

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Pastor: The Rev'd Eric Wolf ([pew@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:pew@stjohnsudbury.org)) cell: 803-760-0222  
Director of Youth & Family Ministry: Michelle Rose ([mrose@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:mrose@stjohnsudbury.org))  
Administrative Assistant: Valerie Ripley ([office@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:office@stjohnsudbury.org))  
Director of Choirs: Benjamin Perry ([choirdir@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:choirdir@stjohnsudbury.org))  
Organist: Bart Dahlstrom ([organist@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:organist@stjohnsudbury.org))  
Sexton: Ron Hagopian ([haggy0412@msn.com](mailto:haggy0412@msn.com))

July 8th, 2021

## THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN

- July 9th -7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting/Sewing Group  
July 11th  
July 12th -10:00 am -Seniorcise  
July 13th - 11:00 am -Seniors on the Go Book Group  
July 14th -10:00 am - Seniorcise  
-8:00 pm - Newish Parents Group  
July 16th - 7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group  
July 18th -9:30 am - Worship **at the American Heritage Museum (aka the Collings Foundation)**  
July 19th -10:00 am - Seniorcise  
July 20th -11:00 am - Seniors of the Go BookGroup  
-7:00 pm - Social Justice Ministry Team  
July 21st -10:00 am -Seniorcise  
-7:30 pm - Council  
July 22nd -11:00 am - Racism/Anti-Racism Discussion  
July 23rd -7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting/Sewing Group  
July 25th -9:30 am - 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.

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

**JULY 22<sup>ND</sup> 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.

Join Zoom Meeting  
Meeting ID: 978 443 8350  
Passcode: 8350

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 JULY 13<sup>TH</sup> & JULY 20<sup>TH</sup>**

Please join us!!!

On Tuesday, **July 13<sup>th</sup>** at 11:00 AM, we will have a ZOOM book club meeting for just a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read.

On **July 20<sup>th</sup>**, we will discuss “Seven Sisters: Book One” by Lucinda Riley.

Join Zoom Meeting  
Meeting ID: 978 443 8350  
Passcode: 8350

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

**Next books:**

August 17, 2021, “Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind” by Ann B. Ross

September 21, 2021, “The Forgotten Garden” by Kate Morton

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



**THANKS!**

Thank you to our Director of Choirs, Ben Perry and his musician friends, Rose Hegele, Melanie Donnelly, Samuel Grandaw, and John Moorman. They were a lovely addition to our June 27th worship. Here they are singing *If Ye Love Me* by Thomas Tallis

**PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS:**

Rachel Florey  
Johnny  
David Donnelly  
Trish Sarvela Leiva  
Paul Simeone  
Patricia Jolou  
Ruth Avery  
Janice Potter  
June Carins  
Erica Kivimaki  
Liz Radowski

Brian  
Wendy  
Christopher Miller  
Alexis Marsh  
Liz Tolbert  
John Duane  
Jim Hansgate  
Ron Rakowsky  
Peter Kindem  
Bill Davis  
Anne Challet

Regina Mueller  
Richard  
Brian Young  
Brennan McGinnis  
Pat Quinn  
Rhonda Tibbetts  
Charlotte McNeil  
Norma Duane  
Steven Greene  
Helen Williams  
Rev. Angelika Zollfrank



## IDENTIFYING EVIL, OFFERING UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

We live in a world with a lot of gray areas. I generally love gray areas because they allow me to think things through with less investment, and come up with ideas from a space of innovation rather than having to overcome the prejudice of predetermination.

Lately there's been a lot in the media about Critical Race Theory. There are ways that this is well-founded and ways in which it's questionable. There are scholars that love it and hate it, full stop. There are scholars who have the ability to examine it more fairly and speak both for it and against it.

I don't think it's fair to either dismiss it or adopt it wholesale, not because it's good or bad or indifferent, but because it's simply a lens. I've found parts that I like and parts I don't like myself. Whether we like it or not is largely a matter of opinion. Honestly, it's absolutely fine to have no opinion whatsoever. That's always an option!

There are a *lot* of gray areas here.

Racism is like this, believe it or not.

Now racism is bad. Also, we can't dismiss a person wholesale just because they express some racist ideas. We all have racist ideas from time to time. I know that in my lifetime I've said things intentionally that were racist, and while I don't do that anymore, I know that I carry baggage from my own upbringing. I spend a fair amount of time processing the thoughts and ideas with which I was groomed by culture, family attitudes, school cultures, and work cultures. These are thoughts and ideas that I know persist, or discover newly, that they are and always have been racist ideas that I assumed to be true because I'd never thought about it from outside of my own perspective.

Internalized racism doesn't make a person evil, it makes a person human. It isn't a bad thing that I have these thoughts, though I'd certainly prefer not. It's bad when I recognize them and they remain intact, unreflected and unprocessed. If I act on them when I know better, it goes from being an unknown sin to a known sin, an intentional behavior about which I know better. *I confess that I am captive to Sin and cannot free myself.*

This is the challenging part of being human, we're capable of the greatest good and the greatest evil. There is a *lot* of gray between these poles.

In some cases there is no gray.

Though racist thoughts and ideations don't make us a bad person, racism is evil. Those thoughts and ideations are a product of that evil.

