



August 16, 2026

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

Flowers on the altar are given by Robin Dye – Blessings for all our educators and students as another school year begins. May your year be filled with joy and learning.

Confirmation Class - Sunday, August 23, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

The next class for confirmation students and mentors will be after Worship in the Concord Room.

Confirmation Class - Sunday, August 30, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Also after Worship in the Concord Room.

Discussion and Listening Sessions on Relocating Flags, Tonight, Aug 16

There are strong feelings among some congregants about whether to relocate the American and Methodist flags to the Fellowship Hall. We believe, in the spirit of Christian fellowship, that it would be useful to have an opportunity to discuss and listen to each other’s views and the reasoning behind them to better understand each other’s perspectives. We will gather **tonight at 5:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall for a pot-luck meal and conversation.** We hope and pray that those of you with opinions will attend and be willing to actively participate in discussions at your table during the dinner, followed by a sharing of those discussions with the whole group. We pray that this discernment process, conducted with respect and love, will move the church body to a better understanding of our collective views and towards a level of closure.

New Video Monitors to Enhance Our Worship Experience

The Trustees recently acquired and installed video monitors on the front wall in the sanctuary. The monitors were purchased using income from the Endowment Fund. The worship planning and live stream/recording teams have been experimenting this summer with different ways of using the monitors during the service. (We will not be displaying the entire service, just items that may help enhance our worship experience.) As we try different ways to use, or not use, the monitors, we are looking for your feedback on the ways in which you find the monitors helpful or distracting; please share your thoughts with Pastor John, Bob Peterson, Val Shupe, or Peter Smyton.

Homecoming at Aldersgate

On Sunday, August 23, Greg Ciesluk, son of Walter and the late Gail Ciesluk, will return to Aldersgate United Methodist Church to share the message in worship. Greg grew up at Aldersgate, where his faith was nurtured through the love, witness, and encouragement of the congregation. After graduating from UMass Amherst and Duke Divinity School, he served for 32 years as a United Methodist pastor in Ohio and Minnesota. Since retiring from pastoral ministry in 2023, he has begun a new chapter serving others as an insurance professional. Greg and his wife, Rebekah, live in Owatonna, Minnesota.

Drawing from Matthew 7:21–29, Greg's message will be a personal testimony to God's faithfulness through every season of life and a heartfelt expression of gratitude for the people of Aldersgate, whose prayers, encouragement, and faithful witness helped shape his journey. His hope is to encourage every generation to build deeply on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ and to remember that lives quietly devoted to Christ often bear fruit for years—and even generations—to come.



Summertime Stewardship

It's hard to believe that we are well into August! There has been so much activity and hard work, by so many servants at Aldersgate! As we journey through the summer months, please be sure to keep your church family in mind with your prayers and your pledges.

Please feel free to bring your 2026 pledged offerings when you join us on Sunday services this summer at 9:30 am. You can also send them by mail or electronic bill pay. Thank you for your faithful stewardship! For questions about bill pay through your banking institution, contact Kelly Mongiovi, our Financial Secretary at kmongiovi@aol.com, or Finance Chair, Bob Peterson, at peterjohn.peterson@gmail.com.

Clean Sweep

Please see the signup sheet in the welcome area and consider signing up for a job or two helping to spruce up the church this summer. The jobs can be done on your time! If you don't have a key, ask Betsy in the office to borrow one or when to come. Time is running out to complete these tasks before the summer is over! If you have signed up to work on a task on the list, thank you!, and, if it is still on your list, please check with Betsy in the church office about access to the church and let her know what supplies you need. Samples of the tasks this year include clean windows, vacuum pews, remove wax off the sanctuary rug, paint the office ceiling, clean out the kitchen refrigerators, and repair hymnals.

Sermon Notes

1. Today we're looking at the theme of holiness and the way God's vision of a genuine, interior holiness of heart after the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost went hand in hand, in the early church, with a movement away from the requirements and regulations of the Old Testament law that seemed more superficial by contrast (e.g., circumcision and keeping kosher). Implicit here is the idea that true holiness is something that moves from the inside out. What are some clear marks of holiness that come to mind for you this morning that fit that description?

2. The passage from Jeremiah 31 today talks about an old covenant and a new covenant. The old was breakable, it says; but the new one will be written on the heart (v. 33). The new covenant as Jeremiah describes it here doesn't leave the law of Moses behind, though, because with it, God says, "I will put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts." With that in mind, how do you think this new covenant supposed to work?

