



Advocate June 2020



Dear Aldersgate Family,

It has been ten weeks now since we have been able to gather together in person. I truly miss seeing you! But I am thankful for the many ways we are continuing to keep our connection to God and one another during this time of necessary physical distancing.

Even though state and federal guidelines have begun to ease, we as a church will do our own discernment about when to re-open. You will find more details about that inside this newsletter. We all want to be together, but we need to do so in a way that is safe and thoughtful for all.

One of our strengths as a church and a staff is our ability to plan. We work well together, we look to the future, and we chart a course with God's guidance to get us there. When this pandemic began, we were concluding our study of the Lord's Prayer, and our prayer was "give us this day our daily bread." We were reminded that we are given one day at a time. In my sermon then, I shared a story about a little girl who was walking in the dark with her father, wishing their lantern would shine brightly enough so they could see all the way to the house. However, the lantern only gave light for one step at a time, and that was enough. Each step requires trust...and that's how this time in our life feels. We wish we could know how long things will be like this, or when we can say we will be able to announce changes to our current way of doing things. But we will take one step at a time...we will trust and walk by faith...and God will guide us. We do not walk alone.

We know that God is with us, one step at a time. May we continue to be people of hope.

In faith,

Pastor Lisa



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Worship Updates

Pentecost Sunday

This Sunday, May 31 is Pentecost, where we hear again about the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2. We will be sending our Aldersgate worship service to you as normal. In addition, our Annual Conference has prepared a virtual worship service featuring faces and voices from around our 6 state region. Our District Superintendent leads the worship which includes a sermon by Bishop Devadhar. We invite you to visit www.neumc.org to access the service.

Celebrating Holy Communion

June 7 we will celebrate Trinity Sunday and invite you to join in celebrating Holy Communion virtually in your home. We encourage you to plan to have bread and juice of your choice with you when you tune in to worship next Sunday. Pastor Lisa will speak the Communion liturgy during the video service and invite you to hold the bread and the cup you have in your home to be included in the blessing. We will then partake of the gifts of God where we are and remember that Christ is with us.

Celebrating our Graduates

June 14 we will celebrate our Graduates. It is our tradition to make blankets for our high school seniors and present them to each of them on this special day. The blankets are in the process of being made, and we will certainly find a way to celebrate our seniors on this day.

Timeline for Reopening Aldersgate

As described in Pastor Lisa's email last week, steps are underway to form a team to discern when and how to safely move towards re-opening the church building and hold worship. We are reviewing the various government and United Methodist New England Conference guidelines, as well as similar information from other denominations. We are also monitoring approaches taken by churches in other parts of the country. So far, everything we have seen indicates an extremely cautious and perhaps delayed process before in-person worship is possible. The Aldersgate team's focus will first be on understanding the conditions to re-open that make sense for our congregation and facility, and the criteria needed to advance through each stage of a multi-step process before we fully return to the various in-person church activities. Our intent is to provide you information about plans and status frequently and through multiple different communication mechanisms, and to provide notice well in advance before we hold our first in-person worship. In the meantime, the weekly recorded services will continue to be posted on the YouTube channel, with the link to it provided by email, our web site, and our Facebook page. If you want to be included on the all-church email to receive the worship link, please notify Silvia in the office.



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Ways We Stay Connected

Aldersgate Connect & Chat Virtual Coffee Hour Opportunities in June

(Hosted by Christine and Peter)

Based on your feedback, there will be weekly opportunities in June to meet for our Connect & Chat virtual coffee hours. These sessions, held virtually through Zoom, are intended for us to spend a little time seeing each other and catching up. The sessions will be every Tuesday in June, at 7:00 pm, and last about 30 minutes.

Caring Calls Help Keep Us Connected

A group of your fellow church members continue to reach out to everyone in our congregation to stay in touch and see how we are all doing. The team so appreciates these very meaningful opportunities to share in fellowship with all of you! As the “safer at home” state guidelines remain in effect, the ways the team is trying to stay connected with you is evolving from, initially, solely by phone to now potentially by email, text, and/or Zoom meetings. Whatever works to keep us connected and be in community! If you are not being contacted and wish to, please notify the church office (978-256-9400 or aldersgatehelmsford@verizon.net) to be added to the list.

Adult Education

We are exploring the possibilities of a new way to do Adult Study via Zoom in the future. If you are interested in helping us get this going, please reach out to Pastor Lisa.



