

# 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))  
Office Director: 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))

August 25, 2022

## UPCOMING AT ST. JOHN

- August 26 7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group  
August 28 9:30 am - Worship (In-person)  
August 29 10:00 am - Seniorcise  
August 30 11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Book Group  
7:30 pm - Stewardship Meeting  
August 31 10:00 am - Seniorcise  
Sept. 1 10:30 am - Bible Study  
Sept. 2 7:30 pm - Knitting Group  
Sept 4 9:30 am - Worship (In-person)  
Sept. 5 Office Closed - Labor Day  
Sept. 6 11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Book Group  
Sept. 7 10:00 am - Seniorcise  
Sept. 8 10:30 - Bible Study  
4:00 pm - Discussion Group on Race/Anti-Racism  
Sept. 9 7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group  
Sept. 11 9:30 am - Worship (In-person)  
Rally Day at Camp Sewataro (Sudbury)

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)

**SEPTEMBER 8th, 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  
AUGUST 30th AND SEPTEMBER 6th**

Please join us!!!

ZOOM book club meetings will be on Tuesdays, August 30th and September 6th, at 11:00am for a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read.

On September 20th we will discuss “The Stranger in the Lifeboat” by Mitch Albom.

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

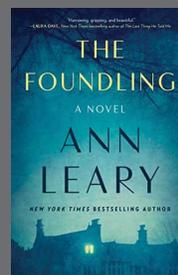
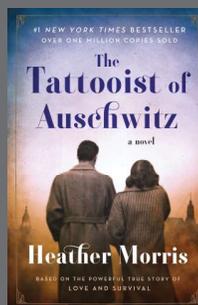
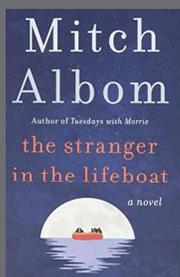
Next books:

September 20 - “The Stranger in the Lifeboat” by Mitch Albom

October 18 - “The Tattooist of Auschwitz” by Heather Morris

November 15 - “The Foundling” by Ann Leary

December 20 - “The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon”  
by Bill McKibben



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

Brian Young  
Norma Duane  
Rhonda Tibbetts  
Bill Davis  
Jan Nielsen  
Judy  
Meg Davis  
Ed Holmgren  
Janet Erb  
Pastor Ivan  
Bob  
Martha

Christopher Miller  
John Duane  
Alexis Marsh  
Janice Potter  
Marilyn Kunelius  
Carolyn Sweeney  
Joan LeDuc  
Gus Sullivan  
Joan Western  
Barbara Locke  
Sedona  
George Wolf

Charles Miller  
Helen Williams  
Ruth Avery  
Wendy  
Ann Kirk  
Claudine  
George Stanley  
Wanda Miller  
Mark Sarvela  
Christine Carosella  
Liz Packard  
The Junghans Family



## WIRES AND FINGERS CROSSED

Communication is challenging. I spend a non-zero amount of time worrying that an email or text message I sent, or a conversation I had, didn't make me sound like a scold or like I'm hopelessly insensitive. Being a pastor means conversing about challenging decisions and topics, and my own humanity sometimes means things I do and don't intend to be challenging may be.

It would be easy to say something like, "well, people are just too sensitive".

Or, "why can't they just understand I meant well!?"

Or any number of things, really, that get in the way of my own ability to respond to people with the care and concern I attempt. The truth is that a lot of what we deal with as a congregation is the delicate balance of individual and community responsibilities, desires, goals, hopes, and hurts. In other words, church isn't much different than any other part of our lives in that regard. A wise comment offered to me this morning is, "Turns out we are all completely and sometimes distressingly human. It's a good thing grace is here to help".

That's about as true as it gets.

Sometimes the best we can do is cross our fingers and hope whatever wires get crossed will be covered by that grace of God, and the grace of people with whom we interact.

