

Aldersgate United Methodist Church

December 22, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Advent



8:30 a.m.

With Pastor John Goldrich serving
Newman U.M. Church
Videographer: Nancy Taylor
Song Leaders: Dan and Kara Steward
Greeter/Usher: Nelda Boswell

11:00 a.m. Service

Greeter/Usher: Dan Smith
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

**Aldersgate
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 22, 2024

Lighting the Advent Wreath #2090 (black, vs. 4, 8:30, *Joseph*) **“Light the Advent Candle”**
(11) **“Advent’s Holy Light”** — *Aldersgate Choir*
(Four candles are lit.)

LEADER: Today the fourth candle, the candle of Love, joins the candles of Hope, Peace and Joy. Like the combined glow of many candles, let this season remind us of the strength found in unity as we come together to love and uplift one another. Let the warmth of love illuminate the connections that bind us together and foster us in a deep sense of belonging. Love creates the bonds that provide us with deep meaningful relationships.

ALL: **The greatest of all gifts is love.**

LEADER: Love inspires random acts of kindness and generosity.

ALL: **The greatest of all gifts is love.**

LEADER: Love causes us to only look for the best in others.

ALL: **The greatest of all gifts is love.**

LEADER: Love allows us to be accepted for who we are, flaws and all.

ALL: **The greatest of all gifts is love.**

LEADER: Gracious Creator, we gather in your presence today, hearts brimming with gratitude for the extraordinary gift of love you have bestowed upon us. May the celebration of love extend beyond our immediate circles, creating ripples of compassion and unity in the world. In recognizing the beauty of love, may we become vessels of your light, shining brightly for all to see. Amen.

WORDS & MUSIC: Joel Raney

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

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

John 3:16

LEADER: For God so loved the world

ALL: **that he gave his only begotten Son**

LEADER: that whosoever believes in Him

ALL: **shall not perish but have everlasting life.**

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

Amid the confusions of an anxious earth, we meet to anticipate the Christ Child’s coming. Light of the World, who shined that first Christmas in a dark generation and came to a strange and humble place where shepherds gathered at a manger, shine on us in our darkness, come to us in our humble estate. Amen.

Hymn #229 (red)

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance (*John*)

PASTOR: Blessed be the God of Israel!

ALL: **Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,**

PASTOR: for God is with us, smiling upon us with love.

ALL: **Blessed be the God of Israel,**

PASTOR: for Christ has saved us from our enemies, our sins, and our fears.

ALL: **Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,**

PASTOR: for God’s Spirit shines upon us, giving light for our darkness.

ALL: **Blessed be the Lord God of Israel! We come before you, mighty God, asking forgiveness and cleansing for our lives that are rough and unfinished. Cleanse us, purify us, give us**

your gentle love, your pure peace and your shining hope. Let the offering of our lives be beautiful, unhindered, and abounding with joy. Let our hearts be steadfast and sure as we face the future, knowing that the future is yours and held in your hands. Amen.

PASTOR: The psalmist proclaims: Blessed be the God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us. Your sins are forgiven. Go and sin no more.

ALL: **Yours sins are forgiven. Go and sin no more.**

Hymn #230 (red, vs. 1, 3-4)

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Affirmation of Faith (*John*)

I believe in Jesus Christ and the beauty of the gospel that began in Bethlehem. I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; of whose coming only shepherds saw the sign and for whom the crowded inn could find no room. I believe in the one whom the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand, whose paths were among the common people, whose welcome came from people with hungry hearts. I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible; whose cradle was a mother’s arms, whose home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, and who looked at persons and made them see what his love saw in them, who by his love brought sinners back to wholeness, and who lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God. I confess our ever-lasting need of God: the need for forgiveness for our greed and selfishness, the need of life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

Offertory Invitation (*Joseph*) (8:30)
(11)

“I Wonder as I Wander” — arr. Mark Hayes
“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” — German Carol

Doxology (to the tune of #75, red)

“Praise God”

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

MUSIC: attr. Louis Bourgeois, 1551

Prayer of Dedication of Gifts and Self (*John*)

Gracious God, in this season of anticipation, we offer our gifts with caring hearts. As we continue to prepare for the fullness of your kingdom, may these offerings be a sign of our readiness and desire to live attentively. Use them to bring justice, righteousness, and joy to our world. Surprise us with your presence and help us to look up, to pay attention, and to embrace the hope, peace, joy and love you bring. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Scripture (8:30 *John*, 11 *Stacey*)

Micah 5:2, Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 11:1, Galatians 4:4, Luke 2:7

But you, Bethlehem, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. A shoot shall come from the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. When the fulness of time had come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Would You Believe . . . A Stable?

by Linda Thomas

Directed by Jim Miller

Produced by special arrangement with Christian Publishers

Hymn #217 (red)

“Away in a Manger”

“God Knew Our Greatest Need” (*Joseph*)

PASTOR: If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator.

