



# ALDERSGATE ADVOCATE

May 2026

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## Pastor's Column

Dear Beloved in Christ,

Spring has sprung! The snow has melted away, the grass is turning green again, the first flowers have come up out of the ground and shown their beautiful colors...and it's about time! Spring always has a way of motivating me to get up and get moving: to clean up the yard, sweep away the sand from the winter snows, switch out my wardrobe for warm-weather clothes, and get myself organized for the seasons ahead. There's nothing quite like the transformations of Spring to get the mind thinking about the preparations that will be needed for the season ahead.


Shifting into Eastertide is a lot like shifting into Spring in that regard—they both signal change and life and a need to gear up for a new way of being out in the world. It just so happens that they come at the same time. I've been asking us to think about that a bit more deeply this year. How is Easter preparing me? How is it inviting me, enabling me, and preparing me for a change? How is Christ's resurrection asking me to put away my winter clothes, so to speak, and make myself ready for a different way of being in the world—for a freer, more empowered, and more missional way of being in the world? We've been asking on Sunday mornings how Easter might be preparing us to be a Pentecost people. We're moving into May this month and Pentecost is upon us.

The season of Easter is often a time of year when we look more closely at the book of Acts. Readings from Acts take the place of Old Testament readings in the lectionary in the season of Easter and we've been reading through Acts in my Thursday morning Bible study as well. If Acts is about anything, it's about how Easter gives way to the Ascension, how the Ascension gives way to Pentecost, and how Pentecost has set the church free to be a missional and Spirit-led people. It's about how Easter has accomplished its preparations, how resurrection has paved the way for bold, purposive action. They even named the book after it: Acts! May this month's transition from Eastertide to Pentecost evoke a similar movement in us as well!

The Very Deepest of Blessings

Pastor John

From Greg Piper - Yesterday, Alyssa delivered a pair of twins... .

William Morgan Watson, born 3:21pm, 7lbs 13 ounces, Vivian Skye Watson, born 3:23pm, 7lbs 3 ounces, 15 lbs of babies. . Kimberly is due on May 11th! Busy time for the Pipers!

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### The New Church Directories Are Here!

The new church directories have arrived. You may pick up your directory on Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> or May 3<sup>rd</sup>, after either church service in Fellowship Hall. After April 26<sup>th</sup>, you may pick up your directory in the church office during normal office hours, from 10am to noon Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. If you have any questions, please feel free to email Rick Newcomb ,at [rnewcomb@comcast.net](mailto:rnewcomb@comcast.net), or Peter Smyton at [thesmytonfamily@comcast.net](mailto:thesmytonfamily@comcast.net).

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SAVE THE DATE FOR THE

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell

**GOLF TOURNAMENT**

**JULY 13, 2026 AT FOUR OAKS**



Presented by **Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell**

**Golf Tournament - Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell**

Get TicketsDonate

Registration ends Sunday, 07/12/2026 11:59pm ED

❖ You're Invited ❖

# Presentation & Potluck: Sunday, May 3rd



SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

## Rev. Dr. Dan Joslyn-Siemiatkoski

Kraft Family Professor & Director,  
Center for Christian-Jewish Learning  
Boston College

EVENING TOPIC

## Understanding White Christian Nationalism

5:00 PM

### Presentation

Introduction & talk by Dr.  
Joslyn-Siemiatkoski

6:00 PM

### Potluck Dinner

Bring a dish to share!

After Dinner

### Discussion & Q&A

Open conversation as one church  
family

The New England Conference passed a resolution denouncing White Christian Nationalism. **What is it? How do we respond?** Join us for an engaging introduction from Dr. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski — a leading scholar who considers this ideology an emergency — followed by a shared potluck dinner and open Q&A as one church family.

**If you don't have something to bring - Bring your appetite! It's YOU we want to see."**

**All youth are welcome and encouraged to attend.** The presentation will be recorded so every member of Aldersgate can share the same foundation of understanding. Please arrive early so we can start on time!

### Questions? Contact Kim Ward

mikdraw@aol.com

or see Suzanne Hevelone, Peter Smyton, or Roger Whitehead

## OUTREACH...

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### Change For Change

Our choir has selected Parkinson Research Foundation for our next Change for Change. Your coins and donations matter. If you would like to make a donation, you can mark envelope for Parkinson Research and place in offering. We hope to raise several hundred dollars over the next few months. Blessings, Outreach

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**Thank you for coming to donate blood on April 18<sup>th</sup>**

**You can schedule your appointment for the next Blood Drives  
for July 11<sup>th</sup> and August 8<sup>th</sup> 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](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and search under December 27<sup>th</sup> to schedule an appointment. For more information call or email Cate Lehan or Robin Dye or the church office.

