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## *The Weekly Chronicle*

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### From Pastor Joel

Dear Friends in Christ,

Last week, every United Methodist pastor in New England, along with an equal number of lay persons from our region's 600 local churches, was expected to participate in the annual sessions of our six-state conference. As I have written before, every time the Annual Conference gathers, United Methodists blend a little of this and a little of that from the

various strands of our spiritual DNA. From our Anglican roots, for example, we have adapted solemn worship services for memorializing conference members who have recently died and for ordaining new elders and deacons. From our camp meeting roots in 18th and 19th century America, we still enjoy rowdy revivals with spontaneous preaching and foot-stomping music. From the example of John Wesley, who conferred each year with the preachers assigned to his circuits, we still strive to conduct our plenary business meetings in orderly and congenial ways. And from the social justice witness of the early 20th century, United Methodists continue to debate and adopt resolutions that address the hot button issues of our 21st century times.

Last week's sessions of the New England Annual Conference were held in a large hotel in downtown Manchester, NH, an innovation introduced to us a few years ago by Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar. Before the Memorial Service began at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, we had already conducted the business necessary to keep the weekend civil and constructive. To prevent the parliamentary meltdown that took place on Day One in 2016, soon after the mass shooting in Orlando, a statement was read by the Board of Laity and the Board of Ordained Ministry assuring conferees that the Judicial Council's recent ruling concerning Bishop Karen Oliveto's election would not cause the conference's leaders to adopt a defensive posture, though it appeared to me that there was a lot more defensiveness - or at least a greater degree of i-dotting and t-crossing before and after key votes were taken to amend the UMC's constitution, for example, and to respond to allegations of clergy misconduct during the full members' executive session.

An especially sad moment during most annual conferences in recent years has been voting formally to close local churches that have reached the end of their lives. On Thursday morning, six congregations were disbanded and their properties entrusted to the conference's Board of Trustees. Eaton Memorial UMC in Livermore Falls, ME; Deering Memorial UMC in South Paris, ME; River UMC in Burrillville and Woonsocket, RI; Bloomfield UMC in Bloomfield, VT; Chelsea West Hill UMC in Chelsea, VT; and Lexington UMC in Lexington, MA; were all shuttered. "It is painful," Bishop Devadhar commented. "Our prayers are with you." During the Memorial Service that followed, these churches were remembered along with clergy who died since our sessions in 2016, including Sudbury UMC's own Rev. Donald Williams.

Thursday afternoon included dozens of small group conversations focused on the ongoing dilemma of systemic racism and how to name and neutralize it in our country. These conversations are never easy, of course, and, in all honesty, I was dreading another awkward encounter with the cultural "elephant in the room." I was surprised, however, by the quality of the conversation my tablemates and I were enabled to share. Guided by video segments and questions prepared by the General Commission on Religion and Race, we were able to remember and repent the racism we had internalized as young people while also committing to do our part each day to resist it.

Friday's sessions brought a candid and moving report from the cabinet, written and presented by the Rev. Rene Perez, our Central Massachusetts district superintendent and dean of the cabinet, about the "state of the church" in New England. "We can fight and argue until there is no one left to fight with," Rev. Perez said, "or we can learn to live together, find new solutions together, and embrace change together, so that what we leave for new generations is far better and fairer than what was given to us." After his address, I hugged Rene and thanked him for his love and candor.

The statistician's report is almost always a highlight of the conference and Joy Mueller did not let us down on Friday afternoon. Since talking candidly about race was our 2017 theme, Joy presented her report through that lens. "While our Conference diversity does not

match the area where we are located, our Conference is becoming increasingly diverse," Mueller said. "Comparing the number of reported members for different races in 2009 with those reported in 2016, the population of African Americans, Asians, and Latinos are all increasing while the white population is decreasing. Slowly, we are looking more like the general population."

After Joy concluded her presentation, Bishop Devadhar pointed out that 26 percent of our New England congregations are growing. We need to ask these churches "What's working for us in New England?"

On Friday evening, two elders were ordained, three provisional deacons were commissioned, and three provisional elders also received the bishop's blessing and authorization to serve local churches.

