

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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978-443-8350 [www.stjohnsudburyma.org](http://www.stjohnsudburyma.org)

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Sexton: George LaBarge

February 9, 2023

## UPCOMING AT ST. JOHN

February 10	7:30 pm -Knitting Group 5:30 pm - Movie Night
February 12	9:30 am -Worship 10:45 am-Sunday School NO Confirmation
February 13	10:00 am - Seniorcise
February 14	11:00 am-Seniors on the Go Book Group 8:00 pm -Executive Committee Meeting
February 15	10:00 am -Seniorcise 7:30 pm - Council Meeting
February 16	10:30 am - Bible Study 5:45 pm - Bells 7:15 pm -Choir
February 17	7:30 pm -Knitting Group
February 19	9:30 am -Worship No Sunday School No Confirmation
February 20	Office Closed - President's Day 10:00 am -Seniorcise (self-led)
February 21	11:00 am-Seniors on the Go Book Group
February 22	10:00 am-Seniorcise
February 23	10:30 am - Bible Study 4:00 pm - Discussion on Race/ Anti-Racism 5:45 pm - Bells 7:15 pm -Choir
February 24	7:30 pm -Knitting Group
February 26	9:30 am -Worship 10:45 am- Sunday School 5:30 pm - Family 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)

**FEBRUARY 23RD 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 14TH AND FEBRUARY 21ST**

Please join us!!!

ZOOM book club meetings will be on Tuesdays, February 14th and February 21st, at 11:00am.

February 14th is a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read.

On February 21st we will discuss "The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon" by Bill McKibben.

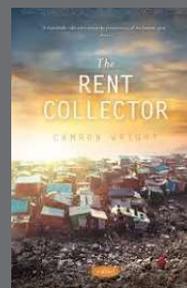
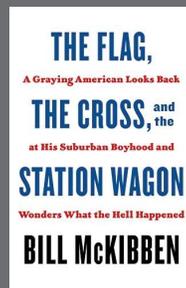
Any questions, contact Jan Nielsen at jrnielsen@charter.net or 978-549-3044.

Next books:

**February 21 - "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**



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

Brian Young  
Joan LeDuc  
Gus Sullivan  
Martha  
Gogi Woodward  
John Duane  
Judy  
Christine Carosella  
Ara Bramantis  
Joyce Fryklund  
Jan Nielsen  
George Stanley  
Liz Packard  
Barbara Smith-Moran  
Tom Toepfner  
The family of Tony Tedesco (bereavement)

Norma Duane  
Ann Kirk  
Pastor Ivan  
Donna & Bob May  
Solveig Rhodes  
Janice Potter  
Meg Davis  
Joan Western  
Katie  
Charles Miller  
Rhonda Tibbetts  
Mark Sarvela  
Royce Fuller  
Caryl Lundie  
Susanne Fuller

Bill Davis  
Claudine  
Bob  
Wanda Miller  
Christopher Miller  
Marilyn Kunelius  
Barbara Locke  
George Wolf  
Gloria Nilsson  
Helen Williams  
Carolyn Sweeney  
Janet Erb  
Amber  
Lauri Pekkala



## MOMENTS THAT PASTORS BRAG ABOUT

I began work in the South Carolina Synod Office on February 1, 2015 — that's today (this was written last week)!

Quickly, I learned that the biggest learning curve was the part of my job that I thought would be the easiest, because I'd been working as a volunteer in South Carolina Lutheran Church Youth (SCLCY) for about eight years, and I was a part of this synod youth ministry as a youth. I served as Chaplain my senior year in high school, and this is one of the definitive moments that led to discerning my own vocation as a pastor.

So why was this hard?

Stephanie Stoudemayer, one of the most significant people in my own life of faith as both a youth and as an adult pastor, led SCLCY since I was a youth. It was her shoes I was stepping into, and they were large — and I was nervous. I remember her looking at me and saying, "You're going to know what it means to have your name on the door soon, and I'm really going to enjoy that!". She was a close friend, and I thought I knew what she meant.

So how hard could it be?

To keep this a little short, I'm going to start by saying the learning curve was *steep*. I thought the hardest part of it would be the 12 events during the year, but what turned out to be most challenging was the logistics of it. There were contracts, payments made and received, receipts to keep up with, and the nerves of making certain that everything was in its place. If you know me, you know that this kind of administrative work isn't my strongest talent. I did quickly find both a volunteer and some budget to pay one of our admins for some extra hours to help me, but it was my name on the door.

