



ALDERSGATE ADVOCATE

November 2025

Pastor's Column

Dear Siblings in Christ,

As we enter the month of November, I wonder if you have ever thought about the fact that this entire month is bookended with calls to us to render our thanks to God. The month begins with All Saints Day, when we give thanks for the saints that God has put into our lives—saints that, so often, have shown us how to live this life well, how to endure trials faithfully, and who remind us of what is good and meaningful in this life. The month concludes with the celebrations of Thanksgiving and Christ the King Sunday—Thanksgiving, to call our attention to the bounty of the harvest, the blessings of family and community, and the goodness of the God who has proven himself faithful through yet another year; Christ the King, to draw us back towards a joyous affirmation of God's ongoing reign. This year, we will have additional occasion to give thanks in church as we celebrate the ministry of the laity on Laity Sunday (Nov. 16) and look toward the festivity and colors of Advent, which begins on November 30th this year.

There's an art to giving thanks, I think—an art that is beautifully modelled for us in the last five psalms of the psalter (Psalms 146-150). The Book of Psalms concludes with a great crescendo of praise in these five psalms. After walking us through the doldrums and disappointments, through reflective wisdom where “deep calls to deep,” and by the still waters, Psalms concludes with these five rousing hymns that leave no stone unturned when it comes to God's goodness and faithfulness and the world's manifold reasons for praise. Let absolutely everyone and everything shout with praise, they say! Let every hidden gift and kindness be accounted for and named aloud! These psalms in particular, I think, suggest to us that our reasons for thanksgiving are easily passed over, easily taken for granted, easily unrecognized unless we, somehow, take hold of them and name them as real and as true. It reminds me of a children's book I once read to my kids: there was a birthday party and, for some reason that I can't recall, the gifts were coming so fast and furious down the conveyer-belt that the guest of honor whose birthday it was didn't have nearly enough time to grab each one, unwrap it, experience it for what it was, and say “thank you,” and so they ended up having to commission several other additional days as being officially part of his birthday so that none of them went unopened or unrecognized.

You and I have had gifts and graces coming our way, fast and furious, all year long and now we get an entire month to say thank you for it! What if we declared this entire month thanksgiving month so that we could have the time we need to say thank you well—with thought, with specificity, with an eye toward the thoughtfulness of the gift and the impact it has made on our lives? What if we thought of our job this month as rescuing God's graces to us from forgottenness and obscurity? What if we imagined ourselves spending some time down at the end of the conveyer-belt with the presents that flew past us, unwrapping each one and giving each

one its due. I think that, then, we might emerge on the other side of this month the way we're really supposed to—with a renewed appreciation for how big our pile is along with a renewed experience and affection for how good our God is. May this coming month's call to thanksgiving bless your hearts richly as you spend your time down at the end of your conveyor belts!

May God Bless Your Hearts!

Pastor John

Annual Church Conference, Sunday, November 30 at 7:00 pm

Our annual Church Conference will be in-person on **Sunday, November 30, at 7:00 pm** in partnership with our friends at Westford UMC and West Chelmsford UMC. Please join us for shared worship and separate business sessions.

A softcopy of our annual report will be sent via an all-church email. If you are attending the Church Conference, feel free to print it out and bring it with you to follow along. If you would like a printed copy, please let Betsy in the office know.

Coming Up at Aldersgate - November - December 2025

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

Laity Sunday, November 16

50 Thanksgiving baskets for those in need. Given out on Nov. 23rd.

Santa Fund Tree – Put up on Nov 23rd

Decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas on Nov 30th

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**

Sign Up for Small Gatherings with Pastor John!

One way Pastor John wants to get to know us is through small informal gatherings, hosted by members of the congregation. Look for sign-up sheets in the Welcome Area with the date, time, host family, and location of these gatherings. The number of entries for each gathering is the maximum that can be accommodated, so please use one line per individual when signing up, e.g., couples should use two lines. Depending on the demand, more gatherings may be added.