On the final day of annual conference, Saturday, June 17, the Board of Trustees announced late-breaking news. Our episcopal area's five-floor office building in downtown Lawrence has recently attracted a serious potential buyer. Meanwhile, a two-story structure more appropriate to our needs has been identified in another Merrimack Valley community. And, after years of remaining empty at the cost of thousands of dollars each year, a suite of offices on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston that belongs to the conference has also been marketed to a potential buyer. If this "grand puzzle" fits together perfectly, the Trustees announced, the New England Conference will move into its newly purchased and renovated building in 2018 without spending any missional funds from the annual budget.

See what I mean? That's what annual conference is like - not just once in a while but without fail! A little of this and a little of that from the many strands of DNA that have combined to make The United Methodist Church what it is today. Like all mainline churches in the US, we are struggling now. But here and there - in a town called Sudbury, for example - we are also growing by God's grace and goodness. Sometimes our worship is rowdy and sometimes it is ritualistic. And sometimes our business meetings meltdown while others model civility and common purpose. But always, as Wesley taught us, we are "going onto perfection" in heart and life because the power of the Holy Spirit to perfect our ministry is always greater than our own misguided efforts to undermine the calling that God has given us in Christ.

See you in church,

Pastor Joel

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## **PRAYER CONCERNS & CELEBRATIONS**

## Prayer Concerns on Sunday, June 18

- ✚ Diane Hammond asks us to pray for success and healing for Fernando Gabriel, known as Gabby, who will have surgery on his spine for cancer this week.
- ✚ Cal Geroux requests prayers for her dear friend Rosemarie Wright. Rosemary has just learned that she has lung cancer and her prognosis is not good. We pray for peace, strength and comfort.

## Prayer Celebrations on Sunday, June 18

- ✚ Donna Mills celebrates her grandson Nathan's graduation from high school last weekend. Nathan will be going to UNH in the fall.
- ✚ The usher team wished Robert Emken a happy birthday! He turned 10 last week.
- ✚ The Mendelssohn postlude played on Sunday by Kevin was in honor of Ann and George Hamilton's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on June 24<sup>th</sup>!
- ✚ Mary and Phil Lenentine celebrate the life of Alton Danforth who passed away suddenly in Maine. Alton, who was 87, was Phil's last remaining cousin on his mother's side.
- ✚ Shetal celebrates the life of her aunt Jess who went to her eternal home last week. She is once again whole and no longer bound by the effects of Parkinson's disease. Shetal knows she is celebrating with all the saints in heaven.

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## SAVE THE DATE

### Members Called to June 25 Church Conference

Members of Sudbury UMC are hereby called to the annual Spring Church Conference at 11:00 a.m. this Sunday, June 25. Copies of the conference booklet were made available after worship on June 18. If you didn't pick up a copy, they can be found in the narthex of the sanctuary. The agenda for our semi-annual church business meeting will be limited to voting the slate of chairpersons and commission members recruited by the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development; receiving written reports at the conclusion of the 2016/2017 program year; hearing and acting on the report of the Building Committee elected to oversee Pave the Way upgrades to our buildings at 251 Old Sudbury Road; and receiving status reports from the Membership Secretary, the Trustees, and the Stewardship and Finance Committee. The Rev. Rene Perez, superintendent of the Central Massachusetts District, has authorized Pastor Joel to preside. Only business in harmony with the call to conference will be transacted.

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## DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

- June 23-25: Youth Service Trip
- June 24: Adult Service Opportunity at Boston's Pine Street Inn
- June 25: Worship - Karen Lubic, Preacher; Pastor Joel Communion Presider
- June 25: Church Conference (immediately following worship)
- June 25: Summer Picnic at Sudbury UMC with Greenwood Memorial UMC at 4:00 pm

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## LEARN

# One Room Summer Sunday School Continues Sunday, June 25!

Starting last Sunday, June 18, Sudbury UMC switched to its Summer Sunday School schedule. Geared for children ages 3-10, a one room Sunday School will meet after the Children's Moment each Sunday in the large room below the sanctuary. Although lessons are geared towards children in 5th grade and below, Middle and High School youth are welcome to participate as helpers or co-teachers if interested. To volunteer, please reach out to Caryl Walsh at [carylw@comcast.net](mailto:carylw@comcast.net).

