

# Aldersgate United Methodist Church



**December 1, 2024**  
First Sunday of Advent

**“...you know  
that the kingdom  
of **GOD** is  
near.”**

**8:30 a.m.**

Videographer: Nancy Taylor  
Song Leaders: Dan and Kara Steward  
Greeter/Usher: Tom Beckenhauer  
Lector: Kari Beckenhauer

**11:00 a.m. Service**

Greeter/Usher: Harry & Sheila Kellenbarger  
Lector: Stacey Lienemann

Ministers: All of Aldersgate's Members  
Pastor: Joseph Rafique  
Director of Music: Julie Clopper-Smith  
Keyboardist: Deanna Steward  
Organist: Jan Malone  
Digital Media Specialist: Nancy Taylor  
Administrative Assistant: Stacey Lienemann  
Child Care Attendant: Katie Softley  
Custodian: Scott Hoyt

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**LUKE 21:31**

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United Methodist Church**  
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**Joseph Rafique, Pastor**  
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*Worshippers are welcomed to use their own terminology for God.  
If you are considering membership, please contact our pastor, 402-489-1510.*



December 1, 2024

**Lighting the Advent Wreath #2090** (black, vs. 1, 8:30 *Kari*)      **“Light the Advent Candle”**  
(11 *Stacey*)      **“Advent’s Holy Light”** — *Aldersgate Choir*  
(The first candle is lit.)

LEADER: Our Advent journey begins today with the lighting of the first candle, the candle of Hope. Like the flame of a candle, may hope be ignited in our hearts, reminding us that brighter days are ahead. For those of us facing difficult challenges

ALL: **ignite our hearts with hope.**

LEADER: For the end of wars wreaking havoc and pain in our world

ALL: **ignite our hearts with hope.**

LEADER: For safety for those fleeing the tyranny of oppression

ALL: **ignite our hearts with hope.**

LEADER: For the light of forgiveness to shine in our hearts

ALL: **ignite our hearts with hope.**

LEADER: Gracious Creator, in moments of uncertainty, we turn to you with hearts heavy but hopeful. Grant us the strength to navigate challenges, the wisdom to see possibilities, and the courage to embrace the journey ahead. May hope be our guiding light, leading us to a future filled with grace, love, and possibilities beyond our imagining. Amen.

WORDS & MUSIC: Joel Raney

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**Greeting and Announcements** (8:30 *Kari*, 11 *Stacey*)

**Opening Truth** (8:30 *Kari*, 11 *Stacey*)

LEADER: The best is:

ALL: **God is with us; God is near us.**

**Call to Worship #211** (red 8:30 *Kari*, 11 *Stacey*)

Response: **“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”**

LEADER: We are people of a promise — God’s promise.

ALL: **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

LEADER: From ancient times, God has promised to be with us.

ALL: **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

LEADER: Even though we know Emmanuel has come, in this season of Advent, we experience the waiting all over again.

ALL: **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

LEADER: Together, we wait for God’s reign of righteousness, justice and peace. We wait for Emmanuel — God with us.

ALL: **Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

**Opening Prayer** (8:30 *Kari*, 11 *Stacey*)

LEADER: In obedience and trust, we approach you, God of the covenant. Day by day, your promises are fulfilled among us. Our redemption is drawing near. Help us to prepare ourselves, our families and our communities for Christ’s coming.

ALL: **Equip us now to worship you with all the saints, past and present, nearby and far away. In the name of Jesus whose coming we await, we ask. Amen.**

**Hymn #196** (red)

**“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”**

## Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer #895 (red Joseph)

PASTOR: Compassionate One, we look to the stormy sky of political unrest — help us to pay attention to the cries for mercy, peace and justice among us. We pray to you,

ALL: **in the name of Christ, who was, who is and who shall be.**

PASTOR: Earth-keeper, we look to the polluted sky of an ailing planet — help us to pay attention to the ways we can mend and tend your creation. We pray to you,

