

**Our Vision—A beacon of God’s love radiating faith, hope, and joy... Everywhere!**

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**Today’s altar flowers are given in celebration of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
to Joe Benson, Love Deb**

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### **ADVENT MISSION PROGRAM TODAY**

**Sunday, November 26th      9:30 – 10:30 a.m.      Fellowship Hall**

Everyone is invited to join us as we prepare for the season of Advent!

Each of our activities will be connected to one of our church’s outreach focus areas and the Advent Conspiracy program of: Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More and Love All.

We will also reveal our Church Wide Advent Mission Focus – come find out what program we will be supporting during Advent!

We are also asking families to bring their favorite holiday goodie to share – each family will have a special card to write their name on, and the item of food they brought. Everyone is encouraged to enjoy this special day together as a family!

### **CHURCH SCHOOL CLASSES WILL BE UPSTAIRS ON THIS SUNDAY**

#### **Christmas Poinsettias**

Once again we will decorate our sanctuary on Christmas Eve with five beautiful poinsettias. We will purchase larger plants that will be present for the Christmas Eve service.

We are again inviting people to make a donation toward the cost of the poinsettias in celebration of someone or in memory of a loved one (suggested donation of \$10). There is a form on the welcome desk that you can fill out and either put in the offering plate or mail to the office. You can also call the church office and leave a message and Betsy will return your call to follow up with you. Betsy will also include the form in the Worship email.

We will include the names in a printed attachment to the Christmas Eve service and will show the names on the video during part of the recorded service, if possible. We want to honor each family’s preference...so please indicate your preference on the form as well.

**Deadline for Poinsettias will be on December 17<sup>th</sup>**



### **Stewardship A Way of Life “Building Tomorrow, Together”**

Dear Members and Friends of Aldersgate United Methodist Church,

As most of you know, the theme of our Stewardship Campaign this year has been “Building Tomorrow, Together”. This has prompted many hours of thoughts and prayers for me as I contemplate the word “together”. We are most successful when we work together, supporting each other within our church community and sharing with others outside our community. Aldersgate, the church with the warm heart, has been known for doing just that, serving and loving our church family and our greater community. Our generous giving has demonstrated that love!

And so with gratitude, on behalf of the Finance Committee, I thank each and every one of you for being a part of this family of faith. Your stewardship, whether it be in pledging, in giving of your time and talents or in just sharing of your love for others, this is how we continue to “Build Tomorrow, Together”.

Although our formal Stewardship Campaign has come to an end, it is not too late to submit your pledge. Giving in this community can come at any time. Obviously, when I mention the importance of community and giving in the context of the stewardship campaign, you might understand that this message is asking you to be more generous in pledging. It is true, we need to pay the salaries of the staff. We need to pay the mission share to the Conference. We need to pay the bills and maintain the building, etc. While those are some legitimate concerns, I ask you to consider these words from Pastor Bob, from the recent stewardship letter, “I wish to invite us to be clearer about the purpose of our church and what makes our church a “church” that is different from the rest of the society. . . .In other words, the church lives out the agape love, the self-giving love for the sake of others.” This type of giving is the most important aspect of our stewardship.

In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of the Finance Committee, I give thanks to all of you, faithful stewards of Aldersgate United Methodist Church, and wish you a joyous and peaceful Advent season.

Grace and Peace,

Wendy Baker, Chair of the Finance Committee

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### **A Big Thank you from Outreach**

Your Outreach team would like to thank you all for the support of our Thanksgiving boxes. Because of all your help in donations and turkeys we were able to give 53 boxes away with turkeys and all the fixings. We are truly blessed with our church family.

## Confirmation Class 2024

We plan to offer the confirmation class starting from January. Please pick up the registration in the welcome area and return it to Cheryl Ortolf, our director of Christian Education. There will be 8 classes this spring and 1 retreat. For more info, please see Cheryl or Pastor Bob.

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## Christmas Faire and Festival is This Week, December 1 and 2

Our annual Christmas Faire and Festival is this Friday, Dec 1, 1:00 pm – 8:00 pm and Saturday, Dec 2, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. The Faire is an important fellowship and financial event, and we need everyone's help to make it a success! Please share your plans for donations or volunteering to staff a table on the sign-up sheets in the Welcome Area. If you can volunteer to staff a table during the Faire, please contact Peter Smyton at [thesmytonfamily@comcast.net](mailto:thesmytonfamily@comcast.net) or 978-256-1795. Contact Bonnie Marden at [BonMarden@gmail.com](mailto:BonMarden@gmail.com) or 978-846-1260 if you have questions.

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## Calling all Elves

We also will need help Decorating wreaths and Swags and completing the centerpieces. Please come after Church on Sunday 11/26<sup>th</sup> as well as Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am to 5pm Downstairs in rooms 1 and -2.

The Scouts are helping with set up on Wednesday evening starting at 6pm. Please come help if you can.

Please bring your bake goods and craft items by Thursday night.

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## Santa Fund

The Santa tree is up and presents need to be in by **December 10<sup>th</sup>**. Thank you all for making Christmas special for all the kids.

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## Sponsor a book for our College Students!

Adult Ed in partnership with Cheryl O. and Pastor Bob, would like to give a copy of *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman to our college students. The books are \$20 and we would like to gift them over the Winter Break when they all gather together again. You can sponsor a book and create a link to the next generation! You can find a donation envelope by the literature rack in the lobby.

