



**LETTER FROM PASTOR LEIGH**

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## LETTER FROM PASTOR LEIGH

“All who believed were together and had all things in common;  
They would sell their possessions and goods and  
distribute the proceeds to all,  
as any had need.”

Acts 2: 44-45

Grace and Peace to you, in the name of the Living God, the maker of heaven and earth.

This month, I would like to start my letter with a little (just a smidgen) of polity. Hang tight, I promise to be quick! (If it's more than you want to know, skip to **what does this have to do with us?**)

**Connexional.** That is who we are as United Methodists. It is foundational to our United Methodist polity. It is the way in which United Methodists work together to support one another, to share resources, and to carry out mission and ministry. This concept of working together for the greatest good is rooted in Biblical texts, including the text from Acts, cited above.

**Connexion.** The United Methodist Church defines connexion as the principle that “all leaders and congregations are connected in a network of loyalties and commitments that support, yet supersede, local concerns.”<sup>1</sup>

With **connexion** as it's foundation, The United Methodist decision-making bodies organize themselves as “conferences” during which representatives from the church gather to make decisions that best represent our values and commitments as a community.

There are several layers of conferences:

- **The General Conference** – this is a gathering of United Methodists from all over the world. (every 4 years; during COVID we had to postpone for 4 years in order for all of the delegates to be able to meet together. It has been 8 years since we have met. We did meet in a special called session in 2019 to discuss LGBTQ issues, which resulted in disaffiliation legislation.)
- **The Jurisdictional Conference** – this is the portion of the United States that embodies a group of conferences in a geographical area. Notably, we elect bishops at this meeting. (every 4 years)
- **The Annual Conference** – each year equal numbers of pastors and laity from local churches gather.

So, you are probably okay with being part of something bigger than yourself. That is what makes The United Methodist Church an organization that does good throughout the world. We can do good because of our ability to work and use our significant resources to help the world.

Sadly, this ability was weakened when disaffiliation happened. Disaffiliation was a 3-year period when churches were released from their “trust clause” and allowed to leave the denomination. The disaffiliation clause expired on Dec. 31, 2023. We lost 18% of our US churches as well as several countries who chose to leave the denomination. Those churches and countries were primarily those who did **not** seek the inclusion of LGBTQ persons, although some left because they simply did not want to be connexional any longer.

Disaffiliation, combined with COVID 19 and declining attendance, as well as churches that did not/could not pay their mission shares, has resulted in the need for massive, seismic reorganization of the denomination.

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<sup>1</sup> “Connection”. *Sharing God's Gifts: Glossary of United Methodist Terms*. United Methodist Church.

But, pastor, **what does this have to do with us?** (I'm glad you asked that question!)

Your pastor is involved with some of this reordering of the denomination. I have been elected to represent New England as a delegate and an alternate delegate to Jurisdictional and General Conferences since 2012. Under "normal" circumstances, this has been a rather manageable endeavor, but given the unusual situations/times in which we find ourselves, some of us have been asked to perform other roles. (I am a core member of the Vision Forward Team, there are 4 of us, and we meet weekly; and I serve on North East Jurisdiction Task Force, on which I am the only representative from New England). Sometimes I need to be out of Sudbury UMC to do these things. I want you to be aware of the reasons for my absence. Please note that I can make myself available for ZOOM calls and emails during these times, however there is usually a pastor "on call" to help with emergencies. Here are some key dates:

- ✦ General Conference, from April 23 to May 3.
- ✦ New England Annual Conference, from June 18 -22.
- ✦ North East Jurisdictional Conference, from July 8 – 12.
- ✦ And, also training from May 3 – 6 (this is the completion of a two-year training program that I have been part of since 2022)

**Why am I writing about all of this?** I want you to be informed about our denomination, as well as the importance of being connectional. We are so much more than what happens on Sunday morning. We are so much more than what happens in Sudbury, or even Massachusetts. You are part of a worldwide church that is working for the good, not just locally but throughout the world.

I love the connexialism of our United Methodist Church. It is a unique quality that few denominations share. It makes us a strong, coordinated community not just in our local churches but everywhere.

So, please, pray for the upcoming Conferences. Pray for hope and justice. If you have questions about any of this, please send me an email, request a class, talk to me during coffee hour, or ask me to write more about this next month.

