

September 20, 2026

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

The flowers on the altar are given in celebration of Debbie Smyton’s 70th birthday by her husband Peter. Happy birthday, Debbie!

Confirmation Class - Sunday, September 20, 12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m.

New date! (changed from Sep 27). The next class for confirmation students and mentors will be after Worship in the Concord Room.



Church School Teacher needed for Fall

We are looking for a 3rd- 5th grade assistant teacher for the fall. Our church is asking you to prayerfully consider making a difference in the lives of the children of Aldersgate. Please contact Lee Williams if you are interested in helping or for more information.

New Acolyte Training



Any youth in 5th – 12th grade that would like to begin serving as an acolyte, please contact Lee Williams. We will schedule a training session for new acolytes as well as any experienced acolytes that would like a refresher or could help with the training.

Green Team Meeting - Sunday, September 27, 7:00 p.m.

Aldersgate’s Green Team will meet by Zoom. Join us as we plan our Fall projects and share ideas on how we can make our church even greener!

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 few 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.

Fall Plans for Aldersgate!

We are excited to have returned to our fall routine today! 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.

This fall:

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

Coffee Hour is offered in the Fellowship Hall between the services.

Church School classes are offered in-person, downstairs between the services, from 9:30 to 10:30 am. Classes are held for PreK - 12th grade.

Childcare is offered 8:15 am – noon in our nursery.

Adult Education is held in the Concord Room and via Zoom at 9:45 am and is studying the Book of Ephesians. The Thursday Morning Bible study meets Thursdays in the Concord Room and via Zoom at 10:00 am and is studying the Book of Acts. Early Bird meets via Zoom each Tuesday at 10:00 am. Please watch for details.

Committees and Small Groups are meeting 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 continues to be in the office Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to noon. She works other hours from home and regularly checks 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 this fall 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!

Sermon Notes

1. We meet the Hebrews today early in their Exodus sojourn (they just crossed the Red Sea one chapter previous to our reading this morning). The Hebrews were slaves in Egypt. Exodus says early on that their taskmasters were especially cruel and even sought to implement murderous methods of population control. And yet, in our passage today, they initially regret leaving. Why?

2. The call beyond Egypt came as a gift and a grace to the Hebrews and yet, they're finding today that receiving that gift will mean learning to depend on God for their daily provisions. Why is that hard?

3. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we're asked to carry forward into our spiritual practice the disciplines that the Hebrews first learned in the desert. "Give us this day our daily bread" is a direct allusion to the Exodus episode we are reading about today. What does it mean today to preserve their spiritual discipline in the way we live our lives?

4. The parable Jesus tells in Matthew imagines that the laborers that God sends out might get equal pay for unequal work. Jesus says here that that is what the Kingdom of God is like. What does he mean?

5. Finally, how does our regular practice of worship help us to sustain the disciplines of looking to God for our daily bread and trusting God wisdom in distributing grace in exactly the right proportions?

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.

Advent Mission Project Suggestions Welcomed!

The Aldersgate Advent Mission Project (AMP) began in 2012 as part of the Advent Conspiracy program to encourage us to Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, and Love All. Thanks to the generosity of the congregation, in the 14 Advent seasons since, Aldersgate has given over \$130,000 to local, national, and international charities addressing food insecurity, clean water, disease prevention and mitigation, immigration support, housing, and disaster relief. Each year, the mission has been chosen by the Outreach Committee and Church Council. This year, we are welcoming suggestions from the congregation. Please place your ideas in the AMP Suggestion Box located in the lobby. Yes, it is only September, but to properly plan for the AMP roll-out in November, we ask for your suggestions by Sunday, October 18. Thank you!

Garden Club News

This week we delivered the following to the Chelmsford Food Pantry:

4 bags lettuce

3 Squash

2 bags green beans

60 tomatoes

2 pints cherry

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.

New Grief Share Group, Continues Wednesday September 23, 2026

On September 23rd 2026 we will continue our Grief Share 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 or Dottie Newcomb. 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). Place: Concord Room at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 242 Boston Rd. Chelmsford, MA 01824.

Grief Share 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 Grief Share 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.

Calling all Faire Friends and Elves!

As we roll toward the Faire (Dec 4-5), we are grateful for your ideas and contributions of crafts, jewelry, Silent Auction items and yummy baked goods! We are beginning to collect input about donations and welcome your updates to the Office or to Bonnie at bonmarden@gmail.com. All are welcome to a brief Faire meeting on October 4th after church to connect and get creative! Thank you to all who are already creating and crafting for our annual Faire & Festival

December 4th and 5th. If you are interested in helping create pics and bows, please let us know!

During your fall cleaning, remember we welcome donations of containers for centerpieces and ideas for the Silent Auction.

For more information, contact Bonnie bonmarden@gmail.com or Melinda mnggoodick@hotmail.com or Deana Peterson.deana@gmail.com We look forward to ringing in the season with our Aldersgate family!

Early Bird Bible Application begins Tuesday Sept 22nd

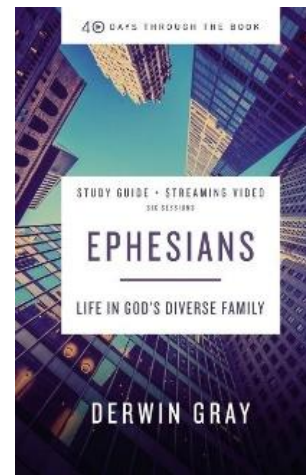
Welcome to the Fall 2026 Early Bird Bible Application!

We begin with an examination on the topic "A Follower of Jesus Christ." The foundational Scriptures for this discussion will be Matthew 5:13-16 and Matthew 22:34-40.

Come and join in the discussion. If you have not been a part of a study group, let this be the year that you take a step and do so. There are many options. Early Bird meets on Tuesdays at ten via Zoom.

A New Year of Adult Education Begins with New Testament Studies!

SUNDAY MORNINGS



Sunday morning at 9:45am in the Concord Room, join members of the Adult Education Team to dive into Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Each morning, we will watch and discuss a short video segment from Derwin Gray, former defensive back in the NFL and now, Pastor of Transformation Church, a multiethnic, multigenerational, mission-shaped community. The study guidebook provides you with a place to take notes as you watch and prompts, prayers and questions, as you read the relevant chapter of Ephesians throughout the week. ***Ephesians: Life in God's Diverse Family (40 Days Through the Book)*** can be purchased from your online retailer in paperback or ebook. If you need a Bible, please see Kim Ward (mikdraw@aol.com) or Pastor John.

Our first Sunday class will be September 20th at 9:45. Grab a cup of coffee and meet us in the Concord Room to discover more about the life of the early church!

THURSDAY MORNING

Thursday mornings at 10:00am in the Concord Room, join Pastor John and friends, as the group continues their study of the book of Acts. During the week, read and explore a chapter of Acts. Then on Thursday mornings, discover together what the life of the early church was like and the application of their lessons to your life today.

This week, please read Acts chapter 9 to be ready to discuss September 24th at 10 am in the Concord Room. All you need is your Bible. If you need a Bible, please see Kim Ward (mikdraw@aol.com) or Pastor John.

