



ALDERSGATE ADVOCATE

October 2025

Pastor's Column

Dear Siblings in Christ,

There is a book on my office bookshelf that catches my eye every so often and whose title always seems to give me pause. The book is called *Divine Economy* and its author is a United Methodist theologian and ethicist, Stephen Long, whom I have become acquainted with and whose writings and postings I have been following for a number of years now. When I read it a few years ago I remember thinking that it was brilliant and convicting—it's pages are full of my underlinings and notes—but also very slow going for the non-economist, like me. Ever since, whenever it catches my eye, though, I find myself thinking something like, “hmmm, ‘divine economy’. I wonder what that really means? I wonder what that would really look like today?”

We're entering into our stewardship season this month at AUMC and I wonder if this isn't a timely opportunity for us, as well, to think through our place within God's economy. The Bible says quite a lot about God's economy. When the Israelites were instructed in the Torah about how they should live their lives with one another once they entered the land, they were told not to steal or covet one another's property, that they should look after and provide for the widow, the orphan, and the resident alien, that every so often there should be a release from crushing debt, a tithe to support the temple, and a portion of the fall harvest to feed the poor. When God stepped into human life in Christ, he spent most of his time in ministry meeting the needs of the poor, feeding the hungry, and healing infirmities and, on more than one occasion, he called those who followed him to participate in what he was doing. When the disciples asked Jesus how they might provide for the great multitude gathered to meet him by the Sea of Galilee, he told them, “You give them something to eat” (Mark 6:37); when Zacchaeus climbed down the Sycamore tree with a new heart and a new perspective, Jesus was quick to let him know that he was also hosting for dinner; and he was keen to point out the hidden spectacle of a poor, old widow offering the temple treasury her very last mite. He might just as well have said, “everyone just look at that woman and the way she faithfully empowers God's economy!”

Empowering God's economy—I wonder if that's not the real subject below the surface when we come around to stewardship season, when we sit down and workout our household budgets, when we look at our schedules and figure out how we want to make use of our time, when we consider how we want to become more involved and engaged with the church in mission. How might I live so that my life empowers God's economy? How might I live and arrange my life to step into what God is doing? That may take some thought. In truth, we live within a number of competing economies and each one empowers something to go on existing. My Netflix subscription empowers Netflix to continue existing for another month. My gym membership allows Choice Fitness to pay its employees and pay their light bill. What are the

things that God needs me to empower? This October, I'd like to invite us all into a season where we revisit together not just our support of the church but, more broadly, the call on our lives to empower God's economy in the world where we live. I'd like to ask you to pray about that in the next month leading up to consecration Sunday on October 26: where, God, do you need to use the things that I have to offer? Where, God, do you need me to empower the things you need to thrive? How are you calling me to participate in the things that you want to accomplish? What are the things that you need from me to help your vision for the world succeed?

May God Bless Your Hearts!

Pastor John

Stewardship Campaign Kicks Off Today!

“Grow, Serve, Share”

Commitment Sunday is October 26th!

Today marks the beginning of our Stewardship Campaign for the 2026 calendar year. Each October, we reflect on God's goodness in our lives and consider how we express our gratitude for our many blessings. This year, especially, we are called to grow in faith, serve God and share our resources with our community as we navigate these ever-changing times. Over the coming weeks, members will express how the church has impacted their lives. We will offer our pledge cards for the 2026 calendar year during Worship on Sunday, October 26th. Please pray for our church as we lead up to this important day.

It's Not Too Late to be in Our New Directory!

It's still not too late to get your family's photo and contact info into our new church directory with our professional photographer, Val Shupe! There is a photo session on **Friday, October 3, 2:00 pm – 5:30 pm**. If that date does not work, please let us know if you are interested by contacting Betsy in the church office at 978-256-9400 or aldersgatehelmsford@verizon.net, and we will try to schedule a time that works. At this point we also ask you to consider submitting your own family photo using an existing photo or taking one with your cell phone. Time is running out, so please decide soon!

