

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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Sexton: George LaBarge

January 13, 2023

## UPCOMING AT ST. JOHN

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| January 13 | 7:30 pm -Knitting Group  |
| January 15 | 9:30 am -Worship<br>10:45 am-Sunday School<br>Confirmation   |
| January 16 | Office Closed - Martin Luther King Day   |
| January 17 | 11:00 am-Seniors on the Go Book Group<br>7:00 pm -Social Justice Meeting                                 |
| January 18 | 10:00 am -Seniorcise<br>7:30 pm - Council Meeting  |
| January 19 | 10:30 am - Bible Study<br>5:45 pm - Bells<br>7:15 pm -Choir  |
| January 20 | 7:30 pm -Knitting Group  |
| January 22 | 9:30 am -Worship<br>10:45 am-Winter Creation Walk<br>5:30 pm -YMCollaborative                            |
| January 23 | 10:00 am -Seniorcise   |
| January 24 | 11:00 am-Seniors on the Go Book Group  |
| January 25 | 10:00 am-Seniorcise<br>11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Fellowship   |
| January 26 | 10:30 am - Bible Study<br>4:00 pm - Discussion on Race/ Anti-Racism<br>5:45 pm - Bells<br>7:15 pm -Choir |
| January 27 | 7:30 pm -Knitting Group  |
| January 29 | 9:30 am -Worship<br>10:45 am-Congregational Meeting<br>5:30 pm - 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.

St. John Lutheran Church  
16 Great Rd.  
Sudbury, Ma 01776  
978-443-8350  
[www.stjohnsudburyma.org](http://www.stjohnsudburyma.org)



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

**JANUARY 26TH 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 JANUARY  
17th AND JANUARY 24th**

Please join us!!!

ZOOM book club meetings will be on Tuesdays, January 17th and January 24th, at 11:00am.

On January 17th we will discuss “The Beautiful Mystery” by Louise Penny.

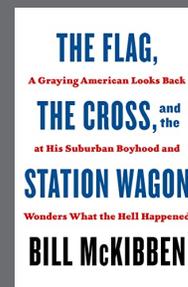
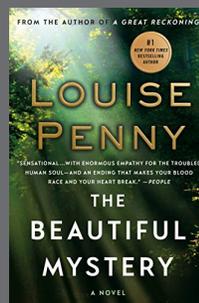
January 24th will be a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read.

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

Next books:

January 17 - “The Beautiful Mystery” by Louise Penny

February 21 - “The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon” by Bill McKibben



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

Brian Young  
Norma Duane  
Bill Davis  
Joan LeDuc  
Ann Kirk  
Claudine  
Gus Sullivan  
Pastor Ivan  
Bob  
Martha  
Donna & Bob May  
Wanda Miller  
Gogi Woodward  
Solveij Rhodes  
Liz Pekkala

Christopher Miller  
John Duane  
Janice Potter  
Marilyn Kunelius  
Judy  
Meg Davis  
Barbara Locke  
Christine Carosella  
Joan Western  
George Wolf  
Ara Bramanis  
Katie  
Gloria Nilsson  
Joyce Fryklund

Charles Miller  
Helen Williams  
Jan Nielsen  
Rhonda Tibbetts  
Carolyn Sweeney  
George Stanley  
Mark Sarvela  
Janet Erb  
Liz Packard  
Royce Fuller  
Amber  
Barbara Smith-Moran  
Caryl Lundie  
Lauri Pekkala



## BAD LUCK & TROUBLE MEET LOVING PRESENCE

It's Friday the Thirteenth.

Covid has struck everyone but me in the office. My dryer decided to break — which is thankfully more the landlord's problem than mine, but tell that to the clothes I have sitting in the washing machine! This seems pretty on brand!

While Covid is frustrating, fortunately the office people are doing okay. The dryer is frustrating, but it's not going to cause our lives to grind to a halt. Even so, I'm reminded that there are moments when the little things stack up, seeming to join the big things in the worry queue.

I spoke to a person this morning who doesn't belong to our congregation who told me his daughter was scared of what might happen to her at school. He told me she was scared of there being a shooter, of being a victim, of being helpless. Being a lawyer, he immediately moved into defend and protect mode. "Well, you have to fight! You have a duty to retreat, but if you've exhausted all other options, you have to fight." Listening to him telling the story, I realized that this is his vocation in his mind — fighting to defend people is what he does. He didn't sound like the kind of person who often retreats. It was a fascinating turn from what our culture often likes to think of lawyers and their ethics. He told me his spouse told their daughter that she needs to pray, and being a Muslim family, this makes sense.