## Youth

Hello SUMC,

My time with SUMC is winding down, but not before an exciting weekend of service and fun with our youth! This weekend, we are staying at First Lutheran Church in Waltham, volunteering at the Hope Food Pantry in Framingham, and preparing care packages for residents of Mary's House--a shelter for homeless women and their children in Waltham. We will enjoy team building activities, evening devotions, and spend time in worship the community hosting us. It's going to be a great weekend!

It will also be a wonderful event to close my time at SUMC. My last day in the office is June 30, and I am looking back on an incredible program year with some truly amazing youth. Between youth fellowship, parties, events, the lock-in, and the service trip, this has been a full and rewarding time in ministry. I am looking forward to preparing for PhD program applications and further academic study. Thank you all for the opportunity to serve, for your support, and your prayers.

Blessings,  
Anthony

## The Upper Room

The Upper Room booklets are available in the narthex. Help yourself to a free copy for your daily devotional readings. Or access it online by clicking here:  
<http://devotional.upperroom.org/>.

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## CONNECT

### Sharpen Your Chopping Skills This Saturday!

Volunteers from Sudbury UMC will join friends from Greenwood Memorial UMC on Saturday, June 24, at Boston's Pine Street Inn. A car pool will leave our parking lot at 8:00 a.m. and return by 1:00 p.m. To volunteer, contact John Iberg at [1970schooner@gmail.com](mailto:1970schooner@gmail.com).



### Join the Thursday Bible Study

Sudbury UMC's Thursday Bible study group always welcomes new participants. Meetings take place at 10:00 a.m. on Thursdays at the Panera Bread located at 21 Andrew Avenue in Wayland's Town Center, just two miles from Sudbury UMC!

Each week's focus text is the next Sunday's preaching passage. Remember to bring your Bible and a few bucks for something warm or cold to sip!

We will look ahead to the passages being preached during worship on:

- June 25: Matthew 10:24-39
- July 2: Genesis 22:1-14

## Stephen Ministry - No Concern Is Too Small



Who can benefit from a Stephen Minister? A Stephen Ministry relationship or conversation is appropriate for most anyone who is in need of caring support as they struggle with life's changes. Sudbury UMC Stephen Ministers have received 50 hours of Christian care giving.

At Sudbury UMC, you have two opportunities to benefit from the listening, non-judgmental presence of a Stephen Minister. Every Sunday morning, a Stephen Minister is available after the worship service. Or if you would like to meet with a Stephen Minister on a regular basis (weekly, twice a month, or monthly), please speak with Pastor Joel. If you know a friend who could benefit from a Stephen Minister, you can also speak to Pastor Joel.

No concern is too small to share with a Stephen Minister.

June 25: Richard Smith

July 2: Linda Cooper

## PICNIC WITH GREENWOOD - This Sunday at 4:00 p.m.

The annual Sudbury UMC picnic with our sister church, Greenwood Memorial UMC, is back this year on Sunday, June 25!

Question: What do I have to bring to the picnic?

Answer: Yourself, family, friend (s) and a desire to relax, have fun and share in the fellowship with others. Since we believe very strongly in an intergenerational and inclusive church, all persons are welcome. Therefore, various activities will be planned to accommodate all ages and abilities - from volleyball to dominoes to Old Maid cards.

In order to have a successful and memorable picnic, we as the host congregation will be working diligently and fervently to make this happen. Consequently, we ask you to:

1. Sign up at Church this Sunday for the number of persons planning to attend. You may also notify Oscar Harrell at 978-443-3821 or owhtwo@msn.com.
2. For those persons willing to volunteer, we have openings for the following: A. Setting up and taking down chairs, tables, tent on June 24 and 25. B. Persons in charge of activities and games for children and adults. C. Food servers. D. Grill Workers. E. Hosts to respond to the questions and general concerns of attendees.
3. For contributors desirous of sharing their culinary arts in salads, desserts, or other

possible picnic items, please feel free to contact us with your offering.

When does all this happen? It's coming this Sunday, June 25, starting on Sudbury UMC's playground at 4:00 p.m. The Greenwood folks will be arriving about then. We'll be together "celebrating" until about 6:00 p.m. This early ending time, we hope, will be particularly attractive to parents with little children who look forward to an early bedtime.

This is truly an all-church happening. We want all of you to be part of this special day.