If Val takes your photo, you will receive a high quality, 8x10 photo, plus a digital copy of the photo, for \$25, or a package of two 5x7s and eight wallets with the 8x10 for \$40. Regardless, \$5 of your payment will go towards Junie's Place, Inc, a local nonprofit that provides support to families journeying through the grief of pregnancy/infant/child loss and to champion grief awareness. **Payment will be collected at your photo session, so please bring your checkbook!** If you have questions about the process, please see Rick Newcomb (newcomb@comcast.net, 978-828-1455).

NEEDED: Digital photos for Directory Activity Pages

Do you have any digital photos of Aldersgate Activities that were taken in the past two (2) years? The activities can be of your committee or small group in action, Vacation Bible School, Sunday School, Youth Group, Trunk or Treat, Christmas Faire, etc. These photos are needed to compile the activities pages for the upcoming Church Directory. Please provide them on a thumb drive or email Elaine Brown at embedel@aol.com. Photos are requested by October 7th.

Request for All Saints Names

There will be one service on November 2nd at 9:30

On Sunday, November 2nd, we will celebrate All Saints Sunday. Our Worship will include the reading of names of those who have died in the past year, who have gone on to join the “Saints Triumphant”.

If you would like the name of a loved one read on that day, please fill out a form on the welcome desk or email the church office or call (978-256-9400) and leave a message on the office phone, **by October 31st**. Please include as a subject “All Saints” on your email. And also include your name and the loved one’s name as well as spell it if by phone.

All Saints Sunday – November 2, 2025

My Name: _____

Name of Loved one: _____

Phonetic spelling if needed/special notes: _____

Date of Passing: _____

Please fill out this form and put it in the offering plate or return it to the church office. Thank you.

Jean Piper’s Memorial Service

Jean's memorial service will be held at Christ Community Fellowship on 43 Maple St., Madison ME on Saturday October 18, 2025, 11:00am (live stream) followed by internment of both Chuck and Jean at Forest Hill Cemetery and a 1pm reception back at Christ Community Fellowship.

This is the very location Jean and Chuck were married 70 years ago October 15th, 1955. The livestream address is <https://www.youtube.com/@ccfmadison1749> Here's a link to the church website. <https://ccfmadison.org/#new-here>

The family respectfully asks that, in lieu of flowers, contributions be made in Jean’s name to Aldersgate United Methodist Church Memorial Fund 242 Boston Rd., Chelmsford, MA 01824 or The Pleasant Pond Protective Association, P.O. Box 36, Caratunk, ME 04925. Finally, a very special thanks to Beacon Hospice Care, truly, angels among us!

Aldersgate at Chelmsford’s Fall Festival

Thanks to everyone who came out to support Aldersgate’s booth at the Chelmsford Fall Festival last month! We made over \$800 that will help fund youth activities this year. A special thanks to the youth who staffed the booth: Matthias D., Eleanor W., Jack W., Charlie H., Leila W., and Connor R., and to Betsey and David Driscoll for making the delicious ice cream cookie sandwiches and providing the freezer.





Trunk-or-Treat!

Please join us in the back parking lot on Sunday, October 26, 4:00- 5:00 p.m. for our Trunk-or-Treat event! We'll have games, prizes, and, of course, candy to hand out! Everyone in the community is invited. Spread the word and bring a friend!

Trunk or Treat

ALL ARE
WELCOME

Sunday, October 26
4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Games - Prizes - Candy

BACK
PARKING
LOT

Aldersgate United Methodist Church
242 Boston Rd, Chelmsford MA

RALLY DAY!

On Sunday, September 8th, we celebrated the beginning of church school and our fall program. Our church school teachers, children, and youth came together to remember how we are all welcome!

We are blessed to have the following church school teachers this year:

PreK – 2nd Teachers: Dottie Newcomb, Kate Henderson

3rd – 4th Grade Teachers: Ray Brown, Marlene Breen

5^h – 7th Grade Teachers: Dave Jones and Dan Ward

8th-12th Grade: David Driscoll, Lee Pender and Peter Smyton



We also presented Bibles to the following children: Vivian Wall and Sybil Whitley received their NRSV Bible.