Christmas Faire and Festival is December 5 and 6

Our annual Christmas Faire and Festival is on Friday, Dec 5, 1:00 pm – 8:00 pm and Saturday, Dec 6, 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 of items to sell or volunteer to staff a table on the sign-up sheets located in the Welcome Area. Contact Bonnie Marden at BonMarden@gmail.com or 978-846-1260 if you have questions.

Stewardship Campaign 2026

It is not too late to submit your pledge card!

“Grow, Serve, Share!”

Thank you to all those who prayerfully considered their family's generosity plan for supporting our 2026 ministries and submitted their pledge cards to our “Grow, Serve, Share” campaign. The Finance Committee and Ministry Leaders will be working together this month to reconcile our 2026 Budget as we prepare for our year ahead. **It is not too late to send in your pledge** for next year by mailing it to the church office, dropping it in the mail slot at the front door of the church or emailing Financial Secretary Kelly Mongiovi at kmongiovi@aol.com advising her of your pledge for 2026. Please return your pledge card or email the information to Kelly as soon as possible since our budget reconciliation meeting is soon. **We need a firm estimate of the expected income from pledges to determine how much we can fund our ministries.**

Middlesex Community College Student Receives Aldersgate Scholarship



Aldersgate has established a scholarship in the church's name at Middlesex Community College (MCC). The scholarship of \$1,000/year is to be given to a deserving BIPOC – black, indigenous, or person of color – student each fall. Thanks to the Mighty Men, who established the scholarship, and income earned from our Endowment Fund, the total funding we have provided enables the scholarship to be

given annually in perpetuity. This fall, the MCC selection committee selected Mayi Nakiyngi. Mayi is currently a Liberal Studies major and hopes to be accepted into the Nursing program at MCC within the next year, with the ultimate goal of transferring to UMASS Lowell for her BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing). Her current GPA is 3.51. From her application essay, we learned that she emigrated to the US on her own, was homeless for a year, living in the women's shelter, eventually got small jobs cleaning houses and went to school to get a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certificate. Mayi is working two jobs to make ends meet and has survived a cancer scare. Her award certificate was announced at a ceremony at MCC on November 6. (Dawn Jones, Isabelle Cole, and Peter served as evaluators of the applications for MCC.) Congrats Mayi!

OUTREACH...

Thanksgiving Baskets

Thanksgiving is around the corner and once again Aldersgate is providing Thanksgiving baskets for 50 families in the Chelmsford/Lowell area. If you would like to help support the project, here are a few ways:

1. Sign up to bring a frozen turkey on Nov 23rd. Sign-ups sheets are in the front entrance way.
 2. Donate \$ in the turkey box in the front entrance.
 3. Sunday school children can donate dry goods and canned goods. (see the Church School News below)
- Gobble, Gobble and Thank You!

Santa Giving Tree

Annual Chelmsford Santa Giving Tree will be up in the entrance way on November 23th. Tags will be hung on the tree for your selections. Christmas gifts are due by Sunday December 14th.

Thank you for helping create a better holiday for local families who need some assistance. God is Good, all the time.

From the Aldersgate Altar Guild.

We have a busy November coming up for decorating our church for Advent/Christmas period. Thankfully the Aldersgate family has always joined in after our Thanksgiving Service on November 23rd. Many members are busy filling the Thanksgiving baskets right after service but that is when we need strong boys, men, and women to bring up the Christmas decorations and Christmas trees and help put up the garlands, lights, wreaths, candles, etc., to prepare for "The Coming of the Christ Child".

Please come help if you can. Will have cider and donuts in the kitchen for energy! Again thank you for all your help in the past many years. Jane

Single Ladies Dining Out



Single Ladies Dining Out will have **lunch** together on November 22nd at 1pm at Princeton Station – 147 Princeton St., No. Chelmsford, MA.01863. **Please** RSVP by Thursday November 20th to Betsy Campbell at 978-256-9400 or aldersgatechelmsford@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

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 pi

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

Birthdays and Anniversaries – November

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.