## Join Us for a Special Advent Season –

We hope you can join us, either in-person or remotely, for our special services this Advent season. In-person worship is at 8:30 and 10:45 am each Sunday. The 10:45 service is live-streamed (preceded by church announcements) and a link to the recording is available on the church website ([aldersgatehelmsford.com](http://aldersgatehelmsford.com)) shortly after the service; live-streams and recordings will include the Silent Night and the 7:00 pm Christmas Eve services

## Silent Night Service, Tuesday, December 12 at 7:00 pm

Join us for this special service in the middle of the busy Christmas season. The service features beautiful scripture, reflections, and music that speaks words of peace and comfort during what can be a time of sadness. You will also have an opportunity to light a candle of hope as we await the coming of Christ, the Light of the World. A brief fellowship reception will follow in the Fellowship Hall.

## Christmas Eve Morning, Sunday, December 24

### Children's Pageant at 9:30 am (One Service)

The church school will be presenting this year's Christmas Pageant during the Sunday worship service for the congregation, neighbors, and friends!

### Christmas Eve (no 4 pm service)

### 7:00 pm Intergenerational Christmas

This service will retell the story of the first Christmas in scripture and carols. It will include a time for children and conclude with the candle-lit singing of "Silent Night."

### 10:00 pm Communion and Candlelight Christmas Eve

This service includes scripture, carols, a Christmas meditation, Holy Communion in the pews and the candle-lit singing of "Silent Night."

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## Hats, Gloves, Mittens, Socks, and Toiletries for St. Paul's

Outreach will be collecting items for St. Paul's by the 17<sup>th</sup> of December. Please bring in hats, gloves, mittens, socks, and mittens as well as toiletries. There is a box in the welcome area.

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## Prayer Wall in Fellowship Hall

The Church Council recently created a prayer wall on a rolling partition in the Fellowship Hall, asking you to post prayers of what our church will look like as a result of the on-going Inclusion discussions. The Council recently decided to expand the purpose of the wall and we invite you to post prayers on **any** topic that you wish to have other members of our church family pray about.

### Adult Ed Education this week

There is no Adult Study today. Please enjoy the Advent Mission Project during Fellowship time.

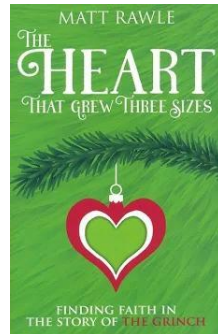
There is no Thursday Morning Bible Study 11/30 because of the Christmas Faire. Sign up in the lobby to help where you are able.

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### Advent Study Begins December 3!

This year, we take a deeper look at a children's book that delights all ages in the Christmas season. *The Heart That Grew Three Sizes: Finding Faith in the Story of the Grinch* by Matt Rawle will be the Advent material for the Adults AND some of the kids Sunday School classes.

**Rediscover the gift of Advent that comes without packages, ribbons, and bows.** We don't know why the Grinch hated Christmas. We just know he did. If we're being honest, there's probably something within the Christmas season celebration that awakens a Grinch within all of us. Maybe the gift we unwrap was all wrong, or memories that were supposed to be joyful never were. When everything seems wrong in the world, even joyful celebrations are much too loud. We don't know why the Grinch hated Christmas. We just know he did. In this new Advent study, Matt Rawle explores the faith themes in the Christmas classic, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* including, how did the Grinch's heart grow three sizes come Christmas morning? How did Christmas save the Grinch? Could it be that the very thing we think we hate is the one thing that changes our lives? This Advent and Christmas season, look at a familiar classic through the lens of faith and see how Christ speaks to us through our culture.



Be a Grinch and get your copy of the book at your favorite bookseller before December! We will save a place around the circle for you.

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### Early Bird Bible Application

Early Bird will examine the topic 'When We Don't See Eye to Eye' using Romans 14:1-23 for scriptural context. Paul admonishes us to 'Live in harmony with one another.' He gave the church some practical instructions on how to do it. Let's examine his instructions and explore how they might assist us in living in harmony with one another. Join in this discussion via Zoom on Tuesday morning. All are welcome.

## ADVENT CONSPIRACY

### WHAT WOULD JESUS WANT FOR HIS BIRTHDAY?

Just as the Wise Ones traveled great distances to bring precious gifts to the child Jesus, so too, we want to give gifts this Holy season that would make the heart of Jesus glad.

Again, this year, we are following the principles of *The Advent Conspiracy*:

- \* Worship Fully
- \* Spend Less on things people do not need
- \* Love all
- \* Give more of ourselves, our time, our lives



We are encouraging each other to save the money we would have spent on gifts that those we love really don't need, and instead give a life-giving gift that truly matters.

On Epiphany, also known as “Kings’ Sunday” - January 7, we will bring our monetary gifts from the savings we have made and will offer them to support our Advent Mission: “Refugee and Immigrant Resettlement Fund.”

**Please join us in our special giving on “Kings’ Day” – January 7<sup>th</sup>.**

Checks may be made payable to AUMC with “Refugee and Immigrant Resettlement Fund” in the memo.

# Greater Lowell Community Foundation



“Since its inception in 1997, the Greater Lowell Community Foundation has maintained the clear mission to improve the quality of life for the people in the communities we serve by connecting caring donors with local nonprofit organizations that best serve the causes that matter most to them.”

## Refugee and Immigrant Resettlement Fund

“On August 8, 2023, Governor Maura T. Healey declared a state of emergency due to rapidly rising numbers of migrant families arriving in Massachusetts who need shelter and services, and the severe lack of availability of those resources.”

“With the influx of new refugees and immigrants arriving in Greater Lowell, GLCF is leading the effort to provide support to local nonprofits charged with these resettlements. The GLCF Refugee and Immigrant Resettlement Fund will support the efforts of Greater Lowell organizations to help ensure those in need are welcomed and connected with housing, employment, transportation, food, acculturation, and other related support.”



*Women Unite group, IINE's peer support group for Afghan women, received GLCF funding.*