TRUNK-OR-TREAT!

Sunday, October 26, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.



Please join us in the back parking lot for our church-wide Trunk-or-Treat event. We'll have games, prizes, and, of course, candy to hand out! Everyone in the community is invited. Spread the word and bring a friend!

Adults, please join in the fun by decorating the trunk of your vehicle and bringing candy for the trick-or-treaters!

JUNIOR YOUTH UPCOMING EVENTS

*This fellowship group is for youth in grades 5th – 7th grade.
Our mission is to provide your youth with a safe, healthy and loving environment
to help them grow and experience Christianity.
Friends are always welcome!*



Canobie Lake Park trip!

Sunday, October 5, noon - 5:30pm.

The combined junior and senior youth groups will kick off the new year with a trip to Canobie Lake Park in Salem NH! Please let Lee Williams know if you plan to go. We'll need plenty of chaperones to keep the groups small.

What, Me Worry?

Friday, October 17, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

We'll talk about things we worry about and how our faith can help us through. Please bring a snack to share. We will need a parent helper to assist with this meeting.



SENIOR YOUTH UPCOMING EVENTS!

All youth in grades 8 – 12 are welcome to join us at any time. During some events, the junior youth will join us. We are a fun group of youth who celebrate Christ's presence among us by engaging in community and group activities, church participation and mission projects.

Canobie Lake Park trip!

Sunday, October 5, noon - 5:30pm.

The combined junior and senior youth groups will kick off the new year with a trip to Canobie Lake Park in Salem NH! Please let Lee Williams know if you plan to go. We'll need plenty of chaperones to keep the groups small.



What, Me Worry?

Sunday, October 19, noon – 1:30 p.m.

We'll make mac & cheese for lunch and talk about things we worry about and how our faith can help us through.



Trunk-or-Treat!

Sunday, October 26, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

We will help set up and run games at this church-wide Halloween event in the back parking lot.

Coming Up at Aldersgate - October - December 2025

GriefShare continues, each Wednesday, Oct 1 – Dec 10, 7 – 8:30 pm

Red Cross Blood Drive: Aldersgate UMC, October 4, 9 am – 2 pm

World Communion Sunday, October 5

Halloween Trunk or Treat, October 26, 4 – 5:00 pm

Laity Sunday, November 16

All Saints' Sunday, November 2 **-One Service at 9:30**

A Celebration of 60 Years of Music, Sunday, November 2, 3 – 5 pm

Christmas Fair, December 5, 1 – 8 pm; December 6, 10 am – 2 pm

Silent Night Service, December 9, 7 pm

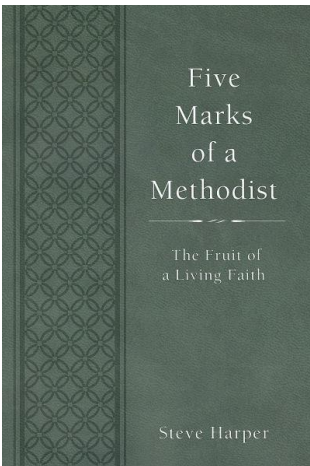
Christmas Pageant, December 21

Christmas Eve Services, December 24, 4 pm, 7 pm, 10 pm

Red Cross Blood Drive: Aldersgate UMC, December 27, 9 am – 2 pm

December 28 - **One Service at 9:30**

Join Us! Adult Sunday School Today



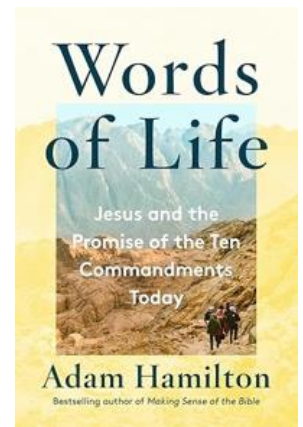
Has it been decades since your confirmation classes? Fuzzy on who Wesley was and what exactly makes you a Methodist? Looking for some conversation with delightful people about the things that really matter? Our new study can help! Join us to watch a short video and discuss Sunday mornings at 9:45 in the Concord Room. Discover five marks that confirm our identity as genuine and fruitful followers of Christ:

1. A Methodist Loves God
2. A Methodist Rejoices in God
3. A Methodist Gives Thanks
4. A Methodist Prays Constantly
5. A Methodist Loves Others

You can pick up a copy of the book and participant character guide anywhere books are sold online.

