

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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February 5, 2021

**THIS SUNDAY AT 9:30 AM!**  
**The Annual Winter Congregational Meeting**  
**will be held via Zoom.**

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

## PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS:

Rachel Florey	Brian	Bill Moldwin
Joe Jackson	Regina Mueller	Johnny
Richard	David Donnelly	Christopher Miller
Brian Young	Trish Sarvela Leiva	Alexis Marsh
Robin Hartford	Brennan McGinnis	Paul Simeone
Pat Quinn	Patricia Jolou	John Duane
Rhonda Tibbetts	Ruth Avery	Jim Hansgate
Charlotte McNeil	Janice Potter	Ron Rakowsky
Isla Rose Kelley	Norma Duane	Pam McKay
June Carins	Dave Weber	Peter Kindem
Steven Greene	Liz Tolbert	Nancy Buse
Erica Kivimaki	Joan Western	



## COFFEE AND CONVERSATION VIA ZOOM

10:00 AM  
SUNDAYS



## KNITTING/SEWING GROUP VIA ZOOM

7:30 PM  
EVERY FRIDAY!



Visit our YouTube Channel  
All of our worship videos  
are available to watch at  
our YouTube channel.  
Find us at:  
St John Lutheran Sudbury.



Check us out!  
@stjohnsudbury

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## A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR WOLF

It was September of 2001, and one of the most life changing moments of my life was in progress: Liberation Theology with Rev. Dr. Alonzo Johnson.

I know, when you hear September 2001, this likely isn't what sprung to mind because those of us who remember it cannot forget the events of the September 11, and to my dying day I'll remember standing in a room full of nearly 200 silent college students until we all collectively gasped as the second plane struck the second tower and I realized that the first was no accident.

My initial response was, "Wherever these people came from, we need to make a new lake in order to demonstrate that they can't do this to us and get away with it!". Over the next few days, I began to consider my theological position compared to my emotional response and heard the voice of Scripture speaking to my heart.

Live by the sword, die by the sword. (Matthew 26:52)

Come, behold the works of the Lord! See what desolations he has brought on the earth: The Lord makes wars cease to the end of the earth, breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; burns the shields with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God!" (Psalm 46:8-10a)

The Lord shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. (Micah 4:3-4)

These verses paraphrased with adjusted punctuation here, among others, rang through my heart and mind, and the most convicting of them all was Matthew 5:43-46:

[Jesus continued,] "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy'. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?"

In my heart I prayed, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you? But Jesus, what about making a lake to get back at those evil plane people?"

Jesus replied in my heart, "Did I stutter?"

When I walked into Liberation Theology while wrestling my heart over the desire for revenge and the desire to follow Jesus as faithfully as possible, the reading for the day was the story of the assassination and martyrdom of Rev. Óscar de Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador. After completing his sermon and moving behind the altar to celebrate the Eucharist, a red car pulled up outside and a still unidentified assassin fired a bullet through his heart. His murder remains shrouded in mystery, but there were people from both warring sides and the superpowers bankrolling them who had reason to want him dead for his defiant message of love in the face of violence, welcoming both government troops and guerillas alike into worship.

Dr. Johnson asked, “Well, we just had our own violent attack here in this nation and I know a lot of you are feeling things about it. In the theology of liberation, we believe God is on the side of the poor and the powerless, and that justice will not go undone. What do you think God would have us do?”.

I knew this one, I’d been mulling it over for weeks now and said, “I think Jesus would tell us to act with mercy. What would happen if we responded with kindness?”.

Dr. Johnson looked at me and rolled his eyes as he replied, “Do you think God would really desire for this violent action to go unanswered? How is not responding going to accomplish God’s justice and allow for the reckoning we believe will come?”, and the rest of the conversation was about how to prosecute a just war. I really had no response, so I filed that away but continued to chew on it.

It’s been 20 years now and I’ve yet to find a “just” war. Thanks to the two decades of studying and writing volumes as I processed this theology, I can give an answer that I believe takes seriously Jesus’ question, “Did I stutter?”.

A response of kindness isn’t doing nothing. Responding with kindness is not only doing something, but it’s the only way to preserve the dignity, lives, and livelihoods of the poor, the widowed, of children and other vulnerable people. It’s the only way to protect soldiers from the horrors and indignities of war, and generals from the crisis of conscience in prosecuting it. Responding to atrocity with kindness, choosing human aid and relief, opting to demonstrate that our heart is steeped in love for those around us — that’s doing something — but that something doesn’t live into the values of our nation’s penchant for the myth of “redemptive violence” in which killing the right people is what the hero must do in order to be heroic.

Responding to hate with love is to embrace the heart of the Gospel. I still wonder what might have happened if our response to 9/11 was the most robust humanitarian action ever taken, with acts of love and partnership, armies of reconciliation descending upon the populace of the places where we’d sowed so much venom in the blood we’ve shed for oil. I wonder, and every time I say it people respond, “That doesn’t work!”.

And I hear their voice and wonder how we know since it’s never been tried?

Did Jesus stutter?

