



ALDERSGATE ADVOCATE

March 2024

Pastoral Letter – March 2024 “But God Still Remembers You”

I recently went to meet my old friend, Rev. Chuck. When I started the ministry candidacy in 2004, he was assigned to be my mentor. Every Saturday, I took the train to his house in Melrose so I could study the history and policy of UMC with him. His wife Anona was humorous, friendly, and kind. She easily spoke with anyone on the streets and made new friends. I often joked, “Chuck, I think Anona should have been the pastor, not you.” Sadly, Anona was diagnosed with dementia a couple of years ago and was moved to memory care. I asked him, “How is Anona today?” He answered, “She does not have much memory in her anymore. She does not even recognize me. She is not the same Anona you once knew.”

In our society, personhood is often defined by one’s cognitive capability. Can one think for herself? Can one remember his past? Can one express oneself verbally? When one is incapable of doing those, one is often considered less than what a human is supposed to be. When someone is diagnosed with dementia or Alzheimer’s, being confused about who they are, people often tell their families, “The person you used to know is gone. His mind is long gone. He is just not the same person anymore.” People believe that as long as patients with dementia are provided with good medical care, they are fine. Keeping them clean and providing good medicine is the best we can do for them. No matter how long or often you visit them, it won’t make much difference.

In *Ministry with the Forgotten*, Bishop Kenneth Carder challenges the notion of our personhood centered around cognitive, intellectual, and individual assent. He argues that Christian faith is not a cognitive asset only. We often express our faith and love through bodily motions, facial expressions, affections, songs or even dances. Moreover, faith is not nurtured in individual only either. As one enters a faith community through baptism where one feels welcomed, affirmed, and loved, faith is not just individual but also communal. Therefore, Carder says, “It is the community that receives and embodies God’s presence and power to create, reconcile, forgive, and transform; and it is in community that individuals are formed and sustained in God’s saving grace.”

See, churches also often place people with dementia on the margin of society. We do not know how to engage with them. We do not know how to invite them to be part of the church. We do not know what to say to their family members. Certainly, a Christian tradition centered on one’s capability to profess one’s faith emphasizes one’s need to accept Christ as their Lord cognitively and verbally to be saved from their sins and go to heaven. However, we as Christians often forget that it is by the grace of God that we are saved from our sins and brokenness. And the grace is none other than God who offers Godself to us as Christ said, “Take, eat; this is my body. Drink from this cup, for this is my blood of the covenant for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Matt 26:26)

I have been recently going to D'Youville Life and Wellness Community in Lowell, which is a memory care facility. I go there to lead a prayer service monthly. At my first prayer service in December, I read from Luke 1 the story of how the angel of God came to Mary to deliver the message of good news that she would be the mother to the Son of God. And I told them that if God could use someone like Mary, on the margin of society, to fulfill the redemptive work of God, God could also use them to be a blessing to others through their smiles, kind words, and presence. In the eyes of God, they are still the same beloved children of God created in the image of God. I told them, "Even when you do not remember God, God still remembers you. And we remember for you."

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 continues on Wednesday, March 6 and will last through March 20. 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 "Giving It Up." The service will be live-streamed and recorded. Thanks to Dan Ward, Cheryl Ortolf, and David Driscoll for leading the first three services. The schedule for the remaining Wednesday services is:

March 13

Giving Up Control

Peter Smyton

March 20

Giving Up Superiority

Christine Kelley

Opportunities During Holy Week

March 24 **PALM / PASSION SUNDAY** – Worship at 8:30 and 10:45 a.m.

March 28 **HOLY THURSDAY – Passover Meal** at 6:00 pm and **Evening worship** at 7:30 pm.

Please sign up for the March 28th 2024 6pm Passover Meal.

Our annual Seder on Maundy Thursday this year will be a bit different.

This year we will experience what a Passover meal in Jesus's time would be like activities going on in Jerusalem, symbolism of the time, and foods that would be served.

Signup sheets are in the front hallway. Let us know how many will attend and if you can help cook, serve or cleanup.

And don't worry there will still be matzo ball soup! See you then.