Thursday Morning Bible Study Continues This Week!

The Thursday morning Bible study continues this week at 10 am in the Concord Room or on Zoom, led by Pastor John. The class will continue their study of *Words of Life* by Adam Hamilton. In this book of Scripture and inspiration, Adam brings modern eyes to the most important set of ethics in history, the Ten Commandments. He considers the commandments in their historical context, considering the meaning of each commandment in Hebrew, unpacking how Jesus reinterpreted them, and showing how every thou-shalt-not was intended to point to a life-giving "thou shalt." He also explores how the latest research in science and psychology illuminates these commandments, rightly understood, as a way of ordering one's life beautifully in the present day. You can find the book at any online retailer.



Early Bird Bible Study

Early Bird continues to explore the theme "The Christian Journey". Previous discussion was on the heart. It is the center of both our spiritual and physical well-being. When we invite Christ into our life, He changes our heart. From that changed heart flows love, forgiveness, service, gratitude and more. We will next look at how Christ in our heart changes how we love. This week's topic is 'Christians Love.' The Scripture is John 13:35. Plan to be a part of this discussion. Early Bird meets on Tuesday at ten o'clock via Zoom

Discerning Our Response to Christian Nationalism

At the New England Annual Conference this past June, a resolution was approved regarding Christian Nationalism. Your Church Council is discerning to understand how Aldersgate should respond to our Conference's call to resist Christian Nationalism. What questions and thoughts do you have on this subject? We invite you to share what is on your mind on this topic with Pastor John, Pastor Maylis, our Lay Leader Jim Ortolf, or our Council Chair, Peter Smyton.

The resolution reads, in part: *“WHEREAS Christian Nationalism is a cultural framework and political ideology that merges an exclusionary form of Christian supremacist identity with a particular American identity, distorting both the Christian faith and the United States Constitution by appropriating Christian language and imagery to intertwine Christianity with political and civic life, amass political power, and often serve as a vehicle for white supremacy and racial subjugation (General Board of Church and Society, Faith and Facts: Christian Nationalism); . . .*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that The New England Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church unequivocally rejects and denounces Christian Nationalism in all its forms as a distortion and a misuse of the Christian faith;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New England Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, in all its expressions, commits to educating its members, clergy, and congregations on the societal and spiritual dangers of Christian Nationalism, equipping them to recognize, address, and resist it through theological reflection, meaningful dialogue, and faithful action.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the New England Annual Conference will work to develop and distribute resources that help pastors and congregations faithfully oppose Christian Nationalism while fostering a Christianity rooted in justice, inclusion, and love;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New England Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church will commit to ongoing discernment, confession, and repentance for any complicity in Christian Nationalism, especially where it has shaped government policy, church governance, or public discourse, striving to ensure that our witness remains true to the gospel's call to love, justice, and liberation.”

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Birthdays and Anniversaries – October

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.

October Birthdays

October 8 - Rebecca Fipphen

October 13 - Betsy Campbell

October 17 - Elizabeth Fipphen

October 20 – Aldo Rodriguez

October 26 – Vivian W.

October 28 – Isabelle Cole



October Wedding Anniversaries

October 10 - Peter and Holly Fipphen

October 11 - Rich and Linda Regan

October 14 – Suzanne Hevelone and Lee Pender

October 22 - Laura and Ray Brown

October 31 - Dan and Jane Voos



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

You can schedule your appointment for the next Blood Drive for October 4th from 9am-2pm

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 August 9th to schedule an appointment. For more information call or email Cate Lehan or Robin Dye or the church office.