"Trust God" meets "trust your fists".

I spoke with another person outside of our congregation whose child has a mysterious mass, and while it's too early to know anything for certain, all the wheels are turning. They're worried about their child, their family, their other kids, their spouse. "What about my job?" I get it. Life has a nasty habit of interfering with our plans, no matter how carefully we prepare. I offered the consolation of sitting in their worry, grief, and pain. I offered the only assurance I believe I can offer with any integrity: faith doesn't mean that bad things won't happen, and it definitely doesn't stop life from being stressful. God's promise is to become flesh when we're weeping, and while I don't know that it necessarily fixes anything, knowing someone loves me enough to stay when I'm grieving helps me feel less alone. Jesus promises to sit with us and to be present.

"I will be with you always, even until the end of the age" meets "I can't even get myself under control".

Isn't that the real kicker?

If I had my preference, I'd say that God should fix my issues. I'd say that it's not fair about my dryer, about the fear of a student for their safety, about the fear of a parent for their child.

"Trust God to be with you always" meets "I trust my fists, but I can't even get myself under control".

Somewhere there's a joke about Bad Luck & Trouble and Loving Presence bumping into each other, and Bad Luck & Trouble saying, "We've gotta quit bumping into each other like this!". At least that's how it works in my head. I meet trouble with humor, and I ridicule what scares my soul because it makes me feel more capable of overcoming it if I can laugh at it. I laughed when I flipped a truck out on a rural highway in South Carolina after I realized I wasn't injured. I was grateful, but a little bit indignant that such a dramatic event left me unscathed save for some soreness the next few days. I laughed at my infected finger when I realized I'd need a fourth surgery on a wound I inflicted with a butter knife.

I didn't laugh the one time my daughter had a fever so high we wondered whether we should take her to the hospital. That was too real, too close, too deep. I did laugh a little at myself for being so beside myself, but it was mirthless. My capacity to ridicule what frightens me sobers up fast when it's my family.

That evening, I remember that there wasn't a lot said in the house, but we sat for awhile in the quiet. Maybe we talked or joked. I'm positive we discussed whether or not to take her to the hospital several times, but we knew we'd made the decision not to. The conversation was an exercise in presence, in love, in caring for ourselves and each other. It was the mutual checking in to see if we were still as helpless as we feared.

It was "I'm so glad I'm not alone in here" meets "I'm so glad I'm not alone in here".

That's the Gospel.

That's it.

Happy, sad; joyful or joking; wounded or healed — I'm glad I'm not alone in here because this is what God enfleshed means at its core. We may not get the easy road we wish we had, but thanks be to God that we're not alone in here.

Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Eric

# PLEASE JOIN US JANUARY 25TH AT NOON ST. JOHN HERITAGE HALL



Please join us for this first Seniors on the Go event of 2023.

We will gather together to share the blessings of food  
and fellowship with a meal of soups and breads.

After our meal, there will be time for fellowship  
and discussion about future Seniors on the Go events.

Come with your ideas about what events you would like us to plan.

NO LATER THAN Monday, January 16,  
please contact Royce Fuller (978-897-8397, royceaf11@gmail.com)  
or the church office to let us know you are coming.

## Exploring Baptism

In Sunday School, we began 2023 thinking about Baptism. Families shared stories of our students' baptisms, and we compared them to Jesus' baptism. Some of us learned what we might experience when we are baptized.

We recognized that water was an important component of both Jesus' baptism and our baptisms! And, of course, the Holy Spirit was present! And friends and family were likely there too.

We found that Jesus' baptism was different from ours. He was an adult, and we were baptized as babies or young children. And none of us were baptized in a river like Jesus was.

We explored different water stations like musical water, ocean in a bottle, pouring water, and will it float? And we enjoyed painting our own shells like the kind that is often used in baptism.

And we realized that while water is what we think of first when we think about baptism, what makes Baptism special is the Holy Spirit!



## Sharing Christmas Cheer with Cambridge's Outdoor Church

What were you doing 3 days before Christmas? Last minute shopping? Desperately wrapping gifts? Baking Christmas cookies?

Well, on the afternoon of December 22nd, youth from St John and Sudbury United Methodist Church (SUMC) were distributing Christmas cookies—and lunches—to street-dependent folks in Harvard and Central Squares in conjunction with Cambridge's Outdoor Church.



