



Aldersgate United Methodist Church

“sharing the living Christ through life-changing service and love”

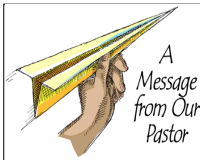


As the temperatures begin to drop, we are being challenged to think of ways that we, as a church, can reach out to the marginalized poor, the hungry and the homeless in the New Orleans area.



There are several ways that we can reach out throughout the winter season to those in our community:

1. We will be collecting new and “nearly new” blankets, sleeping bags, hats, gloves, mittens and socks to be distributed throughout the community. These items are to be brought to the church. We will get them to those who will distribute them.
Note Professional Shoppers: Shop after Christmas sales and let’s gather up as many items as we can. The church will reimburse you for your “shopping efforts.”
2. We will be purchasing electric heaters for those who may have little source of heat in their homes. If you know of someone who is need of such a heater, contact the church office (985-641-5829).
3. Please make a donation to the “Warmth for the Winter” fund. We will try to meet all needs, as we are able with the resources provided to us. This includes but is not limited to: electric bills, needs of the Food Bank and CCC, for example.
4. Be alert for another “sandwich” day...should we see the opportunity.



A
Message
from Our
Pastor

One of my most favorite Christmas hymns is the hymn, "Love Came Down At Christmas."

Here are the words:

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, love divine;
Worship we our Jesus:
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
Love shall be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and to all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

Soren Kierkegaard once told this story:

A prince wanted to find a maiden suitable to be his queen. One day while running an errand in the local village for his father he passed through a poor section. As he glanced out the windows of the carriage, his eyes fell upon a beautiful peasant maiden. During the ensuing days, he often passed by the young lady and soon fell in love. But he had a problem. How would he seek her hand? He could order her to marry him. But even a prince wants his bride to marry him freely and voluntarily and not through coercion. He could put on

his most splendid uniform and drive up to her front door in a carriage drawn by six horses. But if he did this he would never be certain that the maiden loved him or was simply overwhelmed with all of the splendor. The prince came up with another solution. He would give up his kingly robe. He moved, into the village, entering not with a crown but in the garb of a peasant. He lived among the people, shared their interests and concerns, and talked their language. In time the maiden grew to love him for who he was and because he had first loved her.

This is as beautiful an appropriation of the story of the Incarnation of Christ as I have ever heard. Our God coming down to us, to live with us, and to

win us, not by his power, but through HIS great LOVE!

Born that night? PEACE! Born that night? HOPE! Born that night? JOY! Born that night?

LOVE...For God so loved the world that God sent God's Son into the world, not to judge the world but that the world might be saved through Him...

Blessings,

rev. Tracy Mackenzie



The Aldersgate Staff would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with Peace, Hope, Joy and Love! We are grateful for your many expressions of generosity throughout this past year and especially during this Holy Season and look forward to serving alongside you in the year to come. Again, many thanks and blessings of the New Year.



Ushers for January



8:30a

Antonio Iennusa
Donna Lew
Kevin Roark

985-781-6001
985-781-6001
985-788-0980

11am

Keith Burriss
Joe Foozer
Chris Rider
Al Hughey

504-382-2593
985-290-1976
985-641-4233
985-781-1835

We are always in need for additional ushers to fill our rosters.

Please consider giving us a few weeks of Sundays to serve in worship!
Email Scott or call the church office if you have questions or are interested.

As we begin this new year I would like to take a quick moment and thank everyone who has shared in making worship at Aldersgate happen this past year. It takes many hands to create, envision, lead, aid and attend over 100 different worship services. There are a lot of moving parts involved in our worship services. Many thanks to those who design our space, welcome and aid our guests and worshippers, lead our music and spoken word, teach our children (and us), create and manage our media and sound, and share the bread and cup.

We could not do it without you all!