The discussion about how to consider our masking policy during Sunday worship is one of the more challenging topics lately. Part of the issue is that everyone has a well-reasoned thought. Part of the issue is that everyone's pretty well tired of having to wear masks, yet accept the reality that there are some contexts in which it's still appropriate or necessary. Another aspect is that there are ways we communicate intentionally and unintentionally about how we feel about it, not simply what we think.

Some innocently offered comments lead us to challenging exposure to how others receive what we've said regardless of what we might mean.

There are moments when I just have to hit "send" knowing that our wires and my fingers will remain somewhat crossed. Even as someone who values clear communication and loving interaction, I recognize my potential for an unintended impact.

This leads me to think of the idea of things being crossed in general. The very idea of two ideas being crossed is that they intersect at some point, whether it's convenient or not. There are people who prefer less risk intersecting with those who can tolerate more risk. We encounter in challenging conversations those interested in talking things through intersecting with those who prefer to just let things drop. We pretty much have every kind of person and communication style there is. It makes sense to throw up our hands occasionally and say *then how can we make **anyone** happy?*

That's just the thing.

Making people happy isn't the job of the Church or a pastor.

I can't make anyone happy who isn't willing to join me there. An individual's happiness isn't really the church's or anyone's job to provide. We're each in charge of that for ourselves.

What I *can* do — what the *Church* can do — is provide a space where we can have the challenging conversations with integrity. As I said in my previous article, our calling is to be kind, not nice. We're called to be honest with each other rather than offering and accepting the little lies of niceties and social graces. It's important for us to speak — not our minds, but our hearts — so that we can make connections deeper

than happiness and other skin deep relationships could ever provide. Jesus comes that we might have life and have it abundantly, and life in Jesus only happens in the spaces God provides. These God-given spaces are honest, painfully truthful places. In this space of God's Holy Integrity, we find an ability to weep, lean on others, and trust each other with our brokenness and joy alike because the reality is that in the vulnerability of these places, we find that even when there isn't a lot of happiness to be had, there is a deep joy in being *seen, known, and loved for who we are*, even when our own identity is all wrapped up in knots.

We find that it's in our personal weakness that we can be made strong — together.

This is the mystery of faith, that when we share our burdens with others and bear theirs with them, the load might be heavier, but the burden is lighter because we're engaging the most sacred mystery of our existence: we are not alone, even when we feel like we might be.

We may not always be understood, but in God's community, there is a trust that allows us the space to dig into the idea of saying out loud the words of confession to those we hurt that seem foolish anywhere else because the world prefers the lies of niceness and the falseness of social propriety.

We're going to misunderstand each other and hurt each other, not because we're bad people who should feel bad, but because we're people. Period. The difference is that in this community defined by the loving integrity given by God through Christ Jesus, we have the chance to achieve a truer healing than anywhere else.

Heal us with your love, O Lord. Give us hearts overflowing with honest vulnerability and deep care for each other in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Eric

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## PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

Pastor Eric can be reached by email at [pew@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:pew@stjohnsudbury.org), and by text or phone at (803) 760-0222.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of each week from 10-2, the pastor makes home visits and keeps office hours, and typically schedules other meetings in the evening. That said, Pastor Eric is always available and glad to make time for anyone in the event of an emergency or time sensitive concern. Pastor Eric typically works from home on Fridays, but is available and glad to schedule Friday appointments in person or by phone as needed. He is off on Mondays, and makes every effort to guard this time for rest.

Please know that the pastor cares very deeply for the needs of all who worship and are otherwise connected to St. John, and is always glad to make time for you!

Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Eric

## PASTOR EMERITUS LARRY WOLFF CELEBRATES HIS 80TH BIRTHDAY!

Larry is turning 80 years **young** on August 27th. We wish him all the best on his birthday and every day! Some of you have asked for his address, you may send birthday greetings to:

**78 Stoneykirk Dr.  
Pinehurst, NC 28374**



## **CROP WALK and the St John Step-Ups NEED YOU!**

**CROP WALK for the Hungry**: The 42nd Annual CROP Walk for the Hungry will take place in Concord on **Sunday, October 23**. The 2 ¼ mile Walk kicks off at 2:15 pm from First Parish Church, 20 Lexington Road, Concord, MA. Participating walkers can enjoy the autumn beauty of some of Concord's most historic country roads, as they walk to raise money for the hungry of local communities and around the world. Come early at 1:30-2:00 pm to register and enjoy music by the Concord Carlisle High School Pep Band.

Local funds raised will be allocated to nine area community supper/pantry hunger programs: Open Table; the Community Supper/Food Pantry in Acton; Mt. Calvary Community Supper in Acton; the Sudbury Community Food Pantry; the Maynard Food Pantry; the Bedford Community Table/Pantry; Loaves and Fishes in Groton; Westminster Community Food Pantry; and also to Gaining Ground. In addition, the CROP Walk funds go to Church World Service for worldwide emergency relief of disasters, such as floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes, and for fighting the root causes of hunger through community development programs in 30 underdeveloped countries.

For more details, see the CWS web site: [www.cwsglobal.org](http://www.cwsglobal.org) and the Concord area CROP Walk web site: [www.concordcrop.org](http://www.concordcrop.org).

To join our St John Step-Ups team, please contact Michelle Rose at [mrose@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:mrose@stjohnsudbury.org) or 508-320-7245 or register with our team at <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2022/teams?event=concordma>.

We look forward to building community as we walk together and sharing with our community as we raise money to feed our neighbors.



FUN, FELLOWSHIP, & FOOD  
AWAIT YOU AT OUR LAST 2022  
**FLASHY BBQ!**

FLaSHY is our fun name for the group of people we are trying to bring together: folks with kids in school or younger, folks without kids, or folks who would like to socialize with this group of people.  
If you fall into any of those categories, you are invited!

Friday, September 9th 5:30-7 PM

St John's Backyard

You bring a side to share (nothing fancy required) and beverages for your family (beer & wine are okay for grown-ups), and burgers (of all kinds) and hotdogs will be provided as well as buns and condiments.  
S'mores fixings also provided.

Share dinner duty with the rest of your St John family while getting to know each other socially  
—while the kids play in the yard and connect with their peers too.  
Yard games for kids of all ages will be out on the lawn.

FLASHY BBQs are scheduled for the 2nd Friday and 4th Wednesday of each month through summer and early fall from 5:30-7 PM. Enjoying FLaSHY so much that you don't want it to end? We are too!  
More FLaSHY events will be scheduled throughout the year.

If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Rose at [mrose@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:mrose@stjohnsudbury.org),  
(work) 978-443-8350 or (mobile) 508-320-7245.

# 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.

- Carrie Stamos
- Suzanne Steinbach
- Jared Kennedy
- Emily Smith
- Royce Fuller
- Was born in Canada.
- Was born in Pipestone Minnesota, where stone quarries were mined by Native Americans for ceremonial pipes, which still continues to this day.
- Played a street urchin in a college production of *La Boheme*.
- Started, with siblings, “The Pony Cart Corn & Apple Company” seasonal business.
- Hiked in Peru this summer.

How did you do with last week’s puzzle? Are you surprised?

Betty Lewis CAN play the violin.

Al Miller has run a couple marathons and several half marathons—  
and he has the medals to show for it.

Lucy Kennedy is an avid rock climber.

Eric Wolf played Kid Connor in a production of *The Red Mill*.

Michelle Rose is a level 40 trainer in *Pokémon Go*.

