



ALDERSGATE ADVOCATE

March 2023

MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR:

“Follow the Yellow Line”

I still cherish the memory of my family going to the White Mountains two years ago. On the first day, we took the Kancamagus Highway. We rolled down the car windows and filled our lungs with fresh air while enjoying the scenic road. On the second day, it was cloudy, and a little bit drizzly. But we decided to venture up Mount Washington since we had heard so much about its beauty and elevation of 6288 ft. As we arrived at the ticket booth, a park ranger told us, “You won’t be able to see anything from the top of the mountain today because of the fog.” Well, we did not want to drive back home with nothing, so we decided to climb MW, shifting into first gear, and moving upward slowly.

After enjoying the scene for the first ten minutes, we became anxious and nervous. There was no guard rail to the side. The fog was getting thick to the point that we could see nothing further than five feet ahead. My mind started coming up with all kinds of scenarios. “What if another car comes down too fast and does not see us?” “What if I misread the road and take a wrong turn?” “What if another driver is driving under the influence?” Daniel was getting scared and started screaming, “Dad! I want to go back!” Well, the fog was so thick that it seemed more dangerous to turn the car around. The only solution was to go upward by following the yellow line in the middle.

As I visualize the road of Mount Washington, I wonder if some of us feel that the path in our life often feels like a curvy road instead of a straight one. At times, we feel secure, comfortable, and enjoyable. We feel satisfied with overcoming some obstacles in our work, relationship, or health. And next, we feel vulnerable, uncertain, and fearful as we drive along the cliff at an elevation of thousands of feet. This pandemic certainly feels that way. It marks three years this month since we all had to quarantine in our homes in March 2020. When we feel like it is coming to an end, a new variant appears and surges in our community and world, affecting our work, parenting, shopping, and health.

In times like these, where do you find a source of comfort and hope? Again, when I was driving up Mt Washington amid thick fog, the only thing that secured my passage was the yellow line. I trusted that it would not only help us avoid any collision with other cars but also lead us to the destination. Then, holding the steering wheel, I thought, “Is there any time when we did not need to rely on the grace of God?” From time to time, challenges and tribulations may block us from seeing the redeeming hands of God, who holds days and nights. We merely focus on our emotions, expressing our anger, frustration, and doubt. However, the psalmist knew that the prevenient grace of God always surrounds us whether we are aware of it or not: “Where can I flee from your presence?” (Psalm 139:7)

Finally, we arrived at the top of the mountain. It was cold, so we had to put on the hoodie quickly. It was so cloudy up there that we could not see anything down the mountain. But we took this family picture, giving thanks to God for helping us climb up safely. Now, we had another thirty minutes to go down the mountain. Another hazardous road without the guard rail. But we knew that if we followed the yellow line, we would safely arrive at the bottom of the mountain. Let me ask you. Do you have the yellow line in your life? Again, the psalmist sings, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” God still speaks to us through God’s word. “Do not fear, for I am with you.”



Pastor Bob

Local Pastor Candidates Visiting Aldersgate March 11

As Pastor Bob works as the Dean of Local Pastor Licensing School, we are privileged to host 8 candidates for ministry and 3 instructors to visit Aldersgate on March 11 for a day of preaching exercise. Our youth group will help to serve them lunch. If you are interested in supporting these students by being present and listening to their sermons, please notify Pastor Bob.

Confirmation Class 2023-2024

Do you have a child who will be 8th grade or up this fall? We are excited to share with you that we will have the confirmation class. We invite the parents and child for the class to meet with Cheryl Ortolf and Pastor Bob in the fellowship hall on March 12 after the second worship service. If you are interested in serving as a mentor, please speak with Cheryl or Pastor Bob.

Please Join Us for Lent This Season

Each year we mark this holy season with mid-week worship with a reflection by one of our church family members, preceded by a soup supper in the Fellowship Hall. Our Wednesday evening in-person soup suppers and worship this year starts Wednesday, March 1 and will last through March 29. The supper will be held at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall, followed by the ~ 30 minute service in the sanctuary at 7:00 pm. If you want to help provide soup for one or more weeks, please contact Betsey Driscoll (betseylll@yahoo.com).