Mike Kane

March 29 **GOOD FRIDAY** – The Sanctuary will be open and available for prayer time from 7:00 am to 6:30 pm, with a prayer service afterward at 6:30 pm. Please sign up on the list in the welcome area for a time if you would like to pray or come whenever you would like. Soft music will be played by Jane Vooys from noon to 3:00 pm.

March 30 **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.

March 31 **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 March 24th



Troop 81 BSA invites you to a pancake breakfast fundraiser on Sunday, March 24th 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.

We hope you all enjoyed this event last year and look forward to having you join us again. Fundraising events like this help fund our scouting activities like summer camp and maintain our equipment (trailer, camping kitchens, Klondike derby sleds just to name a few.)

Scout Sunday on March 10

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.

Memorial and Reception Meal for Chuck Piper

We got word from Jean Piper that Chuck passed away at Kennedy Meadows on Saturday morning January 20th. His memorial will be held on **March 16th at 11 am** in our Sanctuary, with a reception in the Fellowship Hall at noon. His burial will be sometime this summer in Maine. Please check in with Betsey Driscoll to find out what you can help with.

Please pray for Jean and the rest of the Piper family as they prepare to celebrate Chuck's life.

Here is the link for Chuck's Obituary: <https://www.rivetfuneralhome.com/obituary/charles-piper-sr?>

Interested in Learning How to Record Worship?

We are looking to add to our friendly team of volunteers who live-stream and record our worship services. We take turns so everyone gets an opportunity to participate. We schedule the two-person crew weekly based on everyone's availability. Training is provided. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Peter Smyton (617-893-9669) or Jim Ortolf (978-995-0614).

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.



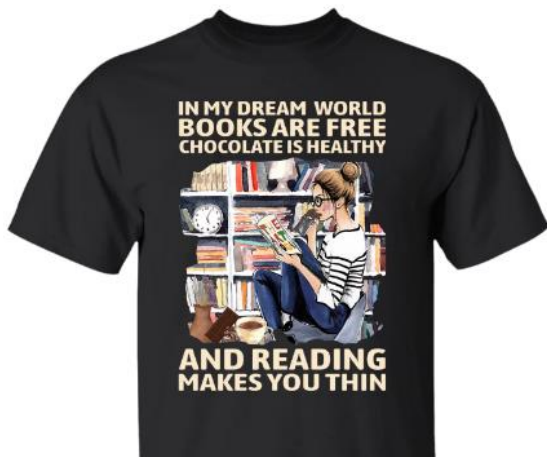
Single Ladies Dining Out

Due to the busy Easter season, Single Ladies Dining Out will have lunch together on **April 13th** at 1:00 pm at the Copper Door in Salem, NH.03079. The address is 41S Broadway. Please RSVP by Thursday Apr 11th to Betsy Campbell 978-256-9400 or by email to aldersgatechelsea@verizon.net so that she can reserve a table large enough.

If you are a single lady and would enjoy a dinner out and lots of fun conversation, we would love to have you join us. Please talk to Betsy for more information.



Book Club in the Concord Room and on Zoom



Here are the upcoming book picks for March and April. If you haven't yet picked, think of your pick and let Deb know what you would like to choose.

Tuesday, March 26, Mad Honey by Jodi Picoult (Robin's pick)

Tuesday, April 30th, The Woman with the Cure by Lynn Cullen (Ken's Pick)

Easter Flowers

If you wish to provide flowers to enhance the beauty of our sanctuary during our Easter Services on March 31st, please complete this form and send or bring it to the church office by **Sunday, March 18th**.



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 Hydrangea	\$15.00

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

Birthdays and Anniversaries – March

It has been a whole year of Celebrations for our Church Family.

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 20 - Jim Ortoff

March 23 – Kate C.



March Anniversaries

None

If we have missed your big day, please send them by email, to Betsy in the office at aldersgetchelford@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.

Central Congregational Church, UCC
presents

A Joyful Alleluia!