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### **Book Club in the Concord Room and on Zoom**

**Upcoming book club picks. We would love to have anyone join us.**

**The last Tuesday of the month, 7pm book club discussion in the Concord room.**

**May 26, Robin's pick, Betty by Tiffany McDaniel**

**June 30, The Astral Library, Deb and Ken's pick by Kate Quinn**

**July 28, Deb's pick is Theo of Golden by Allen Levi**

**Come with any of your new picks. Blessings, Deb**

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

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### **Single Ladies Dining Out**

Single Ladies Dining Out will have **lunch** together on **Saturday, May 23rd at 1 pm at Good**



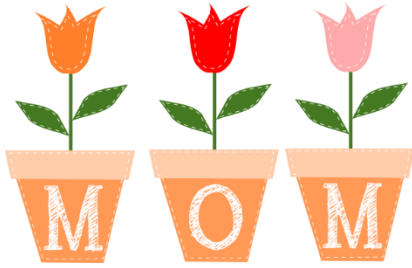
**Thymes. – 1278 Gorham Street. 01852.** Please RSVP by Thursday May 21 to Betsy Campbell at 978-256-9400 or [aldersgatehelmsford@verizon.net](mailto:aldersgatehelmsford@verizon.net) so that she can reserve a table large enough. If you are a single lady and would enjoy a lunch out and lots of fun conversation, we would love to have you join us. Please talk to Betsy for more information.

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### **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!

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**MOTHER'S DAY BREAKFAST**  
**SUNDAY, MAY 10**  
**9:00 – 10:30 A.M.**

MENU

Pancakes with Assorted Toppings  
Breakfast Casserole  
Sausage  
Fruit Cups  
*Vegan & Gluten-free selections, too!*

**All donations go toward the Youth Mission Trip this summer.**

**Church School Families:**

**Please come to breakfast at 9:00 am  
so you can attend church school classes at 9:30 am.**

**Garden Club Plant Sale - Sunday, May 17**

The Garden Club is offering a selection of plants and seedlings for your lawn or garden. Stop by at the back entrance to the church after each service. All donations will go towards the church gardens.

**CHURCH SCHOOL SUNDAY – MAY 17**

**\* Last day of church school classes \***

**Aldersgate is creating a Green Team!**

Stop by the Green Team table to learn what a Green Team is, why we're forming one, and how you can make a lasting impact, helping our church live out our calling to care for God's creation and serve our community with justice and compassion.



## College Graduates

Congratulations to our college graduates this spring! We are so proud of you. Please let us know if we missed any graduates so we can celebrate their accomplishments.

Jenna Ward

May 18, 2026

Clark University

Masters in Environment and Policy

Jenna's summer plans are to explore the globe,  
starting with Peru and Switzerland and the East Coast.  
Fall plans to begin her quest to change the world for the better!

Alyson Mireault

May 15, 2026

UMass Amherst, Isenberg School of Business

B.S. in Business, Accounting Concentration

Alyson has accepted a position at Ernst and Young, an auditing firm in Boston.

Larry Yang

May 14, 2026

New York University

Bachelors in Computer Science and Applied Mathematics  
Larry is going to work for a company as a computer scientist.

# CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

## Easter Egg Hunt Celebration!



## Green Sunday Activities!

Thank you to Wendy and Dottie for helping with our Green Sunday activities. We learned how to take better care of God's creation through a Recycling 101 presentation. The children made seed balls, how-to-recycle refrigerator magnets, and aluminum foil balls. They also planted peas in our church garden.



## CONFIRMATION CLASS NEWS

### Service Project - Saturday, May 2, noon - 2:00pm

Our first service project as a confirmation class is to help the Outreach Committee with the Rummage Sale cleanup! Meet in the Fellowship Hall where we will sort and pack items that were not sold, so they can be donated to the Epilepsy Foundation for another chance.

### Confirmation Class - Sunday, May 17, noon – 2:00 p.m.

All confirmation students and mentors will meet in the Fellowship Hall for our next class. Thank you to the Ready family for providing lunch on this date!

### Confirmation Class - Sunday, May 31, noon – 2:00 p.m.

Next class. Thank you to the Cruickshank family for providing lunch on this date!