Acolyte Schedule

January 7

Roselynn Moore

January 14

Shelby LaBourdette

January 21

Gracie Manion

January 28

Preston Paulk

Sunday Mornings

**Traditional
Worship**

8:30am  Sanctuary

**Contemporary
Worship**

11:00am  Sanctuary

Adult Sunday School 9:45 am-10:45 am

→ Cokesbury Building, Chapel, Asbury

Sunday School for Youth 9:45 am-10:45 am

Confirmation Class (6th grade) Genesis Hall

Youth Sunday School Class (7-12 grade) meet in the Choir Room

College, Career & Coffee "C3" meet in Cokesbury 201

Children's Sunday School 9:45 am-10:45 am

→ Susanna Wesley, John Wesley Center

Dec. 29/Jan. 1 Church Office Closed

January 4 Thursday Morning Coffee with 9th-12th graders *resumes* 6:30 am, Starbucks on I-10 & Gause
 Marriage Encounter Class *more information on page 5*

January 7 Epiphany Sunday Worship 8:30 am Traditional / 11:00 am Contemporary, Sanctuary

January 8 Kairos Prison Ministry Informational Meeting, *more information on page 6*

January 9 Something's Brewing *resumes* 9 am, Genesis Hall
 Lunch with the Pastor 11 am - 1 pm, El Paso

January 10 Beginner Crochet Class, *more information on page 5*

**Wednesday Night Dinners resumes 5-7 pm,
 in the John Wesley Center**

Wednesday Night Youth *resumes* 6-7:30 pm, Genesis Hall

Faith Friends *resumes* 6-7:30 pm, John Wesley Center

GriefShare Support Group, *more information on page 5*

Covenant Bible Study *begins—6:30 p.m.*

January 25 Grown Ups Coffee & Conversation

**Menu for
 Wednesday, Jan. 9th
 Turkey & Sausage
 Gumbo
 Potato Salad, Salad
 Bar, Bread, Dessert.
 Adults \$8.00
 Kids under 12 eat
 for Free!
 Best Meal Deal in Town!**

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL FROM WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1992

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." Luke 2:10

The year was 1952, the day was December 24th, the time was one o'clock in the early morning, the place was the western front in South Korea. I had just arrived at the artillery battery that was to be my "home" for the next year. It was cold that morning, very cold, it was noisy, very noisy, and I was scared, very, very scared. I was also tired and as I walked into the bunker I found a veteran G.I. on duty who welcomed me warmly. (Perhaps the main reason for the warm reception was that I was his replacement and he would now be able to go home soon). He looked around and found a half dozen blankets and a cot and told me to get some sleep for I was going to be busy at sunrise." But try as I might, sleep wouldn't come. I was just too cold (even with all those blankets), too scared, and it was just too noisy from the out-going artillery rounds.

As I lay there in the dark, shivering from cold and fear, I realized that the battery operated radio was tuned into the Armed Forces Network and they were bringing messages to the servicemen from the folks back home. I thought how I wished I was home with my family and friends. As I lay there I started to recall all the Christmases past. I thought of Christmas morning, the family dinners and the programs that we had at school and at church. Suddenly I realized that the radio was playing Christmas carols, and as they continued to play the carols I had the warming feeling that God was near, even there in Korea halfway around the world. Then, even though the radio wasn't very loud, they played "Silent Night, Holy Night" and somehow that song was able to drown out the noise that was outside and I fell off to sleep.

The days went by and I was able to adjust to army life and to the conditions in Korea. The truce was signed in July and a quietness came to the land and although the Korean people are still searching for true peace, the truce was a hopeful sign. Then a few days before Christmas 1953, the orders came down that I would be heading for home, the departure date - December 26th. Therefore, I would be spending my second Christmas in Korea, but how different it would be from the first one.

On Christmas morning, a group of about 20 orphans came to spend the day at our battery and to share a turkey dinner with us. We passed out gifts (sent to us from families back home), played games and had a most enjoyable day listening to the children's laughter and seeing their smiling faces. After dinner, the children put on a Christmas program, very much like the ones that I was involved in at my church when I was growing up. They closed their program by singing "Silent Night, Holy Night" in their native tongue. The Lord was surely there with all his people throughout the world that day and always.

Prayer: Dear Lord, we thank You for the peace You have given us, which does not depend on feelings or circumstances.

Gordon J. Greenwood

Something's Brewing . . . returns January 9

For more information contact Suzie Hunt, Suzie@aldersgate-slidell.org

The ladies of Something's Brewing will float into the new year on the wings of "The Good and Beautiful Life" by James Bryan Smith. As a companion book to "The Good and Beautiful God", a study much enjoyed to the SB group in 2017, this volume will also offer great material for discussions led by Cheryl Smith.