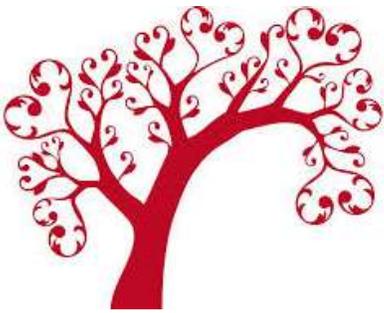
## **FAITH FORMATION CLASSES KICK OFF IN SEPTEMBER!**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL WILL BEGIN ON SUNDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 18TH!**



We look forward to welcoming all students from preschool through grade 5 for Sunday School. Classes will run directly following worship from approximately 10:45-11:45 AM. Each week all classes will meet together for group snack, songs, and games for a few minutes before breaking out into age-based classes.

Throughout the year, we will continue to offer periodic Family Sunday School classes, as well as quarterly BRIDGEs (Building Relationships In-between Different Generations Experiences).



### **Calling All 6th, 7th, 8th Graders and Above!**

We will begin our newly overhauled Confirmation Program in September. Our program will continue to provide the foundations of faith that we have always included such as books of the Bible, prayer, Luther's Small Catechism, the Ten Commandments, and the sacraments while also incorporating topics that relate more directly to our everyday lives like dealing with grief, anxiety, mental health, mindfulness, and questions we have about God and faith. We will consider our own identity, how we relate with friends, family, community, and God. And we will explore these topics using conversation, movement, art, science, games, music, service projects, and more!

We will continue to include a Family Confirmation class every 6 weeks or so as well as gathering with our Sudbury Youth Ministry Collective to form friendships with our neighbors of faith.

If you would like more information, please contact Michelle Rose at [mrose@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:mrose@stjohnsudbury.org) or call or text at 508-320-7245.

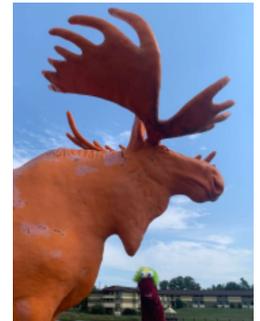
**We look forward to exploring and growing together in faith and love!**



# RUBY'S ROAD TRIP

The dog days of summer might be over, but Ruby is still getting around with her favorite dog, Conrad. Ruby may invite some crazy looks from folks—especially on the mini golf course—but she does make people smile. And surely, that is one of the things that God gave us mouths for. Her latest encounters include:

- Flirting with flamingos at Fitger's on the Lake in Duluth, MN
- Playing mini golf under the watch of the SS Meteor, a Great Lakes ore boat on the shores of Lake Superior
- Befriending the Orange Moose in Black River Falls, WI
- Adding her contribution to a Kindness Rock Garden in Madison, OH. Can you find Ruby's rock?
- Contemplating the ocean at Fort Foster Park in Kittery, ME



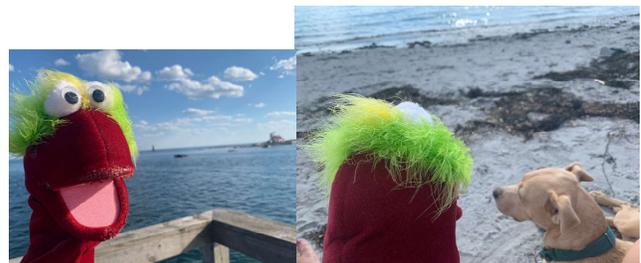
Ruby's utter joy is contagious from the golf course to the fishing pier. Her quirky kindness can brighten anyone's day and remind strangers that *You are loved*.

Even though school is starting, summer is not quite over, and Ruby's travels will continue. Follow Ruby's fun in the newsletter, on the Puppet bulletin board, and on Instagram @puppets-and-the-little-things or #rubysroadtrip #sharinggodslove #puppets (of course, the hashtags will get you a lot more than just our funzel Ruby.)



