

# The Hilltopper

July 2024



Message from Pastor Sharon



## Arlington Street UMC

63 Arlington Street

Nashua, NH 03060

Sharon Sargent, Pastor

Pastor's Cell (978) 987-6036

[pastor.s.sargent@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.s.sargent@gmail.com)

### Inside This Edition

Message from Pastor Sharon

Annual Conference Highlights

Church Picnic

Finance Update

Meet our new Administrative Assistant

NEAC Welcomes Bishop Bickerton

New District Superintendent

Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter

New District Superintendent

New Facebook Page

Summer Mission Dr Crisp Elementary School

Wee Read United Way of Nashua

## Using our Building for God's Good Work

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For 125 years our church has been serving the Crown Hill Community. And now more than ever we are becoming a community church. Our building is now home to four churches spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. How exciting is this! The four churches include:

- Disciples of the Word, a Sabbath Keeping Church led by Pastor Jose Lune gathering on Saturday mornings.
- Iglesia Bautista Faro de Luz, a Spanish speaking Baptist Church led by Pastor José Ramirez, who gathers on Sunday afternoons.
- FourSquare Gospel Church, a Portuguese speaking Pentecostal Church serving the Brazilian community led by Pastor Elizeu Gomes Santos, gathering on Sunday evenings.
- And our beloved Arlington Street United Methodist Church, led by Pastor Sharon Sargent, gathering on Sunday mornings.

We also host Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings on a weekly basis.

The Community Center has utilized our downstairs classrooms for a preschool program and Dr. Crisp School is holding their "Kick-off to Kindergarten" program in our fellowship hall this summer.

Sadly, we have had to discontinue our non-perishable food pantry, but we will continue to support the Nashua Soup Kitchen.

Please visit our website to check out all the happenings at our church at

[www.asumc.org](http://www.asumc.org).

## ***Annual Conference Highlights***

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, from Thursday, June 20, 2024, to Saturday, June 22, 2024, clergy and laity representatives from the people called United Methodists gathered from every region and district in New England for the 2024 New England Annual Conference. On Wednesday June 19, 2024, clergy gathered in the afternoon, and laity gathered in the evening. Together we participated in Holy Conferencing celebrating by hearing the Word and raising our voices in song. We worshiped and praising our Lord, giving thanks to our God who is the vindicator of justice and whose steadfast love endures forever. And we sought forgiveness for the harm that we collectively have done as the church.

Our denomination formally apologized to victims and survivors of sexual misconduct, as triage teams were available to assist those triggered by this apology. Guest Speaker, Rev. Bailes Baker, winner of the Zigler Preacher Award, called upon the Methodist to “imagine... the church committed to believing the stories of survivors of sexual misconduct.” And to “Imagine ... the church, disciples of Jesus believing the stories of survivors of sexism, and heterosexism, ageism, and ableism...” In response to the apology, we heard from some of the sexual abuse survivors who share painful stories in response to the apology, stating that it is a beginning, but alone it is not enough.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, we have much work to do. Our Triune God is already at work among us, convicting leaders of the church to tell the truth about misconduct in our churches. We are being called to listen with love and believe those who share their stories with us, believing that it happened, and believing their pain. Wednesday through Saturday was a time for reconciliation in which we began a new chapter in trying to go forward as a united body, willing to accept our differences with love and respect, treating one another with dignity, acknowledging that each person in our denomination is called to serve the same God, who is the creator and maker of all things.

And though we may not agree on all matters, may we recognize that God has a perfect plan. Our Lord God never worries or stresses. And neither should we. All we have to do is look to Jesus for guidance and direction, as He has promised to show us the way. For Christ has told us that He is “the way and the truth and the life.” I And as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to seek justice.