Before the January meeting of the Synod Council, the bishop asked me to swing by his office. As a pastor who served a long time in Charleston, he'd developed a laid back tone typical to the area. It was in this deceptively casual tone that he said, "So Eric, the treasurer told me that the youth ministry is overdrawn on its budget by \$10,000 this year. That's something Synod Council will likely ask you about, so just be ready to discuss it. No big deal".

My response to this was "I'm just doing what we've done!" What the bishop told me was, "Stephanie was here longer than anyone else in the synod office. As Youth Ministry Coordinator, she had the ability to dictate what she needed and make it happen. You're an assistant to the bishop and you don't really have that luxury. No big deal."

No big deal. Right.

In the next few days, I pored over every aspect of our expenditures and projected costs and realized that we were likely going to need another \$10,000 for the rest of the year, but I devised ways to cut costs for the rest of the year, and presented a plan to make the next year's events come in not only at cost, but under budget!

At the meeting, I was ready for it. I shared the plan and answered the questions, and at the end of it the bishop said, "You know, Eric's really done a great job with this program. Let's give him a hand!" — and at the end of this conversation during which I said we'd end up \$20,000 in the red, they applauded. After the meeting, the bishop said, "I want you to know that we applauded the fact that you're doing a good job, not the overspending. You really do need to fix that."

No big deal.

This past Sunday, this congregation passed an ambitious budget, one that reflects a significant planned deficit as our situation currently stands. This really is a big deal, and though I don't have to explain the reasons it's an anxiety producing big deal, I do want to share why I believe this is a big deal from a very positive perspective.

First, the conversation about it. I can't tell you how amazing this congregation is in the sense that we were able to talk about the challenge before us and speak more about how to accomplish our mission as the Church and how to live into our values of stewardship, care for those God puts in our community, and what ways we can make things even out in the short term — even though we agree these aren't long term solutions. The fact that we can do this with care and concern for each other is *huge*. I cannot say enough how much I appreciate this, and you'll never realize how amazing it is.

Second, we engaged it from our core identity. The question, "how does this reflect our values of stewardship" is one of the most important questions we can ask in any circumstance. This question was asked with regards to our synod benevolence / mission support. The sense of general agreement that having this item in the budget itself is important to our identity as people of God is gratifying, and it so perfectly reflects the core ethics of this congregation. We're part of something bigger as a congregation, just as we're part of something bigger as families and as individuals.

Third, we were able to discuss some options for moving forward with clear understanding of what's before us, and the intention of using our resources responsibly, recognizing the faithful stewardship of our past and in this previous year, and looking forward to ways we can cultivate future stewardship of our treasures: our time, talents, and resources.

As we ended that meeting, I left grateful to be the pastor of a congregation like this, but more honestly, to be the pastor of *this* congregation. I can't imagine a better group of people to share this moment with, to share this wrestling forward with, and to enjoy the act of serving Christ together as the Church. Thanks so much for being who you are! Please know that as much as I love to see members of this community grow in faith and love for God and God's people, this congregation pushes me forward in the same ways that having faithful partners in ministry always has.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Eric



**FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH**

**5:30-7:30 PM**

**JOIN US FOR PIZZA, POPCORN, AND  
SNUGGLING!**

**NOW SHOWING: SHAUN THE SHEEP (MAYBE?)**

# IT'S SURPRISING..... THE VALENTINES DAY EDITION



Which couple owns each of these “Meet Cute” stories? We will print the answers in our next newsletter.

- Liz & Duane Packard
- Dorene & Steve Glynn
- Laura & Jared Kennedy
- Valerie & Mike Ripley
- Michelle & Tom Rose
- Brittany Mihelich & Joe Maranville
- Met hiking the Appalachian Trail
- Met at band practice when he kept poking her in the back with his trumpet
- Met at church camp in high school
- Met over chocolate chip cookies
- Met when she served him a hamburger at the Lutheran Campus BBQ
- Met on a blind date to a restaurant that had closed (for good—not just for the night)



How did you do with our last puzzle back in October? Are you surprised?

Paul Haugsjaa skis the black diamond trails.

Nancy Allison volunteered at an archaeological dig in Montana.

Royce Fuller played the trombone in high school.

Ron Aerni attended a one-room K-8 schoolhouse, and one year was one of 5 students in the whole school.