And don't forget to join us at the "connexion," Sudbury United Methodist Church at 10 am every Sunday morning, or join us on Facebook.

Blessings to all of you.

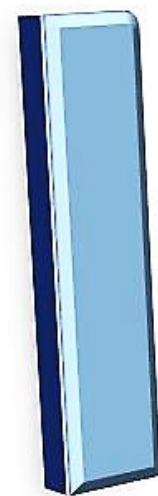
Pastor Leigh

## LEARN

### Greetings from the SUMC Youth!

#### ***New: Sunday Morning Youth Devo***

This month begins a new weekly Christian formation opportunity for youth (grades 6-12). Each Sunday\* through June 9 at 9:15am, youth are invited to the youth room (below the sanctuary) for a morning devotion using the *d365* app or website. *d365* <https://d365.org/> is a daily devotion written for youth and adults. The devotion follows a five-step format – Pause, Listen, Think, Pray, Go – and the reading/discussion will usually take 15-20 minutes. Afterward, youth are encouraged to go one room over into our livestream booth, where SUMC's livestream team can



### February Calendar

- **February 11:** Youth Sunday
- **February 11:** Super Bowl party @SUMC (families invited)
- **February 24:** Outdoor Church food distribution
- **February 21 & 28:** Lenten soup dinners

teach them to use the video/streaming equipment and (under supervision and if they feel comfortable) help stream and record that morning's worship service. For those who would rather not join the tech crew, they are free to play games in the youth room until 9:45am.

*\*Note: We will not have a Youth Devo class on February 11 because that is Youth Sunday.*

The SUMC youth and the Christian Education Commission is thankful for our adult volunteers who will facilitate the morning devotion and discussion, and for the livestream team leaders for their leadership.

### ***Provide Dinner for our Youth***

One of the great things about this congregation is how much it supports and cares for its youth, and one of the best ways to support us and get to know us is by providing dinner at an upcoming Sunday Night Fellowship meeting. We eat dinner each Sunday at youth group from 6:00-6:30, and we depend on volunteers from our congregation for those dinners. If you would like to provide dinner one Sunday night this semester, click this link to sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0E49AEA723A4F85-youth3#/>

If you have any questions about anything pertaining to youth ministry at SUMC or if you are a youth/parent who would like to receive weekly updates, contact Zack ([zack@sudbury-umc.org](mailto:zack@sudbury-umc.org)).

Keep the Faith.

## **Magnific Moment**

### ***Kidbury UMC***

Kidbury UMC is open before and after worship! The theme for the month of January is "Wow!" because it's all about Jesus' miracles. Last week, we learned about Jesus' healing miracles, and over the next three weeks, we'll learn about Jesus calming a storm, feeding (over) 5,000 people, and walking on water! That guy was amazing, right? We'll also learn a song about how Jesus miracles help us to "Be bold, be strong, for the LORD your God is with you," and as usual, the Kidbury Library, games station, and Tent of Meeting (prayer station) will be available for children to visit any time.



Kidbury is for all ages (there's even a toddler table!) and opens at 9:00 am each Sunday. Feel free to come by any time before 9:45 or after worship during Coffee Hour.

### ***Easter Egg Olympics***

The second annual Easter Egg Olympic games are scheduled for the afternoon on **Saturday, March 23** (if we do it one more year it will officially be a tradition!), so mark your calendars now. Want to get involved? The CE Commission would love to have congregation members volunteer to help lead games and activity stations. Talk to Caryl Walsh or Zack Moser to see how you can help (emails below).

### ***Adult Formation Classes***

There are two adult education opportunities every Sunday. *Exploring Topics in Christianity* meets in Davison Chapel. Each week is a new topic that revolves loosely around a connected theme. *The Upper Room Group* meets each week in the O'Reilly Room. This group opens in prayer, then reflects on a scripture passage or devotional reading provided by individual volunteers from the group. Both adult classes are 9:15-9:45 am.

For more information about any of our Christian Education/Formation programs or to volunteer at the Easter Egg Olympics, contact Caryl Walsh ([CarylW@comcast.net](mailto:CarylW@comcast.net)) or Zack Moser ([zack@sudbury-umc.org](mailto:zack@sudbury-umc.org)).

