If you would like to have your offering credited to 2024 please turn it into the church office or place in the offering plate by January 5th. Please clearly mark your gift as "Offering 2024".**

**I HAVE A DREAM**

On Monday, January 20th, 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 62  
 Holiday Cheer  
 plates and  
 baskets!**



**The United Methodist  
 Men meet on January  
 20th There will be a  
 meal, a short business  
 meeting, and lots of  
 fellowship. Join us,  
 and bring a friend!**







## UM Women Golden Age Birthdays

January 1st– Jeannine Kenney



The deadline for the next Parish Visitor is  
***Friday, January 17th at 8am.***

All articles must be  
submitted by this date!

## THOSE WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

Alicia/healing  
Jodie Andress  
Tom Balmer/health  
John Bender/health  
Bishop David Bard  
Family of Vick Bieri  
Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai  
Bill Breeden/health  
Renae Brown/mental health  
Family of Holly Blythe  
Family of Greg Campbell  
Neil David/hospice  
Connie Dellitt/health  
Dori/health  
Jim Droste/health  
Stacey Dutton/health  
Hal Earl/health  
Sonjia Fell/healing  
Amber Fitzsimmons/cancer  
Jayne Fitzsimmons/healing  
Renee Forber/healing  
Lyn & Don Franks/health  
Marie Fredrickson/InterVarsity  
Gabrielle/FMD  
The Gerber Family  
Family of Tyler Gilbert  
Family of Jim Hansen  
Katie Harris/lung cancer  
Andrew Hofer/FCA  
Stan Hunt/health  
Kathy Jenkins/recovery

Meyer Johnson/recovery  
Dave Kozlowski/cancer  
Gary Long/health  
Lupe/health  
The McCaw Family  
Laura and Randy McGinnis/  
health  
Family of Peggy Malone  
Mauricio/health  
Family of Sharon Moffitt  
Linda Morrow/health  
Family of Jane Mumm  
Mike Newsom/healing  
Kula Naeole/health  
Kathy Newswander/cancer treat-  
ment  
Cookie Olsen  
Jennifer Olson/cancer  
Family of Cheryl Patterson  
Paul & family/addiction  
Baby Peyton/health  
Marion Pinkham/health  
Bill Pollock/health  
Janice Pollock/cancer  
Chrissy Riddell/cancer  
Pastor Dave & Candice  
Ashley Schmidt  
Family of Gina Shaffer  
Katherine Shondel/health  
Celia Sinclair/health  
Joyce Smith/cancer



Dianna Spencer health  
Family of Amy Studer  
Finn Tatum/health  
Dale, Debby, Ashley Thomas  
Family of Verla Thompson  
Tony Tomsha/health  
Nena Visser/health  
Kim Watkins  
David Wheeler/healing  
Jane Williams/pain  
Family of Mike Willis  
Dick Zimmerman/health  
Liz Zimmerman/health  
Acceptance, Respect, Dignity,  
Equality  
AUMC family & committees  
Brookstone, nursing homes, and

Vashti  
Those who are grieving during  
the holidays

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



## AUMC's Entry in the Holly Days Parade

Thank you for everyone who made the Peter Pan Float a “shining” success in the electric parade December 6<sup>th</sup>. We appreciate the designers of the float: Wayne and Vi Darsnek, Candice Schultz and Mindy Rushford and the float decorators: Darsneks, Schultzes, Parkers, Mary F., Norma C. and Ruth D.

Bob and Andrea provided their garage to build the float and drove the float in the parade using Gary Heard's trailer. Our “Peter Pan” characters represented AUMC well: Ollie Stice as Peter Pan, Carly Stice as Tinkerbell and Ashlie and Patrick Fuller as pirates on the Pirate ship!

Our bus was driven and decorated by Adam Douglas. Norma C. and Ashley T. enjoyed riding the bus in the parade.

A huge thank you to all who participated,

Ruth Dulaney,  
Outreach Director



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## 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! Network of Caring provides people with short term financial assistant to help pay their bills.



## EPIPHANY

January 6<sup>th</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 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](http://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 to the UMW and UMM for their generous gift to us in the office.

We love being a part of the AUMC family.

Joanne and Julie

Dear United Methodist Church,

Thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus in 2024. 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*



United Methodist Men preparing delicious omelets on Sunday, December 8th.



## It was a very Merry Christmas at AUMC



### Starting at top left, and going clockwise:

- December 15th Children's Christmas Pageant
- December 8th Chancel Choir on Music Sunday
- December 8th 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

Our Sunday evening Bible Study will Start up in January. We will be Using a study entitled "*Ten Women of the Bible*" by Max Lucado. Natalie Nelson leads this study which is held at 6 pm most Sundays.. Interested persons may contact her for details.

## AUMC Vashti Trips to Walmart and Mercer Market

During the month of January, AUMC bus service will run on the first and second week, January 6th and 13th. We will only be going twice during this month. Make sure you have your shopping list ready so you can utilize this service.

## 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            | 12/01/2024 | 12/08/2024 | 12/15/2024 | 12/22/2024 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Attendance      | 146        | 182        | 209        | N/A        |
| Receipts        |            |            |            |            |
| (Toward Budget) | \$4,796.96 | \$3,189.00 | \$5,990.00 | \$         |