Chad Dorsey ate a beetle on a train in Thailand.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

The change in the calendar year means that we have moved from Old Testament stories to New Testament stories.

On January 15th, we had a dramatic retelling of Jesus and his disciples setting out for a day of fishing on their boat—when a storm came up. We pretended we were



fishing from the blanket that served as our boat. We could imagine how it felt to have a storm kick up on the water—a fan blew wind in our faces, squirt bottles sprayed rain on us, and our parachute mimicked big waves all around us. We could understand the terror the disciples experienced as well as the relief they felt when Jesus said, “Peace. Be still.” And the waters calmed.



After some parachute games, we set to work coloring posters to promote our Souper Bowl of Caring fundraiser.

On January 22nd, we took Sunday School outside with our Winter Creation Hike. Please see that article to find out about our winter hiking experience.



## 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.

During our class on January 15th, we began this exploration and built collages of moments, places, etc where we experience God. And then we delved into music—thinking about songs that are meaningful to us and considering why and how we can feel God's presence in the music we enjoy.



On January 22nd, our Youth Ministry Collective (YMC) gathered at Sudbury United Methodist Church for an evening of **Polka Dots and Bible Plots**. We kicked off the event celebrating National Polka Dot Day by playing Pass the Present (wrapped in various polka dotted wrappings, of course!) to such polka dot favorites as *Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini* and the *Polka Dot Polka* (two of the youth actually asked for that one!) And then we divided into teams and scrambled to find the most hidden polka dots and stuck them to our human easels. As we snacked on clementines and blonde brownies (also National Blonde Brownie Day), we considered a variety of famous art made with dots. Everyone chose their favorite and shared their reasons.

Finally, we moved onto the Bible Plot portion of the evening, which was inspired by National Dance of the Seven Veils Day, which celebrates Salome's dance for King Herod II, which led to John the Baptist's death and head on a platter. This story inspired our game challenging our knowledge of barely believable Bible stories. It took a combination of Bible familiarity and speed to dash to the winner's seats. With each question, we learned about the Bible story that sparked that question. Finally, we asked our youth to create an original art piece reflecting one of the stories we shared using Do-A-Dot markers. What story provided the fodder for the most artwork? It's from Numbers 22: the story of Balaam and the talking donkey!



## February's Featured Lending Library Book



Every February our youth sponsor the Souper Bowl of Caring to raise money for local food pantries. Food insecurity exists in every community in Massachusetts.

This month's featured book is **Saturday at the Food Pantry** by Diane O'Neill and illustrated by Brizida Magro. This book tells about a child going to the food pantry with her mom. The story emphasizes that everybody needs help sometimes and that we all have gifts that help others. Join us for the Children's Message on February 12th to hear the story.

Access to food is a human right and all children need nutritious food to grow, learn and thrive. The most recent numbers from Project Bread put the rate of food insecurity for households in Massachusetts at 16.6%; among households with children it is 21.5%. Individuals experiencing food insecurity could be our neighbors, children in our children's classes, our friends.

Mildred Cheung



## Can you Balance like a Flamingo?

If not, perhaps you should join us for Seniorcise! Our Seniorcise class has continued throughout the COVID years on Zoom. As it has since Jayne Tapia started it about 25 years ago, Seniorcise exercises are all done in or holding onto a chair.

The exercises improve our strength, balance, and flexibility—and we have a lot of laughs while taking care of our bodies. You may notice that our exercise where we balance like flamingoes has inspired our mascot—the Flamingo!

Classes take place using our regular St John Zoom on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 AM-a little after 11 AM. That depends on how chatty we are and if you stay for the ending relaxation, which lasts 6 minutes.

If you would like to join us or find out more, please touch base with Michelle Rose [mrose@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:mrose@stjohnsudbury.org).





## WALKING IN A WINTER WONDERLAND

Our Winter Creation Hike included a small but mighty crew. As we turned into the driveway that leads to the parking area, we were eyed by a bird of prey who didn't look too sure it wanted us there. But we were brave! We explored the Weir Hill Trail in Sudbury, which included a climb up and down Weir Hill and a walk out into a platform in the middle of a pond/wetlands area. While on the platform, Al Miller, who organized and led our hike, read to us from Genesis 1:

*“Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.* Looking out at the frozen wetlands, we could see Weir Hill rising up above the water. We could feel God's presence in the work of making the Earth.



