

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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April 16, 2021

BOOK DISCUSSION TUESDAY, APRIL 27TH AT 7:00 PM VIA ZOOM

Join the Social Justice Ministry team and our partners at Trinity Lutheran for a discussion of *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson via Zoom! Poetically written and brilliantly researched, *Caste* invites us to discover the inner workings of an American hierarchy that goes far beyond the confines of race, class, or gender. A book steeped in empathy and insight, *Caste* explores, through layered analysis and stories of real people, the structure of an unspoken system of human ranking and reveals how our lives are still restricted by what divided us centuries ago. *Caste* is available for purchase in hard copy and as an E-book or audiobook online.

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

SUDBURY FOR RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE WILL BE OFFERING ITS 4TH FACILITATED DISCUSSION ON SUN., APRIL 25TH FROM 3:00 TO 5:00 PM VIA ZOOM.

The purpose of this series of discussions is to learn about the history of systemic racism and how it influences current events and to spend time examining our own personal experiences around race, privilege and discrimination.

Session 4 will focus on examining White Privilege and the flip side of being disadvantaged, understanding the role of intersectionality, and recognizing what you can do to be an effective ally. Given the current treatment of People of Asian Ancestry, it is critical that we take action to stand up and be allies for this community and other groups that are also being victimized.

Each session has focused on different aspects of examining the role of race and privilege in our society. You are welcome to attend the 4th session even if you have not participated in earlier discussion groups.

If you are interested in attending this meeting please send an email by April 18th to ellistern123@gmail.com.



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](https://www.instagram.com/stjohnsudbury)

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UPCOMING SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

4/18/21

No Class - April Vacation

UPCOMING CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE

4/18/21

No Class - April break

KNITTING/SEWING GROUP VIA ZOOM

7:30 PM
FRIDAYS!



COFFEE & CONVERSATION VIA ZOOM

10:00 AM
SUNDAYS



BIBLE STUDY NEW TIME

Bible Study has moved back to its previous time of Thursday mornings at 10:00 am.

Contact Ippolit Matjucha if you would like more information.

APRIL 22ND 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.

ST. JOHN SENIORS ON THE GO BOOK CLUB FOR APRIL 20th

Please join us!!!

We will have a ZOOM book club meeting on Tuesday, April 20th at 11:00 AM to discuss “Girl in Translation” by Jean Kwok.

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.

Next books:

April 20, 2021, “Girl in Translation” by Jean Kwok

May 18, 2021, “A Children’s Bible” by Lydia Millet

June 15, 2021, “Girl, Woman, Other” by Bernardine Evaristo



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)

ZOOM Meeting

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

April 16th

7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group

April 18th

-10:00 am - Coffee and Conversation'

NO Sunday School - school vacation

NO Confirmation - school vacation

April 19th

Office Closed - Patriot's Day

April 20th

- 11:00 am -Seniors on the Go Book Group (Jan's Zoom)

April 21st

-10:00 am - Seniorcise

-7:30 pm - Church Council\

April 22nd

-10:00 am - Bible Study

-11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Group on Racism/Anti-Racism (Jan's Zoom)

April 23rd

- 7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group

April 25th

-10:00 am - Coffee and Conversation'

11:00 am - Sunday School

6:00 pm - Confirmation

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS:

Rachel Florey	Brian	Bill Moldwin
Regina Mueller	Johnny	Wendy
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	Peter Kindem	Steven Greene
Erica Kivimaki	Bill Davis	



FAILING FORWARD BY PASTOR ERIC WOLF

I was almost a fourth year student in seminary and in the throes of discerning whether I was on the right track, or whether I needed to find another career.

The problem wasn't ministry, it was school. I don't mean "school" in terms of my academic aptitude, I mean "school" as the system of expectations, necessary skills, timelines, and all the rest of it that always made the Education Industrial Complex a hellish experience for me. I'm plenty smart enough to accomplish what I need to, after all I did earn my M.Div, but my cluster of interpersonal skills and talents in the various areas that are needed more in the vocation of ministry have never been particularly useful to me in school.

The result of this is that I spent a significant portion of my childhood thinking there was something wrong with me because I just lacked some fundamental and indefinable characteristic that allowed my friends to shine as students. Every year it was the same thing: Ds on midterms, Cs and Bs on report cards, and notes home that said some form of "Eric just chooses not to live up to his potential" or, "Eric has the capacity but not the drive". The comedian Ron White said best what I heard in my parents' voices whenever read these comments to me, "There's a lot of quit in that boy".