*Later the Master...sent them ahead of him...to every town and place where he intended to go. "The one who listens to you, listens to me. The one who rejects you, rejects me. And rejecting me is the same as rejecting God, who sent me."*

Luke 10:1&16



## BLESSING OF BACKPACKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLY SCAVENGER HUNT

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28TH

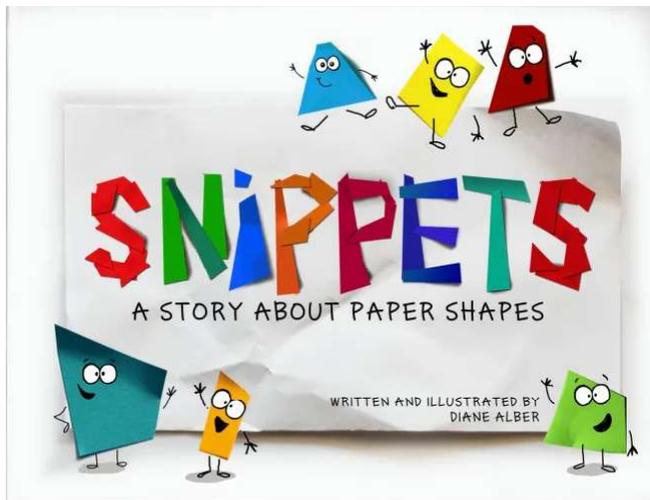
Bring your backpacks and book bags for a blessing during the service and a backpack tag. After the service and a snack, we will have our annual School Supply Scavenger Hunt. Plan to join us for the fun as we prepare for the new school year!

## AUGUST'S FEATURED CHILDREN'S BOOK BY MILDRED CHEUNG

Snippets written and illustrated by Diane Alber was read for last week's children's message.

The book is about Snippet, a shape that did not resemble the other squares and triangles. Ostracized because of its unique shape Snippet finds a way to bring all different shapes together; because being together is better than being apart. Michelle Rose, our Director of Youth and Family Ministry, tied this to the day's Gospel reading to question whether rules make sense if they do not bring us together.

The book is available to be borrowed in our Children's Lending Library.



## SAVE THE DATE!

**JOIN WITH OUR ST JOHN FAMILY ON  
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH  
FOR OUR RALLY DAY  
ALL-MEMBER PICNIC!**

Following worship, we will head down the road to Camp Sewataro in Sudbury (about a mile from church) for congregational fun, food, and fellowship in their large, covered pavilion. We will have games and activities for all ages as well as access to the pickle ball and basketball courts.

You may call the office, sign up on the kiosk, or use sign up genius  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0b4ea8af23a3f58-stjohn3>



# **THE FINNISH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MAYNARD NOW KNOWN AS ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SUDBURY CREATED WITH FAITH, HOPE, LOVE AND SISU**

BY DIANNE HULTSTROM

Finnish immigrants began to settle in Maynard in 1885. A Finnish Bible salesman, John Laitinen inspired an outdoor worship service in 1894 and later that year, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Maynard was organized. The services were in Finnish until 1941 when there was a gradual change to English.

In 1945, the church was renamed St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church. The church was part of the Suomi Synod of Lutheran Churches along with other Finnish churches in Fitchburg, Worcester, Gardner, Gloucester/Rockport, and Lancaster. In 1962, the Suomi Synod, Augustana (Swedish) Synod, and a couple of other Lutheran synods merged to form the Lutheran Church in America. A further merger in 1988, formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

In the earlier days, members of St John often gathered with the members of the other Finnish churches for social events and at times shared a pastor with them.

Of note, Finland was part of the Swedish empire for nearly 500 years, until 1809 when it became a possession of Russia. Finland gained independence from Russia on December 6, 1917.

The first permanent home of the church was 18-20 Glendale Street in Maynard and was finished in November of 1907. St John moved to the current building in Sudbury in December of 1967.

In 1956, the congregation sponsored the Walter Klein refugee family from Germany. They remained faithful members of St John. In 1976, the congregation sponsored the Cosme Carvajal refugee family from Chile. Shepherd of the Valley in Groton became a satellite ministry in Groton in 1990.