The worship theme this year is “Forgiveness.” We so look forward to hearing the perspective of a few of us who normally sit in the pews. Come and hear Suzanne Hevelone (March 1), Dan Ward (March 8), Jim Ortolf (March 15), Marcia Dana (March 22) and Charles McCrea (March 29th) give us their perspective on Forgiveness. The service will be live-streamed and recorded.

Opportunities During Holy Week

- April 2 **PALM / PASSION SUNDAY** – Worship at 8:30 and 10:45 a.m.
Troop 81 will host a breakfast – see details below.
- April 6 **HOLY THURSDAY** – **Seder Meal** at 6:00 p.m. and **Evening worship** at 7:30 p.m.
Join us for a traditional Jewish Seder meal as Jesus would have celebrated with His friends. To plan for food, please notify Betsy in the church office if you plan to attend, by Saturday, April 1. A service of Tenebrae and Holy Communion will follow at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. The service will be livestreamed, and a recording of the service will be posted on the church web site.
- April 7 **GOOD FRIDAY** – Noon to 3:00 p.m. The Sanctuary will be open for personal prayer.
- April 8 **EASTER EGG HUNT** – Saturday at 10:00 a.m. Friends are welcome! (Indoors if necessary!) Join in for a morning of fun including crafts, a movie about the First Easter and a fabulous egg hunt! You are invited to bring home some of the empty plastic eggs in the welcome area to fill for the hunt.
- April 9 **EASTER SUNDAY** – 7:30 – 10:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall with worship at 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.

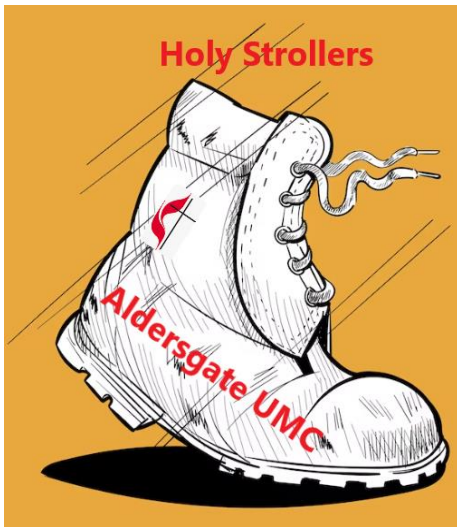
Troop 81 Hosting Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast April 2nd



Troop 81 BSA invites you to a pancake breakfast fundraiser on Sunday, April 2nd from 8am-11am. We will be serving pancakes, butter/syrup, fruit, coffee, tea, and juice for a suggested donation of \$10 per person, \$8 for senior citizens/kids under 5.

For many years the troop hosted a breakfast at the senior center as a key fundraiser, due to COVID we have been unable to have this event for many years which. We are so happy to bring the tradition back and have it at the Aldersgate United Methodist Church so that we can join in fellowship with the congregation that has provided so much support for us. Fundraising events like this help fund our scouting activities and our scouting equipment like our trailer, camping kitchens, Klondike derby sleds just to name a few.

Come Join the Holy Strollers



Come and hike with Aldersgate's Holy Strollers hiking group. The group hikes once a week on local conservation land in Bedford, Billerica, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Lowell, and Westford. The hikes are usually 2.5 to 3 miles or about 1 to 1.5 hours on wooded trails which often have rocks and roots. The group usually hikes on Thursday at 1:00 pm when the weather is cold or 9:00 am when the weather is hot. If the Thursday weather forecast is rain or snow, the hike will shift to another weekday. On Sunday night or Monday morning an email is sent out to the group indicating the day, time and location of the hike. The email also includes a Google map link to the trailhead and a link to the trail map. A person from the group will meet at the church for anyone who wishes to carpool to the

trailhead. You don't need to commit to every week, hike when you can. If you wish to join us and be included on the email notification for the hike or want more information contact Rick Newcomb, email: rnewcomb@comcast.net or Peter Smyton, email: thesmytonfamily@comcast.net.

