



September 6, 2026

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

**Flowers on the altar are given by Steve Johnson in celebration of
Cate Lehan’s birthday on September 7th**

Rally Day

Sunday, September 13

Join us as we rally together to start our fall program!

9:15 a.m. - Church School Registration (or pre-register*)
9:30 a.m. - Church School for Children & Youth
9:45 a.m. - Church School Parent Reception in Library
10:45 a.m. Worship - Bible Presentation to Kindergarten
and 3rd Grade Students

12:00 noon – Potluck Lunch for all!

Please bring a side dish, salad, or dessert to share.

We will provide hot dogs, hamburgers and veggie burgers.

*Skip the paper and [pre-register for Church School](#):



Kitchen Update

Thanks to a generous bequest from a member of the congregation, the Trustees and several frequent kitchen users are working on plans to update our kitchen. The improvements will make it easier and safer to use, improve accessibility, simplify cleaning, and bring it up to code. The new design will be based on commercial-kitchen standards.

We are working with a local kitchen-design firm and anticipate beginning the renovation after Easter next year.

Change for Change

Your change matters. Thanks to many generous donations, Aldersgate is making a donation of \$1200 to Parkinson Research Foundation. So next time you hear the clink in the collection platters remember the difference it makes. Thank you to entire church with a warm heart. Change for change now making a difference over 20 years.

New Grief Share Group, Wednesday September 9, 2026

On September 9th, 2026 we will begin a new GriefShare support group. The book that will be used for the group, has a cost of \$20. Feel free to contact Pastor John Whitley at john.b.whitley78@gmail.com or 703-303-3603 or our two facilitators, Marcia Dana or Chris Sargent. If you have questions or would like more information please visit griefshare.org. Please join us on Wednesdays 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm (in-person only). Starting Date: September 9th, 2026, Place: Concord Room at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 242 Boston Rd. Chelmsford, MA 01824.

GriefShare is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. Over 13 weeks, you’ll find relief and comfort as you learn what to expect in the days ahead and how to navigate your personal grief process. Since there are no neat, orderly stages of grief, you’ll learn helpful ways of coping with grief, in all its unpredictability—and gain solid support each step of the way.

Topics include how to manage grief-related emotions such as loneliness, anxiety, sadness, anger, and regret; how to cope with the changes in your life and relationships; how to recognize what’s normal in grief; and what to do if you feel stuck or hopeless.

At a weekly GriefShare meeting, you will view a video featuring respected counselors, teachers, and healthcare professionals on grief-related topics. After that is a small-group discussion for sharing, support, and personal application of what you learned on the video. You will receive a participant guide with exercises to help you through your individual grief process. The cost for this guide is \$10, scholarships are available.

Youth Mission Trip Sharing Time!

Saturday, September 19

6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

The youth and adults who attended our Youth Mission Trip this summer will host a free dinner and share a special presentation with you about our experiences serving at Mission Central. We have many stories and photos to share with you. Come join us - all are welcome!

A Big Thank you from Evelyn Heinrich

“Thank you with all my heart for the months of good wishes, cards, prayers, and treats. I missed being in church in person, but the streaming was perfect! I so appreciate all the people and effort that make it possible. The depth of my appreciation to everyone is impossible to express! I can even sing along!

Mostly, I am grateful to God — for the faith and His love that bring us all together! Blessed!

Sermon Notes

1. In Acts 15, what leads the apostles and elders to conclude that their decision is good to the Holy Spirit? What does this suggest about how we might recognize the Spirit's guidance?
2. Why do you think the Council describes its decision as “good to the Holy Spirit and to us,” rather than simply claiming that it has discovered the right answer? What does this tell us about the relationship between divine guidance and human discernment?
3. Jesus promises in John 16:12–15 that the Spirit will guide his disciples into truth. What might it mean for a church to trust that promise while also recognizing that its own understanding is partial and developing?
4. The Council reaches its decision through listening, testimony, Scripture, debate, and the work of the Spirit. What practices might help our church discern together when faithful Christians genuinely disagree?
5. Finally, what features of our regular practice of worship help us, the church, to sustain a culture of humility, discernment, openness to the Spirit, and commitment to the pursuit of reconciliation that are so vital to our ability to engage in true and deep discernment?

Fall Plans for Aldersgate!

We are excited to be returning to our fall routine next Sunday! Everyone is welcome for worship, education, fellowship, and the shared camaraderie and joy that we experience when we gather as a community of faith together in person.

Beginning in next Sunday, **Rally Day, Sunday, September 13:**

Worship services will be offered at 8:30 and 10:45 am. The 10:45 service will be live-streamed and recorded for posting on the church web site shortly thereafter.

Coffee Hour will be offered in the Fellowship Hall between the services.

Church School classes will be offered in-person, downstairs between the services, from 9:30 to 10:30 am. Classes will be held for PreK - 12th grade. On Rally Day, Church School Registration for children and youth starts at 9:15 am in the welcome area downstairs. We will also present Bibles to all Kindergarten children and 3rd grade children during the 10:45 am worship service.

Adult Education will meet in the Concord Room on September 13 at 9:45 am to hear about the plans for the Sunday Adult Ed class this fall. Everyone is invited! The class will begin on September 20 in the Concord Room and via Zoom at 9:45 am. Early Bird will commence via Zoom on Tuesdays at 10:00 am in September. The Thursday Morning Bible study will begin later in September in the Concord Room and via Zoom at 10:00 am. Please watch for details.

Committees and Small Groups will meet either in person or via Zoom, based upon the decision of each group. Please let Betsy in the office know of your group's plans so she can keep the calendar up to date and schedule rooms if needed.

Staff & Office Hours: Betsy will continue to be in the office Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to noon. She will be working other hours from home and checking voicemail and email. The other staff will also be in and out of the office, as well as working remotely, connecting by Zoom, email and phone, and are also available by appointment.

If you have gotten out of the habit of attending in person, we hope you will plan to return and experience the joy of being in worship and fellowship together. Thank you for your faithfulness in prayer and in your participation as we begin this new year together!

Feedback on the New Video Monitors

The worship planning and live-stream/recording teams have been experimenting this summer with different ways of using our new monitors during the service. 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. During the summer, in what ways did you like how they were used and in what ways did you dislike how they were used? Please share your thoughts with Pastor John, Bob Peterson, Val Shupe, or Peter Smyton.

Garden Club News

This week we delivered to the Chelmsford Food Pantry:

- 5 bags kale
- 3 zucchini
- 4 summer squash
- 1 cuke
- 5 bags romaine lettuce
- 3 sweet peppers
- 5 bags green beans
- 5 pints cherry tomatoes
- 35 tomatoes
- 1 bag hot peppers



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. It’s helpful if you bring your own bag.

Final Listening Session on Flags in the Sanctuary

The Church Council has discussed relocating the flags in the sanctuary worship space for a few months, received feedback from a number of parishioners on the subject, and held a listening session to better understand the congregation's feedback. Another session is scheduled for September 27 immediately after the second service to gather more feedback from the congregation. This is the final opportunity to voice your opinion on this subject and understand the opinions of others. We encourage those of you with strong opinions to make time to participate. Please join us for this important dialog. If you have a strong opinion and are unable to attend, please submit a brief note explaining your position and why you feel that way, to Pastor John, Peter Smyton, or Roger Whitehead, to be read at the session.

Bring a bag lunch and join in this final session. Beverages will be provided.

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Summertime Stewardship

It's hard to believe that summer is almost over! 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 peterston.robertk@gmail.com.