3. The apostle Paul is also talking about holiness today in the excerpt from Romans. We are to "present ourselves "holy and acceptable to God" as our "spiritual act of worship" (Rom 12:1). But in the next verse, he says that that work begins in the mind: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds..." Why does this work begin in the mind?

4. We're also peeking back in on the decision of the Council of Jerusalem today in Acts 15. One interesting thing to notice about the council today is that there too we find a renewed call to the church toward holiness, *but also* that that call went hand in hand with extending full fellowship to Gentile Christians. Because the Spirit is interested in the heart, surface matters (here, circumcision) that divide the fellowship are less and less important. What do you think about that? Is it possible that a universal call to seek God's heart could end up being more inclusive?

5. One feature of our worship service today is an infant baptism. Have you ever noticed how, when we baptize an infant, there's an additional commitment for the sponsors/parents that they nurture the child "that by your teaching and example...[they may come] to profess their faith openly and lead a Christian life"? What does that commitment have to do with holiness?

Service in the Fellowship Hall on Hot Sundays This Summer

If the sanctuary is uncomfortably hot on a Sunday morning this summer, we'll plan to hold the service in the **air-conditioned** Fellowship Hall. Our rule-of-thumb will be to hold the service in the Hall if the temperature that morning is predicted to be over 80°. Watch for an all-church email and/or One Call-Tell All notification of the venue change if time permits. In lieu of the livestream on those Sundays, a recording of the service will be uploaded later that morning.

Summer Social Justice: Read MLK's Favorite Author with Us!

Join us to read *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman. This is the book Pastor Bob gifted our young people a few years ago. The UMC General Board of Church and Society frequently utilizes Thurman's writings including *Jesus and the Disinherited*, to inspire and shape its justice-rooted advocacy. Martin Luther King, Jr., carried the book in his briefcase wherever he traveled. Let's read it together and find out what the UMC and MLK found so compelling about it!

Join us August 26 from 6:00-7:00 PM in the Concord Room to discuss the book in its entirety. Let either Kim (mikdraw@aol.com; 315-368-7324) or Suzanne (shevelone@gmail.com, 617-504-0922) know if you are planning to read with us but please feel free to show up even if you don't RSVP!

Garden Club News

The VBS children spent the morning in the garden this past week. They harvested potatoes for us! They each got to take home one potato to taste, and the rest will be delivered to the pantry.

This week we delivered to the Chelmsford Food Pantry:



The Garden Club also has the congregation's share of produce. You can find the produce on tables in the Fellowship Hall every Sunday this summer. This week's offerings are Zucchini, Summer Squash, Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Potatoes and maybe a few Green Beans.

Green Team Meeting - Sunday, August 30, 8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Join the Green Team at our next meeting in the Concord Room. We'll finalize our plans for a congregation-wide project this fall. Bring your ideas!

Aldersgate Breakfast and Bible (AB&B)

The next 'Aldersgate Breakfast and Bible' (AB&B) will convene on Thursday 20 August at ten-thirty (10:30-12:00) in the Fellowship Hall. It is a time of fellowship, learning and sharing. All are invited. If you plan to attend, please sign up by noon Tuesday

Blessing of the Backpacks

Sunday, August 30

Pastor John will offer a Blessing of the Backpacks during Worship this day. All our children, youth and college students are encouraged to bring their school backpacks for this special occasion. Pastor John will bless them as they go forth and begin a new school year.



Vacation Bible School Appreciation

We had a great time at our Operation Overboard VBS this year! We learned Bible stories at the Underwater Passage, created Aquatic Arts, played fun games at the High Tide Hangout, ate delicious snacks at the Diver's Diner, sang songs at the Coral Reef, performed science experiments at the Exploration Station, and watched funny puppet shows with Ocho and Oogle, all in a beautifully decorated ocean set.

Many thanks to our amazing group of adult and youth volunteers who helped make this year's VBS a fabulous week for all of us!

Adult Volunteers

Deb Benson, Rebecca Biggar, Betsy Campbell, Janet Chaput, Maylis de la Fey, Betsey Driscoll, Robin Dye, Kate Henderson, Suzanne Hevelone, Jillian Jones, Harriet Kinnett, Robin Knox, Jean Moreland, Deana Peterson, Chris Sargent, Val Shupe, Dan Ward, Pastor John Whitley, Laralin Worsham, Wendy Xu.

Youth Volunteers

Matthias, Charlie, Liam, Alyxis, AJ, Andrew, Will H., Shmuel, Melinda, Eliana.