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Ongoing Ministries

Garden Club

Thank you to all the gardeners for sharing their perennials and seedlings, and thank you to all who attended the plant swap! It was so nice to see people from church in person again. All the plants have found a new home, and everyone's generous donations totaled over \$120. Here are some pictures from the event.

Thanks, Lee W.



Women's groups

Single Ladies Dining Out and Daytimers Breakfast Club members are staying in touch via emails and phone calls. Contact Betsy C. to be included on their mailing list.

Men's Breakfast

The Mighty Men met in May via Zoom. It was a great chance to reconnect! Contact Peter F. to be included on their mailing list for the next meeting.

Book Club

Hopefully soon we will be able to meet again. Our next meeting would have been discussing "The Giver of Stars." What a great read! We have "The Paragon Hotel" coming up then "Locally Laid", "The Dutch House", "In the Midst of Winter" and "Sycamore Road". This would have taken us through August.



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Ongoing Committee Meetings

Are you interested in becoming more involved? Below are lists of our committees and their ministries. We are in the process of planning for Fall committee rosters.

If you are interested in serving in one of our ministries, please contact Pastor Lisa.

Church Council

continues to meet monthly via ZOOM to coordinate ministries, support the congregation and to consider the phased re-opening of Aldersgate as the weeks move forward. We are grateful for the ongoing leadership of our Council Chair, and all the committee leaders for the ongoing ministry we share even during this time of physical distancing.

Trustees

The Trustees continue to meet monthly via ZOOM. Don checks the building regularly and has made adjustments to keep the building safe and energy efficient: the stove has been turned off, thermostats are re-set so no heat is being called for. We give thanks that we have received more SREC credits from our solar panels and look forward to sunny summer months. We are also looking forward to completing final capital campaign projects during the summer.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee has been meeting via ZOOM to review our year to date financial activity and to plan for our church's financial needs during this unprecedented time. Members of the Committee have also been attending webinars to understand financial planning and insights into financial stewardship during this pandemic.

Staff Parish Relations Committee

We are grateful for our talented and committed staff who are working remotely to continue to create and support ministries during this time. Members of the SPRC will be checking in with staff members for their annual reviews, to assess how best to support and enable them to do their tasks in this environment. They look forward to the time when they are able to work together in person again with all of you!



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Ongoing Committee Meetings—continued

Outreach

St. Paul's Update

Outreach has sent a contribution to Life Center Connections, the only soup kitchen operating in Lowell. Many evenings they are feeding over 200. Aldersgate delivered donations of Water and juice last month . You can support them directly at

<http://www.lifeconnectioncenter.org/donate.html>

Ways to Help

Face Masks – Thank you to all who continue to make face masks and share them. Gay Rinker has made over 200 herself! If you need a mask, please contact the church office and we will see that you get one.

Grocery Shopping – If you are willing to add a few things to your own grocery list to help someone who cannot or should not be shopping on their own, please let the office know. If you need groceries brought to you, please let us know through the office as well



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Education News



CHURCH SCHOOL

We would have celebrated our children and youth on Children's Sunday on May 17th. We are so blessed to have so many children and youth that truly care about their church family.

We also want to celebrate our teachers who have taught this year. Thank you to Holley R., Patrick H. and Suzanne H. for teaching our preschool/Kindergarden class.

Thank you to Dottie N. and Lee W. for teaching our 1st – 2nd grade class. Thank you to Melinda G. for leading our classes in music.

Our 3rd – 5th grade class and 6th - 8th grade class have met using zoom for the last couple of months. Thank you to their teachers: Jim O. and Gail C. and Dave J. and Dan W. for offering this opportunity to meet.

The senior youth class will continue to meet during the summer. Using zoom. Thank you to their teachers: David D., Lee P. and Peter S. for continuing to offer this time!

Seeing each other and connecting with each other is so important during these challenging times.

WORSHIP ARTS

The worship arts children have been meeting each Tuesday using zoom and have time together to do a craft and sing a song together. We had our last worship arts time until the fall.

We will start a new program using zoom on Tuesday, June 23rd. This program will be open to all children ages 4 years old – 5th grade. It's called summertime fun. We will do crafts, cooking, science experiments, etc. We will meet weekly from 4:00 – 4:30 p.m.

The Moms will also be able to spend some time together in conversation using zoom after the children's time. If you are interested in joining worship arts, please e-mail Cheryl at

aumc-education@verizon.net

SENIOR & JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS

The junior youth will meet on Friday, June 5th at 6:30 p.m. to connect using zoom.

The senior youth continue to meet on Wednesdays at 4:00 p.m using zoom.

