

The Parish Visitor



December 2025

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United Methodists Ratify Plan to Restructure Denomination New plan decentralizes the role of the United States

Yonat Shimron November 10, 2025

Source: <https://ministrywatch.com/united-methodists-ratify-plan-to-restructure-denomination>

(RNS) — After years of controversy over LGBTQ issues that split their denomination, United Methodists have ratified a plan to restructure the 57-year-old church to give regions around the world equal standing and greater freedom to tailor church life to local customs and traditions.

The so-called “regionalization plan” received overwhelming support, with 91.6% of United Methodists voting in favor of constitutional amendments to change the church’s structure, according to a church statement. The tally was 34,148 to 3,124, with both clergy and lay people voting in each conference, or regional body.

The plan decentralizes the role of the U.S., which gave birth to churches in Europe, the Philippines and Africa. Each of its nine regions across four continents will now have the ability to set its own qualifications for ordaining clergy and lay leaders, write original hymnals and rituals, compose their own rites for marriage and establish judicial courts.

Among the things that cannot be amended from one region to another are the church’s constitution, its doctrinal standards or its positions on social issues such as human rights, economic justice or care for creation.

The vote completes the process that began in April 2024, when the regionalization plan passed the General Conference, the denomination’s top legislative body. Since then, the denomination’s 120 annual conferences have been learning about the four constitutional amendments and then voting on them. The denomination had tried and failed to restructure before in an attempt to avoid schism over global differences on controversial issues, especially on whether to allow United Methodist ministers to perform same-sex ceremonies or ordain church leaders who identify as LGBTQ.

The inability to come to consensus resulted in the departure of more than 7,600 United Methodist churches in the U.S.—25% of all U.S. congregations—in recent years. Even with those churches gone, differences remain: Last year, the church in the United States fully affirmed LGBTQ identities and lifestyles, a step churches in the Philippines and in Africa have not made.

But with greater unity among the congregations that remained in the United Methodist Church, it was

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SPECIAL DATES:

- December 4 Caring Hearts Food Prep 9AM
- December 4 Brookstone 10:15
- December 4 UMW Exec Meeting 4PM
- December 4 decorate float at the Parker’s
- December 5 Holly Days Electric Light Parade 5:30PM
- December 6 Salvation Bell Ringing 9am-5pm
- December 7 UMM Omelet Breakfast 8:30-12:30
- December 7 Choir & Bells Cantata at 10:30
- December 7 Forge 6pm
- December 9 Loving Hands Food Prep 1PM
- December 10 9am Organize items for cheer plates
- December 10 Assembly line for cheer plates 1pm
- December 10 Deliver cheer plates 3pm & 5pm
- December 11 1pm & 5pm delivery if needed
- December 14 Children’s Christmas Pageant 9:45
- December 15 UMM 6pm
- December 18 Caring Hearts 1pm
- December 19 Parish Visitor Deadline 8AM
- Forge 6pm
- December 21 Forge 6pm
- December 24 Christmas Eve Services 7PM & 11PM
- December 24 & 25 Office Closed for Christmas
- December 28 8am blended
- 9:45 am Rock & Worship
- January 1 Office closed for New Years

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able to move ahead with restructuring after the 120 annual conferences voted with overwhelming approval. In a statement, Council of Bishops President Tracy (*Continued from page 1*)

S. Malone called the vote “a defining moment in the continuing renewal and unity of The United Methodist Church.”

But her push for greater equality among the denomination’s regions was also framed as an effort to decolonize the church. Born of an 18th-century movement begun by John and Charles Wesley, the Methodist movement through its various schisms and realignments has for centuries been centered in the United States.

“There was a very strong feeling that the U.S. needed to not be the center of the church,” said Judi Kenaston, chief connectional ministries officer for the Connectional Table, a sort of denomination-wide church council that played a critical role in developing the plan. “We can’t make rules for everybody.”

While church regions in Africa, the Philippines and Europe have already had some leeway in customizing church life, the United States has not.

A committee will now be established to organize the United States into its own regional conference. Each region will also be able to revise some sections of its *Book of Discipline*, or rulebook, to fit with local custom and tradition.

Connecting with the Word

As believers in Christ, we are shaped by the Word of God. Following are the scriptures suggested by the Revised Common Lectionary for each week in November. I encourage you to read these passages to prepare your hearts for worship, whether in-person, on the radio, on Facebook, or on our church website, Myaledoumc.com.

