

May 11, 2025

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

The Flowers on the Altar are given by Clewis and Dave Howe in celebration of Mother’s Day

Today is Veejay’s Last Sunday

On May 11th Mother’s Day, we will have Veejay preaching for us and we will celebrate the two years he has been with us. There is a basket in the welcome area for you to put your cards in. Please come and wish him well in his future ministry.

We Welcome Rev. Dr. John B. Whitley and His Family

On Monday, April 21, Rev Megan Stowe, our District Superintendent, introduced the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) to Rev. Dr. John B. Whitley (Pastor John) who will be recommended to be our new pastor at the 2025 Annual Session of the New England Conference. Pastor John comes to us from Milford UMC in Milford, NH, where he has been serving since 2017, with his wife, Elizabeth, and their children, Will, age 16, Leila, age 15, and Sybil, age 8.

Pastor John is originally from Florida. He received his Master of Arts in Religion from Yale Divinity School and Doctor of Theology at Harvard Divinity School. During that time, he served as an Instructor, Teaching Fellow, and on staff of the Harvard Theological Review. Pastor John’s pastoral ministry includes serving as a spiritual counselor in Florida, a pastoral intern in Virginia, and as a Licensed Local Pastor at Community UMC in Brighton, MA, before becoming ordained as an elder and serving at Milford UMC.

The SPRC was very impressed with how good of a fit Pastor John is for Aldersgate. He is collaborative, inclusive, gracious, and appreciative of the gifts and passions of the staff and laity of the church. He seeks to equip and empower others in service to God. He views

his approach to be Christ-centric, invitational, communal, and sacramental. He cares deeply about the youth in the church and has been on the Board of Directors at Camp Wanakee in NH since 2017, serving as the chair for the last two years. He and Pastor Bob know each other quite well and have served together at the Local Pastor Licensing School since 2022. His pastoral leadership style and approach to preaching really match what the SPRC feels best suits our church culture. The entire committee felt very comfortable that he will fit right in at Aldersgate and is well equipped to lead us into our future.

There is a Transition Team that has formed so you will be seeing news about plans for how we will say good-bye to Pastor Bob and his family, and welcome and get to know Pastor John and his family with the warmth and graciousness that the Aldersgate family is known for.

The process of transitioning from Pastor Bob to Pastor John is becoming clear. Some key milestones in that transition are:

- May 7, a Transition Workshop via Zoom for our transition team to attend
- June 22, we celebrate Pastor Bob’s last Sunday with us
- June 23 – July 1, Pastor Bob and family move to Vermont, we ready the parsonage, and Pastor John and family arrive
- June 29, worship led by our District Superintendent, Rev. Megan Stowe
- July 6, celebrate and welcome Pastor John and family

Rest assured there will be opportunities planned to say good-bye to Pastor Bob and his family. There will be a lot of activity between now and when Pastor John steps into the Aldersgate pulpit, so please stay tuned for more details.

If you have any questions or want to know more about why we are excited about our future with Pastor John, please reach out to anyone on the SPRC committee: Dan Ward (chair), Marcia Dana, Clewis Howe, Steve Johnson, Susan Lewis, Sherri Panneton, Lee Pender, Jay Turchinetz, and Jane Vooyo, or Peter Smyton, Church Council Chair.



Welcoming Pastor John and Family

Pastor John Whitley and his family – his wife Elizabeth, their children Will (age 16), Leila (15) and Sybil (8), and their dog Brody – will be moving into the Parsonage in late June. One way we’d like to welcome them is with a basket of cards and notes from the congregation, greeting them to Chelmsford and Aldersgate. We would like to gather the cards prior to their arrival and provide the collection in a basket, rather than mailing the cards to the Parsonage, so they are all together and can be read at the family’s leisure. If you would like to share a note of welcome, please drop it off with Betsy in the church office or give it to Dan Ward (SPRC chair) or Peter Smyton (Council chair), by Monday, June 23.

Coming Up at Aldersgate May– July 2025

Mother's Day breakfast: May 11, 9:00 – 10:30 am - TODAY

Graduation brunch (9:30-10:30 am) and recognition (10:45 am) June 8

Father's Day breakfast: June 15, 9:00 – 10:30 am

Last Sunday for two Services June 15th

One Service at 9:30

July 4th booth: July 3, 4:00 – 8:00 pm, July 4, 8:00 am – 1:00 pm

Meal Train

Our Aldersgate family provides meals to people or families in times of need. If you would like to participate by occasionally providing a meal through our Meal Train, please email shevelone@gmail.com to receive information about signing up. Also, if you would like to receive meals from the church or suggest someone who would benefit from this ministry, please let us know!

