

The Hilltopper

Fall 2024



Arlington Street UMC

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Message from Pastor Sharon

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

Christmas is coming! And the season of Advent is just around the corner. While it has long been celebrated as time of preparation to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child, may we be encouraged to turn our focus toward preparing for Christ's second coming, asking ourselves if we are truly ready for that day when "the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thess. 4:16-17, NRSVUE) My brothers and sisters in Christ, while we do not know the hour nor day, let us be ready for that glorious day!

For Advent is a celebration of what has already taken place, what is happening now, and what is to come. Let us make ready our hearts to shine more brightly than the lights on the Christmas tree or in the heavens above. Amidst the hustle and bustle of decorating and shopping, of gathering with family and friends, of feasting and sharing gifts, may we take time this Advent to draw nearer to our Lord so that on Christmas morning our hearts may be filled with abundant joy in Him and so that we are truly ready to welcome Him when He comes again.

How often do we focus only on the outward appearances of the season by making everything bright and merry, fussing over the little things, and wearing ourselves out by trying to make everything perfect. As you can see from the picture, I have shared with you of the last home I owned in Goffstown, I too went over the top with decorating, only to find myself totally exhausted by Christmas. Yet over the years my focus changed from striving for outward perfection, to seeking inward peace.

This year why not take a break from all the hustle and bustle, infusing 'Christ Time' into your schedule just to spend time alone with the One whom we celebrate. Take time to relish being in His presence through reading and meditating upon the Word, listening to music and singing Christmas carols about our Lord and Savior. Take time to practice silence, listening for His gentle voice to guide you. Gather with others for communal worship and fellowship. Do good works of charity in loving kindness to honor God. Be all love in His name and through His grace. And above all, take this time to draw nearer to the One who came into this world to bring light and love, healing and hope, salvation and the promise of eternal life with Him and in Him.

Let this season truly be about Christ. And may the Love, Peace, and Joy of the Season fill your hearts with His Joy. Amen.

Wishing You All a Blessed Christmas Season.
Pastor Sharon

Note: This Year's Christmas Eve Service will begin at 6:30 PM



Finance Update – Maurice Cloutier

I'm writing this update so that our church members and friends can understand the current situation with our church's financial condition. Arlington Street United Methodist Church is struggling to meet our operational expenses to keep the church open. This year we have reduced the Custodian's time, the Administrative Secretary's time, and the Pastor has gone from half time to quarter time effective 7/22/2024. We have reduced our spending as much as is possible currently. In addition to this we have lost our church organist/choir director.

Since June 2024 the Trustees have transferred Over \$7,000.00 to the Finance Committee to cover operating expenses of the church. The church is not on a sustainable path to keeping its doors open for very much longer. This situation is dire to say the least. If we do not have the support of our members and friends financially, being actively engaged in attending worship services, and participating in areas of fundraising to alleviate our financial condition, then we have ourselves to blame for the consequences we face soon.

Those members and friends of the church that were there when we needed them, I praise your efforts and your continuous support. The church should be a gathering place to worship, to serve the community, and to provide fellowship to each other. To share in the right to gather as a family of believers who share in each other's joys and concerns. To serve as necessary on committees that need your help and expertise.

We will be holding our Consecration Sunday at the Nov. 24th church service. I truly hope and pray that the congregation/members will be in attendance to show their support of our church who has been serving the community and neighborhood for over 125 years. I want to thank you for having supported our church. I am asking you to continue that support and if possible, perhaps you could give the church a donation to the General Fund.

This year has been extremely stressful for many of us, and I understand that. You are not alone in that situation. I can attest that it has been very stressful for the Finance Committee members as well. I truly appreciate their dedication to the task.

I know some of the readers of this update will be upset with the tone of this message, and for that I apologize. I can't paint a pretty picture at this point, but I am hopeful that the situation will turn around soon if we really put our hearts and minds together to find a solution.

In all the years that I have been associated with Arlington Street United Methodist Church's finances this year, by far, has been the most challenging. The Finance Committee and the Trustee's have been considering some alternatives, that may be taken in the future,

to ensure the viability of this church in the coming years. The Trustees, as recently as October 22nd, have voted on renting the church Parsonage to raise money.

The financial situation the church finds itself in currently is unsustainable and will not end well. The Finance Committee will continue to monitor the situation and by the Grace of God we will find a way to make it through the year financially.

If anyone of our members or friends have any suggestions to help alleviate the situation, we currently find ourselves in, please do not hesitate to contact the Finance Committee. We are all in this together and together we will overcome it!

Maurice Cloutier
Finance Chair

Estimate of Giving

“Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart”

In our song book, *The Faith We Sing*, there is a hymn written by Henry Smith titled, “Give Thanks”. The lyrics convey a message to “Give thanks with a grateful heart; Give thanks to the Holy One; Give thanks because He’s given Jesus Christ, His Son”. And in I Thessalonians 5:18 we are reminded to “give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

As Thanksgiving fast approaches, there are two questions that we should be asking ourselves. First, what are we thankful for, and second, how can we show our gratitude to God. All that we have is a gift from God in which our Lord God has poured out God’s mercy, grace and blessings upon us. As Christians we are abundantly blessed through Jesus Christ who has done for us what we could never do for ourselves – He restored us into right relationship with God so that we may have abundant life eternally in and through Him. Christ offers us not only forgiveness of our sins, but healing of our spirits, giving us new hope – hope for today, tomorrow, and for what will be when He comes again in glory.