ALL: **in the name of Christ, who was, who is and who shall be.**

PASTOR: Gentle Healer, we look to the twilight sky of suffering and illness — help us to pay attention to the ways we can ease the pain of those who suffer. (We name the suffering in our hearts.) We pray to you,

ALL: **in the name of Christ, who was, who is and who shall be.**

PASTOR: Guiding Light, we look to the dawning sky of a new day and a new way — help us to live your way of abundant promise and blessing. We pray to you,

ALL: **in the name of Christ, who was, who is and who shall be.**

PASTOR: What prayer needs would you like to lift up? (pause) We pray to you,

ALL: **in the name of Christ, who was, who is and who shall be.**

PASTOR: Loving God, we long to know your joy and peace in our world during this season of Advent and look forward to see them more fully in the world to come. And until then, we will continue to pray the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, saying:

ALL: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Hymn #715 (red, 8:30, vs. 1-2, 4)  
Special Music (11)

**“Rejoice, the Lord Is King”**  
“Goin’ to Bethlehem” — *Aldersgate Choir*

God Is Near (8:30 Kari, 11 Stacey)

Jeremiah 33:14-16

PASTOR: A long time ago, the Hebrew people were afraid and sad. There was much fighting and trouble in their land. “What will happen to us? Will we have to leave our homes? Where will we live?” Sometimes the people began to wonder if God had forgotten them and they felt scared and lonely. “Has God left us all alone?” they whispered to each other. But God had not left the people alone. When the time was right, God gave a message to Jeremiah.

LECTOR: *Jeremiah, tell my people not to give up. Tell them I am near. I am sending someone special to you. Someone who will share my love with everyone.*

PASTOR: Jeremiah was very happy to hear God’s message. “God is near! God has a plan! This is good news! So, Jeremiah shouted out the good news to everyone.

LECTOR: *God is with us; God is near.*

PASTOR: When the people heard the message they too, were very happy. “God is with us!” they said to one another. The message was passed from one person to another. At first, it sounded like a whisper in the land. God is with us; God is near. But slowly, more and more people heard the good news and the message became louder and louder. God is with us; God is near. Whenever they heard about the troubles in the land, or whenever they were scared and lonely, the people would remind each other of God’s wonderful promise. God is with us; God is near. God’s promise moved through the land. It helped the people not be afraid because they knew that God was always with them.

Look at the Fig Tree (8:30 Kari, 11 Stacey)

Luke 21:25-36

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"Look up," said Jesus.

(Have everyone look up.)

"And you will see signs in the sun and the moon and the stars." "Listen up," said Jesus.

(Have everyone put a hand to an ear.)

"And you will hear the roaring of the sea and the crashing of the waves and the distress of people on earth, confused by what is happening" "Look around," said Jesus.

(Have everyone look around.)

"And you will see people fainting and trembling with fear at all that is coming upon the world. And at the

shaking of the powers of the heavens." "Now straighten up," said Jesus. (Have everyone sit up straight.)

"And lift up your heads." (Have everyone look up again.)

"For when all these things begin to happen, you will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds. Coming in power. Coming in glory. And you will know that your redemption, too, is coming close." Then Jesus told a parable story. "Look at the fig tree," he said. (Have everyone shield eyes and look straight ahead, like they are looking at a fig tree, or at an actual tree or picture you've prepared.)

"Look at any tree, for that matter. When you see the leaves come out, you know that summer is near. In the very same way, when you see the things that I have just described, you will know that the Kingdom of God is near. Trust me, this generation will not come to an end until everything that I have described takes place. Heaven and earth may pass away. But not my words. Not ever." "Now look at yourselves," said Jesus, finally. (Have everyone look at themselves.)

"Watch that you don't get bogged down with bad choices and hard living and drunkenness and all that goes with being carried away with what this world has to offer. For everything that I said will happen, will happen, indeed — to everyone on earth. And if your attention is fixed on your own pleasure, then it will catch you out, with a sudden snap, like a rat in a trap. But if you stay alert, and pay attention, and pray, then you will find the strength to escape all that will happen. And you will stand, at last, before the Son of Man."