## YOUTH GROUP UPCOMING EVENTS

### Picnic and Hike *(combined junior and senior youth groups)*

#### ***New Date!* Sunday, May 3, noon - 2:00 p.m.**

We will travel to Great Brook Farm State Park in Carlisle for a picnic lunch and hiking in the park. I'll bring picnic blankets. Please bring your own picnic lunch and drink, plus money for ice cream at the stand.



### Mother's Day Breakfast *(senior youth + 7<sup>th</sup> graders will join us) (fundraising points)*

#### **Sunday, May 10, 8:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.**

Come help cook and serve breakfast! This is a fundraiser for our summer mission trip.

### Youth Mission Trip at Mission Central *(7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade)*

#### **Sunday, July 12 - Saturday, July 18**

Join us on our summer youth mission trip to Mechanicsburg PA where we will serve at the Mission Central warehouse! We will support their disaster relief work with jobs like packing flood buckets, assembling hygiene kits, and sorting donations. We will also visit HersheyPark on the way down and Philadelphia on the way back. Please let Lee Williams know if you are interested in going.



## Senior Youth Preparing Easter Breakfast



## Junior Youth Roller Skating!



## Earth Day Service Project

Thank you to the Senior Youth  
and Garden Club for beautifying  
our church grounds!



## Summer Camp Programs

The New England Conference offers many summer camping opportunities for all ages. Please see [www.neumc.org/campsandretreatcenters](http://www.neumc.org/campsandretreatcenters) for more information. There are scholarships available to all children and youth who attend a camp program, thanks to our Doris Miller Camp Scholarship Fund.



### **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL! August 10 – 14, 9:00 a.m. – noon Children Ages 4 – 12**



Summer is just around the corner, and we're planning an exciting Vacation Bible School experience! Sign up today! This year's VBS, "Operation Overboard: Dare to Go Deep With God," is an invitation and a challenge to dive into the waters of God's Word and discover what true faith is all about. We will learn Bible stories about people who show deep faith by depending on God, daring to care, claiming Jesus, choosing to follow, and changing the world. Kids of all ages will experience God's Word, explore and create through fun crafts and activities, music, snacks, and games. The cost for participating is \$20.00 per child with a family max of \$60.00.

**Registration is available online at**

**[www.aldersgatehelmsford.com/education/vacation-bible-school/](http://www.aldersgatehelmsford.com/education/vacation-bible-school/)**

**If you have any questions, or would like to help, please see Lee Williams.**



*Mother's Day*  
**BREAKFAST**  
**SUNDAY, MAY 10TH**  
**9:00 - 10:30 A.M.**

~MENU~

Pancakes with Assorted Toppings  
Breakfast Casserole  
Sausage  
Fruit Cups

Vegan & Gluten Free  
Selections, too!



## Birthdays and Anniversaries – May

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.

### May Birthdays

May 6 – Samuel R.

May 6 – Laura Brown

May 6 – Jayne Yeuell

May 9 – Diane van Buren

May 10 – Steve Johnson

May 24 – Ray Brown

May 26 – Gail Kaufmann

May 26 – Arthur Umana

May 28 – Jillian Jones



### May Anniversaries

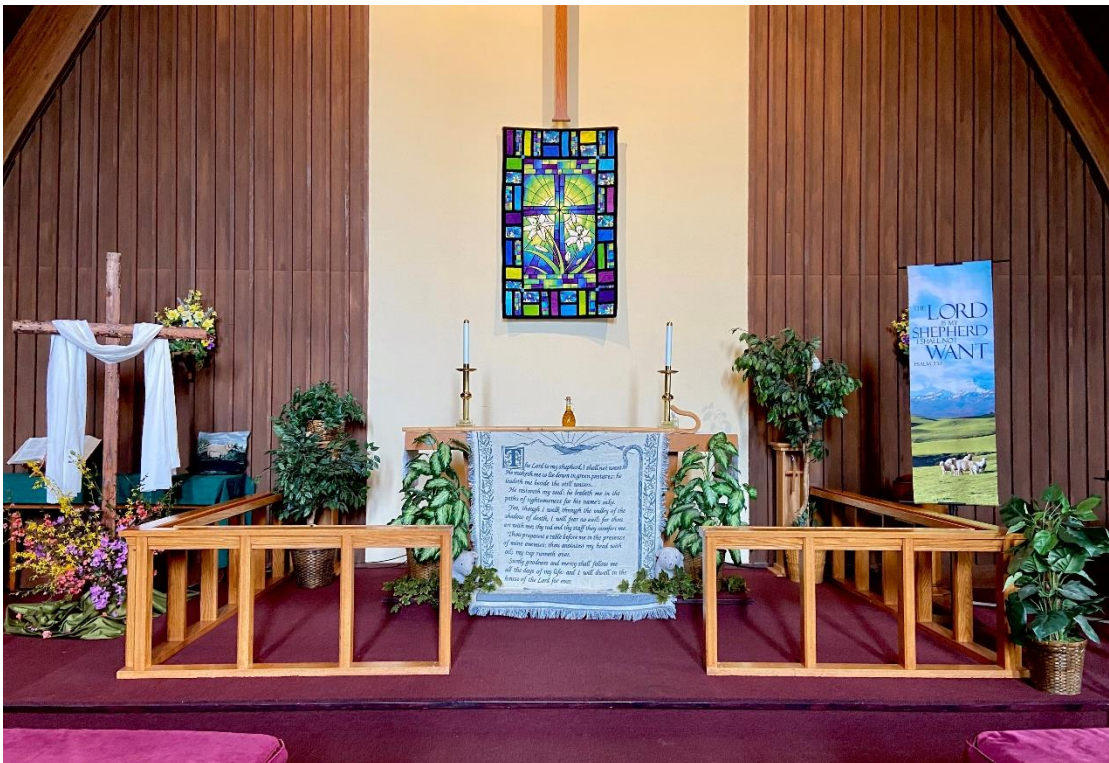
May 23 - David and Dawn Jones wedding anniversary

