

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Pastor: The Rev'd Eric Wolf (pew@stjohnsudbury.org)
Administrative Assistant: Valerie Ripley (office@stjohnsudbury.org)
Director of Choirs: Benjamin Perry (choirdir@stjohnsudbury.org)
Organist: Bart Dahlstrom (organist@stjohnsudbury.org)
Sexton: Ron Hagopian (haggy0412@msn.com)

January 21, 2021



**The Annual Winter Congregational Meeting
will be held on February 7th via Zoom.**

This will be held via Zoom at 9:30 am

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

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION
VIA ZOOM

10:00 AM
SUNDAYS



KNITTING/SEWING GROUP
VIA ZOOM

7:30 PM
2ND/4TH FRIDAYS



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)

St. John Lutheran Church
16 Great Rd.
Sudbury, Ma 01776
978-443-8350
www.stjohnsudburyma.org

NORMALLY RADICAL

This congregation provides a constant stream of amazement for me. I love getting to meet new people, learn new things about the ministry and history of the congregation, and hear stories of something wonderful we've done. I find so much joy in discovering what people are passionate about, and seeing people respond to the Spirit's calling into new ways of being the Church. Just last night, we celebrated the formation of a new ministry: the Social Justice Ministry, approved by Council last night with Maddy LaCure as the chair and newly appointed Council member!

This new Social Justice Ministry is a great example of what the Holy Spirit does in us, through us, and for us.

It began as a reading and discussion group when Maddy and others saw the need to dig into the issues related to racist behavior, systems, and thought. They spent time reading books, participating in several weeks of coursework together, and beginning to come to the understanding that this antiracist work isn't just something we do in congregations, but it's central to our identity as followers of Jesus Christ and central to the identity of the Church. Throughout the witness of scripture, with around 3,000 mentions, there's no topic more frequently addressed than God's instructions to support the poor, the widowed, and the vulnerable. Not only does God command us to provide support for the vulnerable and dispossessed, but in many of these passages in scripture we hear that God ignores even otherwise-righteous actions of those who "trample on the poor", as in Amos 5:11.

Or even more challenging, Amos 5:21-24 continues what began as their disregard for God's command to care for the poor:

I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

This also reminds me of perhaps the most famous chapter in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13, which tells us that doing amazing things isn't what makes something beautiful to God; rather, the love of God reflected in our hearts is what makes them beautiful. Paul writes in verse 13 that "now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face" when only "faith, hope, and love remain, these three; and the greatest of these is love". When we are face to face with God, what we will see is what God sees in us through the eyes of love looking back at us.

Love in Scripture isn't a feeling, but an action. Even the Ten Commandments are rooted in God's preference for the poor and identification as the One who brings freedom, saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; [therefore,] you shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:2-3). God doesn't deny other gods, but challenges them: "What did those other gods whose idols you worship do for you? Nothing. *I* led you out of Egypt; *I* led you out of the house of slavery. These other so-called gods have done nothing, and are worthless to you". The idea that God values wealth or privilege is a popular heresy, and if we think we can follow Jesus without loving the poor and powerless, we're deeply mistaken.

continued on next page

What I celebrate most about this new ministry is that it also is providing us a new way to live into our status as a Reconciling in Christ congregation by driving us to talk about how to not only work toward racial justice, but intentional inclusion of our LGBTQIA+ siblings in Christ!

What does it mean to be the Body of Christ when our buildings are closed? This.

None of this would be possible for any of us on our own. In order to accomplish God's work, we have to remember who we are just as the Hebrew people had to remember who they were before being slaves before they could learn how to be a people in their own land. As we live into our holy mission as disciples of Christ Jesus, we see more completely what's always been true: Christ is present in the Church whether we're able to meet in person or not, and that none of us can truly follow Jesus on our own — it *always* requires a community.

I'm so grateful to be part of *this* community, and I look forward to seeing who we become together.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Eric

*and the greatest
of these
is love...* 1 Corinthians 13

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	Liz Tolbert	Nancy Buse
Jim Gronemeyer	The Maurer Family (bereavement)	



**ST. JOHN SENIORS ON THE
GO BOOK CLUB FOR JAN.
26th and FEB. 2nd**

Please join us!!!

We will have ZOOM book club meetings on Tuesdays, Jan. 26 and Feb. 2, at 11:00 AM for just a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read.

