

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

---

**Today’s altar flowers are given by Laura and Ray Brown  
in celebration of Owen’s 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday on the 12<sup>th</sup>**

---

### **Welcome to our Intern – Veejay Strama**

Please welcome our new intern, Veejay Strama. He is in the second year of M.Div. program at Boston University School of Theology. He will assist with the worship service and our education program. Veejay is passionate about spiritual and mystical texts in the Christian tradition. He is talented with music, playing the piano, trumpet, and guitar. He seeks ordination as an elder in the UMC.

---

### **Sermon Series on Loneliness (Sep 10 - Oct 9)**

Pastor Bob invites you to join him in a sermon series on loneliness starting from today. Sep 10: #1 Pandemic and Loneliness; Sep 17 #2 Illness and Loneliness; Sep 24 #3 Death and Loneliness (Rev. Maylis preaching); Oct 1 #4 Social Media and Loneliness; #5 Misfit and Loneliness We are grateful for the wisdom and stories from our sermon team: Melinda, Dan, Kim, Betsey, Dave, Maylis, Janice, Suzanne, and Christine.

---

### **Memorial Service for Bill Closs**

Bill Closs passed at Lowell Hospital on September 6 and entered into eternal rest in God. There will be a wake at Sweeney Memorial Funeral Home in Billerica from 1 pm to 4 pm today. Pastor Bob will lead the memorial service tomorrow (Sep 11) at 11 a.m. at the same place.

---

### **Thank you to Jane Vooy**

A big thank you to Jane Vooy for playing the organ on Sunday Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> as well as the two dates in June. This allowed Maylis and her family to take some time off. Well done Jane.



### **Youth 2023 Sharing Time! Save the date!**

The youth and adults who attended Youth 2023 will host a pasta dinner and share a special presentation with you about our experiences at Youth 2023 on Saturday, **September 16<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.**

We have many stories to share with you along with photos and videos. Come join us - all are welcome!

---

### **Today is Rally Day!**

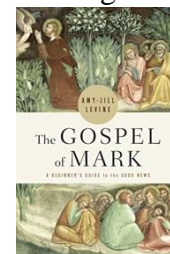
Today we celebrate Rally Day, with the return to two services at 8:30 and 10:45 am. Church school for pre-K through high school classes is downstairs between the services at 9:30 am. Parents: please stop by beginning at 9:15 am to register your children for the year. There will be a reception for parents in Rooms 7/8 at 9:45 am with refreshments. You are invited to gather in the Concord Room at 9:30 am to hear about the plans for the Sunday Adult Ed class this fall, or to enjoy Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall.

During the 10:45 service, Bibles will be given to the Kindergarteners and Third Graders. After the second service, join us for our traditional Rally Day cookout and potluck. The church will provide the burgers – including veggie burgers – hot dogs, and beverages, and we ask that you bring a side dish, salad, or dessert to share. We’ll have nine square outside for the kids and fun and fellowship inside. The Patriots don’t play until 4:25, so spend your lunch time at church!

---

### **Fall Adult Study Starts Soon**

Both the Sunday morning Adult Ed class and the Thursday morning Bible Study class will be using *The Gospel of Mark: A Beginner’s Guide to the Good News* by Amy-Jill Levine to start our fall programs. Walk through the Bible’s earliest source for the life of Jesus to examine John the Baptizer, the Little Apocalypse, the Transfiguration, and several of Jesus's most notable stories and parables, as we see Jesus as divine and human, powerful and weak, approachable yet mysterious. The Sunday class starts Sunday, September 24 at 9:45 am. The Thursday class meets on September 14 to re-connect, and will start the study on September 21, both at 10:00 am. Both the Sunday and Thursday classes will meet in the Concord Room and via Zoom.



The Thursday Zoom link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85933493284?pwd=bCtJZmM0cXcrNmwwNEwraU45eThBUT09> By phone (audio only), dial 646 558 8656 and, at the prompt, enter Meeting ID: 859 3349 3284

Passcode: 068355

Look for the Sunday Zoom info next week.

## Clean Sweep Projects Update

A big Thank You to everyone who helped with this summer's Clean Sweep projects! Whether it was cleaning the pews, weeding, or painting, your efforts helped the church property continue to look cared for, welcoming, and active!

