

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

16 Great Rd., Sudbury, Ma 01776
978-443-8350 www.stjohnsudburyma.org

Pastor: The Rev'd Eric Wolf (pew@stjohnsudbury.org) cell: 803-760-0222
Director of Youth & Family Ministry: Michelle Rose (mrose@stjohnsudbury.org)
Office Director: Valerie Ripley (office@stjohnsudbury.org)
Director of Choirs: Benjamin Perry (choirdir@stjohnsudbury.org)
Organist: Bart Dahlstrom (organist@stjohnsudbury.org)
Sexton: George LaBarge

April 13, 2023

UPCOMING AT ST. JOHN

April 14	7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group
April 16	9:30 am -Worship No Sunday School No Confirmation
April 17	Office Closed – Patriot's Day 10:00 am – Seniorcise (self-led)
April 18	12:00 pm – Seniors on the Go Potluck
April 19	10:00 am - Seniorcise 7:30 pm - Council Meeting
April 20	10:30 am - Bible Study 5:45 pm - Bells 7:15 pm - Choir
April 21	7:30 pm -Knitting/Crafting Group
April 23	9:30 am –Worship 10:45 am – Sunday School 5:30 pm - Confirmation
April 24	10:00 am - Seniorcise
April 25	11:00 am - Seniors of the Go Book Group
April 26	10:00 am - Seniorcise
April 27	10:30 am - Bible Study 4:00 pm - Seniors of the Go Discussion on Race/Antiracism 5:45 pm - Bells 7:15 pm - Choir
April 28	7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting
April 30	9:30 am –Worship 10:45 am – Spring Creation Hike 5:30 pm - Youth Ministry Collaborative



Check us out!
[@stjohnsudbury](https://www.instagram.com/stjohnsudbury)



Visit our YouTube Channel
All of our worship videos
are available to watch at
our YouTube channel.

Find us at:
St John Lutheran Sudbury.



Login information
<https://zoom.us/j/9784438350>
Meeting ID: 978 443 8350
(or call in 1-312-626-6799)

APRIL 27th at 4:00 PM – ZOOM Meeting to Discuss Race, Racism, and Antiracism.

Our group meets the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 4:00 PM for informal, unstructured discussion about books, ideas, and experiences touching on race, racism, and antiracism.

Please join us!

Any questions, contact Jan Nielsen at jrnielsen@charter.net or 978-549-3044.

ST. JOHN SENIORS ON THE GO BOOK CLUB FOR APRIL 18th AND APRIL 25th

Please join us!!!

ZOOM book club meetings will be on Tuesdays, April 18th and April 25th, at 11:00am.

On April 18th we will discuss “Sarah’s Key” by Tatiana de Rosnay.

April 25th is a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read.

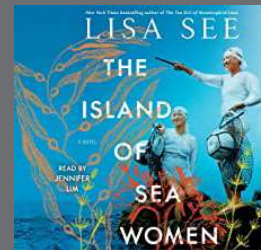
Any questions, contact Jan Nielsen at jrnielsen@charter.net or 978-549-3044.

Next books:

April 18 - “Sarah’s Key” by Tatiana de Rosnay

May 16 - “The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek” by Kim Michele Richardson

June 20 - “The Island of Sea Women” by Lisa See



WE PRAY FOR OUR COMMUNITY:

Brian Young
John Duane
Joan LeDuc
Judy
George Stanley
Pastor Ivan
Liz Packard
Ara Bramantis
Wanda Miller
Nancy Quinn
Tom Toepfner
Loretta West

Christopher Miller
Helen Williams
Marilyn Kunelius
Carolyn Sweeney
Gus Sullivan
Janet Erb
Martha
Amber
Caryl Lundie
Glen Jorda
Vince Golden
Bill Weiblen

Charles Miller
Janice Potter
Rhonda Tibbetts
Claudine Selzer
Barbara Locke
Bob
George Wolf
Katie
Lauri Pekkala
Brian Fuller
Pete Rhoads

Norma Duane
Jan Nielsen
Ann Kirk
Meg Davis
Mark Sarvela
Joan Western
Donna & Bob May
Gogi Woodward
Estela Gaudet
Joyce Fryklund
Taylor



AWKWARD

I'm always fascinated by awkward comments, partly due to my own frequent relationship to them. More, it's because they reveal something about a person's inner dialogue, anxiety or conflict, or misunderstanding of a situation's stakes or mood.

