

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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

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

February 23, 2023

## UPCOMING AT ST. JOHN

February 24	7:30 pm -Knitting/Crafting Group
February 26	9:30 am -Worship 10:45 am - Sunday School 5:30 pm - Youth Ministry Collective
February 27	10:00 am -Seniorcise
February 28	7:30 am - Lenten Morning Prayers (Zoom) 11:00 am-Seniors on the Go Book Group
March 1	10:00 am-Seniorcise
March 2	10:30 am - Bible Study 6:45 pm - Lenten Evening Prayers (in-person)
March 3	7:30 pm -Knitting/Crafting Group
March 5	9:30 am -Worship 10:45 am- Sunday School 5:30 pm - Confirmation
March 6	10:00 am - Seniorcise
March 7	7:30 am - Lenten Morning Prayers (Zoom) 10:30 am - Seniors on the Go Lunch 1:00 pm - Youth Ministry Collaborative-zoom
March 8	10:00 am - Seniorcise
March 9	10:30 am - Bible Study 6:45 pm - Lenten Evening Prayers (in-person)
March 10	7:30 pm -Knitting/Crafting Group
March 12	9:30 am -Worship 10:45 am- Sunday School NO - Confirmation



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)

**MARCH 9TH 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.

Awareness  
Knowledge  
Action

**ST. JOHN SENIORS ON THE GO BOOK CLUB  
FOR FEBRUARY 28th AND MARCH 7th**

Please join us!!!

ZOOM book club meetings will be on Tuesdays, February 28th and March 7th, at 11:00am.

On February 28th we will discuss “The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon” by Bill McKibben.

March 7th is a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read.

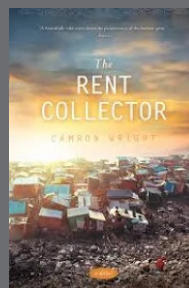
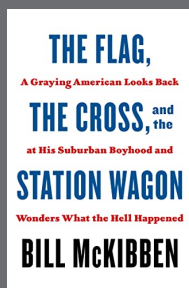
Any questions, contact Jan Nielsen at jrnielsen@charter.net or 978-549-3044.

Next books:

February 28 - “The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon”  
by Bill McKibben

March 21 - “The Rent Collector” by Camron Wright

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



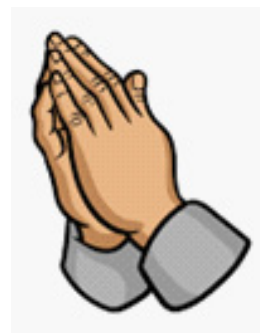
**WE PRAY FOR OUR COMMUNITY:**

Brian Young  
John Duane  
Joan LeDuc  
Judy  
George Stanley  
Pastor Ivan  
Liz Packard  
Donna & Bob May  
Gogi Woodward  
Estela Gaudet  
Joyce Fryklund

Christopher Miller  
Helen Williams  
Marilyn Kunelius  
Carolyn Sweeney  
Gus Sullivan  
Janet Erb  
Martha  
Ara Bramantis  
Wanda Miller  
Nancy Quinn  
Tom Toepfner

Charles Miller  
Janice Potter  
Rhonda Tibbetts  
Claudine Selzer  
Barbara Locke  
Bob  
George Wolf  
Amber  
Caryl Lundie  
Glen Jorda  
The Nilsson Family (bereavement)

Norma Duane  
Jan Nielsen  
Ann Kirk  
Meg Davis  
Mark Sarvela  
Joan Western  
Royce Fuller  
Katie  
Lauri Pekkala  
Brian Fuller



## ASH THURSDAY

Ash Wednesday is my favorite service of the entire liturgical calendar. I like it because it's honest in a way most of us try to avoid the rest of the year, and if we can't, it's because we live with those ashes falling on our nose every day due to some dis-ease or grief that brings it to the fore.

The image of ashes falling on our noses is one that's become a central piece of it for me, oddly enough. It's because I grew up in a congregation that imposed ashes like Jesus taught us: dry. Okay, that may have been Peter. More seriously, there's something in the dryness that matches the sobriety of the moment. The oily ashes that stay put just aren't messy enough to encompass the gritty reality. The mild abrasive feeling between finger and forehead calls me to a space of reverence, its authenticity leaves me with a few tears by the end. Children always receive it with a look of curiosity more than anything else, while adults seem to range from resignation, to acceptance, to anxiety, to any number of emotions upon hearing the words and feeling the imposition of ashes and pronouncement.

*Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

Remember where you came from, my friend; and remember where you're going.

Ash Thursday is always a day that leaves me reflective in a way that Wednesday doesn't. On Wednesday I ponder my own humanity, my mortality, my responsibilities for services, my own self-awareness and self-consciousness about all that the day implies. But Thursday is a day that always leads me to my vocation. I've pondered the grave. Now what do I do when the stone is rolled away from my heart and I can now live again?

At its core, I think this ironic focus is one of the chief reasons we celebrate Lent. Yes, our journey to the cross with Christ gets all the press because of its stark reality. Its cruelty reveals something of our human nature that frightens and thrills us. The bleakness of God suffering is such a powerful image because at some moment in all of our lives, there's been something akin to a wish that God would suffer as we do in the vain hope that this would cause God to somehow remake the world into something in which suffering doesn't exist for us.

God suffering with us and for us — God's suffering on display before us feels almost just to some I've talked to in their own grief, pain, and doubt. "If God can make it this way, he damn sure should live with it" were words that came from the mouth of a husband grieving his wife's death early on in my first job with hospice. These words stuck with me, because they revealed something deep in human nature about how fairness and justice should coexist.

The catch is that Lent really isn't about the cross any more than existence is about death.

We survey the wondrous cross upon which the King of Glory died, counting our greatest gains as loss — not because we lost the King of Glory that day, but because the end of the crucifixion narrative is a rolled stone, an empty tomb, a confused disciple as Mary saw it, confused disciples in hiding when she told the men what she saw, and faithful folks in the painful space between grief at Jesus' sensible death and inconceivable resurrection.

Easter Sunday was a day of wondrous confusion. Easter Monday was a day of everyone saying, "Well now what?"

This is Ash Thursday.

We heard that we are dust, and to dust we shall return — and now what? What do we do with our newfound remembrance? What do we do with the existential wrestling into which we're invited? How do we step forward into this reconceived liminal space of our existence between our times of being dust?

Ash Thursday means wrestling with the idea that life may be brief, but its brevity has purpose. "Here am I, Lord" are the words that Samuel spoke to Eli three times, until Eli realized that it was God calling and gave Samuel a response when the Lord spoke again. "Speak, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3). What are we called to *do* with this time? We listen. We wait. We hope. We attend to what God puts into our hearts with minds whose posture follows the example of young Samuel — hearts and minds that are open to the new thing that God is about to proclaim that will make the hearts of God's people tingle.

The question of Ash Thursday is upon us: We're given this time, now what?

This isn't as personal a question as it may seem. Our faith is lived fully in the context of community. St. John is given this time, now what?

Who are *we* called to be? What are *we* called to value? What are *we* called to incarnate for the world around us? What are *we* called to become for the sake of the neighbors who God so loves? What are we called to do and hear and be that will make *our* hearts tingle when we as a congregation hear them?

The time is short, and yes we feel its urgency, yet God calls us to follow.

This might be the hardest thing, that though the shortness of time makes our hearts feel hurry, God seems to be plodding along. The act of discerning our vocation as a congregation is dwelling in the now but not yet, the ready but still. We're called to live as Samuel: open enough to listen, and prepared to act when the time comes.

My prayer for us is that we will take time to listen faithfully, and in so doing, remain prepared to speak when and what the Lord instructs.

Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Eric

## MORNING PRAYER TUESDAYS AT 7:30AM DURING LENT

Pastor Eric invites you to invite him on the St. John zoom Tuesdays at 7:30 during Lent for a morning prayer. This will include a short passage of scripture, some discussion, and an opportunity to pray with and for each other and whatever's on our hearts. The plan is that it will last 30-45 minutes, depending on how deeply we engage.

Hope to see you there!

# IT'S

# SURPRISING.....



Can you match the personal fact below to the person who owns it? Try and see if you can figure this puzzle out. We will print the answers in our next newsletter.