ALL: **If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist.**
PASTOR: If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist.
ALL: **If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer.**
PASTOR: But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.
ALL: **God's greatest gift to us is Jesus Christ.**
PASTOR: This Christmas may we see and know anew how great His love is toward us!

Hymn #249 (red)

“There’s a Song in the Air”

Sending Forth (*Joseph*)

PASTOR: Let us depart, blessed, filled with the wonder of God’s plan, and inspired by the willingness of everyone involved, real or imaginary, in carrying out that plan, so God’s kingdom may come to earth.

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)

“Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow” — arr. Mark Hayes
“For Unto Us a Child Is Born” — arr. Tornquist

Would You Believe . . . A Stable?

Cast

Angels

Uriah
Sgt. of Angels — *Karl Schwabauer*

Brother Daniel
Tom Haggar

Brother Justin
Public Relations and Field Expert — *Patrick Williams*

Sister Hannah
Carol Clymer

Sister Ursula
Member of Celestial Choir — *Julie Clopper-Smith*

Sister Joanna
Char Haggar

Humans

Larry Ruth
Ethan Huston
Dexter Jambor

Working behind the scenes on set, props,
costumes, program, sound and prompting:

Artisans

Nelda Boswell
Julie Clopper-Smith
Harry Kellenbarger
Donna Lanum
Stacey Lienemann
Larry Ruth
Pat Ruth
Myrna Stanard
Nancy Taylor

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.)



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 or Harry Kellenbarger by Sunday, December 22.

Your name _____

Name(s) you wish to honor _____

Name(s) you wish to remember _____

Announcements

Today, December 22

- 8:30 a.m. Worship including "Would You Believe. . . . A Stable?" — Worship Center and online <https://www.youtube.com@aldersgateunitedmethodistc8463> or at your convenience at 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. Middle School/High School Youth Sunday School — Room 1.
- 9:45 a.m. Children's Sunday School "Chrismons" — Room 2.
- 10:45 a.m. Choir Warm-up — Choir Room
- 11:00 a.m. Worship including "Would You Believe. . . . A Stable?" — Worship Center
- 2-5 p.m. Living Nativity Walk-thru the Barn — 3B Homestead, 7603 298th St. Murdock
- 2:00 p.m. Parkinson's Support Group — Sheridan Lutheran

Monday, December 23 – Tuesday, December 24

11 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Living Nativity Drive-thru — 3B Homestead, 7603 298th St. Murdock

Tuesday, December 24 **Christmas Eve**

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service — Worship Center and online

Friday, December 27

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

Saturday, December 28

- 11:00 a.m. Huston Family Christmas — Sunshine Room
- 5:00 p.m. Hartwig Family Christmas — Sunshine Room
- 5:00 p.m. Lienemann Family Christmas — Fellowship Hall

Next Sunday, December 29

- 8:30 a.m. Christmas Carol Sing — Worship Center and online
- 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour — Fellowship Hall
- 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 Haggar and Sheila Kellenbarger
- 11:00 a.m. Christmas Carol Sing — Worship Center

Next Monday, December 30

7:00 p.m. Spiritual Living and Worship Planning Team — Room 4

Tuesday, January 7

11:30 a.m. Grand Generation — Stauffer’s Café, 5600 S. 48th St.

7:00 p.m. Lasting Legacy Series — Worship Center and online. Andrew Loudon and Lorrie Benson, attorneys discussing how to gather the details of your life (including your digital footprint) so your family/estate executors can take care of your affairs.

Wednesday, January 8

1:30 p.m. Book Club *The Women* by Kristin Hannah — Room 4

Friday, January 10

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

Wednesday, January 15

1:30 p.m. Stitcheroos — Room 4

Thursday, January 16

2:30 p.m. Care Ministry — Zoom

Saturday, January 18

8:00 a.m. Men’s Breakfast — Room 4

Tuesday, January 21

7:00 p.m. Book Club *The Women* by Kristin Hannah — Room 4

Tuesday, January 28

7:00 p.m. Earth Steward Series “2025 LES SEP Incentives” — Worship Center and online

Prayer List

Anniversaries and Birthdays This Week

- 22 Jake & Marjorie Wyant
- 23 William Vlasnik
- 24 Phyllis Nelson
- 25 Dennis Frederick
- 27 Evie Hustad
- 28 Jerry & Shirley Hanley Bill & Phyllis Nelson

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Dick Easley | Judy Faubel | Dennis Frederick |
| Shirley Hanley | Keller Hustad | Dallas Huston |
| Laura Marshall | Lynda Nordyke | Roxie & Richard Swyers |
| Zach Steward | Jacob | Arlene |

- John
- Skip, Katrena Anton’s friend with colon cancer
- Jody Anderson, Hayley Jambor’s mother who has a brain tumor
- Nadyne Bauer is on hospice
- 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