Covid Protocols

The conditions in our community due to the various viruses are changing rapidly! The Discernment Team continues to monitor the CDC and our denomination, as well as best practices in our community, weekly, to understand the protocols we need to apply to allow us to worship safely. Due to the high number of flu and COVID cases in the area, **it is strongly recommended that you wear a mask while in the building.** Please continue to watch for announcements as we adapt our guidance to help keep the church family safe and healthy.

Remember, if you are feeling ill for whatever reason, or if you have been around anyone waiting for COVID test results, to please refrain from attending church, and attend virtually by enjoying the recorded services while you recover at home. If you test positive for COVID-19, have been in the church building in the past two weeks, and believe you may have been contagious while there, please notify the church office and someone will assist you with contact tracing.

Scout Sunday on March 12

Please join us on Scout Sunday as we get to meet some scouts who will participate in our worship service and share stories of their wonderful works in the past year.

Update from the Endowment Committee

On Wednesday, January 18, 2023, the Endowment Committee met to determine the endowment distribution for 2023. The committee reviewed the 2022 earnings and losses of the AUMC Endowment Fund which was down in 2022 because the overall stock market was down. The committee recommended no distribution from the Fund for 2023.

The Endowment Fund did receive additional gifts in 2022 which has raised the principal balance to \$119,577. Additional gifts may be made to the Endowment Fund at any time. Any gifts to the fund will make a greater long-term investment to the financial health and well-being of the missions and property of Aldersgate.

At the end of December 2022, the church received an estate gift of \$38,324.51 from the June and Larry Gould Trust. Since the use of this gift was not designated, the Charge Conference authorized the Church Council to decide the distribution. At the Church Council meeting on January 4, 2023, the Council approved the following distribution allocation: 10% to Mission Outreach (\$3,832.45), 10% to Youth Camp Scholarships (\$3,832.45), \$1000 to the Endowment Fund and the balance to the Long-term Maintenance (\$29,659.61). A second much smaller distribution from the trust is expected in the future. We are truly blessed by the generosity of our church family!

Save the Date

Reserve June 10, 2023, for Rev Maylis' Ordination Ceremony

Reserve the afternoon of June 10, 2023. Rev Maylis will be ordained a Deacon in the United Methodist Church at a ceremony conducted by Bishop Peggy Johnson during Annual Conference at the DoubleTree Hotel in Manchester NH. We need to be represented at that ceremony in support of Rev Maylis. We can set up carpools for those wishing to attend that session that is usually at 2 PM on Saturday afternoon. As we get closer to the date, we will have more information.

At a subsequent worship service at Aldersgate, we will be presenting Rev Maylis with a Jordan River stole in honor and recognition of this important milestone in Rev Maylis' journey with Christ. If you want to make a small donation for the purchase of that stole, make your checks payable to Aldersgate UMC but mark it with "Stole" in the notes section of your check. We don't need that much, only a couple hundred dollars, so if there are more donations than needed to cover the cost of the stole, the remaining money will go towards our youth attending Youth 2023 this summer in Daytona Beach, Florida. This event is sponsored by the United Methodist Discipleship Ministries.

For now, reserve June 10, 2023.

Birthdays and Anniversaries – March

We celebrate a Happy Birthday and a Happy Anniversary for the following. When you see them, you can celebrate with them or send them a card on their special day.

March Birthdays

March 6 – Frank Shumbata

March 9 – Dan Ward

March 15 - Charlotte Cole

March 16 – Gabriel R.

March Wedding Anniversaries

None



If we have missed your big day, please send them by email, to Betsy in the office at aldersgetechelmsford@verizon.net or call 978-256-9400 so she can add your names and dates to the lists for the Advocates for the coming months. We can then recognize the milestones in your life and celebrate with you.

Book Club in the Concord Room and on Zoom

Book club is meeting on March 28, we will discuss “The Book of Two Ways” by Jodi Picoult. (Liz’s pick) Let Deb know if you want to join by Zoom.