Another example is the institution of slavery: this is an evil that we engaged in willingly as a nation, and we wrote it into our founding documents as the law of the land. It's simply a fact that we traded the humanity of black persons for the opportunity to become a single entity, The (kind of) United States of America. This is simply true. Yet I still hear people argue in person that "slavery isn't all bad" as recently as yesterday.

Segregation and Jim Crow; using the monuments and symbols of the Confederacy to harass and cow black persons into obedience — these are evil. In the South I hear people call the Confederate flag "heritage, not hatred". It may well be their heritage, but it's an evil heritage of hate. Sometimes we love Great-Great-Granddaddy, but we have to cope with the fact that he died fighting for the institution of slavery.

It's also true that because we've never dealt with our racist institutions in any way that brings us to a point of cultural recognition, understanding, and approached a reckoning with the sinful nature of what we choose, we knowingly continue to do harm to living persons of color who are our siblings in Christ and our siblings in the human family.

continued

And *this* — *this* is why I'm writing about this today. I don't care about the politics of it or the optics of it or the arguments about it. All these people I've named — whether oppressed or oppressor — our identities as siblings in Christ and siblings in the human family are our primary identities, superseding that of nation or even family.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God declares love for *all* people. I hear the phrase "all means all" a lot, but often even that statement is conditional. "Well yeah, *all means all*, but not if you're (fill in the blank)". So I say this: when scripture tells us that God so loved the world, and that it's God's intention to redeem and not condemn the world, there are no caveats on this all.

So *all means all* means that all means *all*.

This is really hard for me because I sometimes feel that God created some people just to be jerks who frustrate me personally. And yet, if all means all, then all *means* all. So I love them even though they're jerks.

We run into another problem here as well. Because it's so frustrating and embarrassing for me to have the thoughts that come unbidden, I found it easy to slip into a worldview which denied color, denied culture, denied individual experience as definitive of a person's life. A friend once told me that his blackness is a part of him. "To deny my blackness is to tell me you deny a part of me that can't be separated from the rest of me", he said. After Charleston, I realized something crucial in my own struggle with internalized racism: *Love Sees Color*. It has to. Love loves all of a person.

And if all means all, all means all.

I have a challenge for you.

Think about your childhood and your friends growing up in school with you. Make a list of five people who you knew just a little or who you were friends with who are very different from you. Spend some time asking yourself these questions:

- What was it like to be them in our school or neighborhood? *What was their experience?*
- Did their difference in color or culture or other difference make a difference to me? *Did it make a difference to them?*
- What difference did their being different around me make for me? *What difference did their being different around me make for them?*

The perspective of the italicized and nonitalicized questions is that of my perspective vs putting myself inside of someone else's experience.

What difference does putting on someone else's perspective and experience make for you?

I hope you take the time to find out.

Grace & Peace,  
PEW

## NEW NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

We will be going to an every other week schedule for the newsletter starting this week.

The next edition of the newsletter will be on July 23rd. If you would like something published in the newsletter, please send it to Valerie by Wednesday on the week of publication.

Have a good week!



## ANTI-RACISM IN EDUCATION BILL

Presently the following bill is being considered in the Massachusetts State legislature: Anti-Racism in Education Bill (H.584/S.365).

The intention of this bill is to create a Commission for Anti-Racism and Equity in Education, with members chosen from advocacy groups, teacher and superintendent unions and associations, and parent groups, with an eye toward ensuring all major ethnic groups in the Massachusetts area are represented.

The purpose of the Commission will be to:

- Develop curriculum materials with a social justice perspective of dismantling racism and to advise the department on improving the history and social sciences framework
- Ensure that ethnic studies, racial justice, decolonizing history, and unlearning racism is taught at all grade levels using a critical approach and pedagogy that is age-appropriate
- Advise the Department on ways to ensure equity on the Massachusetts Test for Education Licensure
- Ensure that teachers and school counselors have access to professional development that fosters equitable, inclusive curriculum and pedagogy and practices that support racial justice.

This is personally important to me because the US history I was taught in public school was Euro centric & white centered. Much of American history taught in schools has erased the stories of Black Americans, Indigenous People, Asian-Americans and other marginalized groups.

Just last month, at Town Meeting in my town, there was an article related to funding to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. A speaker came up to the microphone and said, "Acton is for Americans, the Chinese are taking over." In the interest of transparency, the speaker's spouse did come up to say that his wife has mental health issues & that she wasn't a racist. Does that excuse her racist comments? Did her mental illness remove the filter that allowed her to speak from the heart? The words are out there and they impact my mental health. The message to me is that I am the perpetual foreigner, even though I was born in the United States and have lived in Acton for 42 years.

It is past time that the contributions of Black Americans, Indigenous People, Asian-Americans and other marginalized groups to the history of America be told and acknowledged. That is why I have contacted my State Representative and State Senator, urging them to support this bill.

Mildred Cheung



### A MESSAGE FROM MADELEINE THE FUNZEL!

Let Freedom ring...

Let love make you serve one another.

Galatians 5:13



*Outdoor Worship  
and Picnic*

July 18, 2021

Worship - 10:30 am

Picnic immediately following

**AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM/**

**COLLINGS FOUNDATION**

**568 MAIN ST.**

**HUDSON, MA 01749**

Caroline and Bob Collings have graciously invited us to use their property for outdoor worship and a picnic. We are asking that you bring your own chair and a brown bag lunch for your family.

If you would like to visit the American Heritage Museum that day, you may visit [www.americanheritagemuseum.org](http://www.americanheritagemuseum.org) to purchase tickets.