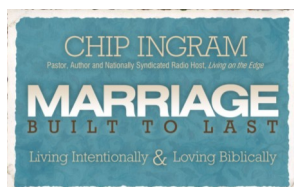
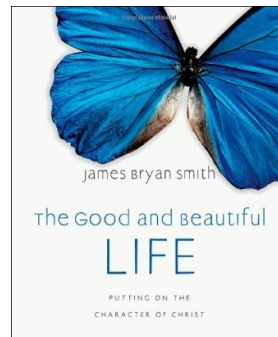
"I have never met a person whose goal was to ruin his or her life.

We all want to be happy, and we want it all of the time."

So begins James Bryan Smith in *The Good and Beautiful Life*. The problem is, he tells us, we have bought into false notions of happiness and success. These self-centered decisions lead us further into the vices that cause ruin: anger, lust, lying, worry and judging. Eventually we find ourselves living a beautifully packaged life of self-destruction. This book will guide us to look behind these character flaws and to replace our false beliefs with Jesus' narratives about life in the kingdom of God.

With the start of the new year and a new study book, this is an excellent time to join in. Not only do we share the word of God with each other, this group has become a wonderful place for women, in various stages of life, to connect and support each other as we go through life together.

Something's Brewing meets in Genesis Hall on Tuesday mornings, beginning at 9 a.m. A free nursery is provided with prior notice. Copies of the study book are available at the church office for \$13.



MARRIAGE: BUILT TO LAST

Six Week Study starting January 11, 2018

6:30-7:30pm Genesis Hall

Money, In-laws, sex, arguments ... we all want a healthy, loving marriage, but there are so many real issues that can stand in the way.

Marriage: Built to Last isn't your typical marriage study. Throughout the series, you'll watch 24 real life couples from across the country share candidly about their struggles in communication, finances, sexual intimacy, expectations, and more.

For more information and/or to sign up for the study please contact Adam Moore: 985-641-5829 or adam@aldersgate-slidell.org.



Beginner Crochet Class starts Jan. 10

A beginner's crochet class will be offered beginning Wednesday, Jan. 10. Led by Phyllis Mitchell, it will cover basic crochet techniques. The 8-week class will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Wednesdays through Feb. 28 (except Ash Wednesday). Each student should have a "K" crochet hook. All other supplies will be provided.

The class is limited to 6 people.

To reserve your space, contact the church office at 641-5829.



After the funeral, when the cards and flowers stop coming, most of the people return to their normal lives. But your grief continues and you feel alone. GriefShare is a 13 week support group that meets weekly. The sessions are designed to help you rebuild your life and to offer help and encouragement after the death of a spouse, child, family member or friend. We know it hurts and we want to help.

Starting Wednesday, January 10th

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in Cokesbury 206

Facilitators: Dr. David Kidder & Debbie Watts

For more information, go to www.griefshare.org or call the church office at 985-641-5829 to register.



Kairos Prison Ministry Information Meeting

Monday, January 8, 2018 7 p.m. Genesis Hall

Aldersgate UMC has had a long association with the Kairos Prison Ministry. Church members have participated by acting as mentors, weekend coordinators, as well as providing agape support, hand-colored posters and homemade cookies.

What About You?

- * Have you the courage to step further as a disciple of Christ?
- * Do you wonder if you can go into a prison and minister to inmates?
- * Can you have compassion and love for women whose loved one is incarcerated?

On January 8 at 7 p.m., Aldersgate is hosting an evening program to learn about the Kairos Prison Ministry.

Come and see how you can be as Christ to the lost. The inmates serve time behind the bars. Their families serve the same time in isolation, loss of support and income and missing the loving arms of their family members.

Come and see how Kairos hopes to change hearts and transform lives.

Come and See!

The Hands & Feet Ministry Is Here to Help



The volunteers of the Hands & Feet Ministry have been busy assisting their fellow man (and woman) with everyday tasks needing a little extra help and consideration.

Thanks to our volunteers, furniture have been moved, light bulbs have been changed in verrrry tall ceilings and even a Christmas tree and the trimmings were moved down from an attic. These may sound like small things, but they were a big deal to those who needed help.

We are on this earth to help each other. If you have something you need help with, please give the church office a call and we'll see what can be done.

With the slogan of "We've Gotcha Covered", we want to help.