**Where:** Sudbury UMC Playground behind the Church

**When:** This Sunday, June 25, from 4:00 till 6:00 p.m.

**Who's Invited:** All Members and Friends of Sudbury UMC and Greenwood Memorial UMC.



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## PARTNERS

### SUNNY HILL

Sunny Hill Preschool is gearing up for a fabulous 2017-2018 school year. We are currently taking enrollments in all classes with limited availability in some so, don't miss out on your first choice. Contact Debbie or Kate for a tour or to complete your child's enrollment. Call 978-443-2627 today.

### Looking for a Safe Summer Camp?

Scary news reports about summer camps for children can be troubling enough to make parents ask, "Where will my child will be safe?" United Methodists in the New England Conference are grateful to know that every possible step is taken to insure a safe and secure environment for children and youth at all of our camping and conference centers. At all four sites, paid and volunteer staffers undergo criminal background checks and safety training before they are hired or enrolled as a volunteers. "Safe sanctuaries" standards are in place to insure the highest standards of safety. Our conveniently

located sites include Rolling Ridge Conference Center in North Andover, MA ([www.rollingridge.org](http://www.rollingridge.org)); Camp Aldersgate in North Scituate, RI ([www.campaldersgate.com](http://www.campaldersgate.com)); Camp Wanakee in Meredith, NH ([www.wanakee.org](http://www.wanakee.org)); and Camp Mechuwana in Winthrop, ME ([www.mechuwana.org](http://www.mechuwana.org)). Need financial aid? Speak to Pastor Joel about funds available through Sudbury UMC.

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## COMMUNITY

### Help Wanted: Drivers Drivers for FISH

Deb Galloway, director of the Sudbury Senior Center, reports that FISH (a network of volunteers that provide transportation to medical appointments to anyone in need, regardless of age or ability level) is currently in need of volunteer drivers. Volunteers use their own vehicles to transport Sudbury residents to and from medical appointments.

Interested in volunteering or learning more about FISH? Please contact that senior center at 978-443-3055.

### The Sudbury Food Pantry

The Sudbury Food Pantry is looking for a volunteer to join (2) other drivers making our twice monthly pick up at The Greater Boston Food Bank on the 2nd & 4th Wed. of every month. With (3) drivers they would drive (8) times during the year.

Any Question please contact Pat Mullen, Executive Director. [P\\_mullen@msn.com](mailto:P_mullen@msn.com), 978-314-5247

### Please Support Household Goods in Acton

Household Goods provides a full range of household items free of charge for people in need. The organization currently has an urgent need for blankets, queen-sized sheets, towels, cookware, and flatware.

Please drop off gently used furniture and household items at 530 Main St. (Rte. 27), Acton on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays between 9:00 a.m. and Noon. Questions? Visit [www.householdgoods.org](http://www.householdgoods.org).

### Household Goods Needs Drivers

If you are interested in joining a team of volunteers dedicated to helping people in need make a home, please call the Volunteer Coordinator 978-635-1710 ext. 6 or e-mail: [volunteer@householdgoods.org](mailto:volunteer@householdgoods.org).

Truck Drivers and Crew are needed for local furniture pick -ups from donor's homes and to off-load furniture at Household Goods' facility. Drivers must be at least 25 years of age, have a clean driving record, the ability to comfortably lift 50 pounds and the ability to qualify for a DOT Medical Card. Crew must be at least 18 and be able to comfortably lift at least 50 pounds.

Household Goods provides a full range of donated furniture and household items, free of charge, to help people in need make a home.

## MetroWest Free Medical Program Seeking Volunteers

On Tuesdays, about 20 volunteers gather to provide healthcare services to people who don't have insurance. The program serves an average of 35 patients, using the sanctuary at Congregation Beth El as the clinic site.

Volunteers are needed to help put the medical supplies and equipment away in the shed behind Beth El. Specifically, people are needed to help move the screens, exam tables, buckets of medical supplies, as well as tables and chairs. With enough volunteers this can be done in 30 minutes.

This is a great job for high school students looking to finish up their community service hours or anyone who wants to get an extra 30 minutes of exercise! When? Tuesdays, 9:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Questions? Contact Kim Prendergast at [kim.prendergast@gmail.com](mailto:kim.prendergast@gmail.com).



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