An Easter Concert

featuring

Katrina Holden-Buckley, soprano

Tudor Dornescu, violinist

Joseph Chapman, trumpeter

Tudor Bota, pianist & director

also featuring

CCC Concert Choir, Bell Choir, Children's Choir &
SonLight Band

Sunday, March 24, 2024

3:00 PM

Central Congregational Church

1 Worthen St, Chelmsford, MA

978-256-5931

www.cccchelford.org

Freewill Offering

**Ken Teal and Elaine and Garth Brown
will be singing in this Concert and
would like to invite you to attend.**

God's Garden News

"Vote for Veggies" Results

The garden club's "Vote for Veggies" election boasted an excellent voter turnout, with 48 ballots cast. Thank you all for participating! Here are the results:

Congratulations to Green Beans, the most popular vegetable with 35 votes, and to the runner-up, Carrots, with 33 votes! Other candidates that made strong showings were Cucumbers (32), Slicer Tomatoes (31), Cherry Tomatoes (30), Onions (29), and Garlic (28). Lettuce, Sweet Peppers, Zucchini Squash and Yellow Summer Squash followed in a 4-way tie (26). Basil was the beneficiary of an enthusiastic write-in campaign. With their broad a-peel, these and more veggies have won a prominent spot in our 2024 garden.

Voters expressed little appetite for Arugula, Turnips, Radishes, Yellow Tomatoes, Hot Peppers, and Okra. While disappointed, these veggies vowed to continue growing in other gardens.

New Composting Bin

Aldersgate now has a curbside collection service for food scraps. The 13-gallon green compost bin is stored in the kitchen. It will be picked up by Black Earth Compost every other Wednesday. In return, we'll receive a 40-pound bag of finished compost for the garden each year. This is a great way for us to reduce our trash, diverting organic waste from the incinerator into nutrients for the soil.

What can go in the bin? There's a detailed list of acceptable items on the lid. Any food scraps are okay, including meat and dairy. Also paper products, like napkins and paper towels, that have been used with food only (not for blowing nose or cleaning with chemicals). Most paper plates, cups and plastic ware are NOT compostable. Only BPI, CMA, or OK COMPOST certified products are acceptable (see the logos on the list). **The most important thing is to keep out any contaminants, like fruit stickers, plastic, and non-certified paper products. If in doubt, stick to just food scraps.** Please "snap" the lid shut when you're finished.

Thanks for your help making Aldersgate a better steward of God's beautiful creation! If you have any questions or concerns about this new program, please see Lee Williams or another Trustee.

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

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!



Potluck and Trivia Night Fun!

We all enjoyed some delicious food at our first potluck & Trivia night event. We had fun with a wide range of trivia questions.



Children and Youth Singing and Chime Time Schedule



This spring, we will be meeting on the following days:

Sundays, March 10th & 17th from noon – 1:00 p.m. We will have pizza from noon – 12:30 p.m. and practice chimes from 12:30 – 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 9th from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. We will have supper together and then meet for music.

Ice Cream and Sully's - Monday, April 15th at 2:00 p.m. – Families are welcome to join us at Sully's for ice cream and fellowship.

Tuesdays, May 7th & 14th from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. We will have supper together and then practice chimes.



Confirmation Class

Please keep the following students and their mentors in your prayers during their confirmation journey:

Sarah A. – David Driscoll, Kate C. – Betsey Driscoll,
Finn H. –Dan Ward, Gabriel R. – Lee Pender.

Junior Youth Upcoming Events

This fellowship group is for youth in grades 5th –7th grade

Altitude Fun!

Friday, March 22nd from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

5th – 7th grade

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

Senior Youth Upcoming Events

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

Chocolate Sale Sunday, March 24th after both services

We will need volunteers to sell chocolate after both services. *(7th graders will join us)*

Easter Egg Hunt and Easter Breakfast Prep

Saturday, March 30th from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Easter Breakfast Prep - noon – 1:30 p.m. *(7th graders will join us)*

Come join the fun as we host a special Easter Egg Hunt for the children in the community and will also prep for our Easter Breakfast.

Easter Breakfast

Sunday, March 31st 6:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Sign up for a time to work a shift during breakfast.



SAVE THE DATE!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!

CHILDREN AGES 4 – 12 WEEK OF AUGUST 19TH – 23RD 9:00 - NOON

This Green VBS curriculum brings together the Bible and environmental stewardship. Children will be able to grow in faith as they play, learn, sing, and work toward renewing their congregation and community.

There will be registration forms available at the end of March. If you have any questions, or would like to help, please see Cheryl Ortolf.