November Birthdays

Nov 2 Dave Howe

Nov 4 - Garth Brown

Nov 14 - Linda Regan

Nov 18 - Rebecca Biggar

Nov 19 -Pastor Bob Jon

Nov 29 – Will Whitley

Nov 28 – Jake Dean



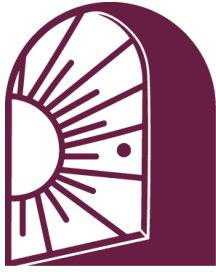
November Anniversaries

November 24th – Deb and Joe Benson Anniversary

If we have missed your big days, 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.

You can schedule your appointment for the next Blood Drive for December 27th 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](https://www.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.



ALTERNATIVE HOUSE

SAFETY STRENGTH FUTURE

Friend,

We are thrilled to invite you to Alternative House's 2nd Annual Donor Appreciation Night! Join us as we celebrate *you*, our incredible supporters, whose generosity powers our mission. The event will be hosted at Alternative House's Community Support Center Offices, on Thursday, December 11th from 5 PM - 8 PM.

Event Highlights

- Delicious food and complimentary wine & beer
- 25+ local vendors to shop from
- Great company and community spirit

Last year's event was such a success, and we can't wait to see everyone again this year!

Important Details

- **Registration is required for all attendees.**
- If you plan to bring a guest, please ensure they are registered individually.
- Unregistered guests will not be admitted.
- To maintain safety and confidentiality, please do not share or publicize our office address.

Tickets are free, please register here: [Register Here](#)

For more information, reach out to Liz at liz@alternative-house.org or 978-937-5777.

With gratitude,

Maria

Maria Crooker-Capone
Executive Director
Alternative House

www.alternative-house.org

Food Collection for Thanksgiving Baskets

Bring in items by November 16

The church school will once again help our Outreach committee by supplying items needed for the Thanksgiving Baskets. Please bring in the following items and place in the brown box located downstairs in the church school area:

PreK - 2nd Grade Class: cranberry sauce or canned green beans

3rd - 5th Grade Class: large can of fruit cocktail

6th - 8th Grade Class: apple juice (plastic container)

9th - 12th Grade Class: regular rice (no instant rice)



JUNIOR YOUTH 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!

Banana Night!



Friday, November 14, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Join us as we go bananas playing banana games and making banana crafts! Please bring a banana and wear banana colors – yellow, green, or brown (overripe).

St. Paul's Feeding Program

Wednesday, November 19, 3:30 – 6:00 p.m.

We will join the senior youth and travel to Eliot Church in Lowell to help prepare and serve a meal.

CHS Musical – *Oklahoma!*

Saturday, November 22, 1:40 – 4:30 p.m.

The combined junior and senior youth groups will meet at Chelmsford High School at 1:40 p.m. to watch the 2:00 p.m. matinee performance of *Oklahoma!*

Members of our senior youth are in the cast, orchestra, and crew!



SENIOR YOUTH 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.

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Canobie Lake Park Fun

Our combined junior and senior youth groups went to Canobie Lake Park for an afternoon of rides, games, food and fun!

Thank you to Cheryl Cruickshank for finding a discount to the tickets!



TRUNK-OR-TREAT!

For our Trunk-or-Treat party, we had a bright, sunny day and a great turnout from our church family and the community! The senior youth group ran activities including Minute to Win It games, temporary tattoos, masks, and pumpkin cookie decorating. Families dressed up and decked out their car trunks with fun, creative themes. The children played games, then truck-or-treated through the line of cars. They left with smiles on their faces and lots of sugar in their treat bags! Thanks to everyone for making this a fun and welcoming event for all.



Trunk or Treat







Christmas Faire and Festival

DECEMBER 5, 2025 1pm - 8pm

DECEMBER 6, 2025 10am - 2pm



Hear Ye – Hear Ye! See below for Table Information and Workshops Schedule! Joyfully we welcome the community and share our amazing gifts and talents – plus 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 to the community.

Starting Now!

Donations for Silent Auction, Jewelry, Containers for Centerpieces, and Gracious Regifting welcome.

Let the Office or David Jones (978-726-1698) know if you want someone to come trim some of your bushes between Nov 22-30.