May 14 – Carmen and Arthur Umana Wedding anniversary

**If we have missed your big days, please send them by email, to Betsy in the office at [aldersgetchelsford@verizon.net](mailto:aldersgetchelsford@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.**

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## The Lord is my Shepherd – Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup>



## Easter Music

A huge THANK YOU to all our musicians, singers and ringers, for providing such beautiful and uplifting music for our services throughout Holy Week.

Also to our Altar Guild for the meaningful visuals that helped us to walk that week with Jesus.  
Thank you!



## Spring Ring on Saturday April 11th

It was a great day of ringing at this year's 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Ring, held at Tewksbury Memorial High School last Saturday April 11. Thank you to all who participated. What a wonderful experience to ring along groups from so many other places, and to fellowship with fellow United Methodists and friends from other area churches and beyond!



## Why I Ride 2026

Dear Sponsor,

Here I go again! I just registered for the 2026 Pan-Mass Challenge. The PMC is an annual bike-a-thon that raises more money for charity than any other event in the country. Last year we raised a record \$78,000,000 for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. We have exceeded a BILLION dollars raised since the first PMC in 1980, and, 100% of every rider-raised dollar goes directly to DFCI.

That's all good info to know, but you're probably wondering why I'm still riding the PMC after 20 years.

I started riding for Erika, who succumbed to a brain tumor when she was just 6 years old. She used to tell people she "spells her name with a "K" because it's strong and straight, and she's too bold for a curlyque "C."

Then I kept riding for my husband Greg, who was treated at Dana-Farber for three years for a rare form of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Despite the excellent care we received, they couldn't achieve a sustained remission. We lost him in 2012.

I ride in celebration of survivorship for my niece, Emily, who was diagnosed with leukemia when she was 6 years old. Last December, she celebrated her 43rd birthday!

I ride for my cousin Sigrid, an avid Red Sox fan, who has survived multiple brain tumors.

I ride for my partner, John, who is a 2-time cancer survivor. I'm grateful to have someone special to share my life with again.

The list goes on, but you get the idea...

Researchers are making great strides in cancer treatment and care. Survivors are living longer with improved quality of life and every penny I can raise toward that end is a triumph. That's why it's so important to me to continue to ride and raise money to help Dana-Farber in their fight against cancer. This is my 21st year riding, and my goal is to raise \$21,000. Won't you help by giving what you can?

If there is someone special that you would like me to ride for, please share their name and whether it is in honor, or in memory. You can donate online by clicking on this link:

<https://profile.pmc.org/MD0202>. If you prefer, you can write a check made out to PMC and mail it to me at 6 Sterling Lane, Westford, MA 01886.

I am grateful and excited to be able to ride.

I thank you in advance for your generosity and your continued support.

Blessings,

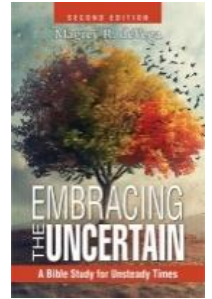
Marcia

## Adult Education at Aldersgate

Aldersgate offers several opportunities to discuss, discover and develop your understanding of and relationship with God.