The H&F Ministry is also looking for people willing to give a few hours of their time to answer a call for assistance. Volunteers will be called on a rotating basis when a request for assistance comes in. If you are not available at that time, no problem.

For more information or to sign up to volunteer your time, please call **641-5829** or e-mail Suzie Hunt at suzie@aldersgate-slidell.org.

Prayer Shawl Deliver Helpers Needed

After a prayer shawl is lovingly created, it needs to find its way to a person in need of its comfort. This ministry is looking for people to make shawl deliveries. If you are interested in this important ministry, contact Phyllis Mitchell at rainbowgirls1970@gmail.com or call the church office at 641-5829.



**Thursday, Feb 15 - Sunday, Feb 18
At The Wesley Center in Woodworth**

As your faith is challenged in a pluralistic world, ask yourself... Are you looking for something more?

Cursillo, the 3-day weekend program, can help you develop, live and share your spirituality in today's society. Discussions are led by Methodist lay people and spiritual advisors and emphasis the meaning of grace and the Sacraments as well as the need for prayer and ways of living life in union with God.

A Louisiana Cursillo weekend is scheduled for February 15-18 at the Wesley Center (Methodist Conference Center) in Woodworth, LA.

For more information about the Cursillo experience, Joann Lightfoot at **985-290-3071**; or Rick Lightfoot at **985-649-5736**.

To participate, you must have a sponsor who is active in Cursillo.



An Encounter with Christ

Faith Friends

Wednesday's
6:30-7:30 Genesis Hall
4th-6th grade
Join us for some faith,
fun, and games!

xeecovers.com

PREK-2nd SWC 3rd-5th JWC

SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:45am

Classes for all ages

Confirmation in Genesis Hall



Be sure to check out our new
space in the front of the
Sanctuary.

This is a Quiet Space for
children under the age of 5!

Please contact Ms. Stacey if you have any questions or feedback
about Wee Worship at stacey@aldersgate-slidell.org

Youth Schedule January 2018

- » **Big Group starts back on
Sunday January 7th.
*Meeting at 5:30pm every Sunday***
- » **Small group starts back on
Wednesday January 10th.
*Meeting at 6pm every Wednesday***



**Thursday Morning
Coffee *with*
High School Youth**

Meet us at Starbucks
(I-10 & Gause) at
6:30 am on Jan. 4th

All 9th-12th graders
are invited to start
your day with us!

**Apple Tree Preschool & “Little Lambs” MDO****COMING SOON... Registration for 2017-2018 School Year**

It's getting close to “that time again”!

Registration for **In-House Students** will be held on Tuesday, February 6th at 8:00am. Registration packets will be sent home with current students at the end of the month. We will begin accepting registration forms at 8:00am the morning of February 6th and class rosters will begin to be filled at that time.

Additional registration dates will be held for **Church & Alumni** on Thursday, February 8th at 9:15am and **Open Registration** will be held Tuesday, February 20th at 9:15am.

Please pass on this important information to friends and family who may have children interested in attending Apple Tree Preschool & Little Lambs MDO.

If you have additional questions, please contact Cheryl Mann or Marsha Hubbard in the school office or stop by anytime Monday through Friday for a tour.

**Apple Tree /
AUMC Children's Ministry Night at
Texas Roadhouse
Tuesday, January 16th
4-8pm Dine In or Take-out**



You are Invited to the Annual PreK Mardi Gras Wagon Parade on Friday, February 9th at 10:30am in the paved parking lot of AUMC.



Our Aldersgate church family, friends, & the community are welcome to attend the festivities!

*For More Information Contact
Cheryl Mann, Director, appletreeslidell@gmail.com
or Marsha Hubbard, Administrative Assistant, appletree@charter.net
985-641-0184*

And Don't Forget to “Like” Apple Tree Slidell on Facebook!



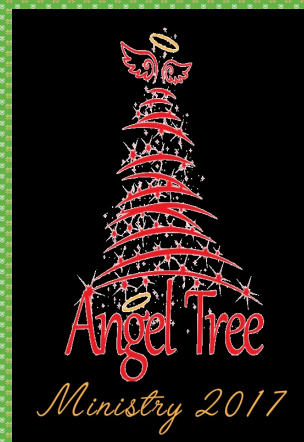
Aldersgate Angel Tree 2017

Aldersgate adopted a total of 94 children this year!
44 by Apple Tree Preschool and 50 by the Congregation

So many of you answered this call and shopped with your heart to make sure that each child has a special present under the tree for them this year. This year your generosity benefited the children from **Rainbow Childcare and Lacombe/Mandeville Head Start**. I can only imagine the smiling faces, the high-pitched screams and the joy that this will bring to the kids and their parents on Christmas morning!