Single Ladies Dining Out



Single Ladies Dining Out will have **lunch** together on October 25th at 1pm at Long Horn Steak House, 5 Harold Dr., Nashua NH 03060. **Please RSVP** by Thursday October 23rd to Betsy Campbell at 978-256-9400 or aldersgatechelsford@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.

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!



Book Club in the Concord Room and on Zoom

October 28th. "Speak to Me of Home" by Jeanine Cummins. Betsey's pick

Nov. 25th - The Seed Keeper by Diane Wilson. Melinda's pick

Dec 30th - "The Phone Booth at the Edge of the World", by Laura Imai Messing. Robins pick

Jan. 27 "My Friends", Judy's pick

Feb. 24th "Yada Yada Prayer Group. Deb's pick.

If you have a suggestion for an upcoming book let Deb Benson know. 978-604-0288

Christmas Faire and Festival



DECEMBER 5, 2025 1pm - 8pm

DECEMBER 6, 2025 10am - 2pm



Hear Ye – Hear Ye! Save the Dates and join our creative teams preparing for our 2024 Christmas Faire and Festival! Please share your plans for donations or volunteering on the Sign-Up Sheets available soon. Spread the word by posting the Faire Flyers located in the Welcome Area at your office or area businesses. It is such a joy to welcome the community and share our gifts and talents – and yummy food and baked goods!

With many unique and one-of-a-kind crafts, food and gifts – your generous donations and shopping blesses others and our church witness.

WORKSHOP DAYS and TABLE LEADS: Spend some time with us November 24 to 26 downstairs as we create the wreaths to be available for purchase on December 1, the first Sunday in Advent. Great fun, teamwork and beautiful bows and decorations already ready for you!

We will be making centerpieces downstairs December 1 to December 4 and then transforming the Fellowship Hall during the afternoon and evening of December 4th. All are welcome to drop by and pitch in as you are able!

During the Faire, AUMC Elves staffing the sales areas and tables support our hospitality to all our guests. To volunteer in one of the Faire areas, please contact Peter Smyton thesmytonfamily@comcast.net at 1-617-893-9669 or the contact persons listed below.

CHRISTMAS & CREATIVE CRAFTS: Highlights of our Craft Tables include holiday decorations and gifts, quilted and decorative crafts and an exciting collection of hand knitted items by our talented Aldersgate Knitters. All gifts and contributions are welcome! Elaine Brown - embedel@aol.com

GLAD TIDINGS GREENS: The Greenery Team works all year to prepare decorations and bows for wreaths and swags – a highlight of our Faire! November 24-26 focus on

wreaths and swags, with centerpiece creation through December 4. Creative or festive containers welcome! Deana Peterson - Peterson.deana@gmail.com

GREENS: Evergreens, Holly, or Decorative Tree Cuttings

On Saturday and Sunday November 18th and 19th, Faire Elves will trim your branches and greenery for the swags and beautiful arrangements we create each year. Contact the Church Office or David Jones at 978-726-1698, if we can harvest any of your greens!!

KRINGLE'S KITCHEN: If you like a busy, fun place and feeding the body as well as the soul, Kringle's Kitchen is the place for you! Our Elves prepare delicious dinner and breakfast items. Our signature dish is Aldersgate Chili! To help this team cook and serve, contact Mike Kane, 978-590-0556, mdkane@comcast.net.

SLEIGH BELLS SILENT AUCTION: Our Silent Auction offers gift and theme baskets, quilts and high-quality items or services for auction. The Auction closes Saturday at Noon! If you have a donation, theme basket or talent to share with others (such as a home cooked dinner), please contact Melinda Goodick 978-256-3983 mggoodick@hotmail.com.

THE CHILDREN'S SHOPPE: Our active Jr. and Sr. High Youth offer creative crafts activities for children each year. Help is welcome in this busy and creative area!

COUNTRY STORE & BAKERY: Cookies, cakes, bread, pies, candy – this is where it's at! Slice it, dice it, bake it, taste it! AUMC Bakers are outstanding, offering festive treats and sweets for the season. Sample Betsey's Scones and other delicious treats.