UPCOMING EASTER EVENTS

CHOCOLATE SALE

Sunday, March 24th

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 Camp Wanakee in New Hampshire.

Easter Egg Hunt



Saturday, March 30th

10:00 am - 11:30 am

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



EASTER BREAKFAST

MARCH 31ST

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

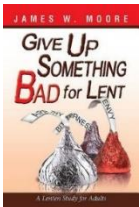
Vegan/Gluten Free Breakfast Menu: Breakfast Casserole, Sausage and Fruited Coffee Cake

ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Adult Ed Sunday Class

Each Sunday in March we will gather to explore the Wednesday Lenten Reflection topic together. This is a chance to share your thoughts and hear from each other. Get some coffee and join us in the Concord Room at 9:45!

Thursday Morning Bible Study- LENT



10:00 AM Thursdays, February 22 to March 21 join us for “Give Up Something Bad for Lent” by James W. Moore. Imagine giving up envy, jealousy, self-pity, apathy, procrastination, gossip, resentment, or negative thinking. How would that change your life? Pick up this easy read and find encouragement and understanding from friends while we take on the challenge of walking this out.

Adult Education & Church Council Invite YOU to an ALL CHURCH Conversation

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind and all your spirit. Love your neighbor as yourself.

We each know and want to fulfill the Great Commandment. But what does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself? Do we have to love even if we believe different things, disagree or are polar opposites? How do we do that? How do we do it well? If we are not loving our neighbor well, are we not loving God with our whole heart?

Here at Aldersgate, we want to encourage each other to seek and find God with our whole hearts and to be His loving hands and feet. Let’s come together to explore how to love like Jesus in a world that likes to fight, cancel, and exclude those different from ourselves.

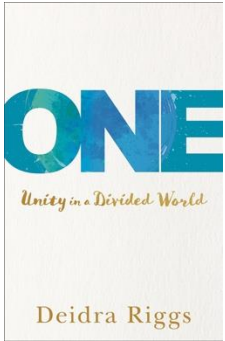
In Sunday and Thursday classes, small groups, in our homes, at church, over dinner or Zoom, let’s come together as a body for five weeks and explore these questions and grow closer in oneness and unity. We want to create an opportunity to join hearts and minds with this book looking at how the church can have unity during a time of rampant disagreement on all manner of things.

We especially would like this to be our focus this spring because General Conference meets on April 23 – May 3, and together we can pray and support Bonnie Marden and the rest of our New England delegation as they navigate some tough issues facing our denomination. It is our hope the experience of reading this book, together, will knit us closer together and deepen our church family’s connections with one another, as well as spur us on to love our neighbors and love God better.

Our ONE focus will take place from April 1 to May 30. Order a copy of the book or get one here at church, and then sign up for a discussion group. Each week we will gather to watch a short video and discuss a couple chapters. Our goal is to offer a variety of dates and times so that everyone who wants to participate can find a good time and location to join in. Some groups will have a Zoom option as well. For those who can’t meet each week, we will hold a book club type discussion of the whole book.

If you would like to lead a small group, please e-mail Kim Ward at mikdraw@aol.com or Suzanne Hevelone at shevelone@gmail.com. Resources – a leader’s guide and videos – are available.

At the end of May, when we complete reading the book and the five weeks of discussion and study, we will celebrate together with a special event!



ONE – Unity in a Divided World by Deidra Riggs. Jesus didn't say that the world would know we are his followers by our biting rhetoric, our political leanings, our charity work, or even by our knowledge of Scripture. He said the world would know us by our love for one another. Yet it's so easy to put others at arm's length, to lash out, to put up walls. Deidra Riggs wants us to put our focus on self-preservation aside and, like Jesus, make the first move toward reconciliation.

In *One*, Riggs shows readers that when Jesus offered himself up in our place, he was not only purchasing our salvation but also setting an example for us to follow. She helps readers understand that they are secure in God's inexhaustible love, making them free to love others lavishly--not just in what they *do* but in what they say, what they don't say, what they will endure, and what they will forgive.

Anyone who longs for unity in the church, in their family, and in their community will find in this book both inspiring examples of loving done well and encouragement to begin the often unnoticed hard work of building bridges with those around them.”