Aldersgate T-Shirts



Our new Aldersgate T-shirts have arrived! Thank you to Vicki Vooyoys for the eye-catching design. We have both adult and youth sizes, and they are 100% cotton. If we run out of your size, we will take orders for more. Suggested donation is \$12 for adults and \$10 for youth. Please see Lee Williams to get yours!



Garden Club Plant Sale

Sunday, May 18th, after each service

The Garden Club is offering a selection of plants and seedlings for your lawn or garden. Stop by at the back entrance to the church after each service. All donations will go towards the church gardens.

New Members to Join

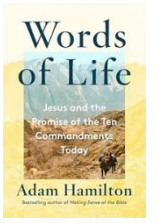
There will be an opportunity coming up, to join as Members of Aldersgate. Please let Pastor Bob know at revbobjon@gmail.com or Betsy know in the office at 978-256-9400 or aldersgatehelmsford@verizon.net if you are interested.

Early Bird on Tuesday

Early Bird continues 'Lessons From the Red Sea' on Tuesday morning. The discussion will focus on God's power, facing our challenges and trusting in God. Plan to join in as we revisit this familiar Bible story and explore its lessons for us today. Early Bird meets on Tuesday morning via Zoom.

Thursday Morning Bible Study Continues

The Thursday morning Bible study continues this Thursday, May 15: *Words of Life* by Adam Hamilton. In this book of Scripture and inspiration, Adam brings modern eyes to the most important set of ethics in history, the Ten Commandments. He considers the commandments in their historical context, considering the meaning of each commandment in Hebrew, unpacking how Jesus reinterpreted them, and showing how every thou-shalt-not was intended to point to a life-giving "thou shalt." He also explores how the latest research in science and psychology illuminates these commandments, rightly understood, as a way of ordering one's life beautifully in the present day. This week we will discuss Chapter IV: Rediscovering the Joy of Sabbath. The study is available at Amazon and Cokesbury. You may also purchase the book at your local bookseller or borrow it from the public library. We meet at 10:00 am in the Concord Room and via Zoom.



Spring Opportunities for Sunday Morning Adult Education

Today, **May 11** is Mother's Day. There will be no class; enjoy breakfast and good company in the Fellowship Hall from 9:00 to 10:30.

May 18 We will finish watching the movie *Just Eat It!* This will be our last class.

We will take a break for the summer. We will be back in September with another opportunity to dive deeper into your faith!

CHURCH SCHOOL SUNDAY - MAY 18th

(Last day of church school classes)

Our church school classes will be participating in the 10:45 a.m. service on May 18th.

Thank you to our dedicated and caring church school teachers!

PreK - 2nd Grade Teachers: Dottie Newcomb, Sungha Jon, Laura Brown & Susan Hunt

3rd–5th Grade Teachers: Jim Ortolf & Marlene Breen

6th - 8th Grade Teachers: David Jones & Dan Ward

High School Teachers: David Driscoll, Lee Pender, & Peter Smyton

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!

August 11th – 15th, 9:00 a.m. – noon

Summer is just around the corner, and we're planning an exciting Vacation Bible School experience! Sign up today for God's Big Backyard VBS! Registration forms are available downstairs and online. If you have any questions, or would like to help, please see Lee Williams.

Mother's Day Breakfast

Sunday, May 11th 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Menu:

Breakfast Egg Casserole, Sausage
Pancakes with Assorted Toppings, Fruit Cups
Vegan & Gluten-free Selections, Too!

Church School families, please come to breakfast at 9:00 a.m.

so you can attend church school classes at 9:30 a.m.



JUNIOR YOUTH UPCOMING EVENTS

This fellowship group is for youth in grades 5th – 7th grade. Friends are always welcome!

Game Time!

Sunday, May 18, noon - 2:00 p.m.

(combined junior and senior youth groups)

We will play indoor or outdoor games, depending on the weather.

Board Games

Friday, May 23, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Come join us for an evening of playing board games.



SENIOR YOUTH UPCOMING EVENTS!

All youth in grades 8 – 12 are welcome to join us at any time.

Mother's Day Breakfast

Sunday, May 11th from 8:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Come help cook and serve breakfast! *(7th graders will join us)*

Game Time!

Sunday, May 18, noon - 2:00 p.m.

(combined junior and senior youth groups)

We will play indoor or outdoor games, depending on the weather.



Wanakee Mission Trip – for youth in grades 7 - 12

Monday, July 14th – Friday, July 18th

Watch for more details coming – save the date!