- Janet Holmgren
- Pete Rhoads
- Carol Leighton
- Jen Leighton
- Michal Mueller
- Had cookies and milk with Jimmy Carter.
- To celebrate their 16th birthday, rode halfway across the country on a motorcycle with their dad to visit the Harley Davidson Motorcycle Factory
- Served as a naval officer on the USS Saratoga during the Cuban Missile Blockade.
- Rode an elephant for an entire day to find a remote waterfall
- With her sister, married two brothers.

How did you do with our Meet Cute Valentines Day edition? Are you surprised?

Laura & Jarrod Kennedy met hiking the Appalachian Trail.

Valerie & Mike Ripley met at band practice when he kept poking her in the back with his trumpet.

Brittany Mihelich & Joe Maranville met at church camp in high school.

Michelle & Tom Rose met over chocolate chip cookies.

Liz & Duane Packard met when she served him a hamburger at the Lutheran Campus BBQ.

Dorene & Steve Glynn met on a blind date to a restaurant that had closed (for good – not just for the night).



## Jesus Blesses the Children

And on March 19th, we will bring **all ages** of God's children together for our next

# BRIDGE

(Building Relationships In-between Different Generations Event)

March 19th during the Education Hour

You may have guessed our topic: Jesus Blesses the Children. We will engage in conversations in creative ways and create art together! Not only is this for folks of all ages—it is for folks of all artistic abilities. Make sure to join us for the fun!

## Have you seen the newest additions to our St John Backyard?



New picnic tables in the Memorial Garden! We cannot wait until the weather is a bit warmer so we can enjoy our coffee hour snacks, Sunday School lessons, and FLASHY BBQs while sitting on them!

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! To Al Miller, Mike Misslin, Ron Aerni, and Michael McLinn for taking the pile of plastic that we ordered and turning it into tables!

## Pizza, Popcorn, and Shaun the Sheep!

**Riddle me this:** When is a church a movie theater?

**Answer:** On Friday, February 10th at St John, of course! Heritage Hall was transformed into a pizza pub and movie theater for our Family Movie Night!



After munching on pizza from Roasted Peppers (our favorite!), veggies, and grapes, and downing as much chocolate milk as our grown-ups would allow, we settled into our Lovesacs and Yogibo to watch Shaun the Sheep!



And we all watched the 90-minute movie attentively for .....15 minutes!

The good news is that we had Baaaaab the Sheep to run around with and ride and new foam blocks to build towers. It was easy to keep our legs and hands busy and still keep an eye on Shaun and his sheep family and dog friends.

Attendees gave the St John theater many Thumbs-Up! 👍👍👍

👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍

Thank you to the AV Tech moms who helped connect the DVR: Kirsten McLinn and Laura Kennedy! The theater would have been in trouble without them.



## CONFIRMATION CONNECTION



Confirmation classes this month are focusing on recognizing God's presence in the world around us. Why? Because often when we ask middle school students where they experience God, the answer is obvious to them: at church. They might experience God through a service project or when doing something with their family. But that tends to be where their list ends. But if we ask someone with more life experience where they feel God's presence, the list is likely much longer: in nature, with someone they love, in music, through a book, in a movie or a tv program, at an athletic event, with delicious food, and the list goes on. Feeling God's closeness with us as we live our daily lives helps us to deepen our relationship with God. And sharing ideas about where we might see God deepens our relationships with each other and helps us to build community.



On January 29th, we discussed our favorite books, tv shows, and movies. Our students have diverse tastes. Check in with them for recommendations as you select your next read or watch session. We considered a favorite character—why we liked them, what we have in common with them, and what is different about them. These stories give us a better understanding of ourselves and where we are or where we hope to go as we live our lives.

We used the movie **Onward**, the tale of two brothers hoping to reunite with their wizard father for one day and their crazy quest to do so, to inspire our own quest. After braving blind turns, crossing an invisible bridge, breaking down a canyon wall, and, of course, finding a sweet reward, we used the **Onward** story to consider how we learn from our family members and how we sacrifice for those we love. And we wondered as we compared the brothers' experiences, our own experiences, and God and Jesus' experiences.



