

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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February 12, 2021

## ASH WEDNESDAY

For nearly 1100 years, the Church has observed Ash Wednesday in some form on the first day of the Lenten fast. Ashes occupy a long history throughout the Biblical narrative as a sign of repentance, penitential action, and faithful dedication to life in Christ. Ash Wednesday is a time to remember our mortality in the words,

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

It's a day to dedicate ourselves to deep reflection and sober engagement of our lives of faith for the Forty Days leading up to Easter.

We'll commemorate Ash Wednesday together on Zoom at 7:30 pm on February 17.

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

You may impose the cross upon each person present in these ashes, saying the ancient words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return". The service will have both live and recorded elements, and an invitation will be sent out in the next several days.

Ash Wednesday kits (a small container of ashes and postcard) have been assembled and are being dropped off by a team of helpers. If you have not received one by Wednesday morning and would like one, please call the church office. Thanks to Bob & Donna May, Kathy Menzel, Dorene Glynn, Carrie Stamos, Amy & Larry Kivimaki, Jen Leighton, Ippolit Matjucha, Michelle Rose, Pat Brown, and Jan Nielsen for helping Valerie by delivering them!



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

Snow! Snow!

Snow.

It's snow joke when I say that I spent nearly five hours yesterday clearing the snow from Sunday and we're now (on Tuesday) expecting another heavy snowfall. The snowfall was the powdery beautiful stuff of my wife's imagining, the kind that makes Willo thrilled to walk through — the kind that I expected to only mildly curse as I shoveled. But seriously, I spent nearly five hours chipping away at it.

The thing that made this latest snowfall take so long to clear isn't that it was the heavy wet stuff from last time, but that there were a couple areas of the heavy wet stuff from last time that I thought would melt away, but instead froze and refroze and re-refroze into an ice that could pave roads. I scraped it off of the asphalt at a corner of our driveway that I hadn't had time to clear, but we drove down to a manageable bump. That was easy because asphalt is rough enough that a scraper blade can get under it easily, even though it had turned into a hard sheet. Cement isn't bad for the same reason, its porous texture allows the ice to scrape off pretty easily.

The place that wore me out was the top of the driveway, where the asphalt is smooth and there are little baseball sized depressions here and there. In these places, the ice had worn down on the side and became a ramp for my scraper blade. I spent a few minutes looking for the right angle — the one that would still allow the scraper to slide along the surface but dig into the ice — and if that angle exists, I couldn't find it.

So I was left with one option (because I'm stubborn and it had to be done right then): I chopped at it and chipped away the edges until I could gain purchase and scrape. This was hard, exhausting work, and it reminded me of how much time I spend sitting in a chair doing office work; how much different my back is than it was in my 20s when I did construction to work through college and seminary.

If only I'd finished what I started with the slushy wet snow that clogged my battery powered snowblower and was so heavy to shovel, I'd have saved myself so much time. But I didn't. I opted instead to let it ride and bet that it would melt.

Faith is like this.

There are moments when it's so easy to believe, to trust, to feel the warmth of the presence of God or the joy of faith. There are also those moments when faith is a hard slog, and we don't feel warmth or closeness or trust or joy — or even belief. Sometimes we can just push through and engage our faithful practices until we feel its inevitable return. Other times we wonder whether it can return at all.

Upon losing his wife, former South Carolina (& ELCA Presiding) Bishop Herbert Chilstrom said (something like), "I stood in worship and found that I couldn't sing the songs of faith anymore. After a few weeks, I looked around and found that the people worshiping there with me were singing for me until I could sing these songs again".

This is the embodiment of one of the baptismal promises we make to each other both as sponsors and as a congregation: to nurture each other in faith and prayer. We pray for each other, but one of the truths of faith & relationship, and one of the deepest mysteries of love is that there are moments when we pray for each other, sing for each other, believe for each other when our siblings in Christ just can't do it for themselves. In the moments when we cry out, "I believe, help my unbelief", our siblings in Christ are the faithful witness that bears us up until we can pray, sing, and believe again.