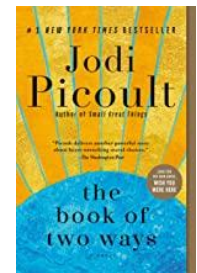
On April 25 we will discuss “The Fallen Angels Book Club” by Franklin James. (Betsy's pick).

On May 30, we will discuss “The Bubonic Plague” by Josh Kilmer Purcell (Robin’s pick)

On June 27 we will discuss “On Tyranny” by Timothy Snyder, (Kim’s pick)

On July 25 we will discuss “The Keeper of Lost Things”, (Deb Teal’s pick)

Hope you all can join us! Blessings, Deb



Single Ladies Dining Out

Singles Ladies Dining Out will have lunch on April 1st at 1 pm at The Establishment, 75 Princeton Street N. Chelmsford, MA.

If you are a single lady and would enjoy a lunch out and lots of fun conversation, we would love to have you join us. Please RSVP by Thursday March 30th to Betsy Campbell 978-256-9400 or by email to aldersgatechelmsford@verizon.net.

Women’s Daytimers Breakfast Club

We meet once a month, Friday mornings at 10 am at a local restaurant for breakfast and socializing. Please contact Chantale Shepard at 978-250-9573 for more details or if you are interested in being added to the email list. We welcome new members!

Easter Flowers



If you wish to provide flowers to enhance the beauty of our sanctuary during our Easter Services on April 9th, please complete this form and send or bring it to the church office by Sunday, March 19th.

I/We wish to order:

Number of plants _____	Pastel Tulips	\$14.00
Number of plants _____	White Double-Stemmed Lily	\$15.00
Number of plants _____	Blue or Pink Hyacinths	\$10.00

Please order as soon as possible to ensure your order can be fulfilled.

Please indicate how you would like your dedication to read in the church bulletin:
(Please print)

Given by:

Please take your plant(s) home with you after the 10:45 service on Easter Sunday.

Return this form and payment to the church office or put it in the offering plate. Checks should be made payable to Aldersgate United Methodist Church, with "Easter Plants" written on the memo line. Please include payment with your order

ADULT EDUCATION...

Join the Adult Lenten Study Anytime

Explore the Psalms and their link to the New Testament and the life of Jesus in this wonderful guide. Over six weeks, discover with us: Jesus in Our Hard Places, Jesus as Our Shepherd, our Hope, Our Strength and Our Savior.

“The Book of Psalms hums with the heartbeat of our humanity with divinely inspired words that find purchase in the tenderest places in our hearts when our human words or wisdom fails us.” -Barb Roose, author of *Finding Jesus in the Psalms*

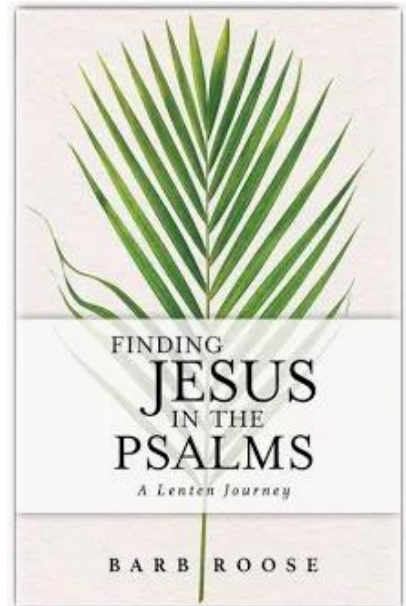
There is always a seat available when it’s best for you:

Sunday morning 9:45 in the Concord Room and on Zoom led by Adult Education members

Thursday morning 10:00 in the Concord Room and on Zoom led by Pastor Bob Jon

You can read and watch the study videos on your own at any time using the church’s Amplify account. If you don’t already have the access code, contact Betsy Campbell in the church office. <https://tinyurl.com/3zkfzy5r>

Or take part in the free Facebook Live study group hosted by the author, Barb Roose on Wednesday nights at 8:00 pm Feb. 22 to April 5. This group is open to anyone in the country on Facebook, and is not run by Aldersgate Members. For more information and to register use this link: <https://barbroose.com/onlinestudy/> You can obtain the book online. There are a few copies available in the library for those who can’t order the book.