First Sunday in Advent, November 30: Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14; and Matthew 24:36-44.

Second Sunday in Advent, December 7: Our 8 am worship service will be a traditional one featuring Pastor Dave and Karen Buchanan. At 10:30 am our Chancel and Bell Choirs will proclaim the Glad Tidings in music. There is no 9:45 service. Additionally, our United Methodist Men will be serving an omelet breakfast in the dining room from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Scriptures include Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7; Roman 15:4-13; and Matthew 3:1-12.

Third Sunday in Advent, December 14: Our 8 am worship service will be traditional and led by Pastor Dave with Ethan Taylor preaching. At 9:45 Anita Heard will present a mini-concert. Then at 10 am our Sunday school children will present their annual Christmas program. Scriptures include Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 1:46-55; James 5:7-10; and Matthew 11:2-11.

Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 21: Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Roman 1:107; and Matthew 1:18-25.

Christmas Eve, December 24: Our 7 pm Candlelight Communion service will feature music by Chancel Choirs, carols, and a message from Pastor Dave. Our 11 pm Candlelight Communion, carols, and Pastor Dave’s message. Scriptures include Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; and Luke 2:1-20.

Christmas Day, December 25: While we will not have services at AUMC, you are encouraged to read Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-12; and John 1:1-14.

Sunday, December 28: Service at 8 am & 9:45 am. Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrew 1:1-4; John 1:1-14.

Celebrate the Birth of Christ with us!

8 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7: Traditional worship service featuring Pastor Dave and Karen Buchanan.

8:30 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7: Annual All-Church Omelet Breakfast sponsored by our United Men. Serving will continue until 12:30 pm. Carry-outs will be available. All omelets will be cooked to order.

10:30 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7: Our Chancel Choir will present “Little Lion, Little Lamb: A Cantata for Christmas” followed by three special selections by our Bell Choir. *(Yes, it’s at 10:30 so you have plenty of time to enjoy fellowship and an omelet. No 9:45 service today only).*



8 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14: Traditional worship featuring Pastor Dave and a sermon by Ethan Taylor. There will be egg casserole in the café from 7:30am to 9:30am.

9:45 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14: A mini concert by Anita Heard, followed by the Annual Children’s Christmas program at 10 am.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21: Blended worship at 8 am; Rock and Worship at 9:45.

CHRISTMAS EVE, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24: Celebration of the Birth of the Messiah at 7 pm and 11 pm. Communion will be served.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28: Blended worship at 8 am; Rock and Worship at 9:45.

NOTE: *Sunday school for all ages will be held at 9 am throughout the month; however, some classes may be canceled or combined by the teachers.*

Sponsors for our December Radio Broadcasts

December 7th: Keith & Shari Chandler

December 14th: Keith & Shari Chandler– 53rd Anniversary

December 21st: United Methodist Women

December 28th: United Methodist Women



Tune in to WRMJ each Sunday on the radio or on the WRMJ app.



Connecting with Confirmands

On Sunday, November 9, Nicole Taylor represented AUMC at the Quad Cities area confirmation gathering at held at Christ UMC in East Moline. Several United Methodist churches are bringing their confirmation students together for a combined confirmation experience. As a guest teacher and conductor, Nicole's role was to introduce the students to bell choir ministry by teaching them how to handle a bell and to have them perform a song. The students then performed their song just 25 minutes after being introduced to their bell.

"I'm a firm believer that anyone can learn to play music, and if you want your church and programs to thrive, you have to put energy into it at all levels, and be willing to do things outside of tradition," Nicole said on her Facebook page.



THE FORGE

WHERE LIVES TAKE SHAPE



Last month, AUMC Youth helped pack 20 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. That was enough to push our church up to a total of 111 shoeboxes which will soon make their way around the world in time to give some Christmas cheer to a boy or girl in need.



Forge members helping with mat weaving.

Forge is the youth ministry of Aledo UMC. Youths in grades 6 through 12 are welcome to participate. December gatherings will be held at 6 pm Sunday, December 7 and Sunday, December 21. Questions? Contact Pastor Dave.

Children's Christmas Pageant

Our grade school Sunday school class has been hard at work already learning their parts, lines and Christmas carols as they prepare to present a brand new Christmas pageant this year! You will hear the story of the birth of Jesus, taken from the Bible and with interesting historical and geological details that bring the story to life. We invite all grade school (K-5th) children to come practice with us during Sunday school at 9AM on the weeks leading up to December 14th when we will be presenting at the 9:45 AM service. Even if you can't make it to any other practices we invite you to bring your grandkids, neighbors and friends the morning of at 9AM. There will be plenty of costumes and fun for all!