An example of this is that years ago, I was speaking to my wife's grandfather, who was looking for something sitting almost immediately in front of his face. I handed it to him and said jokingly, "Here it is, are you blind?", to which my mother-in-law replied flatly, "yes, as a matter of fact he is going blind". Stunned, I said, "well at least you can hear". Again, my mother-in-law said, "he isn't wearing his hearing aids this morning, he may not have heard you", and at this point he started laughing. Finally I said to him, "Jimmy, is there anything else going wrong with you that I can pick on today?". I was fortunate that this was humorous, but it's not always so simple.

In Sunday's Gospel reading from John, Thomas is absent when Jesus returns to see the other ten. They tell Thomas that Jesus had been there, and Thomas replied that unless he saw the marks of the nails and put his finger in Jesus' hand, and saw the spear wound and put his hand in Jesus' side, then he wouldn't believe them. For this, he's frequently known as *Doubting* Thomas. I still find it frustrating that this perfectly rational inclination to disbelieve that a dead person had come back to life and walked through the door to spend time with everyone when he conveniently wasn't there gives him such a nickname. This is a group of guys, and let's be honest, we're known for our weird and cruel jokes.

At the end of the story, Jesus says to Thomas, "do not be doubting, but believing" and goes on to say, 'blessed are those who have not seen yet have still come to believe'.

This does raise an interesting point for this age: there's much we take on faith about the world, existence, science, and even our own humanity, regardless of piety. We've all heard third hand about things as children that we believe farther into adulthood than we'd like to admit. A silly example my friends have been throwing around is, "well just look how long everyone believed Pluto was a planet!". There are more serious falsehoods we cling to for far too long, like the idea that it's time that heals wounds, rather than the restorative work done by our own efforts to mend the wounds of our hearts.

"Unless I put my finger in the holes" is a specifically gnarly request, but it's not a farfetched request given what's just happened. The request seems to linger in the air like day old fish when Jesus shows up and allows him precisely this. As frequently as Jesus admonishes Peter in the gospels, we don't hear him admonishing the others quite as frequently. Some of it may come down to some rivalry among the disciples, that since Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John weren't at the center of the narratives in the same way as Peter, it makes sense that they'd clearly remember the times Jesus got after Peter. It's a rather subtle way of putting Peter in his place, whether he ever saw these writings or not. Certainly, through the millennia, Peter's name has remained just as precarious as Thomas'. In one breath, Peter confesses faith in Jesus and his virtue is extolled. In the next, Jesus is saying, "get behind me, Satan!".

Awkward.

What I find hopeful is that Jesus didn't send Peter off packing. He didn't throw Thomas out of the disciples. He didn't expel disciples for arguing about who the greatest was among them. Jesus corrected their course and moved on to the next thing.

That's the thing about these awkward moments: though many of us have a tendency to hold onto the embarrassment, most of the people around us barely acknowledge it as a blip. Holding our anxiety and embarrassment doesn't really do anything for us other than to spend energy on things long forgotten by those around us. Forgiveness gives a wonderful gift: the ability to let go.

Coming to Believe Thomas did changed his mind when he saw what he hoped to see: that Jesus hadn't left him out. "I want to see it for myself, but will he show me, too?" is the question I imagine behind his statements. The good news for us is that God never disappoints, even if sometimes we feel like we're left waiting.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Eric



PLEASE JOIN US

APRIL 18TH AT NOON
ST. JOHN HERITAGE HALL

Please join us for our first Pot Luck Seniors on the Go event. We will gather together to share our favorite dishes and enjoy time for fellowship after our meal.

Please contact Royce Fuller or the church office to let us know you are coming and to sign up for a dish to bring. We are also looking for volunteers to help with setup and cleanup.

ACTON FOOD PANTRY DONATION BY LARRY KIVIMAKI

Janet and Walter Sarvela leveraged the community outreach funds of Thrivent to kickoff this project, solely defined and implemented by them. St. John added to the donations with yet more food.

The Acton Pantry has received food donations from St. John for many decades. It serves about 275 families each week from over 50 area communities and coordinates with yet more area pantries to ensure the larger area needs are met.

We thank the Sarvelas, Thrivent, and the people of St. John for their generosity on this food drive in ensuring that hunger is stopped in its tracks. Next month and each month thereafter we will replenish the food supply again!



CURRENT AND CRITICAL NEEDS AT THE ACTON FOOD PANTRY:

Baking mixes (brownie, cake, cookie), Canned chicken, Canned fruit, Canned soups, Dish soap, Dried beans (kidney, pinto, etc), Gluten free bread, Individually packaged nut-free kids' snacks, Jarred pasta sauce, Jelly, Laundry soap, Nuts (pecans, pistachios, walnuts, almonds), Oatmeal-flavored packets, Protein bars (such as Kind, Luna, Clif, Rx), Sugar



You are invited to participate in St John's first
KIDS HELP THE WORLD FAIR

Saturday, June 24th 1-4 PM
In our St John Parking Lot

Our goal is to provide families in our community with the opportunity for their kids to help with different service organizations at the fair on June 24th.

Note: There is no cost to families to attend the fair although we will have a bounce house to raise food donations/money for our local food pantries.

How can I help?

If you work with a service organization, you could help sponsor a table (no charge) at our fair and help brainstorm and run an activity that kids ages 3-14 could do to help the organization.

For example, maybe the Outdoor Church has kids write a note to add to our lunch bags that we distribute to Cambridge's street-dependent population on the 4th Sunday of each month.

Or maybe a family has a special cause they like to support like the National Kidney Foundation. Perhaps they could set up a soccer goal and have kids kick a ball to score a goal and donate \$.25 per goal.

In addition to the project, organizations are welcome to have brochures or trinkets to distribute to families and to have a Sign Up List for recruiting new volunteers.

I'd love to help but I don't work with any service organizations. Can I still help?

Of course! We would be thrilled to have you! Just let Michelle Rose know of your interest, and she will give you an activity to help with.

How can I find out more?

Contact Michelle Rose at mrose@stjohnsudbury.org or 508-320-7245.

Mother's Day Bags for The Wish Project

Our Sunday School classes will be decorating and filling Mother's Day bags for donation to The Wish Project in North Chelmsford. The Wish Project works with social service agencies throughout the Merrimack Valley and beyond to fulfill a variety of client needs. We are hoping to donate 15 full bags. Can you please help us by donating any of the following items?

- Bath salts/bath bombs
- Body lotion
- Body wash
- Pair of white socks or slipper socks
- Hairbrush
- Comb
- Deodorant
- Small notebook or journal
- Pens/pencils
- Adult coloring books
- Colored pencils
- Women's razors
- Women's shaving cream
- Lip balm/Chapstick
- \$5 Dunkin' Gift cards
- Nail polish
- Nail polish remover
- Headbands

Please bring the items to church by Sunday, April 16th. We will be decorating and filling the bags during Sunday School the following Sunday.

If you would prefer to make a monetary donation, we welcome those as well! Please make checks payable to St John and note Mother's Day bags in the memo section. Also please label any cash donations for Mother's Day bags.

If you have any questions, please call Michelle Rose at church or email her at mrose@stjohnsudbury.org.

Thank you for your help in making a special day for women across the Merrimack Valley!



Moments of Joy from Easter

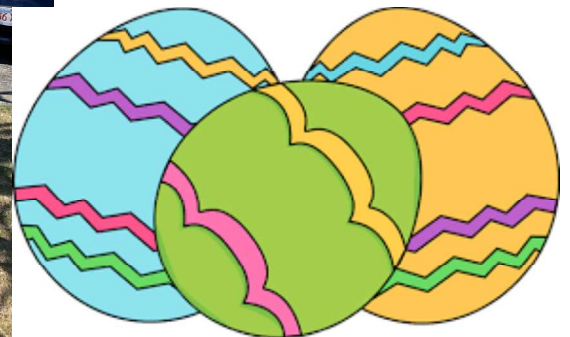
2023

The Alleluias are back!

The Easter Bunny left us a lot of eggs!

And we got a picture by our climbing tree!

We are growing in God's love!



SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

Just as we have done through our readings in worship, our lessons in Sunday School have been

leading us to Easter. On March 26th, our classes experienced the story of Lazarus. This included not just reading the story, but also wrapping up a friend as Lazarus might have been prepared when his sisters thought he was dead.