## Sudbury Inter-Faith Social Justice Event February 25th: Gun Violence Film Screening and Discussion

SUMC is co-hosting a screening of *Trigger: The Ripple Effect of Gun Violence* on February 25th at 2:00 pm. The event will be held in person at the Presbyterian Church in Sudbury and online via zoom. Join to watch the 51-minute film, hear from the film's producer, and engage in discussion about what we can do to end our crisis of gun violence.



### "Where the World Meets to Pray"









Free copies of *The Upper Room* may be found in an outdoor Lucite rack next to the O'Reilly Room entrance and in the narthex. Daily readings can also be found online by clicking:

<https://www.upperroom.org/>.


Five minutes, fifteen, or thirty reading Scripture and sitting quietly in God's presence will set the tone for the whole day.

## CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS

### Prayer Concerns on Sunday February 4

-  The Christensen family requests prayers for a family friend, Wallace, who has been diagnosed with cancer in his colon, liver and spine. Wallace has limited family support. May the support and love of Jesus help him through this challenging time.
-  Leslie Bell requests prayers for Pastor Richie Gonzales who was in a serious car accident on January 1, breaking multiple vertebrae. Pastor Richie founded Net of Compassion in Worcester and works tirelessly to help the most vulnerable populations. He preached at SUMC several years ago, sharing his powerful redemption story at our first Second Chance Sunday.
-  Prayers are requested for Carol Ford who fell last week in her condo. She is recovering slowly. We pray for healing and strength.
-  The Puchulu family requests prayers for the people of Chile as they battle the fires near Vina del Mar. At last count, 120 have died and hundreds are missing.
-  We pray for our country's leaders and military as they are involved in the conflict with Syria and Iran. May God protect all in harm's way.
-  We pray for peace in all war-torn countries.

### Prayer Celebrations on Sunday February 4

-  The Hamilton family celebrates the arrival of Francis Pancoast Hamilton-Yates on Tuesday January 30th. Francis weighed in at 9 lbs., 10.5 ounces and is 21 1/2 inches long. He joins his 3 year old brother, Monty, and his parents Bruce Hamilton and Elizabeth Yates.

### Do You Have a Prayer Request for "Concerns and Celebrations"?

How can we pray for you? Share prayer requests at: <https://www.facebook.com/SudburyUMC/> and send us a message by clicking on the blue "Send Message" button. Or email ([sumc@sudbury-umc.org](mailto:sumc@sudbury-umc.org)).

## FINDING SUDBURY UMC ON SOCIAL MEDIA

### Live-Streamed Sunday Services Available on YouTube and Facebook Live

Sunday morning services at Sudbury UMC can now be viewed on SUMC's own [YouTube](#) channel and [Facebook](#) page live each Sunday morning. Missed a service and want to watch it later? You can find them using the same links! We hope these social media platforms will help us reach a larger audience. Please help us grow by using these services. You can also connect with SUMC through ([InstagramSUMC](#)) and ([TwitterSUMC](#)).



[Facebook](#)



[YouTube](#)



[Instagram](#)



[Twitter](#)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Lent Soup and Study

It seems as if we have just welcomed the baby Jesus into the world, swaddled in a blanket, lying in a manger. Yet on February 14 we will observe Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent.

During Lent, we will meet every Wednesday, beginning on February 21 through March 20, enjoy a soup dinner at 6:30 pm, and study Embracing the Uncertain: A Lenten Study for Unsteady Times, by Magrey R. deVega. Each class stands alone. Here is a breakdown of the study:

- February 21 – Mark 9:14-29, the Uncertainty of Faith
- February 28 – Matthew 18:21-22, the Uncertainty of Forgiveness
- March 6 – Luke 12:1-34, the Uncertainty of Worry
- March 13 – John 11: 1-44, the Uncertainty of Mortality
- March 20 – Luke 19: 1-10, the Uncertainty of Surrender

You may purchase the text, but it is not necessary.

So, come and join us for soup and study. Invite a friend. Come for one lesson or all. Everyone is welcome.

### The LENT BLOG rides again!

... and Ash Wednesday is only SIX days away!!! Which means your humble Lenten Devotions Blog editor-in-chief is suddenly nervous. Not panicky! But he is... \*aware\* of a deadline!

The "LentBlog" is our annual collection of Lenten devotions, written by members and friends of SUMC and posted online, one devotion every morning in Lent, and YOU are invited to participate! Even if you don't think you're a writer ... you don't have to be! We'll provide some ideas for SHORT "expressions of thought", and we'll provide other good help if you need!