Holly Days Parade Theme: Luau AUMC Entry – Santa's Beach House

Our church is going to be participating in Aledo's Holly Days Electric Parade again this year on December 5th. We will be driving the bus and building a float. You can sign up to ride the bus, decorate the bus, and help build the float at the announcement table.

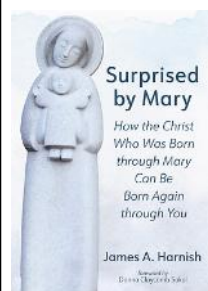
Our float will represent the LUAU theme with a "Santa's Beach House" We welcome anyone who would like to come help decorate the float on December 4th at 5:30 PM at Bob and Andrea Parkers' garage 603 SW 2nd St.

Thank you to Candice Schultz, for the float decorating ideas and supplies; Gary Heard for use of his trailer; and Parkers for the use of their garage again. Parkers will drive the float. We need a bus driver and bus decorator to complete our parade entry.

Ruth Dulaney, Outreach Director



Tuesday Morning Bible Study



Our Tuesday morning Bible study has just launched into *Surprised by Mary*, a Bible study by James Harnish. Pastor Dave leads this 90-minute study every Tuesday morning beginning at 9am. This study will take us into January.

You are welcome to join us for coffee, fellowship, and the Word in this faith-forming weekly event.

SHARE THE HARVEST

This is our year-end stewardship drive to meet all our financial obligations for the year, most notably our Conference apportionments. Once again this year, we have three tiers or goals: Our Bronze Goal of \$10,000; our Silver Goal of \$25,000; and our Gold Goal of \$40,000.

As of this writing, you have responded beautifully, and we have already received \$14,865, smashing through our Bronze Goal.

We hope everyone in the congregation will participate in this stewardship drive. Some can give large amounts, but everyone can give something. If we all work together, we will reach our Gold Goal.

Please prayerfully consider how you might participate in Share the Harvest by giving above and beyond your regular giving, whether that's an extra dollar or an extra \$100. It all adds up and it all helps us close the gap in our giving.

Please mark your extra giving for "Share the Harvest" or simply, "Harvest." If you haven't given at all this year, or if you've given sporadically, anything you give may be marked for Share the Harvest.



We are ringing again this year for the Salvation Army.

We are ringing from 9am to 5pm on Saturday, December 6th at the Aledo Walmart. There is a sign up sheet in the Fellowship Café or contact John Taylor!



Dear Denise and Aledo UMW,

Thank you for your continued support and impact on the mission and Children of Cunningham, we are blessed to be aligned with you!

Caitlyn Floyd

Development Officer



"Soup Luncheon"

Coming next month on Sunday, January 18th the UMM will be putting on a soup luncheon.



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

12/02/1972– Neil & Pamela Truman
 12/07/1991– Tim & Jennifer Thompson
 12/12/2023 Bill and Tami Kraut
 12/12/2020– Robert & Katie Moran
 12/16/1972– Keith & Sharon Chandler
 12/27/1996– John & Angela DeBlock
 12/28/1991– John & Angie Burns
 12/29/2007– Matt & Mindy Rushford



UM Women Golden Age Birthdays

12/07— Renee Forber
 12/18— Jeanne Lange
 12/20— Jane Williams
 12/30— Gena Nelson
 12/31— Wava Minter



Become a Member of Aledo UMC

Take the opportunity to join our church. If you have been faithful in attendance for several months, and are interested in joining our church, please see Pastor Dave in advance.

THOSE WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

General Needs

Jodie Andress
 JeAnne & Tom Balmer
 Christy Bender/pain
 Renae Brown/mental health/loss
 Karen Dosh
 Marie Fredrickson/I V
 Andrew Hofer/FCA
 Debbie Jasper
 Gene & Tracy Keppy
 Danny Lee
 Dennis Litwiler/lymphoma
 Cayden Logsdon/seizures
 Judy Lovett
 Paul & family/addiction
 Sharon Peterson/pain,
 Elizabeth Schroeder

Those Living With Cancer

Nick Billiet, Renee Forber, Macoy & Lane Green, Juna, David Murphy, Kathy Newswander, Jennifer Olson, Janice Pollock, Debbie Swank, Shelly T., Juna, Bobbie Thomsen

Those Living With Grief And Loss

The Families of:

Lainey Jean Gladkin
 Pete Guyton
 Laura McGinnis,
 Chris Pearson,
 Bill Retherford
 Carole Schmidt,
 Corey Thompson,
 Trudy Turner,
 Dick & Liz Zimmerman
 Also
 Alice Cantrell, Lyn Franks

Those Who Are Healing and Recovering

Alicia, Anne, Clint Bigham, Steve Brown, Jayne Fitzsimmons, Jim & Mary McClellan, Megan Melton, Donna Murphy, Mike Newsom, Dennis Palmer, Dianna Spencer, Mark Stanley, Chris Swanson, Sarah Thomas, Jane Williams, John Williams

Those With Health Issues

Bill Breeden, Connie Dellitt, Jim Droste, Gabrielle, Judy Headley, Diane & Stan Hunt, Kathy Jenkins, Junie, Vicki Lowe, Megan Melton, Mitch Meminger, Phyllis Meyer, Ruby Nimrick, Mom, Ginny Orud, Cara Osborn, Marion Pinkham, Bill Pollock, Kevin Ricke, Ashley Schmidt, Nena Visser

Ongoing Concerns

Acceptance, Respect, Dignity, Equality
 AUMC family
 Brookstone, nursing homes, Vashti residents
 Farmers as they harvest
 Loving All Neighbors
 Those who are homeless
 Young person who needs peace

Those In Leadership

Bishop David Bard, Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, Pastor Dave Schultz, Our Local and Federal Government, World Leaders, AUMC Chair persons and Committees, Andrew Hofer

District Schools

The Staff, Students, Teachers and Administration of:

Mercer Schools
 Sherard Schools
 United Schools



That's a "OCC Christmas Wrap"

As we close the book on another Operation Christmas Child campaign, I am gratified to announce that 111 boxes were delivered to the Aledo Baptist Church on the 19th of November. As I reflect on how many boxes our congregation gave, my heart is warmed by the fact we serve a mighty GOD who will take these gifts, find the perfect recipients, and use them to their fullest potential. The Samaritan's Purse website is filled with such stories, and I wholly believe this year's gifts will provide more proof of how these boxes change lives.

Thank you to everyone who gave to this worthwhile mission. Whether you packed a box, made a monetary donation, or prayed for the success of this mission, we appreciate every contribution very much. Now, as the boxes leave our community and make their way around the world, we ask one more thing: please pray and ask God to work a wonder in the life of every child who receives one. Thank you and may God bless you all.

*Aledo United Methodist Church
Operation Christmas Child Team*



Congratulations to Malaynie McIntosh and Gracelyn Bieri who won this year's traveling trophy for Trunk or Treat!



Thank you for giving me the Golden Pumpkin Trunk or Treat Trophy!

*God is Good,
Maylanie*



Christmas Nursing Home Gifts

We will be collecting unwrapped gifts for the residents of Mercer Manor and Arcadia Care until Tuesday, December 16th, at 10am. Ideas: small fleece blankets, dressy scarves, adult coloring books with markers, metal tins of cookies, costume jewelry, lotion, shampoo, shower gel, stamps, diabetic socks, slipper socks with grips, cube boxes of Kleenex, chocolate candy, sugar-free candy. Please NO powder, open back slippers, or conditioner.

Please bring your donations to the office by noon on Monday the 15th.



Reverse Advent Buckets

You may pick up your “**Reverse Advent Bucket**” on Sunday, November 30. For many years, this has been a seasonal project at Aledo UMC. It is inspired by those Advent calendars in which a child receives a piece of candy every day during Advent. We’ve reversed the tradition by inviting you to *give* something rather than *receive* something during Advent. Each day from December 1 until Christmas, drop a donation—small or large—in your Advent bucket. Those donations will be sent to Heifer International where they will be used to purchase various animals—or wells—for families in impoverished parts of our world. Giving an animal gift during the holidays is like giving someone a small business, providing wool, milk, eggs and more.

Please return your Reverse Advent Bucket on Christmas Eve, December 24. If you participate by check, please make it payable to AUMC.



Connection Coins For December

This month, our Connection Coins go toward The Heifer Project.

On Sunday, December 14, we’ll be passing around our repurposed Pingles’ cans to give you the opportunity of dropping in your change, folding money, or checks payable to AUMC. This month, rather than asking you to give to yet another project, your Connection Coins will be added to your Reverse Advent Bucket giving. Thus, both your Connection Coins and your Advent Buckets and will all be directed to Heifer International.