On Sunday, November 24, 2024, we celebrate Christ the King Sunday. On this day, we will make our annual covenantal offerings to God through our Estimate of Giving to continue the good works of the church in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. On this day, we will consecrate our Estimate of Giving-our promised tithes and offering for the coming year, rededicating ourselves to the mission and ministry of Christ in serving one another

through our skills, talents, and God given gifts that we bring for edification of the church and for lifting up our neighbors at large.

Also, on November 24th, with it being the Sunday before Thanksgiving, we will be collecting non-perishable goods to help those families in our community suffering from food insecurity. May we be reminded that we are all called to mission and ministry in love and service to others as co-workers with Christ. May we truly be the heart, hands, and feet of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ here on earth through our good works and deeds, and in bringing God's message of love to all we meet.

May I also remind you that "each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7) and may we always "give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. (1 Chronicles 16:34)

With thanksgiving for all that you say and do in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, may we collectively grow in love, faith, and service, always offering our gratitude to the Holy One, because He's given Jesus

Christ, His Son" to us – the greatest gift of all. Amen.

With Love, Peace & Blessings,
Pastor Sharon

The Estimate of Giving Form is included within this publication.

2024 Greater Nashua Crop Walk

CROP Hunger Walks are community-based walk fundraising events held in cities and towns across the United States, created to support the global mission of Church World Service, a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster. Walkers gather in solidarity to help our local and global neighbors. After a CROP Hunger Walk ends, 25% of the funds raised is returned to the host community to support local hunger fighting efforts. The four local organizations that get those funds in our area are the Corpus Christi food pantry, the Nashua Soup Kitchen, St. James of Merrimack food pantry, and Share Inc. of Milford.

The 40th Greater Nashua Crop Walk was held on a sunny, brisk day on November 3. Heather Davis organized a team of 6 walkers for the interfaith community event in which many area churches and organizations united at Temple Beth Abraham to help those that are food insecure. Our team, ASUMC Faithful Feet, raised over \$1400. Thank you to Kim G. and Lorna S. for raising funds and for participating in the walk along with the Davis Family. Thank you to all those who generously donated towards this important cause! We are so grateful for your support.



Fall Yard Sale

The Fall Yard Sale was a great way for the parish to come together for fellowship, fun and fundraising as the picture below shows!





Holly Town Fair

The Holly Town Fair will be held on December 7, 2024 from 9am to 2pm at Arlington Street UMC. This annual event is an important fundraiser and public relations event for the Parish.

The Fair features hand-crafted items by local vendors, baked goods, canned goods, candy, a cookie walk and much more! Soup and Sandwich luncheon will be served from 11am to 1pm.

We need your donations and assistance to make this fundraiser a huge success. Please consider donating any of the following items.

Baked Goods

Homemade cookies for cookie walk (Please note - do not package them!)

Bread, cakes, squares, pies, candy (fudge is a particular favorite!).

Please package to sell and note if they contain any nuts. Any flavor of Chex Mix. Please package to sell and note if they contain any nuts.

Hand Crafted Items

Knitted mittens, scarves, hats, socks or slippers.

Christmas decorations - ornaments, centerpieces, wreaths or candles.

Canned Goods

The Fair Committee has already prepared homemade salsa, pickles, jam and other canned goods to sell. Any additional items will be welcomed.

Monetary Donations

Monetary donations to help defray expenses would be greatly appreciated! Checks should be made payable to "ASUMC" and sent to the attention of the "HTF Committee".

Help Setting up

We need a few people to help set up on Sunday, December 1, following service. We need help setting up tables and tablecloths and generally getting ready for the event.

We also encourage parishioners to attend the event and or tell others about it. Please post on your social media accounts and tell friends and family.

If you can help or have questions, please contact Susan Gorman at the office at asumc.adm@gmail.com or call (603) 882-4663.

Music Director Search



As many of you know, Lenny Cavallaro, recently resigned as the Music Director at Arlington Street UMC. I know all of you are sad to see him leave and grateful for the music and fellowship he shared with us during his tenure.

Currently, the SPRC Committee is searching for Lenny's replacement. The Music Accompanist coordinates and implements the music ministry as a form of worship to enhance the spiritual life of Arlington Street United Methodist Church. General duties include.

(1) **Worship Planning and Accompaniment:** The Music Accompanist works closely with the Pastor to plan and lead the worship music on Sundays and for special services during the year including Christmas and Easter. The music portion of the worship service typically consists of prelude, hymns, responses, offertory, anthem, and postlude, played on the piano.

(2) **Choir:** The Music Accompanist works with the choir to plan and select appropriate selections for the music ministry. The Music Accompanist will accompany the choir during choral music offerings; frequency of choral participation may vary.

The ideal candidate would have prior experience leading a choir particularly within a faith-based setting. If you know anyone, please encourage them to visit Indeed and/or the Arlington Street UMC website to apply. Resumes can also be sent to asumc.adm@gmail.com.

Poinsettia Sale

We will once again hold a Poinsettia Sale in 2024. Please look for Order Forms to be sent via email, on the website and as an insert in the weekly bulletin. We should have prices and order forms ready by the last week of November or the first week of December.





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