"Why can't you just put the effort in at the beginning of the semester that you do at the end?", they'd ask. I just never did know how to explain that there was just something about me that felt paralyzed when it came to school work so much of the time that it was all I could do to overcome what had become dread and deep fear of failure every time I picked up an assignment. I remember vividly sitting at the table with a pencil in my hand looking at my math homework and the now indecipherable notes I took that day in class with no idea how to even start. Part of my brain would be saying, "Come on!" while my body said, "no way".

Even after proving I could graduate not only high school but also college, there I was in a Masters program feeling like a failure even though I hadn't failed a thing. All the familiar voices were saying all the familiar things, "Not smart enough", "too lazy", "too distracted".

There's a lot of quit in that man.

Early in the morning, Peter watched the ghost walk across the surface of the water out of the storm. He was terrified.

"Don't be scared, it's me!", came the voice of Jesus cutting through the winds and stilling his heart.

"Well if it's really you, then invite me to stand on the waters with you."

I imagine Jesus giving a shrug as he replied, "Well come on."

Peter got out of the boat and made it to Jesus, and then got distracted by the wind still churning around them. His attention no longer on Jesus, he sank into the water and cried out, "Jesus! Heeeelp!"

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The summer after my internship year in seminary, after a challenging semester that ended with an almost complete breakdown and shattering of my confidence — even though I'd passed everything, and learning during internship that I'm actually good at doing things even if I wasn't great at school, I started a landscaping business. I had some work my aunt wanted me to do, a few people from church wanted some things done, and I had a lot of connections in the area because I grew up only about 16 miles from campus. I was doing really well, had more work than I could handle on my own, and hired a helper from a local labor company. Soon there was too much for us to do together, so I hired two more people to be my second crew.

Before I knew it, I was doing really well! I had work lined up for at least a couple of months and felt like maybe this was something I could do that wouldn't kill me. It was better than school, and though it wasn't ministry, it was work I could understand. Maybe being a pastor is just a pipe dream.

Then about two months in I realized that because the second crew didn't really work unless I was there, and I didn't account for the cost of tools, gas, and other necessities that I'd never had to account for previously, we'd actually lost money that summer.

I'd worked my fingers to the bone and felt more successful than I'd ever felt before, but because I didn't really understand the basics of starting a business, I did the impossible: I lost money doing landscaping in Columbia, SC during the summer. I'd never felt like a bigger failure than at the end of that semester, but I passed everything. Sometimes feelings aren't facts.

Sometimes we get so distracted by our insecurities, our fears, and our concerns that we can't see how well we're really doing.

Sometimes the wind startles us and we take our eyes off of Jesus, only to find we're sinking and don't know how to stop.

"Littlefaith!", Jesus said as he took hold of Peter's hand. Peter, who Jesus earlier called The Rock in an all-too-ironic twist as he was sinking, but Jesus pulled him up. Almost always we hear this rendered as "O you of little faith!", but the Greek suggests that it's more of an address or a description than it is a proclamation about his character.

"Littlefaith! Why do you doubt?"

Because I'm awful at school. Because I can't stop feeling like I somehow don't belong and if anyone knew this they'd know I'm a fraud.

Imposter syndrome, my old frenemy.

"Peter failed to walk on water" is what we often hear in this story, but that's not strictly true, is it? Peter walked to Jesus on the water, sinking only when he became distracted by what was going on around him.

It's a seductive idea to wrap this into the neat little bow of "all you have to do is keep your eyes on Jesus and you'll be fine!". It wraps up so nice, but too neatly. Jesus isn't a moralizer who needs it all wrapped into a neat package with a bow on top, Jesus teaches the Way that leads us into right relationship to God, each other, and ourselves. Relationships are always messy because people are always a hot mess just underneath the surface. We all hide it, we all conceal it, we all learn how to pack that fear down into the pits of our soul and pile food on top of it until it quiets down, but as soon as the food digests a little, all those fears and feelings are still there.

Jesus doesn't just ask Peter why he doubts. Jesus takes Peter by the hand and gives him a gentle admonishment as a reminder that Peter isn't out there by himself. Together, Peter and Jesus walked back to the boat, got in, and the storm stilled.

I was lonely and afraid, distracted by the many self-identified failures, frustrated that I felt like I was failing my wife as a man, a husband, and as a partner. Through my wife, through my parents, through some good therapy — looking out into the storm, I saw a ghost walk across the surface of the water out of the storm. I was terrified.

"Don't be scared, it's me!", came the voice of Jesus cutting through the winds and stilling my heart.

It's not about whether I or Peter were able to walk on the water, but about the willingness to hear and answer the calling of the Spirit in our lives. We're all Littlefaiths from time to time, doubting our abilities even as we're doing the thing we think we can't. We all share in the need for Jesus to pull us back out of the water and walk with us back to the boat so the winds of our hearts can be stilled.