It is a blessing to serve this wonderful ministry!

Sasha Massel, Lauren Brignac, and Cheryl Mann



Thank you for answering the call!

It was wonderful to give the Toys For Tots collection truck a box full of toys this year. Thank you for helping make a child smile at Christmas time!



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

Thank you to all who contributed to the 2017 CCC Food Pantry Collection Drive. As of Dec. 15, we exceeded our goal of collecting 1,000 lbs and have donated more than 1,024 lbs of non-perishable foods and personal hygiene supplies to the CCC for distribution to those in need.

Nicely Done!

**Watch for details about our upcoming
2018 Food Drive**



**Our January 7th
Communion Rail
Offering will support**

Rainbow Child Care here in Slidell
 Rainbow's Mission is to strengthen working families with a quality child development program. This program provides a low cost, quality childcare program for children ages 1-5 to low-income families attempting to break the cycle of dependence on public assistance.

Covenant Study Begins January 10

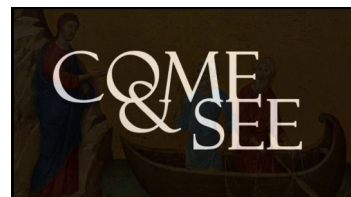
Aldersgate will be offering the Covenant Bible Study beginning Wednesday, Jan. 10.

Rick Lightfoot will be leading this study in Room 207, Cokesbury beginning at 6:30 pm.

The Covenant experience will guide participants through an in-depth, comprehensive study of the Bible over three 8-week sessions. This amazing study stresses the unique relationship that God chooses to have with us as God's people. This relationship is grounded in God's love for us and our ongoing commitments to stay in love with God while we share signs of that love with others.

The first 8 week study is titled "Creating". Each class member will need a participant guide and their Bible. Guide copies are available in the church office for \$10.

Reserve your place in this interesting class by calling the church office at 641-5829 or e-mailing Suzie Hunt at suzie@aldersgate-slidell.org. If you have any questions concerning the class, contact Rick at right98@bellsouth.net.



Where's the Coffee?

Beginning Sunday, January 7, stop by the Mix and Mingle Room at the rear of the Sanctuary for a fresh cup of coffee on Sunday mornings. We are moving the JWC coffee service to the Mingle room so that everyone can visit in one central location.

Coffee will be available on Sundays from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. starting in January. See you in the Mingle Room.

Creative Corner

Monday, Jan. 8—UMCOR School Bags— We will be sewing UMCOR cloth school bags. All supplies will be provided. If you have a portable sewing machine, please bring it. We will need help cutting and pinning the bags to prepared to be sewn. These bags will be given to the UMCOR Sager Brown Depot when we make our mission trip there in April.



Monday, Jan. 22—Handmade Valentines — Susan Alexander will lead us in a workshop as we make beautiful handcrafted valentines. All supplies will be provided and are free.

See you in Genesis Hall—6 p.m.

PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING

Our church family is our best source for names of those persons in need of care. Please contact the pastor at (641-5829) or a Care Team member when you know of a need. You can also email your prayer request to prayer@aldersgate-slidell.org

Our Care Team coordinators are: Rhea Snyder, 643-3945; and Charlotte Clifford, 847-0966.

Christian Condolences: Jerri West and daughter in the passing of their husband and father, Frank West.

Joys: Wonderful Small, Dancing Light Cantata, Sounds of the Season, Soups of the Season. Caroling, Cookies and Cocoa. Beautiful Christmas Eve Worship Services. Bill & Mary Lee George celebrated 63 years of marriage on December 11, 2017.

Impending Tests/Surgery: Craig Horn, Judy Farrow, Erin Copeland, Jean Lynch, Carl Fuglein, Themis Filas.

Hospitalized: Doug May, Julia Guillory, Pat Doyle, Taylor Tyner.

Recovering at Home: Catherine Scarborough, Mindy P. Stewart, Rev. Jack Lynch.