For several years, our congregation has supported Heifer International during Advent. We’re excited to do so again in 2025!

2025 Holiday Food Baskets and Cheer Plates

*The Outreach team will be leading our annual Holiday Baskets and Cheer Plates.
We will be putting together about 42 food gifts.*

ALL ARE WELCOME TO HELP PREPARE AND DELIVER OUR HOLIDAY BASKETS.

We will be adding homemade cookies to the cheer plates and food baskets.

Look for a sign up sheet to make cookies on the announcement table.

Bring cookies to the Activity Room by Wednesday, December 10th at 9:00 AM

Mark Your Calendars – Here are this year's work times:

Wednesday, December 10, 9:00 AM – Organize items for cheer plates and Holiday baskets

Wednesday, December 10, 1:00 PM – Assembly line to put together our food gifts

Wednesday, December 10, 3:00 PM and/or 5:00 PM – Deliver

Thursday, December 11, 1:00 or 5:00 PM — Deliver if needed.

Other ways to connect with neighbors at Christmastime:

- Write encouraging notes or Christmas cards to be added to each food basket or Cheer Plate. (No postage needed, just names.)
 - The residents in Brookstone, Vashti and Nursing Facilities can be individually addressed. Names and addresses will be provided.
 - There will be about 18 others receiving our Holiday food connections whose names will be added by the Outreach Team. Your cards can be given to these individuals,
- All "Christmas Love Notes" can be placed in a box on the announcement table or taken to the church office by December 9.
 - Each note will be given to those as the Food basket or Cheer Plates are delivered on December 10.

Thank you for everyone's generous monetary donations and thanks in advance for the help preparing and delivering the cheer plates!

**YOU CAN CONNECT WITH THOSE
RECEIVING A HOLIDAY BASKET OR
CHEER PLATE!**



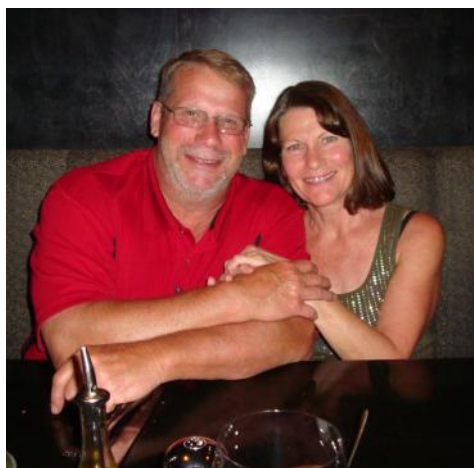
Need a ride to church?

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



The deadline for the next
Parish Visitor is
Wednesday, January 21st
at 8am.

All articles must be
submitted by that date.



December Volunteers of the Month Gary & Anita Heard

Our December Volunteers of the Month feature a couple who serve together on our Board of Trustees. As members of the board, they have been at the center of many of the projects our church has undertaken in recent years. With his flair for gardening, Gary recently installed some landscaping on the south side of the church. Both Gary and Anita volunteer in the kitchen for various meal-related activities. During the summer, they can be found at Mercer Market whenever our church has the opportunity to grill pork chops. Anita also serves on one of our teams to provide a luncheon after a funeral.

With her talent at the piano, Anita is always willing to provide music when Katie Moran is away. She also plays piano every month when Pastor Dave conducts worship at Brookstone, where Anita enjoys hearing the residents sing as much as they enjoy her play. Incidentally, Anita will present a 15-minute mini-concert at 9:45 am on Sunday, December 14, just prior to the children's Sunday School program.

For his part, Gary serves as commander of the Mercer County Search and Rescue, providing an important service to the sheriff's department as well as the people of our county and beyond.

Arguably, though, the most important ministry Gary provides to Aledo UMC is his leadership of the Wednesday morning Men's Bible Study, fondly known as "The Bible Boys." Each week Gary picks up breakfast pizza and donuts from Casey's, studies that week's scriptures, and brings just enough levity to help the men take on another week. "Bible Boys" is open to all men at 6:30 am every Wednesday.

Congratulations to Gary & Anita Heard, December Volunteers of the Month

FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

| Date | 11/02/2025 | 11/9/2025 | 11/16/2025 | 11/23/2025 |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Attendance | 162 | 136 | 171 | 208 |
| Receipts | | | | |
| (Toward Budget) | \$13,886.00 | \$7,115.00 | \$5,950.00 | \$4,463.00 |