Several members of the congregation have been ordained as Lutheran pastors including Walter Sarvela's brother Bill and Elaine McCann's brother, Michael Erkkinen. Pastor Tim Stein who recently passed away was a member of St John before he entered seminary and went on to serve at Faith Lutheran in Cambridge. Pastor Gordon Ilauskus served as choir director before seminary and served congregations in Connecticut and Texas before retiring last year. Pastor Wendy Anderson was our first Youth and Family Ministry Director and went on to attend seminary. She served congregations in Minnesota and is currently at Nativity in Rockport, Maine. Pastor Michael Gutzler grew up at St John and is currently pastor at Holy Trinity in Falls Church, Virginia. St John has mentored several seminarians and interns who are still in active ministry.

The church celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1994 with multiple events. A history of the church was assembled into a book and copies are currently in the church library in the lounge. It is a very interesting read and gives one insight into the dedication, devotion, struggles, and successes of the congregational life of St. John.

Historically, St John members devoted many hours contributing to the building of both churches. We were fortunate to have masons, iron workers, carpenters, painters, electricians, and seamstresses who contributed many after-work hours to what it is today. Many articles were brought from the Glendale Street church to the Sudbury church and are proudly on display or used during worship. Over the years, we have heard the stories of the people who proudly told us of the work they did to create our beautiful worship space, chapel, and furnishings including paraments and banners. We have several active members who are descended from those who organized and contributed to the building of both the Maynard and Sudbury churches.

While the congregation was originally Finnish, those of us from other backgrounds have been welcomed with open arms and made to feel at home. The melding of traditions has strengthened the congregation. The congregation has faced many challenges over the years and the success of the church has been based on faith, hope, and love (and sisu).

Note: Sisu is a Finnish word meaning special strength, persistent determination, and resolve to continue and overcome in the moment of adversity. It is a combination of stamina, perseverance, courage, and determination held in reserve for hard times.

## **AX HANDLE SATURDAY, AUGUST 27, 1960** BY DIANNE HULTSTROM

August 27, 2022, is the 62nd anniversary of the event known as Ax Handle Saturday in Jacksonville, FL. When a city high school was named for Confederate general and Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard Nathan Bedford Forrest in 1959, it angered the blacks. (The name was changed to Westside High in 2014.) The summer of 1960 was the summer of sit-ins in many communities. The Youth Council of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was participating in a peaceful protest, sitting at a whites-only lunch counter at Woolworths in downtown Jacksonville as they had done several times that summer. On August 27th, they were once again spat on and verbally assaulted with racial slurs by whites. Things escalated and up to 200 white people led by the KKK who organized in Hemming Park chased blacks through the streets beating them with ax handles and baseball bats. It should be noted that the ax handles were decorated with Confederate Flags. A van was parked nearby boasting a sign 'Free Ax Handles'. Police stood by and watched until members of a black street gang showed up to assist the people being attacked. At that point, the police joined in beating the blacks. There appear to be no official police records of how many people were injured that day.

Hemming Park was named for Charles C. Hemming, a local Civil War veteran who in 1898 donated a towering Confederate monument to the city. The Confederate memorial was removed on June 9, 2020. Jacksonville is also the hometown of James Weldon Johnson, the Black activist, and poet who penned "Lift Every Voice and Sing," popularly known as the Negro national anthem. After contentious debate over whether Hemming Park should be called Veterans Memorial Park instead, the Jacksonville City Council voted in 2020 to rename it after James Weldon Johnson. The James Weldon Johnson College Preparatory Middle School is also named for the Black activist and poet.

Ax Handle Saturday is a painful reminder to Jacksonville of its contentious past treatment of black residents.

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***Save the Date:***  
***Social Justice***  
***Book Discussion***  
***The Sum of Us***  
***by Heather McGhee***  
***Tues Sept. 27th***  
***at 7:00pm via Zoom***