So please do consider helping out ... a collection of writing prompts will be available soon. Any questions? Ask Rob Hammerton (email him at [rhammerton@charter.net](mailto:rhammerton@charter.net), or see him in the Chancel after Sunday service).



## February 12th Annual Pre-Lenten Gathering with Bishop Peggy Johnson on "Ableism".

The Conference Commission on Religion and Race and Conference Disabilities Committee are co-hosting this year's New England Conference Pre-Lenten Gathering, focused on Ableism. This virtual event at 7:00 pm will begin with a short devotional during which Bishop Johnson will preach, followed by a presentation by Rev. Justin and Dr. Lisa Hancock. The Hancocks are co-founders of The Julian Way, an organization focused on empowerment and discipleship with, for, and by persons with disabilities. To learn more, please follow the link:

<https://www.neumc.org/eventdetail/18160135>

## Choir Chimes Are Back!

We will be playing for Worship on March 17 and **rehearsals** will begin this Sunday after worship in Davison Chapel.

Anyone interested in making music as a team, of almost any age, is welcome to join us.

You **don't** need:

Any previous experience

To read music

Gloves – these are not hand bells

You **do** need:

To be able to count to 4

To work as a team

To practice on Sundays for 5 weeks

If you are curious and would like to give Choir Chimes a try, please call Sherry Stonebraker at 978-568-1596 or email her at ([sstoneb@aol.com](mailto:sstoneb@aol.com)).

## Food Health and Safety for Children, Families and Staff



We enjoy and encourage SUMC members to continue to build upon fellowship within our community in a variety of ways. When events with food are held, we ask for your help in keeping the children and families we serve, as well as the members of our staff, safe and healthy.

We have life threatening food allergies within the Sunny Hill Community, and we are sure within the Church. We ask you to be extra cautious when bringing in food items into the church buildings. SUMC is a peanut and tree nut-free building.

**Please do not use the white refrigerator in the kitchen as that is for use of Sunny Hill items only that are SAFE for all.** If you have any questions, please feel free to

contact the SUMC office.

Additionally, we respectfully request that everyone who uses the kitchen should leave it clean and organized. Again, thank you for your help in keeping everyone safe.

## Keep the Snowball Rolling!

As we step into the new year, we are thrilled to announce a series of enriching and uplifting events. Save the dates for these upcoming gatherings and let's start the year with joy, music, service, and spiritual reflection. **Keep the snowball rolling!**

*In Faith, Kristin*

## Winter and Spring Highlights:

**Wednesday, February 14 at 7 pm: Ash Wednesday Service in Davison Chapel** - Commence the season of Lent with our Ash Wednesday service, a time of reflection and renewal. Join us as we mark the beginning of this sacred period leading up to Easter.

**Saturday February 24: Youth Outdoor Church** - Youth and youthful alike are welcome to join as the Outdoor Church ministers to the needs of people in Cambridge. See Zack for more information about how to help with distributing food and warm socks.

**Wednesday evenings, from February 21, through March 20, at 6:30 pm: Lenten Suppers** - Share in the spirit of fellowship and nourishment during our Lenten Suppers. These gatherings provide an opportunity to break bread together, engage in meaningful conversations, and deepen our understanding of the Lenten season. This year's study is entitled "Embracing the Uncertain."

**March 15-17: Youth Berea Trip** - Youth are invited to sleep away at Camp Berea and enjoy winter activities. Contact Zack to find out how to register.

**March 24, 28, 29, 31: Holy Week and Easter** - Join together for services during Holy Week, a time to reflect on the sacrifice of Christ and the hope of Easter. Details about Palm/Passion Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday services are forthcoming.

We encourage you to participate in these events, as well as the many Bible studies and classes - and of course Kidbury - throughout the week, by bringing your energy, enthusiasm, and faith to each gathering. Let us come together as a church family to make these months a time of spiritual growth, community building, and shared joy. ***Keep the snowball rolling!***

## Musical Notes

### 🎵 Instrumental hymnody

Do you play a wind, brass or percussion instrument? Join us to play the congregational hymns on Sunday February 10 at 8:45 AM. You can sign up here:

<https://forms.gle/sYE2VrTiQsrnNrpS7>

How about a bowed or plucked string instrument? Join us to play the congregational hymns on Sunday February 10 at 8:45 AM. You can sign up here:

<https://forms.gle/nNXrcjJXvLv6gWX6>

We welcome players of all abilities - don't be shy! You can email Kevin or Rob with questions or concerns anytime.