### Sermon (*Joseph*)

"Trust Jesus' Word and Be Always on Watch"

### Sacrament of Holy Communion (*Joseph*)

PASTOR: The Lord be with you.

ALL: **And also with you.**

PASTOR: Lift up your hearts.

ALL: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

PASTOR: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

ALL: **It is right to give God our thanks and praise.**

PASTOR: It is right and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for that day when justice shall roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream, when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

ALL: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

PASTOR: Holy are you, God, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ, whom you sent in the fullness of time to be a light to the nations, to be Emmanuel, your presence with us. He humbled himself in obedience to your will and freely accepted death on a cross. By the baptism of his suffering, death and resurrection you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with a new covenant by water and the Spirit. On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

ALL: **And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith. Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

PASTOR: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and juice. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, al-

mighty God, now and forever. Amen.

ALL: **Amen.**

**Prepare for Communion with Confession and Words of Affirmation** (*Joseph*)

PASTOR: The bread of heaven transforms a sinner into a saint. Receive the bread, eat and be transformed.

ALL: **We receive this gift knowing that we are only sanctified by God's grace.**

PASTOR: The bread of heaven changes our church community. Share the bread; share the cup.

ALL: **We gather as a family of faith. We share our lives with each other.**

PASTOR: The bread of heaven is holy and pure. Our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another. Let us draw near with faith, make our humble confession and prepare to receive this Holy Sacrament.

ALL: **I do not presume to come to this your table, O merciful Lord, trusting in my own goodness, but in your unfailing mercies. I am not worthy that you should receive me, but give your word and I shall be healed, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.**

PASTOR: Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that is proof of God's love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

ALL: **Amen. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.**

PASTOR: Amen.

**Sharing the Bread and Cup**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication of Gifts and Self** (*Joseph*)

PASTOR: Thank you, merciful God, for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son, and for your promise of watching over us. You journey with us wherever we go and you promise to bring us into new days and new ways. Living in the joyous hope of your coming to redeem us, we dedicate our gifts and our lives to your service.

ALL: **Lord, bless our gifts and accept our thanks. Help us to live with hope for your new day and guide us to help others to prepare for that day. In the name of Jesus we ask. Amen.**

**Hymn #211** (red, vs. 1-4)                    **“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”**

**Commissioning and Blessing** (*Joseph*)

PASTOR: We give thanks to God, who blesses us with the joy we find in each other.

ALL: **May God be ever-present to us in the faces of those we encounter this day.**

PASTOR: Increase and abound in love for one another. And may God strengthen your hearts in holiness as you joyfully await and prepare for his Son's coming who lives and reigns with him and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ALL: **Amen.**

(Thank you to those who have participated in today's worship.  
You are invited to stay and listen to the Postlude or leave as you wish.)

**Postlude** (8:30)  
(11)

“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”—arr. Mark Hayes  
“Come, Messiah King” — arr. J. Rouse

# Announcements

## Today, December 1 First Sunday of Advent

- 8:30 a.m. Worship — Worship Center and online <https://www.youtube.com@aldersgateunitedmethodistc8463> or at your convenience at [www.aldersgatelinc.org](http://www.aldersgatelinc.org). You may also search YouTube for Aldersgate United Methodist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska
- 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour — Fellowship Hall
- 9:45 a.m. *The Chosen* — Room 4
- 9:45 a.m. Middle School/High School Youth Sunday School — Room 1.
- 9:45 a.m. Children's Sunday School — Room 2.
- 10:40 a.m. Choir Warm-up — Choir Room
- 11:00 a.m. Worship — Worship Center
- 11 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Living Nativity Drive-thru — 3B Homestead, 7603 298th St. Murdock
- 12:15 p.m. Hanging of the Greens — Sunshine Room. A family event with soup & sandwiches.
- 1:00 p.m. *The Shepherds* — Worship Center
- 1:00 p.m. Lincoln Ostomy Group — Fellowship Hall

## Monday, December 2

- 6:00 p.m. Dance Class Christmas Potluck — Sunshine Room

## Tuesday, December 3

- 9:00 a.m. Artisans
- 11:30 a.m. Grand Generation — Stauffer's Café, 5600 S. 48th St.