On February 16th, we will 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

*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)*

January 22th - 7:30 - Knitting Group

January 24th - 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

January 25th - 10:00 am - Seniorcise

January 26th - 11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Book Group

January 27th - 10:00 am - Seniorcise

January 28th - 11:00 am - Presentation by Mildred Cheung about the
History of the Chinese in the US

January 31st - 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 1st - 10:00 am - Seniorcise

February 2nd - 11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Book Group

February 3rd - 10:00 am - Seniorcise

ZOOM Meeting Login information

<https://zoom.us/j/9784438350>

Meeting ID: 978 443 8350

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

**JANUARY 28TH AT 11:00 AM – ZOOM – PRESENTATION BY MILDRED CHEUNG
ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE CHINESE IN THE US**

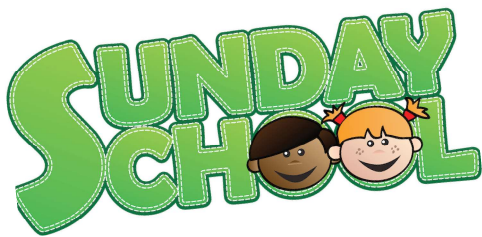
On January 28th at 11:00 AM, Mildred Cheung will present a talk on the History of the Chinese in the US.

Our group meets every other Thursday 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. And, if you need help connecting to the ZOOM meeting, let Jan know; she will help you.

Jan Nielsen
978-549-3044



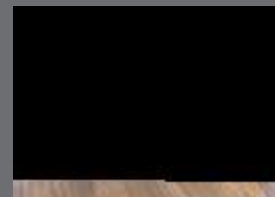
THE LATEST AND GREATEST WITH SUNDAY SCHOOL AND CONFIRMATION

After the whirlwind of excitement making Chrismon ornaments and sharing stories of Jesus's birth and relating it to our own personal stories, it has been a joy to reconnect with each other in the early weeks of 2021!

In Sunday school, we kicked off the year with a family Sunday School class discussing the wise men's visit and the gifts they gave to Baby Jesus. Individual families talked about special visitors who may have come to visit when the kids were born and special gifts that they received. While some of the kids had received something akin to gold, none of them received frankincense or myrrh!

We also discussed Jesus's early life—something there is very little information on. We read the story of Jesus being lost from Mary and Joseph on their way back home from Jerusalem and of how they found him “in his Father's house” —the temple. We thought about the significance of this story being the only story after Jesus's very early years until Jesus is baptized (at around age 30) that is included in the Bible, and of Jesus's understanding even as a 12-year-old boy that he was the Son of God.

This past Sunday we talked about Jesus's baptism by John the Baptist and our own baptisms. What do each of you know about your baptisms? Maybe that would be a fun conversation to have for all of us! We also made paper doves (see photo below) to remind us that each of us is a Child of God.



In Confirmation Class we are finishing up our study of the New Testament this week. We have enjoyed having Pastor Eric present in class and sharing his unique insights. We will be making New Testament Find It Bottles to recap what we have learned.

Next week of January 31st, we are asking Confirmation parents and students to join class from 6-7 PM on Zoom to get to know each other and Pastor Eric and talk about Confirmation plans going forward.

1/24/21- Jesus Calls the Disciples

11 AM Sunday school -
Preschool to Grade 3

11:45 AM Sunday school -
Grades 4&5

6 PM Confirmation - Revelation-
New Testament Recap

1/31/21- Parable - Lost Sheep

11 AM Sunday school -
Preschool to Grade 3

11:45 AM Sunday school
Grades 4&5

6 PM Confirmation - Parents and
Kids - Get to Know Each Other
with Pastor Eric

2/7/21 - Parable - Sowing Seeds

11 AM Family Sunday School =
All grades

6 PM Confirmation - New Unit -
Lutheran Living

2/14/21 - School Vacation

NO Sunday School or Confirmation-

THE SOUPER BOWL OF CARING IS COMING!

Our favorite teams might not be in the Super Bowl this year, but we can still have fun while raising money and collecting non-perishable foods for our local food pantries through our traditional Souper Bowl of Caring fundraiser! Mark your calendar for Sunday, February 7th, and grab a few extra items at the grocery store. Help the St John youth raise money and goods to help our friends and neighbors especially as the pandemic drags on. You can drop non-perishable goods in the box in the church entryway from now until 2/8. Just ring the doorbell or call so Valerie can let you in. Dig out your favorite team jersey or hat and get ready to join the fun with the kids and the puppets!