([rhammerton@charter.net](mailto:rhammerton@charter.net)) or ([kevin@sudbury-umc.org](mailto:kevin@sudbury-umc.org))

## Ron Smith Memorial Fund

The Ron Smith Memorial Fund award is given each year to remember a beloved member of our congregation. Ron was a member for many years and contributed much to the music program with his very talented trumpet playing.

The Fund was established in 2019 after Ron's passing and is given annually

(1) to a young person to encourage and to help pursue their musical goals.

(2) It can also be awarded to cancer patients and loved one who provide care for them.

The Fund awards a monetary gift in May. Please see Pastor Leigh or a member of the Worship and Music Commission for more information and to apply.





### Sunday Greeters Needed

The Church Growth Commission has resumed our custom of welcoming visitors and members to church each Sunday morning. Cindi Bockweg maintains the schedule of Sunday Greeters. She would appreciate hearing from you, if doing this is a way you want to contribute to our time together. Cindi's email is ([cindijb@hotmail.com](mailto:cindijb@hotmail.com)). She looks forward to hearing from you!



### Join the Flower Team!

Do you love flowers? Would you like to join the team that creates the beautiful arrangements on the altar each Sunday? Please contact Kerry Healy to let her know of your interest and she'll be happy to fill you in about the process. Her email address is ([healyweeks@gmail.com](mailto:healyweeks@gmail.com)).

### Looking for Coffee Hosts

We need help!!! Coffee and Fellowship Hour is enjoyed by many and we want to thank the dedicated people who have been serving as hosts.

Sherry and Ernie are willing to train those who are willing to join the team. It is a fantastic way to get to know our congregation. Contact Sherry at ([sstoneb@aol.com](mailto:sstoneb@aol.com)) to offer your help.

### Coming to Church? Please Follow Safety Guidelines!

The windows in the sanctuary will remain open for the foreseeable future to improve air flow and enhance public safety. We're trying to prevent the spread of viruses and COVID. Please be mindful of the outdoor temperature and dress accordingly. Mask wearing is optional; if you need a mask, the ushers have a supply on hand.



## GIVE

### How to Donate Sunday Morning Altar Flowers

The Flower Team welcomes altar flower donations. To choose a date, visit a user-friendly website: [Flower Sign-Up Genius](#). or email ([Kerry Healy](mailto:Kerry Healy)). Please use the comment section to note if your gift is intended to be in honor or in memory of someone special. And if you have specific flowers in mind, please share that information also in the comment section. Thanks.



### Going Shopping? Pick-up Something for the Food Cart!



Donations to our church's shopping cart may be left at the O'Reilly Room entrance Monday through Friday. The best canned items to donate include solid white tuna, fruits, and vegetables. Raisins in boxes, dried beans, condensed milk, rice pilaf, pancake mix, syrup, pasta and pasta sauce in jars, macaroni and cheese, instant coffee, laundry detergent, shampoo, soap, feminine care products, and wipes are also appreciated. Whenever you shop – or have groceries delivered to your home – please remember the food cart!

Sudbury United Methodist Church, 251 Old Sudbury Road, Sudbury, MA 01776

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Fax: (978) 443-3052

Church Office: [sumc@sudbury-umc.org](mailto:sumc@sudbury-umc.org)

Website: <http://www.sudbury-umc.org>

**Church Staff**

**Pastor:** *The Rev. Leigh E. Goodrich*

*(Pastor Leigh observes Sabbath on Friday)*

[pastorleigh@sudbury-umc.org](mailto:pastorleigh@sudbury-umc.org)

**Youth & Children's Ministries Director:** *Zachary Moser*

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**Business Manager:** *Michael Greb*

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**Sunny Hill Director:** *Kathy Palmer*

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**Office Manager:** *Shetal Kaye*

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**Sexton:** *Joe Picorelli*

[joe@sudbury-umc.org](mailto:joe@sudbury-umc.org)



**We are a Stephen Ministry  
Congregation**



**We are a Reconciling and Welcoming  
Congregation**