

UPDATE FROM THE EXECUTIVE PASTOR EASTER 2017

This past fall a woman visited us for worship. She was in the last month of her first pregnancy and her husband was a patient in Johns Hopkins with brain cancer. She was looking for sanctuary. We baptized their little boy this Easter at 11:30.

Such is the work we do as a church.



Speaking of Easter, we had our largest attendance ever across 5 services, baptizing two other new Christians and receiving 4 couples into membership. Our live-streamed service on Facebook had 259 additional people join us for the 8:30 worship service while downloads of the Easter dialogue sermon nearly equal our overall Easter attendance. Holy Week too, both online and in person, exceeded years past.



Our Easter offering was \$49,000 compared to \$20,000 in Easter 2016. During the season of Lent, you all gave \$202,000 to our operating budget compared to \$175,000 last Lent, giving us a first quarter total of \$436,553 versus \$344,707 in 2016. Financially, we're tracking better than last year, our best year; however, our budget is also larger than any previous year so it'll be a stretch by the time we get to the final quarter, making your generosity all the more needed and appreciated.

Meanwhile, our Lenten Fundraiser, which will go towards our two projects with our partner, Highland Support Project, in Guatemala and White Mountain Apache Reservation raised over \$20,000.

Keeping up the mission theme, we followed Easter with our second Serve Sunday, welcoming Becca Stevens from Thistle Farms to preach, and then deploying volunteers throughout the church and at Stratford Landing Elementary School across 4 service projects, packing 40,000 meals for Rise Against Hunger, hundreds of food kits for Washington Mill Elementary School, and suppers for the homeless in DC. Between worship and the projects we had over 600 involved on Serve Sunday.



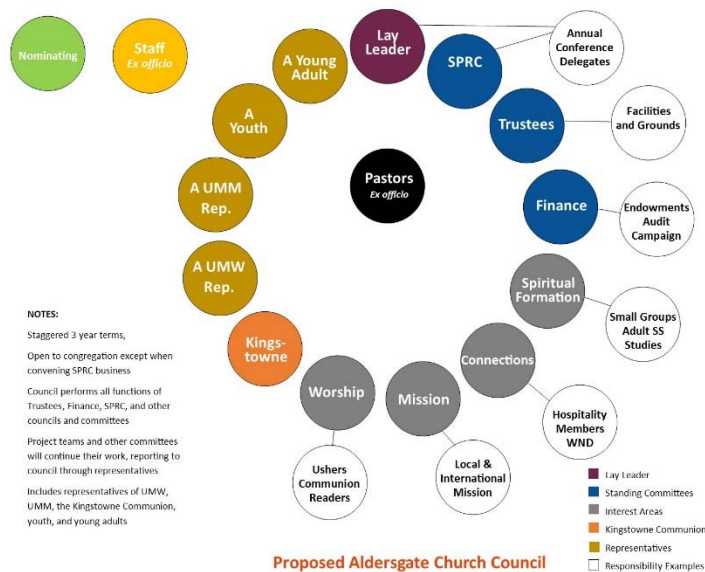
Our staff has been doing a fantastic job to organize and communicate the events and services this past month, and we look to add to our staff as members of our Staff-Parish Relations Committee are presently slated to begin interviewing the (very strong and promising) candidates we have for Youth Director.

At the end of May, Aldersgate member David King, a student at Haverford College who is discerning a call to theological work, will begin interning here for the summer. He will be leading our mission trips, preaching, and developing online curriculum. David is the sixth student to intern at Aldersgate in the past twelve years, which speaks volumes about Aldersgate's vitality, now and in the future.

By all measures, Aldersgate is thriving and bearing fruit.



To position us for even greater effectiveness, our lay leaders, the church council, and pastors have been considering a new model of lay governance for Aldersgate. It is based on an increasingly popular structure that is being adopted by many United Methodist congregations, especially large ones like Aldersgate. The model simplifies and reduces the number of councils and committees that oversee our work, decreases the need for redundant meetings, streamlines decision-making, and gives our leaders a wide-angle view of the congregation and its activities.



Under the new model, the church council would comprise 13 lay leaders who would be responsible for all of the administrative and leadership work of the church, including Trustees, Finance, and Staff-Parish. The United Methodist Book of Discipline gives us the latitude to modify our leadership structure provided that certain functions required by the Discipline (such as Trustees) are accounted for by the resulting governance group. You probably saw a letter about the proposal in This Week at Aldersgate, and you can find more information about it, a larger version of the diagram, and link for providing feedback at aldersgate.net/news/governance/.

Our lay leader, Leah Matthews, will facilitate listening sessions in the Library on Sunday, May 21, at the same time as the 9:45 and 11:15 services to hear your feedback and respond to questions you might have about this change.

Finally, it has been so long now since we announced it last summer that you may have already forgotten about it! Thanks to the generosity of Steve Guback we will be renovating Founders Hall. Third-party review of the plans has been completed, and we are now in the process of having the permits reviewed by the county. We expect construction to begin June 1, with the project completed in time for our kick-off in September. If we do not need the contingency money that Steve has also gifted us, we hope to be able to remodel the Founders Hall kitchen as well. Terry Williams has done a bang-up job leading our building committee once again, and I would encourage you to thank him!

Resurrection doesn't mean Jesus was alive again having been dead. It means Jesus is yet alive. The Church, therefore, isn't our work or creation. It is the means through which the Risen Christ works and creates.

I thank you for all the ways you keep this Easter news in front of me.

Jason Micheli, Executive Pastor