### **Sunday mornings; 9:45 to 10:30 in the Concord Room and on Zoom.**

Join us as continue *Embracing the Uncertain* (Second Edition) by Magrey Devega. Devega invites us to wrestle with the uncertainties in our lives and the world, instead of ignoring them. This study has us digging deep into our faith, pointing us to Jesus and showing us how to follow Him with hope, courage and obedience. Please order a book from your favorite book seller. There are also a few copies in the lobby for a suggested donation of \$17.



### **Thursday mornings 10 to 12 in the Concord Room and on Zoom.**

The group is studying the New Testament book of Acts together. Please read Chapter 3 before **the next class on April 30**. If you need a Bible, there are several in the Concord Room to choose from. See Kim Ward ([mikdraw@aol.com](mailto:mikdraw@aol.com)) or Debbie Smyton or Pastor John if you would like help choosing the right one for you.

### **Tuesday mornings, at 10 am, exclusively on Zoom.**

**Early Bird** is exploring what it is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Each week there will be a question from Scripture which will challenge and inform us of what it means to be a disciple. The series title is *'Seven Questions - A Self-Assessment.'* Plan to join, explore the questions, and reflect on your faith journey. Direct your questions to Charles McCrea ([chocprchr@verizon.net](mailto:chocprchr@verizon.net))

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## Aldersgate UMC Habitat Workers.

On Saturday, April 11, 2026, Aldersgate UMC had a great team working for Habitat for Humanity at Road, Concord build of three wonderful homes. We accomplished a lot and had a simply wonderful also had a wonderful meal together - our church loves to eat together.



Dave Howe, Ray Brown, Dan Ward, Ken Teal, Deana Peterson, Marcia Dana, Mike Kane, Christine Kelley, Chris Sargent, Liz Hryniewich, Wendy Zu.

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER**  
**DISCUSSION & CHURCH FAMILY POTLUCK**

The New England Conference passed a resolution last year denouncing White Christian Nationalism. What is White Christian Nationalism? How do we respond to it? What are we to do about it? The Adult Education Committee seeks to help us increase our awareness and understanding of White Christian Nationalism.

**Join us May 3 for a special presentation from Rev. Dr. Dan Joslyn-Siemiatkoski followed by discussion, potluck dinner and question-and-answer session.**

Details are still coming together. We aim to start the presentation at 5 pm, followed by dinner. We hope to be able to record the presentation so every person at Aldersgate can start from the same place of understanding this sometimes-divisive ideology. Having dinner after hearing the introductory information will allow us to 'chew it over' literally and figuratively, to process it all together. We hope it will be a warm, lively conversation and sweet time together as one church family and we **\*really\*** want you to be a part of it. All Youth are invited and encouraged to come, and we will look into baby sitting services if needed. It is our desire that everyone enjoy a good meal and be home at a reasonable time on a school night.

As the Kraft Family Professor and Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning, Dr. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski considers the threat of White Christian Nationalism to be an emergency. With his expertise, we feel Aldersgate would be unified within the same space of understanding. Once we have this introduction and large group conversation, the Adult Ed team will come together again, to create next steps in developing our understanding of what White Christian Nationalism is and what our response should be, in keeping with the Conference's resolution.

Dr Joslyn-Siemiatkoski is a colleague and longtime friend of Dr Suzanne Hevelone. You can read more about him here: <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/morrissey/departments/theology/people/faculty-directory/joslyn-siemiatkoski-daniel.html>

Questions? See Kim Ward ([mikdraw@aol.com](mailto:mikdraw@aol.com)), Suzanne Hevelone, Peter Smyton or Roger Whitehead.

**Mark your calendar for May 3<sup>rd</sup>! Start planning which dish you will bring to share!**  
**We can't wait to spend some time together with you.**

## SUPPORT AN EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

My name is Leah Downs, and I am a member of Scout Troop 81 in Chelmsford. I am currently working toward achieving my Eagle Scout rank, the highest honor in Scouting.

For my Eagle Scout service project, I am partnering with Chelmsford Veterans Park to design and install a Purple Heart monument that will honor the brave service members who were wounded or killed in combat while serving our country.

This monument will be a lasting tribute to those who sacrificed so much for our freedom.



An important part of completing my project is raising funds to help cover the cost of the monument and installation. To support the project, I am offering Purple Heart lapel pins as a symbol of your support and partnership with the park.

A \$10 donation will receive a commemorative lapel pin.

### To donate

Scan the QR Code or send a check made out to BSA Troop 81 you can mail check to

Troop 81  
C/O Leah Downs  
244 Riverneck rd Chelmsford, Ma  
01824



Donations



To purchase a pin

