

December 15, 2024

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

The flowers on the altar are given by Evelyn Heinrich in celebration of Noel’s Birthday in Heaven on Christmas Day

December Upcoming events

Cookie Walk, today, December 15th, 9:30 am during coffee hour and after 10:45

Santa Fund presents due today, December 15th, 9:30 am

Hats, mittens, gloves, socks, toiletries for St. Paul’s due today

Christmas Pageant, December 22nd, 9:30 am – only one service

Christmas Eve Services, December 24th, 4 pm, 7 pm, 10 pm

Red Cross Blood Drive: Aldersgate UMC, December 28th, 9 am – 2 pm

Sunday, December 29th – one service at 9:30 – No Church School

Epiphany Sunday on January 5th, 8:30 am and 10:45 am

Welcome Adesuwa, Our Scholarship Winner, and Family

Today at the 10:45 service we welcome Adesuwa Onyekwena and her family to Aldersgate! Adesuwa is this year’s recipient of the Aldersgate Scholarship at Middlesex Community College. She is majoring in public health informatics and technology. Adesuwa has a 3.76 GPA and is planning to graduate in 2026. Her career goal is to work as an environmental health specialist and next attend UMass to pursue her bachelor’s degree in public health. Welcome, Adesuwa, and congratulations!

Church Conference at 10:30 am on December 29th

After the one service on December 29th, we will be holding a Church Conference around 10:30 am to vote to approve the proposed 2025 budget. The balancing of the budget needed to be done after the Church Conference once the pledges were received and were compared with the proposed 2025 expenses. The proposed budget includes a 3% pay increase for the church staff. We will also approve the addition of Beth Randall to Trustees. All church members are invited to attend this short meeting to review and vote on these two important items.

Please pick up your offering envelopes for 2025 in the Welcome area.

Faire Items Still Available! Until December 15th

A big THANK YOU to all the Faire Elves and shoppers for participating in last weekend’s Faire! It was a fantastic time of fellowship as we welcomed the community to Aldersgate! There was a great spirit throughout in preparing for and holding the Faire. Thanks to the generosity of the congregation and community, we have made over \$10,000! There are still excellent items, including wreaths, swags, arrangements, knitted items, crafts, jewelry, and regifting items, that are available for purchase in the Fellowship Hall. We invite you to shop before or after the service

Church School Christmas Pageant

The church school will be presenting this year’s Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 22, during the one 9:30 a.m. worship service for the congregation, neighbors, and friends! The pageant practice for all participants will be on Saturday, December 21, at 10:00am in the sanctuary.



Note: There will be only one service on December 22 at 9:30.

Santa Fund

Presents need to be in by **December 15th**. Thank you all for making Christmas special for all the kids.

Hats, Gloves, Mittens, Socks, and Toiletries for St. Paul’s

Outreach will be collecting items for St. Paul’s by **the 15th of December**. Please bring in hats, gloves, socks, and mittens as well as toiletries. There is a box in the welcome area.

You can schedule your appointment for the next Blood Drive on December 28th from 9 am-2 pm

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](https://www.redcrossblood.org) and search under August 10th to schedule an appointment. For more information call or email Cate Lehan or Robin Dye or the church office

The 2025 Flower Chart is up on the wall. Please start to fill in your spots for your special dates.

Christmas Poinsettias Due December 20th

Once again, we will decorate our sanctuary on Christmas Eve with four beautiful poinsettias and several smaller ones. We will purchase larger plants that will be present for the Christmas Eve service.

We are again inviting people to donate toward the cost of the poinsettias in celebration of someone or in memory of a loved one (suggested donation of \$10). There is a form on the welcome desk that you can fill out and either put in the offering plate or mail to the office. You can also call the church office and leave a message, and Betsy will return your call to follow up with you. **There are forms on the welcome desk and Betsy will also include the form in the Worship email.**

We will include the names in a printed attachment to the Christmas Eve service and will show the names on the video during part of the recorded service, if possible. We want to honor each family's preference...so please indicate your preference on the form as well. **deadline for Poinsettias will be on December 20th**

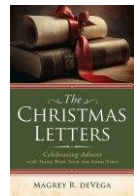
Single Ladies Dining Out

Single Ladies Dining Out will have **lunch** together on December 21st at 1 pm at Bahama Breeze - 413 Middlesex Rd. in Tyngsboro, MA 01879. **Please RSVP** by Thursday December 19th to Betsy Campbell 978-256-9400 or by email to aldersgatehelmsford@verizon.net so that she can reserve a table large enough. If you are a single lady and would enjoy a dinner out and lots of fun conversation, we would love to have you join us. Please talk to Betsy for more information.

Early Bird on Tuesday

Early Bird meets this Tuesday morning to discuss 'Christmas and its Cast of Misfits.' Please read Luke 1:26-34 and come prepared to share your insights on some of those involved in the Christmas story as the God of the Universe enters into our world. Early Bird meets at ten o'clock via Zoom.

The Sunday and Thursday Adult Ed classes will be studying "The Christmas Letters" by Magrey deVega. In The Christmas Letters we are invited to hear about the miracle of



Christ's birth from those who first told the story. The letters in the New Testament, known as the Epistles, contain the first attempts by the church to understand and celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation. Discover what the letters ask of us as we follow Christ. The book is available through Amazon, through Cokesbury, or at your local bookseller. A few copies will be available for a suggested donation of \$15.

Prayers of Thanksgiving!

We are happy to report that Lt. Jasper Swan, Ken and Charlotte Bair's grandson, has returned safely to Oklahoma! He will be in Virginia with his family in no time to celebrate the holidays together. **Thank YOU** for providing all the popcorn, coffee, protein bars, bacon and fun surprises over the last year. These tangible gifts improved Jasper's morale, and his family was so encouraged by your acts of love and support. It's hard to quantify how something as simple as applesauce in a USPS box can change a crumby day into one you can handle. "None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful"- **Mother Teresa**



CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS



With one week left, our Aldersgate family wishes to extend to you the opportunity

to participate in the giving of a Congregation Gift for the Staff:

Pastor Bob, Betsy, Rev Maylis, Lee, Deana and Mirna.

The Congregation Gift is a wonderful opportunity to share of ourselves and acknowledge our love for their gift to us throughout the year.

If you would like to contribute you may do so by dropping your donation off at the church, mailing it to the church and marking it with a "Staff Gift" note, or giving it to an usher or any member of the SPRC ((Dan Ward, Clewis Howe, Sue Lewis, Marcia Dana, Angela Hughes, Jane Vooy, Michelle Mescall, or Ray Brown).

In Christian Love and Spirit,
The Staff Parish Relations Committee

On December 15, Sheilagh Carlisle, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell, will be our special guest to tell us about the important work this organization is doing in our community.

ADVENT CONSPIRACY

What Would Jesus want for His Birthday?

Just as the Wise Ones traveled great distances to bring precious gifts to the child Jesus, so too, we want to give gifts this Holy season that would make the heart of Jesus glad.

Again, this year, we are following the principles of *The Advent Conspiracy*:

- * Worship Fully
- * Spend Less on things people do not need
- * Love all
- * Give more of ourselves, our time, our lives



We are encouraging each other to save the money we would have spent on gifts that those we love really don't need, and instead give a life-giving gift that truly matters. This year our church council and outreach committee have selected the Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell organization as our Advent Mission.

You are welcome to take one of the special ornaments on our Mission tree in the front lobby area beginning December 8.

On Epiphany, also known as “Kings’ Sunday” - January 5, we will bring our monetary gifts from the savings we have made and will offer them to support our Advent Mission: Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell.