

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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Organist: Bart Dahlstrom ([organist@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:organist@stjohnsudbury.org))

August 5, 2021

## UPCOMING SCHEDULE

August 8th -9:30 am - Worship at **St. John**  
August 9th -9:30 am - Seniorcise  
August 10th -11:00 am - Seniors of the Go BookGroup  
August 11th -9:30 am - Seniorcise  
-8:00 pm - New(ish)Parents Group  
August 12th -11:00 am - Discussion Group Race/  
Anti-Racism  
August 13th -7:30 pm - Knitting/Craft Group  
August 15th -9:30 am - Worship at **St. John**  
August 16th -9:30 am - Seniorcise  
August 17th -7:00 pm - Social Justice Ministry  
August 18th -9:30 am - Seniorcise  
-6:00 pm - Outreach  
-7:30 pm - Council  
August 20th -7:30 pm - Knitting  
August 22nd -9:30 pm - Worship at **St. John**



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



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.

## NEW OFFICE HOURS BEGINNING AUGUST 1, 2021

The church office will be open from  
9:00 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Thursday  
and will be closed on Fridays.

St. John Lutheran Church  
16 Great Rd.  
Sudbury, Ma 01776  
978-443-8350  
[www.stjohnsudburyma.org](http://www.stjohnsudburyma.org)

## SPECIAL BIRTHDAY FOR CHUCK ZIMMER

On August 1st we helped Chuck Zimmer celebrate a special birthday which was in July. A long time member of St. John, he has joined a special group of seniors with his 85th birthday. Congratulations to Chuck.



## ST. JOHN SENIORS ON THE GO BOOK CLUB FOR AUGUST 10th AND 17th

Please join us!!!

ZOOM book club meetings will be on Tuesday, August 10th and Tuesday, August 17th at 11:00 AM. August 10th is for a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read. August 17th, we will discuss "Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind" by Ann B. Ross.

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

Next books:

September 21, 2021, "The Forgotten Garden" by Kate Morton

October 19, 2021, "The Last Train to Key West" by Chanel Cleeton

## AUGUST 12TH AT 11:00 AM – ZOOM MEETING TO DISCUSS RACE, RACISM, AND ANTIRACISM.

Our group meets the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 11:00 AM 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.

## PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS:

Liz Radoski  
Brian Young  
Norma Duane  
Angelika Zollfrank  
Rhonda Tibbetts  
Ruth Avery  
Janice Potter  
Marilyn Hartke

Debbie Reed  
Christopher Miller  
John Duane  
Jim Hansgate  
Alexis Marsh  
Pat Quinn  
Wendy

Walter Sarvela  
Charles Miller  
Helen Williams  
Liz Tolbert  
Trish Sarvela  
Bill Davis  
Carol VanCleave



**New Prayer List Procedure** - We will be changing the way that we do the prayer list. Names will automatically remain on the prayer list for 3 months and then will need to be renewed. You may request removal or addition of a name at any time. Please review all the people on the prayer list and update Valerie as to how they are doing. This will help ensure that the list remains current. Thank you for your help.

## TROUBLE WON'T GO

One of the most frustrating things in life is the sense that there's something going wrong and you either can't fix it or can't put your finger on what it really is that's happening.

Too often we spend a lot of time worrying about all the potential threats, and it causes us to miss what's right in front of our own eyes. "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they aren't after you" is an adage attributed to Henry Kissinger and other famous folks, but the meaning rings true: the existential angst of our own lives that causes us to be afraid doesn't actually protect us from the threats that might really be out there waiting.

Threat minimization is such a seductive way of thinking because we spend our entire childhoods hearing adults yelling, "Don't do that! You'll poke your eye out!". I remember wanting to ask mom, "Yeah? If everything's so dangerous, why don't I see more adults with eye patches?!". That I'm currently writing this is evidence enough that I never said it.

The trouble is that generic threats are easy to imagine but real threats are hard to spot.