Violet Hopkins Library News...

LOBBY AND LIBRARY BOOKS

You can't miss the book display in the lobby! Please help yourself to anything that interests you. Directions to check a book out are simple- remove the card from the back of the book and add your name to it. Place it in the floral box located near the lobby display. If there isn't a card in the back of the book, please find a fresh card in the floral box, add the title of the book and your name to it and place it back in the floral box. You can return the book at your leisure.



More than 863 items are available to you in the library located downstairs. **You are welcome to read, relax or reflect with a cup of tea or coffee.** If you'd like to check out a book from the basement library, the directions are the same – just leave the card in the wooden box on the shelf. Return the book when you are finished to the table under the window.

The library is a work in progress, so please use it and help us keep it in good condition for the next person. Your help is always welcome to shelve books, add cards and sleeves to books or review books that have been donated. This library belongs to all of us- so please make your mark or contribution in the way you are best gifted! If you have questions or ideas, please see Kim Ward (mikdraw@aol.com or 978-256-2014) to compare notes.

Have books or other items to donate to the library? Books should be applicable to a Church Library setting for adults or children, have a copyright date after 2003 and be in good condition. Please leave items in the library in the basket marked donations. If the book isn't applicable to our library we will pass it on to the Chelmsford Public Library book sale.

Recommendations are enthusiastically provided by the members of the Adult Education Committee. See Suzanne Hevelone, Charles McCrea, Kathy Mireault, Cheryl Ortolf, Bob Peterson, Debbie Smyton, Kim Ward, or Pastor Bob. Members of the Book Club are always eager to swap titles with readers as well and fiction books can be found on the book rack in the Concord Room. Make a new friend and discover a new favorite all at once!



OUTREACH...

Blood Drive 3/25 Cancelled

Thank you for all who donated blood on Saturday 2/25. Our total for this time was 42 pints. Watch for information on our next drive.

For more information call or email Cate Lehan or Robin Dye or the church office.

Aldersgate Reaches Out!

Through the generosity of the Aldersgate community, the following outreach donations have been distributed so far in 2023 on your behalf:

Argentina Church Support: A total of \$430 raised during the fall season Chili and Apple Crisp Fundraiser was donated to a Methodist Church in Argentina. The money was used to purchase Spanish Bibles and repair a church window. Rev. Gus Vinajeras (Pastor Gus) is the first on the left in the photo below with his congregation at Iglesia Evangélica Metodista de Argentina de San Pedro (Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina at San Pedro). They are truly grateful for the support and love shared by Aldersgate. May God continue to bless both of our ministries and that of the Church around the world.



Advent Offering: A total of \$10,550 was collected and sent to Dig Deep, a human rights non-profit working to ensure that every American has clean, running water which changes a life forever. While most Americans take running water completely for granted, millions of our neighbors struggle to get enough clean water to survive. 100% of the donation funds programs to close the “Water Gap in the U.S”. NOTE: Since Aldersgate began the Advent Conspiracy in 2013, we have collected and distributed funds totaling \$108,110 over the past 11 years to provide local and international outreach and support to people in need.



Change for Change: Do you hear what I hear? It's the jingling and clattering of loose change put in the offering plate each Sunday. Your loose pocket change is pooled and used to support mission areas in need. Since the program began in 2007, a total of \$18,635 has been distributed to worthy causes. Check out the complete list of organizations/missions receiving support over the past 17 years. The Outreach team is looking



for suggestions for our next Change for Change candidate. Organizations can be local, national or global in nature. Send your suggestions to the office or robinjdye@gmail.com . Your loose change has made a change in the lives of thousands over the years!!