I will be sending out a survey to the senior and junior youth groups to see what day and time will work to meet this summer. Watch for more information in a couple of weeks!



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CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

High School Graduates

Anthony is graduating from Chelmsford High and will be attending UVM, College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences, Presidential Scholarship, Major: Civil Engineering.

Levi is graduating from Chelmsford High and will be attending the College of the Holy Cross in the fall.

Josh is graduating from Bishop Guertin High School. This fall he will be attending Saint Michael's College in VT where he will be majoring in accounting and be part of the lacrosse team.

Adam is going to take online classes at Berklee School of Music. He will continue studying voice, piano, and guitar with his current teachers. Adam has students of his own and will continue teaching them, as well as working on his online presence by posting videos to his Youtube and other social media accounts. He is considering an additional year with the Handel & Haydn Society in Boston or possibly pursuing his interests in personal training and nutrition, but it depends on what happens with the Coronavirus.

Lindsey is graduating from Tyngsboro High School and she will be attending Westfield State in the fall - Her major will be in elementary education/special education with a minor in psychology.

Zach is graduating from Chelmsford High and plans to go to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) to study computer science.

College Graduates



Landon graduated from the College of the Holy Cross and received his Bachelors degree in political science and economics.

Jared received his Bachelors degree in data science his future plans are to continue learning and do what he loves.

Kim just completed her second Masters at New York University (NYU) in Bio Ethics.

Andrea just graduated from Framingham State University with a B.S. in Elementary Education and Geography.

Sarah graduated from Lesley University with a B.S. in Art Therapy and minor in Fine Arts.



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Music

During our time of physical distancing, music groups are keeping in touch with one another via email and phone calls.

A heartfelt THANK YOU to the musicians who have contributed to the recordings for our worship services during this unprecedented situation. We appreciate your time and the sharing of your gifts for the glory of God and the spiritual enrichment of our congregation. We miss making music together and look forward to whenever we are able to meet in person again. In the meantime, we encourage you to look through the wealth of musical resources now available online. Music is a universal language and one that the Spirit of God uses to speak to us and bring us God's peace. Keep the music playing, and keep singing along! Prayers for health and safety.

In Christ's love, *Maylis and Cheryl*

THANK YOU!

I am so blessed to have all of you in my church family. All the cards, emails, and phone calls after the death of my Mom truly made me feel so loved and supported. Even though we could not be together in person, I could feel all your thoughts and prayers coming through.

Thank you all so much for being there.

Love, Deana P.



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Stewardship

Stewardship Update – Continued Blessings!

We continue to receive blessings from the faithful givers of our Aldersgate Church Family! We want to **thank** each of you for continuing to support our church with your gifts. As a result of **your generosity and faithfulness** in sending your pledges to the office, you have provided for our needs through May - we are still in good shape!

We hope you will continue to pray for our church family and fulfill your pledges as you are able so that Aldersgate may continue with God's Will for God's Work in God's Kingdom on earth.

"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow!"

From Our Treasurer...

In an effort to anticipate Aldersgate's cash flow requirements during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Church applied for and received a **PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) loan** to cover staff salaries and specific expenses through mid-June. The Church Council briefly convened as a Charge Conference to vote to receive the funds at the May 6th meeting.

Ways to Give

Many of you have asked how you can continue to give your tithes and offerings during this time. You may choose to mail your gift or use bill-pay to have a gift sent to the church. You may also drop off your offering in the outdoor mail slot located beside the front door to the lobby of the church. We continue to receive mail daily. Pastor Lisa will place those gifts in the offering plates she raises each week after the Doxology in our video worship services. God understands, and we are sensitive to the changes that have taken place in many people's financial situation. We are grateful for any way you are able to respond with your gifts during this time.



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Thought for the week...

Transformed by the Holy Spirit,
united in trust,
we can boldly proclaim Christ to the world.

Stay in touch

Our Staff is reachable by phone and email. The office will be open several mornings throughout the week. Please call ahead for hours..

Office phone: (978) 256-9400

Aldersgate office / Silvia – aldersgatechelmsford@verizon.net

Pastor Lisa – revlisabc@gmail.com

Cheryl Ortolf, Christian Education Director – aumc-education@verizon.net

Maylis de la Fe, Music Director and Organist – mdelafer@yahoo.com

Cheryl Cruickshank, Choir Conductor – cmcruick@gmail.com

Website: www.waldersgateumc.us

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/aldersgateumc.chelms/>