Sign Up Sheets for Table Staff during the Faire are available in the Church Foyer.

Spread the word by posting the Faire Flyers located in the Welcome Area at your office or area businesses.

2025 Workshop Schedule

Nov 23-25 Wreath workshop opens. Join us Sunday afternoon or Monday between 10am and 5pm to decorate wreaths, build swags and begin Hall Set up

Nov 30 - Wreaths available for purchase - First Sunday of Advent
(3pm-7pm) Begin Hall Set up and Centerpieces

Dec 1 - Please bring in your Knitting and Craft items by Dec 1st.

The Prayer Shawl ministry will be pricing them on that day.

Dec 1 - Dec 4 10am to 5pm Greens and Centerpiece Workshop Days

All are welcome to drop by and pitch in as you are able!

Dec 3 - Afternoon and Evening Fellowship Hall Set Up

Dec 4 - Bake Table Donations Delivery and All Table Set Up Completion

Dec 5 - Bake Table Donations Delivery and Final Set Up

12:30pm Volunteers Check-In for 1pm Opening!

6:00pm - Caroling - if Choir and Musicians available! (*check with Maylis!*)

Dec 6 10-2pm Faire open (Invite a Friend to boost traffic on Saturday!)

Dec 7 Faire Items available after worship services

KRINGLE'S KITCHEN: Calling all “Cooks and Gourmet Elves!” This year our focus for Friday afternoon and evening meals will be on “Soups, Chili’s, and Stews!” We are looking for volunteers to prepare a batch of their finest dish. Chili, Turkey or Chicken Frame Soups or your favorite stews will be greatly appreciated! The kitchen activities will be very similar to years gone by, with the exception of short order cooking. We’ll need order takers, runners, servers, waiters, waitresses to help serve and clean.

For Saturday morning, the target meal will be scones, muffins and possibly AUMC Egg McMuffins. Same support required. Signup Sheets for the kitchen help and volunteer meal preparation are available in the church entryway. Please contact Greg Piper

at gpipes01@gmail.com or (978) 985-6535 for an elf spot on the team or an offer to donate your favorite dish!

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.

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: Share your new or barely used jewelry and holiday gift items at our Jingling Jewelry! 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

GRACIOUS REGIFTING: Offering gently-used or new items, this table is stewarded by Jane Vooy's. Bring in your donations early to help us set up!

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!**

Garden Update

It's the end of another growing season, and our Garden Club members are glad to have a winter break! Thank you to the church school classes for getting us off to an early start with their seed sowing in milk jugs, to the VBS children for harvesting potatoes, and to Chris Sargent and Wendy Xu for tending our church garden all season! We had a great crop of veggies this year. In addition to the Sunday offerings in the Fellowship Hall, we sent fresh produce to the Chelmsford Food Pantry. Here's a list of our donations to the pantry:

46 cucumbers, 12 garlic, 17 peppers, 25 summer squash, 22 pints cherry tomatoes, 318 tomatoes, and small amounts of broccoli, carrots, collards, kale, lettuce, rhubarb, Swiss chard, and zucchini.



Our 60th Anniversary Celebration

A huge THANK YOU to all the musicians who worked so diligently to offer a beautiful 60th Anniversary Concert to the community on Sunday, November 2nd. Thank you also to Betsy Driscoll and Robin Dye for preparing the delicious treats for the reception.



The audience was impressed by the quality of the performances and the musicianship of all participants. Many audience members expressed how touched they were by the program, and a good number of them were visitors!

We are all blessed by the music ministry of our church and this concert was a wonderful celebration of it! Thank you to our church family for supporting it with your prayers, presence, and encouragement always.

Credits for the pictures – Finn H, Charles McCrea, Vicky Vooy's and Angela Hughes



Charles McCrea



Maylis and Juhee Lee

Violinist Rev. Juhee Lee





Audience and Choir

Shepherd Bells, Finn H., Juhee Lee

Bellissimos



**Choir
from the
right with
Karen
Leonard**



Choir from the left