Sharing our favorite stories and our personal stories helps us to feel connected to others when we discover what we have in common or when they give us a peek into what is going on in "their world".





## The Souper Bowl of Caring Chalks Up Another Win!

The Kansas City Chiefs may have won the Super Bowl, but the winners at St John were our local food pantries! On the final day, hours before the Super Bowl began, we did sell the entire board to raise \$1000, and our Outreach ministry matched our funds raised for a total of \$2000! Checks to the Maynard, Acton, Stow, and Sudbury food pantries should go out by next week!

Of course, four lucky families also won soup dinners! Congratulations to the Fuhrer family, the Boerth family, the Ripley family, and the Hultstrom family! Note: this is the Hultstroms third win in as many years! A testament to how tasty our soup dinners are—they continue to participate! This year the Confirmation class will be making the soup dinners on Sunday, March 5th for delivery on Monday, March 6th!

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Souper Bowl of Caring Squares this year!

FAMILIES,  
MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR FOR  
SATURDAY,  
MARCH 18TH

3-5 PM

PLAN TO JOIN THE FUN!



## SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP



We kicked off the month of February with The Beatitudes and shared our thoughts about Jesus' message.

The next week our focus was Jesus Feeds 5000! It was particularly awesome timing since we had the final day of the Souper Bowl of Caring, which was about feeding folks. And, we made centerpieces for the Acton Community Supper that St John sponsored on February 15th, which was also about feeding folks.

As we considered the story of Jesus Feeds 5000, we imagined we were sitting on a hillside watching Jesus and his friends approach the shoreline on a boat. We wondered, with Jesus and his disciples, how in the world they could provide food for all the people there. We marveled over the generosity of the young boy who offered to share his



basket of 5 loaves of bread and 2 fishes—not knowing if he would get any more than a morsel of the food he shared. And we were amazed that somehow that small amount of food fed all the people until they were full. We had a ball sorting the remaining bread and fishes into 12 baskets!

Then it was time to make our centerpieces, which provided

Community Supper attendees with bright and cheerful Lantern Day decor—and a roll of paper towels to take home!

## IT'S TIME TO START THINKING ABOUT PUMPKINS!!

It is only February, and we can't even grow pumpkins yet this year, BUT St John has been approved as a Pumpkin Patch site in October. Woohoo!

Yes, it is seven months away, but there is planning that we can begin now.

For instance, if you have any old wagons or plastic crates/baskets that you are considering getting rid of, please consider giving them to St John! Providing wagons for folks to haul their pumpkins to their cars with and baskets for organizing the pumpkins will improve our customers' shopping experience and increase our sales!



We also would like to provide fun photo opportunities for our visitors like the painted wooden pictures that you stick your face in so if you have some wooden boards that you don't know what to do with, we would love to put them to good use!

If this sounds like fun to you and you would like to get more involved, please contact Michelle Rose at [mrose@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:mrose@stjohnsudbury.org) or 508-320-7245.

## COFFEE HOUR HELP NEEDED!

Please consider signing up to host coffee hour.

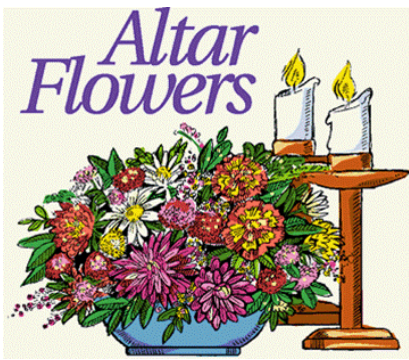
We are in need of goodies and people who are willing to make coffee, especially in the next few weeks,

while one of our dedicated hostesses is on vacation.

It would be a huge help to have a few new faces providing this much enjoyed fellowship!

The sign up is on the rolling white board with the worship assistant sign-up or you may call the church office (978-443-8350) or Carol Leighton.





## ALTAR FLOWERS

The new altar flower schedule is up for 2023.  
Please consider adorning the altar in honor  
of a loved one or in celebration of a special event.  
You are welcome to take the flowers  
with you after the worship service.  
The cost of the flowers is \$55.00 this year.

## A CHANCE TO SERVE...

Have you always thought that you would like to be a  
reader on Sunday mornings?