What might this world look like if we really took him seriously?

Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Eric

## **HISTORY OF THE CHINESE IN THE US**

If you missed Mildred Cheung’s presentation about the History of the Chinese in the US you may catch it on YouTube. Use this link to watch [https://youtu.be/h9OZ\\_RH6Mu4](https://youtu.be/h9OZ_RH6Mu4)

## ST. JOHN SENIORS ON THE GO BOOK CLUB FOR FEB 9th and FEB. 16th

Please join us!!!

We will have a ZOOM book club meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 9 at 11:00 AM for just a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read.

On February 16th, we will discuss "When We Left Cuba" by Chanel Cleeton.

If you do not receive a ZOOM invitation email prior to the meeting time, please contact Jan Nielsen at jrnielsen@charter.net or 978-549-3044. And, if you need help connecting to the ZOOM meeting, let Jan know; she will help you.

Next books:

February 16, 2021, "When We Left Cuba" by Chanel Cleeton

March 16, 2021, "Masked Prey" by John Sandford

April 20, 2021, "Girl in Translation" by Jean Kwok



SAVE THE DATE

*All Meeting are held via ZOOM  
Call church office if you are having trouble connecting.  
(Zoom meeting information below and is the same for MOST church meetings)*

February 5th - 7:30 pm - Knitting Group

February 7th - 9:30 am - Annual Congregational Meeting

-11:00 am - Pre-K-Gr 3 Sunday School

-11:45 am - Grade 4/5 Sunday School

- 2:00 pm - Bible Study (Previous Thursday am Group)

- 4:00 pm - Confirmation (Special Time!)

February 8th - 10:00 am - Seniorcise

February 8th - 7:00 pm - Stewardship Team Meeting

February 9th - 11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Book Group

February 9th - 6:00 pm - Outreach Team Meeting

February 10th - 10:00 am - Seniorcise

February 11th - 11:00 am - Discussion on Race, Racism and Anti-Racism

February 12th - 7:30 pm - Knitting Group

February 14 - 10:00 am - Coffee and Conversation

-11:00 am - Pre-K-Gr 3 Sunday School

-11:45 am - Grade 4/5 Sunday School

- 2:00 pm - Bible Study (Previous Thursday am Group)

- 6:00 pm - Confirmation

### ZOOM Meeting Login information

<https://zoom.us/j/9784438350>

Meeting ID: 978 443 8350

(or call in 1-312-626-6799)

## FEBRUARY 11TH AT 11:00 AM -

## ZOOM MEETING TO DISCUSS RACE, RACISM, AND ANTIRACISM.

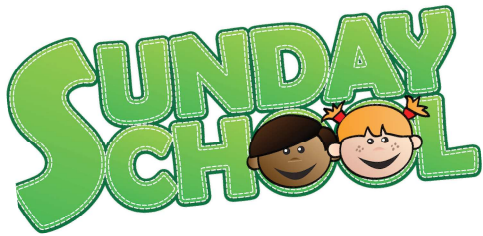
Our group meets the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 11:00 AM for informal, unstructured discussion about books, ideas, and experiences touching on race, racism, and antiracism.

Please join us.

If you do not receive a ZOOM invitation email prior to the meeting time, please contact Jan Nielsen at jrnielsen@charter.net or 978-549-3044. And, if you need help connecting to the ZOOM meeting, let Jan know; she will help you.

Jan Nielsen

978-549-3044



**2/7/21** - Parable - Sowing Seeds  
11 AM Family Sunday School =  
All grades (after the  
Congregational Meeting)

4 PM Confirmation -  
New Unit -  
Lutheran Living

(Confirmation is moved to 4-5  
pm to avoid conflicting with  
Super Bowl activities)

**2/14/21** - No Classes.  
Enjoy the long President's Day  
weekend.

Stayed tuned for lessons be-  
yond 2/14

## LATEST NEWS FROM OUR ZOOM CLASSROOM

On January 31st, classes started talking about the parables that Jesus told. And we discussed the parable of the Lost Sheep. We made adorable sheep out of doilies to remind us that each of us is a child of God. The week before we learned about Jesus calling the disciples to be fishers of men. We talked about each of us being "fish" who have learned about God and God's love. We also started a special project in preparation for our discussion of the Sowing Seeds parable this Sunday. Stay tuned for more on that!



## CONFIRMATION

Confirmation families and teachers gathered on Zoom this past Sunday to get to know Pastor Eric and to talk about Confirmation going forward. The Confirmation students have been working with Pastor Eric since he joined our congregation, but we thought it was important to expand the Confirmation relationships with Pastor to include the families. To that end, we have decided that the first Sunday of each month will be Family Sunday for Confirmation, so discussions will include confirmation parents as well as the students.

## SUPER BOWL SQUARES FOR THE SOUPER BOWL OF CARING



Thank you to everyone who has participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring! As of Thursday morning, we have sold 87 squares, so we are hoping that we hit the goal of selling all 100 squares and raising \$1000 for our local food pantries. Thank you to the families who will be preparing soup dinners and desserts for our 4 lucky winners!