At the conference, some progress was made but we still have a lot more work to do. The inequities faced by Black churches, previously identified at past conferences, were addressed this year by voting upon allocating funds from church closings toward a reparations fund. And the conference voted to return a parcel of land known as Covenant Hills, a camp located in Vermont, to the Abenaki peoples from whom it had been stolen. There were votes taken and passed on helping immigrant clergy navigate the immigration system with its many challenges, including financial aspects of the process. And votes taken to establish a support group for LGBTQI members of the church. Good stewardship of our environment and a desire for world peace were other topics of discussion that were voted upon. As well as the usual business of salaries, budgets, leadership roles and reports given by the different committees within the church.

We celebrated the lives well lived of those faithful servants who have gone home to be with our Lord, mourning our loss yet rejoicing in the promise of their eternal I John 14:6, NRSVUE life with Christ. And while we don't like to see any churches close, we celebrated the good works that had begun in these places of worship, acknowledging that "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot". Again, may we recognize that God has a perfect plan.

While I have given you a brief overview of some of the actions taken at our 2024 New England Conference, there is much more information that can be found on our Conference website at <https://www.neumc.org>.

Blessings,  
Pastor Sharon

## ***Church Picnic***

### ***ASUMC-NSUMC FAMILY FUN DAY: AUGUST 18, 2024***

*Note the date may change due to weather or other situations please check Facebook for updates.*

### ***There will be No Worship at Arlington Street UMC on August 18, 2024***

Outdoor Worship will be at 10:00 am at North Salem UMC (located at 389 North Main Street Salem, NH 03079) followed by a time of fellowship with a cookout, water balloon fights for the kids and kids at heart, and fun and games for everyone.

Please dress casually and bring a lawn chair.

If you are planning to attend please email Susan Gorman (Administrative Assistant) at [asumc.adm@gmail.com](mailto:asumc.adm@gmail.com) by August 15 or write the number on this flier and drop it in the collection plate, to let her know how many in your family will be attending.

---

## ***Finance Update***

**Maurice Cloutier, Finance Director**

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 possible currently. Even with the changes that I have stated, we find the church's projected income for 2024 has decreased by \$16,656 from the church's income in 2023. If you add back in the savings in the Pastor's salary for the next six months of \$5,500 you have a net delta of \$11,156.

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 Trustees have been considering some alternatives, which may be taken in the future, to ensure the viability of this church in the coming years. 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. 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. It's unfortunate that many of our members and friends have strayed away from the church and have chosen to do other things rather than to come and worship in the Lord's House. The Church in today's times has become foreign to most! I'm sure they have their reasons for not attending church and supporting their church and participating in the fellowship.

If any 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!

### ***Meet our new Administrative Assistant***

In April 2024 The Arlington Street United Methodist Church welcomed a new Administrative Assistant, Susan Gorman.

Susan recently relocated to New Hampshire from the Cleveland Ohio area. She, her husband Dan and two cats (Molly and Dolly), are living with their daughter and young family until their house is completed. Susan and her husband are remote members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Medina Ohio, where she currently serves on the Vestry.

Susan is semi-retired and was a former Vice President of Human Resources and Mission Services at Goodwill Industries. Her husband works for The Cleveland Clinic.



## ***NEAC Welcomes Bishop Bickerton***



*Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton*

As of Sept. 1, the New England Conference, which is now part of an Episcopal Area that includes the New York Conference, will be served by [Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton](#).

Delegates and other members from both conferences met with Bishop Bickerton following the announcement of the assignments on July 12.

Bishop Bickerton said he has two priorities:

- How may I serve you?
- What can I do to complement what you're doing so the body of Christ can be developed even further?

"We have work to do, and there's a lot of gas in this tank," he said. "I'm not shy about work. Both of us need to understand that it's going to be different. It's going to be an adjustment. We will find our way. ... Let's figure that out together."

---

## ***The Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter***

The Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter provides food and shelter to vulnerable individuals and families in the Greater Nashua Region in a dignified and sustainable manner. NSKS works to increase access to a full spectrum of basic needs through advocacy, targeted programs, and collaboration with other organizations. Some of the programs and services provided are breakfast and dinner throughout the week, pantry services, housing and shelter and client support services.