This is the perfect time to get involved! We need you!

**GOOD NEWS..** there is NO age restriction!  
it doesn't COST anything!  
there's no TEST!

What...you don't know about the microphone???

## MORE GOOD NEWS...

Mike Ripley will host a session for readers on **Sunday,**  
**March 12** following the service. This is for experienced  
readers as well as those who would like to help with our  
service .

***Please come and participate!***

## EASTER OPPORTUNITIES

It's time to sign up for Easter flowers!  
The sanctuary looks and smells so lovely on Easter morning thanks to these special offerings. As always you may designate whether you want to dedicate your flowers in memory or in honor of a loved one.

The cost for the flowers this year will be \$15.00 per plant. You are welcome to take them home and plant the bulbs in your home garden after Easter!



This year we are adding another opportunity for you to participate in our Easter celebration services. Perhaps you can't sing in the choir or play a brass instrument but you can still participate by making a donation in the amount of your choosing toward our special Easter music.

*Please use the envelopes in the pews and note whether your donation is for flowers or music. Thank you.*

## 2023 LENTEN WORSHIP

### Weekday Lenten Services

**Every Tuesday during Lent (Zoom) 7:30 am\***  
**Every Thursday in March at 6:45 pm**

### Holy Week

**Palm Sunday April 2 at 9:30 am**  
**Maundy Thursday April 6 at 7:30 pm**  
**Good Friday April 7 at 7:30 pm**

### Easter Sunday

**April 9 at 9:30 & 11:00 am**  
**Easter Egg Hunt in between the services.**

*\*Pastor Eric invites you to join him on the St. John zoom Tuesdays at 7:30 during Lent for a morning prayer. This will include a short passage of scripture, some discussion, and an opportunity to pray with and for each other and whatever's on our hearts. The plan is that it will last 30-45 minutes, depending on how deeply we engage. Hope to see you there!*



### Calling All Girl Scouts: Current and Former!

St. John will once again be celebrating Girl Scout Sunday on Sunday, March 12<sup>th</sup>. Girl Scouts will assist with worship and connect their faith with the Girl Scout Promise.

*“The motivating force in Girl Scouting is spiritual.” - Preamble, Constitution of Girl Scouts of the USA.  
Girl Scout Sunday celebrates the powerful ties between Girl Scouting and faith. Girl Scouts are encouraged to connect their faith to the Girl Scout Law and earn the religious recognitions of their faith. Let’s honor the Girl Scouts and adult volunteers who give their time and talents in service of others!”*

*- Girl Scouts Celebrate Faith, [girlscouts.org/faith](http://girlscouts.org/faith)*

If you are interested in participating and/or assisting, please contact Laura Kennedy at [Kennedy.LKK@gmail.com](mailto:Kennedy.LKK@gmail.com). Thank you!

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## THRIVENT ACTION TEAM OPPORTUNITY!

Are you a Thrivent Member? Are you familiar with Thrivent Action Teams?

Simply gather a team of friends, family or neighbors to put on a fundraiser, educational event or service activity. They’ll provide the resources you need to get started – including up to \$250 in seed money.

Then you and your team can get busy bringing your project to life. You may apply on-line at <https://www.thrivent.com/about-us/membership/thrivent-action-teams>

This month, St. John members **Walter and Janet Sarvela** are sponsoring their own service activity with Thrivent’s help. They will be shopping and filling the food pantry cart at St. John with lots of pantry staples that will help out the clients of the Acton Food Pantry. Please help further fill the food cart in the lounge by bringing in the current most critical needed items listed below:

**Baking mixes-brownie, cake, cookie**  
**Canned fruit**  
**Dish soap**  
**Gluten free bread**  
**Jarred pasta sauce**  
**Laundry soap**  
**Oatmeal-flavored packets**  
**Sugar**

**Canned chicken**  
**Canned soups**  
**Dried beans (kidney, pinto, etc)**  
**Individually packaged nut-free kids’ snacks**  
**Jelly**  
**Nuts-pecans, pistachios, walnuts, almonds**  
**Protein bars (such as Kind, Luna, Clif, Rx)**

*Thank you for your support, and if you are a Thrivent Member  
please think about sponsoring your own service activity.*