We were also struck by the quiet. We could hear blue jays squawking every so often and an occasional peck from a woodpecker, but otherwise there was just silence. We marveled at what a difference there would be if we were on that platform in the summer.

As Marina blazed our trail, we enjoyed looking in the snow to see what animal friends had been there before us: squirrels, bunnies, and deer!

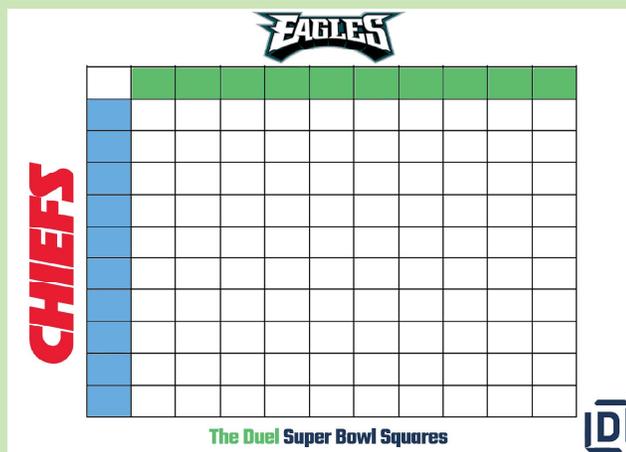


Because nature cooperated, and we actually had snow for our Winter Creation Hike, we ended our hike by making a snowman. Marina named her Flowers. You might even find a photo of Marina and Flowers on the Assabet River Wildlife Refuge Facebook page.

We are so glad that Marina Opiyo, Nancy Ndale, Susan Valentino, Al Miller, and Michelle Rose were able to enjoy God's world in winter together! Thank you to Al Miller for planning this wonderful outing!

# St John's Super Bowl Squares for the Souper Bowl of Caring

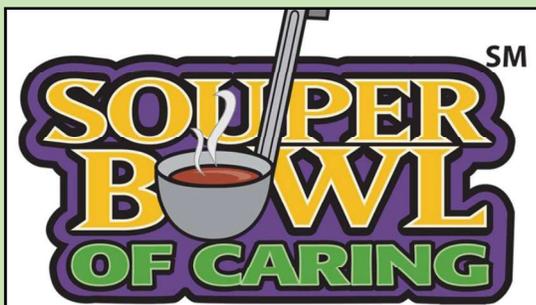
Now we know the names of the teams playing in the Super Bowl, but we need your name on our grid!

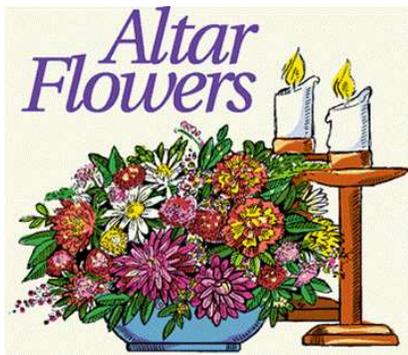


Help our youth raise \$1000 for local food pantries by buying one—or more—square(s) for \$10 between now and Friday, February 10th. On February 11th, we will randomly draw names of all contributors out of a hat and assign names to squares. If your square has the last digit of the score of both teams at the end of each quarter or the game, you will win a homemade soup dinner including soup, salad, bread, and dessert! Four dinners up for grabs! St John Outreach will match! Help us double our fundraising!

To join the fun, you can click this link to our Google Form <https://forms.gle/4FJv7tJMUiFvvFD19>! Or call the church office. Mail \$10 per square you are purchasing to St John, 16 Great Rd, Sudbury, MA 01776 or place your donation in the offering plate. Note Souper Bowl of Caring in the memo section.

Another way to help is to purchase some non-perishable food items place them on the Food Pantry cart in the lounge by Sunday, February 12th.





## 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.



## PHOTO DIRECTORY UPDATE

- Valerie will be updating and printing a new directory.
- 
- Please review the information that is currently in the directory and let Valerie know of any changes.
- 
- If you were inadvertently omitted from the directory and would like to be included, please let Valerie know.
- 
- New photos are always great!
- 
- Families with children, remember your kids grow/change quickly so a new photo will be helpful to church members.
- 
- It is so easy! You may update your information by e-mailing [office@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:office@stjohnsudbury.org) or you may send/bring a hardcopy photo to church and Valerie can scan it. You will get your originals back!
- 
- Deadline is March 5th.