Lura Smith Scholarship: The offering received at this year's Ash Wednesday service was donated to the Lura Smith Scholarship fund at Middlesex Community College. The purpose of the scholarship is to assist African or African-American student(s) pursuing associate degrees at Middlesex Community College. A total of \$572 was collected during the service. If you would still like to contribute, please indicate the Lura Smith Scholarship in the documentation with your donation. What a great way to celebrate Black History Month!

UMCOR International: A special offering was collected on two (2) consecutive Sundays in February to assist the victims of the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria. UMCOR has helped to provide tents, heaters, blankets, warm clothes, ready to eat meals and first aid kits to those who have been displaced. A total of \$2808 was contributed from Aldersgate.

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

Valentine Thank you!

We received thank you cards from people that received Valentines made by our church school classes. Thank you, children and youth, for sharing a little love!



Pancake Sunday Fun!

Our church school hosted a pancake Sunday event this year and it was enjoyed by all! Thank you to the youth for preparing the pancakes and helping with crafts. We also had pancake races and a Mardi Gras parade!



Worship Arts

Join us on Tuesday afternoons from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. in the church school area downstairs. This program is for children ages 4 through 6th grade. Cheryl will be leading the art time and Maylis de la Fe will be leading the music time.



SAVE THE DATE!
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!
FOR CHILDREN AGES 4 - 12
WEEK OF AUGUST 14th – 18th

This summer during VBS we will be "Under Construction" learning about Habitat for Humanity and the way God helps us to Share, Care, Learn, Worship, and Celebrate!

WATCH FOR UPCOMING INFORMATION!

Youth Super Bowl Sub Sale Update



The youth would like to give a huge thank you to our church family for supporting them in their first fundraiser of the year!

Thank you for your support and prayers as we continue to plan for our upcoming trip!

Junior Youth Upcoming Events

This fellowship group is for youth in grades 5th – 8th grade

Am I Normal?

Friday, March 10th from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

5th – 8th grade - *parent helper needed*

Growing up can be hard! We will explore how to deal with the pressures of being a teenager. Bring a snack to share.

Altitude Fun!

Friday, March 24th from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

5th – 8th grade - *parent helper needed*

We will travel to Altitude Trampoline Park in Billerica, MA. Please bring \$15.00 and go on line to fill out the waiver at www.altitudeparkma.com.

Senior Youth Upcoming Events

All youth in grades 9 – 12 are welcome to join us at any time. The 7th & 8th graders will join us for some activities.

We ALWAYS welcome friends and remember you are an important part of this group!

Youth 2023 Event Meeting & Escapology Fun!

Sunday, March 5th from noon – 2:00 p.m.

We will have a brief meeting about Youth 2023, eat lunch out and then go to Escapology in Tewksbury. More info coming soon!

Service Project

Saturday, March 11th from 11:00 – 1:00 p.m.

We will prepare and serve lunch to candidates participating in a preaching event hosted by our church.

Lowell Wish Project

Saturday, March 18th from 9:00 a.m. – noon

We will work at Lowell Wish Project in No. Chelmsford. We will stop at Dunkin Donuts first – bring money.

Chocolate Making Fun! Sunday, March 26th from noon – 1:30 p.m.

We will have fun making chocolate to sell on Sunday. (7th & 8th graders will join us)

UPCOMING EASTER EVENTS

CHOCOLATE SALE

Sunday, April 2nd

After both services



The youth will be selling homemade chocolate in the hall area after both worship services. This is a fundraiser for their mission trip to Youth 2023 in Daytona Beach, FL.

Easter Egg Hunt



Saturday, April 8th
10:00 am - 11:30 am

Join us for fun crafts, an Easter Egg Hunt and a special movie – bring your friends!



EASTER BREAKFAST

APRIL 9TH

7:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Easter Services: 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.

No Church School

Breakfast menu: Egg Benedict, French Toast, Hash Browns, Fruit selection, Bacon/sausage, Baked Goods, Yogurt Parfait, Cold cereal

Vegan/Gluten Free Breakfast Menu: Breakfast Casserole, Sausage and Fruited Coffee Cake