Betsey Driscoll 978-852-8761 betseyLLL@yahoo.com

JINGLING JEWELRY/RE-GIFTING: Share your new or barely used jewelry and holiday gift items at our Jingling Jewelry/Regifting Area. We offer a responsible way to pass it on our treasures! Let Marcia know if you have donations or want to help! Marcia Dana marciadana@gmail.com



CALLING ALL ELVES!

Additional help with set up beginning before Thanksgiving and clean up on December 7 is greatly appreciated! For any other general questions, contact Bonnie Marden, 978-846-1260 BonMarden@gmail.com

**Safely and joyfully we will share, prepare, shop and sing together
as we ring in the Holy Season**

Outreach News-

For the months of September and October, we will be collecting the following items to be packed into “Ditty Bags” to be distributed to seafarers through The Seafarers Mission located in Boston. **Please have the items in by October 19th.** There will be a container in the church lobby after Labor Day to collect items.

Items for Ditty Bag:

Hats - knit or store bought

Socks - white or black

Combs

Nail clippers

Bandanas

Hard Candy

Sewing kit (directions with container)

Note pads

Pens

Disposable razor

Gum

Toothbrush

Lip balm

We are hoping to fill 24 bags for delivery the beginning of November.

Thank you for your support of this effort.

Outreach Committee

AUMC Habitat Work Day

Please also note that we have a work day scheduled for 10/25 in Westford. We have 12 volunteers already and have room for 2 more. I will create a waiting list if anyone drops out. You can reach Ken at tealka@verizon.net.

18th Annual Dream Builders Gala

Please join Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell for our **18th Annual Dream Builders Gala** at the beautiful Nashawtuc Country Club in Concord, MA on Friday, October 3rd from 6 to 10 PM. Attire is black tie optional.

This special evening will include a catered sit-down dinner, music, and the chance to come together in support of our mission to build safe, affordable homes for families in need. [Tickets are on sale now!](#)



We're excited to share the progress we've made, including a home closing in Bedford this August, two homes under construction in Westford, and three new homes now underway in Concord.

As we grow from building one home per year to three, this event is a celebration of what we've accomplished — **and what's ahead**. The night will feature a silent auction, live auction, raffles, a delicious meal and drinks, and all proceeds will support our work to create more opportunities for local families to build brighter futures.

Please consider sponsoring this event. By donating, your funds will be leveraged to help us raise even more towards our mission. [Sponsorship levels and benefits can be found here.](#)

You are cordially invited to

A Celebration of 60 years of Music

**Aldersgate UMC, 242 Boston Road
Chelmsford, MA 01824**

**Sunday, November 2, 2025
3:00-5:00 pm**

Free will offering. Reception to follow.

For more information or if you are
interested in joining the choir,
contact the church office at
aldersgatechelmsford@verizon.net



Our 60th Anniversary Celebration culminates with a musical concert to commemorate 60 years in our beautiful sanctuary. Save the date and share the invitation!

If you are interested in joining the choir for this special occasion, please contact Maylis for more information and the rehearsal schedule.

"A Celebration of 60 Years of Music"

Location: Aldersgate UMC, 242 Boston Road,
Chelmsford, MA 01824

Date: Sunday, November 2, 2025

Time: 3:00pm-5:00pm

Reception to follow

Free will offering

Join Us For Junie's Place - 3rd Annual Gala October 4th



You're invited to the 3rd annual fundraising gala in support of Junie's Place, Inc, a local nonprofit with a mission to provide no-cost grief support to families journeying through the grief of pregnancy/infant/child loss and to champion grief awareness. This is the event of the season, with this year's theme being Iconic Couples and Crews! Come dressed as your favorite famous icons, ready to dance the night away, have your oracle read, enjoy tasty bites from Summer Street Grocers and try your luck at some fantastic raffle prizes (we hear Bruins tickets might be in the mix!).

We're also seeking sponsors for the event! Chelmsford Police Athletic League is this year's presenting sponsor, but we have many other opportunities available too. For any questions about sponsorships or the event, please reach out to Laura Brown at LBrown@SapphireHealthcare.com