## Wednesday, December 4

- 1:30 p.m. Book Club *The House Is on Fire* by Rachel Beanland — Room 4
- 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice — Worship Center

## Thursday, December 5

- 12:30 p.m. Worship & Prayer Service — Theater, Legacy Estates, 7200 Van Dorn

## Friday, December 6

- 8:45 a.m. Take Off Pounds Sensibly — Room 4

## Saturday, December 7

- 8:00 a.m. Crown Point Townhomes Association — Sunshine Room
- 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Mission Christmas — First U.M. Church, 2723 N. 50th St. Cookie Walk, Craft Show, Grandma's Attic, homemade soups, sandwiches and pie
- 10:00 a.m. Nebraska Herbal Society — Fellowship Hall
- 11:00 a.m. Citizen's Climate Lobby — Room 4

## Saturdays, December 7, 14, 21; Sundays, December 8, 15, 22

- 2-5 p.m. Living Nativity Walk thru the Barn — 3B Homestead, 7603 298th St. Murdock

## Next Sunday, December 8

- 8:30 a.m. Worship — Worship Center and online
- 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour — Fellowship Hall
- 9:45 a.m. *The Chosen* — Room 4
- 9:45 a.m. Middle School/High School Youth Sunday School — Room 1.
- 9:45 a.m. Children's Sunday School — Room 2. Taught by Char Haggard and Sheila Kellenbarger
- 10:40 a.m. Choir Warm-up — Choir Room
- 11:00 a.m. Worship — Worship Center
- 2-4 p.m. Women's Christmas Happy Hour — Fellowship Hall

**Tuesday, December 10**

1:30 p.m. Caregiver Education Group Holiday Celebration — Fellowship Hall

**Friday, December 13**

6:30 p.m. Friday Fling — Fellowship Hall

**Sunday, December 15**

8:30 a.m. Lessons and Carols — Worship Center and online

11:00 a.m. Lessons and Carols with the Aldersgate Choir — Worship Center

12:15 p.m. Ham potluck — Sunshine Room

**Spirit of Giving**



If you wish to make a donation in memory or in honor of a loved one for poinsettias, please return this form in the offering plate or to the Church Office by Sunday, December 22. The remainder of the money collected will go to Mosaic in Axtell at Bethphage Village (Zach Steward’s home.)

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) you wish to honor \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) you wish to remember \_\_\_\_\_

**Gifts for the Staff**

At this time of year, we often express our appreciation through gifts. If you would like to participate in a monetary Christmas gift for our staff, you may give your contribution to Kathy Dombrowski by Sunday, December 22.



**Prayer List**

**Birthdays This Week**

1 Lynda Nordyke (85)  
Nancy Taylor (65)

5 Seth Lienemann

6 Milly Lienemann

7 Ava Aksamit

Linda Pearson

Dan Smith

Hollister Huskey

Alane & Gary Wahlstrom

Dick Easley

Shirley Hanley

David Huston

Zach Steward

Roxie & Richard Swyers

Nadyne Bauer is at Bryan East

Skip, Katrena Anton’s friend with colon cancer

Hayley Jambor’s mother who has a brain tumor

Sister Judith Healy is the 82 yr. old cousin of Katrena Anton, rehabbing in Omaha after a fall.

Iva Maxey, Reba Wysocki’s sister, who is undergoing dialysis treatments

Ava Miles, Phyllis Nelson’s niece, was diagnosed with gastroparesis.

Jennifer Miles, Phyllis Nelson’s niece

Tim Murphy, a veteran with memory issues

Isaiah Pierce, Karen Pierce’s grandson who was born 12/13/22 with heart issues

Alex Ronne, Pat Ruth’s cousin, a 7-year-old girl living in Colorado diagnosed with MLD, a rare, incurable, genetic disease.

Ross Teske and his missionary work in Talavera de la Reina, Spain

People in Ukraine, Israel and Palestine