Prayers: Hope Oberkirch, Andy Toth, JoAnn Kidder, Marty Martin, John Stroh, Blanche Copeland, Cory, Savannah and Kyleigh, Bre, Scott Hutson, Brian Gordon, Scott, Bonnie and Janie, Ling Stroh, Kitty

Roper, Kristi Kinsey Holley, Kendra Miser, Our Country, Our Military, President Donald Trump, the Unemployed, Aldersgate United Methodist Church, Homebound members, Rev. Tracy L. MacKenzie

Continuing Concerns: Rachel Cochrane, Marilyn Quimby, JoRee Bechnel, Brenna Carpenter, Mary Felder, Cheri Loveless, J.D. Hartman, Susan Batson, Kathryn Wilson, Jeanie Stevens, Jerrold Stevens, Clyde Guillory, William Brumfield, Kurtill Bell, Janice Deviller, Kevin, Walter Hebert, Johnnie Lou Whitman, Shirley Dufrene, Larry Hamm, Vickie Palermo, Kristen Vanleusden, Kay Felkins, Joanne Parker, Bill and Janice Fink, Luke Smith, Lissa Jordan, Rick Saluga, Sara Delaha, Faye Hammer and family, Nancy Wood, Lucian Grass, Loretta Moore, David Nezat.



	November 2017	2017 Year to Date
Income	\$ 54, 371	\$ 593, 188
Expense	\$ 58, 281	\$ 667, 609
Net Income	\$ <3, 910>	\$ <74, 421>

The Communion Rail Offering for November, supporting The Prayer Shawl Ministry, came to \$305.00.

Stewardship Moment

The End of the Financial Year for 2017

First of all, let me apologize for the lateness of the **Connect**. I have been waiting on End of the Year financials which I (still) do not have as of the printing of this publication. I will send this information out immediately when I receive the corrected numbers for December and the End of the Year.

However, it is clear that we are going to have a significant shortfall for the 2017 Financial year. As of this date, there is a shortfall of pledged income of 5% or \$24,222.15. We generally finish the year with 98% or more in pledged giving. We are projecting a shortfall of about \$60,000.

The church can receive End of the Year giving until January 8th, as long as the contributions are dated 12/31/2017. After this we must close our financial books for the current year. The better we end the year, the stronger we start the new year. Also, end of the year gifts to the church are certainly beneficial to tax deductions.

2018 Stewardship Report (as of 12/31/2017)

Thus far, we have received 98 pledges for the coming year totaling \$420,229.00. Our projected budget for the coming year is \$770,000.00. This represents only 55% of the income that we need to operate the church in the coming year.

The Finance Committee and the Administrative Council will meet in January to look at the adoption of this budget. Factors which will be looked at concerning the proposed adoption of this budget are Pledged Giving, Unpledged Giving (based upon historical trends), Sunday School offering, Loose Plate Offering and other (small) miscellaneous sources of income. The number one factor is Pledged Giving. This is why it is soooooo very important

to have your financial commitments for the coming year. In 2017, there were 127 pledges totaling \$484,443.00. So we are missing a significant number of pledges for the coming year.

Can you imagine how hard it would be for you to run your households or businesses without a true picture of your expected income? I can tell from the standpoint of the church and the leadership of the church this is extremely "challenging."



I would certainly be remiss if I didn't thank you for your faithfulness and generosity throughout the year. Amazing things have happened this year through the ministry of the church. Next month, I hope to report more fully on how we achieved Something Bigger at Aldersgate UMC.

On behalf of the staff, thank you for your generous gifts that provided for year-end Christmas bonuses for the staff. All were so very appreciative.

Me? I am thankful for a staff that rises to every challenge with which they are confronted.

I am thankful to a congregation that always allows themselves to be nudged...okay, pushed to do even more than they can imagine.

I am thankful to be your Pastor and I look forward to our future together as we welcome another year of shared ministry.

Blessings upon blessings abound,
A Grateful Pastor

FINAL YEAR-END GIVING - Please make sure your final year-end giving contribution/tithes are postmarked by December 31, 2017 and turned in to the church office or put in the drop box in order to be included on your 2017 Giving Statement.

THE ECHO

Published by
ALDERSGATE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
aumc@aldersgate-slidell.org

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 360 Robert Blvd, Slidell, LA 70458.

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Love is Born



AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS...

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