---

### Red Friendship Pad

On the center aisle of the pews are Red Friendship Pads. During the offering, please sign the pad and pass it down the row so all can sign it and pass it back to the center aisle. Please note who is in the pew with you. If you are visiting, we would like to welcome you and get to know you. Please fill in your contact information. For more information about our church, please talk to those around you or contact Betsy in the church office at 978-256-9400. The email address is [aldersgatehelmsford@verizon.net](mailto:aldersgatehelmsford@verizon.net).

---

### Comfort in the Pews for Everyone

An additional pew has been removed to make our existing seating more accessible and accommodating to people using wheelchairs, walkers, canes or crutches and those who may be accompanying them. If you need more space or find the pew difficult to sit in, please make yourself comfortable in the red chairs provided. Please let an usher or trustee know if you need something adjusted. This is a work in progress and an experiment. We want you to feel at home in our space.

---

### Aldersgate Faire 2023 Preparations!



Mark your calendar for AUMC Faire December 1 and 2, 2023.



Wreaths and swags with our amazing bows and picks are already being created. We look forward to wonderful baked goods and hand-crafted items as well as gift baskets and silent auction items. If you would like to donate a gift basket or auction item, please contact Melinda Goodick or Bonnie Marden. Our talented church invites the community to visit us as we begin the Advent Season!



## Music Notes

Welcome to our new Season of Music at Aldersgate!

If you have been thinking about joining one of our choirs or would like to offer your musical gifts to the glory of God and for the enrichment of our church family, we invite you to be a part of our wonderful music ministry. New members are always welcome!

Our choir rehearses on Tuesdays at 7:30pm in the sanctuary choir loft.

Our handbell choirs will begin in a few weeks. If you would like to try handbell ringing, we would love to have you join!

Previous musical experience is always helpful, but not necessary. We'll teach you to read music!

For questions and more information about any of our groups or opportunities to participate in our program, please contact Maylis at [mdelafer@yahoo.com](mailto:mdelafer@yahoo.com)

We are looking forward to having you join us in worship for some wonderful music-making!

---

### Junior Youth Pizza Party!

**Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.**

**All youth in grade 6 - 8 are welcome to join us!**

We will eat pizza, play games and talk about the activities for the year – friends are always welcome!

### Senior Youth Fun!

**Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup> – noon - 2:00 p.m.**

**All youth in grades 9 - 12 are invited to join us!**

We will eat pizza, talk about ideas for this year and play 9 square or scooter hockey!



## **Inclusivity Info Sessions Start This Thursday Sept 14th!**

The Church Council has recently been discussing how to ensure we are an inclusive, welcoming church to all here at Aldersgate. A Statement of Inclusivity, consistent with the beliefs of our denomination and its Book of Discipline, created by the Council and posted on the church web site in the Who We Are page, is included below.

Some people have been confused about or are unfamiliar with the United Methodist Church's (UMC's) stance on the LGBTQI+ community, how our New England Conference is addressing this stance, and what that means for Aldersgate. We invite the congregation to learn about the current situation and options the UMC and Conference may consider through information sessions this month, led by Pastors Bob and Maylis, as our clergy, Bonnie Marden, our delegate to the UMC General Conference, where these topics are discussed, and Peter Smyton, our Church Council chairperson. The sessions will consist of an overview of the denomination's stance and the impact on local churches, followed by a Q&A. Each of these four sessions will be similar. **There will be two in-person sessions this Thursday, 9/14 at 7:00 pm and next Sunday, 9/17 at 9:30 am (between the services) in the Fellowship Hall. There are also two sessions via Zoom: Wednesday, 9/20 at 8:00 pm and Monday, 9/25 at 7:00 pm. Watch for the Zoom link info in upcoming emails.**

The Council plans to offer other opportunities after these sessions for further dialog and sharing of stories and perspectives as we seek to discern how we as a church family can be inclusive to all regardless of age, race, nationality, ethnic background, gender, sexuality, ability, and physical appearance. We welcome your feedback on how you want these discussions to be conducted.

### **All Are Welcome at Aldersgate**

As a United Methodist congregation, we affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. We affirm that we are an open, welcoming, fully accepting congregation supportive of all, regardless of age, race, nationality, ethnic background, gender, sexuality, ability, and physical appearance. In agreement with our New England Conference Open Spirit Task Force, we are committed to safeguarding the sacred worth and dignity of all persons in our churches and communities, including those who identify as LGBTQI+ persons.

We are a church that supports every individual's full participation in the life, ministry, sacraments, membership, and leadership of the church at any level. We celebrate the blessings of gender and cultural diversity in our pastors and leadership team.