I think this is true because we just have a sense that we understand our lives and surroundings a lot more than we really do. We hear over and over and over about seniors who lose their savings and income to fraud. All of these scams use real fears, human greed, or pressure tactics to operate. "If you don't protect yourself from this, someone will get you!". When we hear the scams that work on others, we can Monday Morning Quarterback our way into thinking that we're too smart, too savvy, too streetwise to fall for such things. The truth is that we recognize them as frauds right away because we're told up front that it's a story of someone falling for a scam.

I mentioned fear, greed, and pressure as the operating influences, but the truth is that the most effective scams involve one key thing: a sense of relationship. "I don't want you to get hurt by your inaction!". "I'm looking out for your best interests". "You don't want to leave your home vulnerable to intruders, do you? After all, you live alone!".

"Hi there, I'm Tom Selleck and I'm selling reverse mortgages. This 'stache don't sell trash!".

I'm sure he's said that. If he hasn't, he should.

Relationship is such a powerful tool because we're geared to fear the unknown and trust the known. When someone accesses our fears, it activates the part of our brains that process fight or flight, and this reduces the cognitive ability to think clearly. I believe sincerely that this is why the deeply harmful theologies of evangelical Christianity rely so heavily on fear. From Billy Graham's, "If you were to die tonight do you know where you'd go?", to the Sinner's prayer that brings you to God's love through threat of hell on fiery pamphlets left in bathroom stalls, to the insistences on multiple baptisms to make certain you're washed from Sin "just in case".

Growing up, I had a friend who went to a Southern Baptist congregation who told me that he'd gotten baptized. I remember being a little confused because I thought he was a little old for that (I'd never seen an adult baptized at this point), and he was confused because he thought my baptism as a young toddler was a little young for it. He started asking me whether I was "saved", a term that confused me because I never really thought I was in any trouble for anything other than my grades. Then, when I began to understand what he meant he kept pushing and pushing until I finally said the 10-year-old equivalent of, "I don't understand why you're telling me that I'm in danger from God! God loves me. I love God. Why would God want to punish me?".

Even so, the fear stuck.

continued

It's not a specific fear, but an amorphous tickle at the back of my brain, wondering whether I'm really somehow not "saved", or whether God's love could be so cold as to torment creation for the sin of being part of a different religion. It still confounds me, and it still tickles at that reptile brain.

We have trouble recognizing the dangers in front of us, partly because it requires us to believe that someone we know would hurt us, but more because it makes us feel so vulnerable. We can't avoid all dangers, we can't process what we don't understand, so we worry about the vague rather than looking at what's real.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God teaches us an important lesson about how our Creator views creation, we're important enough to die for. I cannot believe this is an act of anger at our Sin, or to satisfy some strange "law" that demands innocent blood be spilled to redeem us. I just can't bring myself to trust that God is this cold and petty. Instead of a message of fear, what we get in Jesus is a message of hope: you're worth the suffering. You're worth the pain. This creation is worth being part of it. "My people are worth my suffering alongside them" is the message of the cross and empty tomb, because love cannot exist without the truth of vulnerability.

We live in this strange truth knowing that trouble won't go because we can't recognize it when it comes. Through God's own vulnerability in love, however, we can begin by recognizing our help when it arrives.

Grace & Peace,  
PEW

## THE 2022 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING WILL BE IN MINNEAPOLIS FROM JULY 24-28, 2022!



This is an inspiring opportunity for youth (Grades 8-12 as of Fall 2021) to gather with other Lutheran teens from across the country to worship together, share experiences and ideas, and serve through citywide service projects.

Registration begins soon. For more information, please contact Michelle Rose at [mrose@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:mrose@stjohnsudbury.org) or 508-320-7245.



### YOU CAN HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE!

Are you inspired to share your favorite Bible stories and lessons?  
Do you enjoy working with young people?  
Do you enjoy developing relationships with others?

If you answered, YES! YES! And YES!, please join the St John Teaching Team! We have openings for teachers at the Preschool, Early Elementary, Late Elementary, Confirmation, and High School levels. You just need enthusiasm, patience, and faith. We will meet with Pastor Eric monthly to review upcoming lessons, and projects and game ideas will be provided.



If you are interested, please contact Michelle Rose at 508-320-7245 or [mrose@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:mrose@stjohnsudbury.org).