The Arlington Street United Methodist Church supports the Nashua Soup Kitchen and is asking for assistance with food and other items during the lean summer months.

The shelter is currently in need of the following items:

1. Canned protein --- tuna, chicken
2. Peanut Butter
3. Dried & canned beans, all types
4. Macaroni & Cheese

5. Cereal --- hot or cold
6. Pasta
7. Bug Spray
8. Sunscreen (the higher the SPF, the better)
9. Manual Can Openers
10. Deodorant

The best time for drop-off donations is Monday – Friday, 8AM – 4:00PM.  
The pantry is located at 2 Quincy St, Nashua, NH 03060

***New District Superintendent -***  
*Reverend, Dr. Jacquelyn Brannen*



Dear Friends in the Granite District,  
I have been reflecting on just how to begin my Superintendency with you when I came across this verse from Job. Job is not always my favorite book of the Bible, but this verse caught my attention in its simplicity and in its message. I am not sure how prosperous we will all be at the end of my interim service, but I am on board with starting with humility. I recognize the good ministry that Taesung and you have had together over the last seven years and pray that it can be a stepping stone for our ministry going forward.

We are in the midst of many changes as people of faith. The change in Granite Superintendent, a new Bishop coming in September and the ramifications that our UMC is experiencing due to the decisions made at our last General Conference, all conspire to make the next several months both exciting and challenging. Change brings out the adventurousness within us as we try new ways of doing ministry and it can also bring out tensions as we try to see life with a new perspective.

I have learned over my lifetime as school counselor, foster parent, and pastor, that humility is a good friend to have during seasons of great change. When we can respond with curiosity and creativity rather than judgment, we hopefully will find ourselves less stressed and more open to what God is birthing within and around us.

I humbly ask for your patience with me as I get up to speed in all that I will need to learn to serve you well as your superintendent. I will do my best to use my previous experience with an open heart to the new ways of serving in a new district. As a longtime resident of NH, (I grew up in Nashua, taught school in Pittsfield, Barnstead, Hampton, and Derry, and served churches in Richmond, Chesterfield and Portsmouth), I have a familiarity and love for this great state. I have traveled many of its roads and even worshiped in many of our UMC churches, but I will be looking to each of you to fill in the gaps of my knowledge and to learn more about how God is at work within our churches and communities.

I thank you in advance for your patience as we travel this new road together. I guess Micah might have said it best, if we do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God, we will all find ourselves on the road to joy and peace and maybe even prosperity! I am looking forward to the adventures that await!

Blessings,  
Jackie



### ***New Facebook Page***

Due to circumstances beyond our control, Arlington UMC had to create a new Facebook page. The link below should take you there. This will be used as another way for the church to market itself and provide valuable information to the congregation. If you copy and paste the link listed below, in the search bar of your computer, it should bring you directly to our page. Please like us! If you have any questions, please email me at [asumc.adm@gmail.com](mailto:asumc.adm@gmail.com).

<https://www.facebook.com/61561553380455>



## ***Your Donations Needed!***

### **Summer Mission Dr. Crisp Elementary School**

We will be collecting one-inch binders (any color) from June 16th, 2024, to August 11th, 2024. This will support 1 Kindergarten and 2 Third Grade Science Study classes. Contributions can be left in the Narthex during this time.

### **WEE READ United Way of Nashua**

United Way's FREE story time project for preschool-aged children is a volunteer-led initiative to bring the love of reading to areas where kids don't have access to books. The project is intended for children between the ages of 3 and 5.

If anyone wants to donate new or gently used books to give to parents, please bring them to church and place them in the designated box. Heather Davis is a reader for this program and can get them to The United Way for distribution.

**Thanks for your support!**



Arlington Street United Methodist Church

63 Arlington Street

Nashua, NH 03060