We also discussed Holy Week: thinking about Jesus and his disciples and how they might have been feeling at the Last Supper, during the events of Good Friday, and then

on Easter. So many emotions! Love, appreciation, sadness, fear, worry, and then finally, joy!

One of our students recently shared that her favorite parts of Sunday School are making new friends, coloring, and reading the Bible stories! We are making impressions and memories in our St John Sunday School community!



SPRING CREATION HIKE! Let's Enjoy God's World Together

Plan to join the group for our Spring Creation Hike on April 30th following worship and coffee hour.

We will drive to the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (down the road from Lincoln-Sudbury High School) and park in the lot at 59-67 Weir Hill Road. This was the site of our Winter Creation Hike, and we are excited to observe the differences in sights, smells, and sounds between winter and spring! God's world offers such a variety of experiences!

We hope you can join us for a beautiful afternoon in the woods with our St John Family!

If you would like to join us, please contact Michelle Rose at mrose@stjohnsudbury.org or 978-443-8350 so we can make sure you know the details.



CONFIRMATION CONNECTION



We ended the month of March with the Youth Ministry Collaborative (YMC) celebrating National Make-Your-Own-Holiday Day here at St John. Middle and high school students from four area churches

gathered together to dream up their own holidays. Youth divided into three groups and used a box full of “inspiration” to create a unique day. They had to determine what the holiday was, activities to celebrate the holiday, when to celebrate it, and more. Potential calendar additions were Superman Bull-Fighting Day, Dinosaurs vs Ducks Day, and Obey the 8 Ball Day. The winner and the made-up holiday we will celebrate to kick off our 2023-2024 YMC program year is....drum roll please.....Obey the 8 Ball Day!



On April 2nd our confirmation class focused on Lent and our relationship with God. We began class considering various scenarios in our lives and what emotions we might feel in those moments. Later in the class, we reviewed these scenarios and our emotions as we compared them to Jesus’ and the disciples’ emotions at various points during Holy Week.

We also discussed Lent: why the season of Lent exists and how we might observe Lent. We considered that some folks give something up for Lent and others add a faith practice to their daily or weekly routines to observe Lent.



One faith practice in giving that St John youth have been doing for over 20 years is assembling Easter baskets for children living at Florence House, an Ascendria-run home for teenaged mothers and their children in Worcester. And this year we were thrilled to keep the tradition going! We filled pails for 11 kids with a couple outfits, washcloths, age-appropriate toys, a cup or bottle, a book, and a snugly stuffed animal.

Thanks to those congregation members who donated to the Negro Spirituals Royalties project in March! Your contributions were added to the church's budget item for this program, and we mailed a check for \$1222 to the Fisk Jubilee Singers this past week. A letter (reproduced below) introduced St. John to the Jubilee Singers and explained the reason for the donation. We'll be focusing on our use of African-American spirituals two more times this year, sending donations to two more organizations that educate young Black musicians. Look for an announcement in an upcoming newsletter and in the bulletin. - Jeff Fuhrer

St. John Lutheran Church
16 Great Road
Sudbury, MA 01776

April 11, 2023

Dr. Anthony Williams

Interim Director, Fisk Jubilee Singers
Fisk University
1000 17th Avenue North
Nashville, Tennessee 37208

Dear Dr. Williams,

Enclosed please find a check for \$1222 from St. John Lutheran Church in Sudbury, Massachusetts.

This donation reflects the proceeds from a new program at St. John that attempts to belatedly compensate composers and lyricists of traditional African-American spirituals. Our church has been inspired by this music for many decades, but unlike other music that we routinely use, no royalties have ever been paid, due to the difficulty in identifying the original composers or their families.

As a way of repaying what we owe, we have identified a handful of organizations that train Black musicians, especially those that focus on church music. Your organization's long history of preserving, performing, and lifting up traditional African-American music inspires us, and for that reason we are delighted to offer this small offering to support your work. We hope to continue this program over time, sending donations annually to organizations like yours.

We would love to know when you plan to visit the Boston area so that we might connect in person. We look forward to building a relationship with Fisk, however long-distance that may be.

With gratitude,



Jeff Fuhrer
On behalf of St. John Lutheran Church, Social and Racial Justice Ministry
Sudbury, Massachusetts
jfuhrer@verizon.net
978-837-7981