Deidra helps us think differently about unity, first examining our own hearts and how we are ONE with God, then examining how we interact with others as ONE Body in Christ. She tackles topics such as racial division in the Church, political convictions that ruin relationships and life experiences that shape us.

A Big Thank you

I want to thank everyone for their kind words, cards, calls and support after my mother's death on Christmas Eve. She loved everyone at Aldersgate and your loving kindness and support has comforted me through this difficult time.

Susan Lewis

Music Notes for March Advocate

The 36th Massachusetts Spring Ring is almost here! We are excited to have eleven Aldersgate ringers joining the massed performances this year.

When:

Saturday, April 6, 2024

Where:

Tewksbury Memorial High School
320 Pleasant Street
Tewksbury, MA

Concert Time:

3:00 PM-4:30 PM

The Spring Ring is an annual event sponsored by Handbell Musicians of America that offers handbell ringers and choirs an opportunity to come together to ring and build skills. This year's guest clinician is Griff Gall, the founding artistic director of Boston's *Back Bay Ringers*.

The day culminates with a concert that is open to the public. It is a wonderful opportunity for you to come and see the beauty and excitement of handbell ringing, and to support our own ringers!

Looking forward to seeing you at this year's Spring Ring!

2024 Spring Ring Clinician



GRIFF GALL is the founding artistic director of the Back Bay Ringers, of Boston, MA. He earned a Bachelor of Music degree in music education from Westminster Choir College and completed his Level III Orff Schulwerk training through Boston University while earning his Master of Music in Education. He has presented workshops in handbell pedagogy, conducting, and Orff Schulwerk at local and national handbell and music education conferences, and is coauthor of *Ring, Dance, Play: First Experiences with Choir chimes and Orff Schulwerk*, published by GIA. Mr. Gall is an elementary music and movement specialist in Danvers, MA, and is an approved movement instructor for the American Orff Schulwerk Association. He is the recipient of the Donna Nagel Award for his contributions to the field of General Music from the

Massachusetts Music Educators Association and the Spotlight Award from the American Center for Elemental Music and Movement.

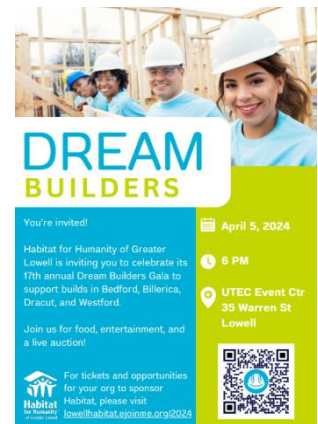
OUTREACH...

Come to Our Outreach Ministry Fair - March 10th.

This Sunday during fellowship hour (930 -1030 am) come meet 3 of our Aldersgate Outreach Missions. You can see our mission dollars in action and how they provide much need support in the local community. St Paul's Feeding Ministry, Habitat for Humanity and Project Kompass will be here. I hope you enjoy this opportunity to explore our missions. Blessings, Outreach.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity will be here during coffee hour on March 10, 2024 (9:30-10:30). They will be staffing a table to provide us with ongoing progress of their important work. In addition, they have their annual Gala scheduled for April 5, 2024. At this event, one of the silent auction items will be the beautiful quilt made of handprints by all who attended the 2023 Habitat themed VBS. They love the quilt and feel it will be one of the best items in the auction. Thank you to everyone who had a part in this wonderful work. If anyone wishes to attend the Gala the registration information is listed below.



Change for Change

Change for Change continues to contribute to others. In the fall, our youth selected the Alzheimer's Association as a candidate. \$400 has been collected by change and will be donated. Our Adult ED team has selected the Alternative House in Lowell as our next candidate. Change matters. God is Good. From Kim – Chair of Adult Ed “Adult Ed would like the next Change for Change designation to go to Alternative House in Lowell, a domestic violence shelter. We'd love the announcement to include a logo, their slogan "There is no excuse for abuse" and link to the website.” <https://www.alternative-house.org/>

Reminder to schedule your appointment for the Blood Drive – April 20th from 9-2

Please sign up if you can help this important cause. There continues to be a national shortage!

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and search under February 24th to schedule an appointment.

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

Blessings, Outreach.