Sometimes our hearts are cold, broken, and concretized against the hope of faith's renewal as that awful stuff in my driveway. It's for this reason I define faith not as "belief", but as an openness to hope. Too often, we reduce faith to a simple intellectual assent to something about God. Faith isn't simply believing something about God, but investing in the relationship we have with God in the same way we do with others we love: we work at it, fight for it, long for closeness to God, slog through the hard times, and rejoice in the good times — together.

As long as we maintain the openness to hope in God's grace, presence, and love, we may feel distant but we haven't gone far. In maintaining this hope, we remain an openness to hope for ourselves as well; hoping that what God has created in us in water, Word, and Spirit will stand not only the test of time, but will stand the test of our hearts as well even when our siblings in Christ hold the faith for us, pray for us, and sing for us until we're able to sing for ourselves once again.

Grace & Peace,  
PEW

## 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	Erica Kivimaki	Joan Western



### COFFEE AND CONVERSATION VIA ZOOM

10:00 AM  
SUNDAYS



### KNITTING/SEWING GROUP VIA ZOOM

7:30 PM  
**EVERY FRIDAY!**





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

Stayed tuned for  
lessons beyond 2/14

**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 12th - 7:30 pm - Knitting Group

February 14th - 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

February 15th - Office Closed for President's Day

February 16th - 11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Book Group

February 16th - 7:30 pm - Council Meeting

February 17th - 10:00 am - Seniorcise

February 17th - 7:30 pm - Ash Wednesday Service via ZOOM

February 19th - 7:30 pm - Knitting Group

February 21st - 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**

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

## **LOOKING FOR A GOOD HOME!**

Bob and Donna May are looking for a new home for this Kenmore sewing machine. It is in working condition. If you are interested, please contact Bob May at [robert.may3@comcast.net](mailto:robert.may3@comcast.net) or 508-517-5814



**ST. JOHN SENIORS ON THE GO  
BOOK CLUB FOR FEB. 16TH**

Please join us!!!

We will have a ZOOM book club meeting on Tuesday, February 16th, to 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: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH AT 3:30 PM  
SUDBURY INTERFAITH CLERGY ASSOCIATION  
DISCUSSION HOSTED BY ST. JOHN VIA ZOOM**

Join members of St. John and Sudbury communities of faith in a second discussion on racism and racial justice on February 28th. As a follow up to the annual Interfaith MLK Day Event, the Clergy group has committed to host monthly events to continue these conversations together and brainstorm ways to collaborate on community actions. More information to come and a Zoom link to follow.

**RACIAL JUSTICE DISCUSSION**

On December 17th, 2020, The Rev. Barbara Smith-Moran gave a special presentation to the Thursday morning group that meets to talk about Race, Racism and Anti-Racism. In case you were unable to attend, we have posted the video for you to watch. As part of her work in the field of restorative justice, Barbara Smith-Moran served as a volunteer and witness to the first proceeding of the Canadian Truth & Justice Commission, in Winnipeg in 2010. The process of reconciliation is ongoing and has ramifications for our own work in intersecting justice movements in the US. In this video, Barbara describes the background of the Commission's work and her own experiences in Winnipeg.

Here is the url...<https://youtu.be/AJ34Qn9DOJA>

**SAVE THE DATE: FEBRUARY 23RD AT 7:00PM  
INEQUALITY OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PRESENTATION**

Join St. John, Trinity, and members of the New England Synod for a presentation and discussion led by our very own Jeff Furher! This discussion will focus on the dramatic inequality of economic opportunity in the US, contrary to our aspiration to be a land of opportunity. First, we will examine the history and data documenting the racial disparities in income and wealth. Next, we will examine candidate explanations for the wealth gap, considering the extent to which current income, education levels, homeownership, or savings proclivities (among others) can explain the wealth gap. We will conclude that none of these factors provide adequate explanations, and then examine the structural, institutional, decades-long discrimination that has produced the wealth gap. Finally, we will discuss potential solutions, and leave plenty of time for Q&A. Join us on Zoom at <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/87589409836>

(Note: this is not the St. John account so please use the above Zoom information)