It was kind of a gray day, but Christmas cheer was in the air as we shared the lunches of turkey, ham or peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, chips, fruit, and cookies.

And when we mentioned that we had socks, winter hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves? Folks happily “shopped” through the bags of items! The first lady that we “styled” with a beautiful pink scarf just glowed! We wandered by her often on our travels, and she sported a lovely smile with her scarf.

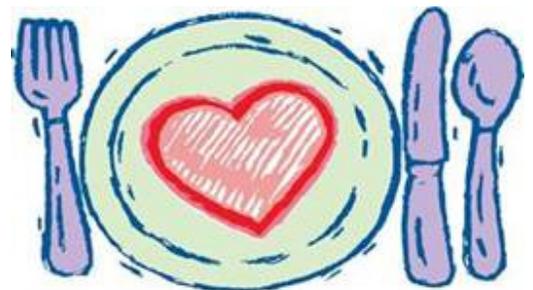
We are grateful to the St John members as well as folks from SUMC and the Presbyterian Church in Sudbury who regularly provide items for up to 120 bagged lunches for Outdoor Church parishioners. And we were thrilled to share all of the adult items that decorated our St John Mitten Tree with Cambridge's street dependent folks.

The “Sudbury Contingent” distributes lunches with the Outdoor Church on the 4th Saturday of each month—or when a holiday challenges that, we distribute on Thursdays. We provide sandwiches, chips, cookies, and fruit as well as water and muffins. And we provide the people power to share the lunches in Cambridge. If you would like to join the Outdoor Church volunteer list, please let Michelle Rose know at [mrose@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:mrose@stjohnsudbury.org).

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### OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY

Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Acton has returned to in-person community suppers. St. John's is sponsoring a supper on Wednesday, February 15, 2023. We are in need of 6-8 volunteers (16 years old + unless a parent or supervisor is involved) to serve the meals to guests. There are no setup or cleanup duties. The time is 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm. All volunteers and guests are required to be fully vaccinated. Volunteers are also required to wear masks. Please email Christine Barilone at [rbarilone@hotmail.com](mailto:rbarilone@hotmail.com) if you're interested in volunteering or have questions.



## Confirmation Connection

In Confirmation, we spent the Advent/Christmas/Epiphany season considering Promises: promises received and promises kept.

We discussed the meaning of a promise. We wondered if it is hard to keep promises and what happens if we don't

keep our promises. We explored what happens when we keep a promise and who to trust with our promises and whose promises to trust.

And we pondered God's unique ability to give a promise because when God promises, the promise is kept—perhaps not in the ways we expect or the timeframes we hope for, but God delivers.



**CONGREGATIONAL  
MEETING**

## SAVE THE DATE

January 29th

Congregational Meeting  
immediately following the worship service.

Don't miss out on important decision making!

Our annual budget will be approved  
at this meeting.



## It Was a Christmas Deck Party!

Nope. We were not outside—we actually did a lot of dec-orating! In December our Youth Ministry Collaborative gathered to decorate—living trees and some delicious cookies!

We also participated in immersive worship centered around the feelings that Mary may have experienced as she prepared for Jesus' birth. We explored those feelings at different stations as we considered our blessings, various ways that we think of God, and prayers for those we care about.

Our next Youth Ministry Collaborative will be on Sunday, January 22nd from 5:30-7 PM at Sudbury United Methodist Church.



### Movie Night for Families

We will be having a St John movie night on Friday, February 10th.  
Plan to join us for popcorn and snuggling!



## **This is how God's love shows. It's a wondrous story to me, to me.**

The St John Puppet Ministry performed throughout Advent with each presentation reminding us to find time to focus on the reason for Christmas—God's love. And to plan peaceful moments to prepare for God's love and ways to share God's love throughout the year.

We kicked Advent off with our annual performance of *If Pigs Could Fly*, a Jeff Fuhrer original. On December 11th, the puppets presented *O Little Town of Bethlehem—an understated Social Justice hymn* arranged and performed by Jeff Fuhrer and portrayed by our puppets Olive, Sequoia, and Violet. And finally, at the Advent Concert, the puppets presented *Bethlehemian Rhapsody* by Mark Bradford and sung by Puppet Tunes.

With each presentation, we asked folks to help fill our piggy bank in support of God's Global Barnyard through the ELCA's Good Gifts program. We raised \$279.56 this year to provide 2 goats, 3 piglets, 3 roosters, chicks and honeybees to the program. Thank you to all!

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## **Let's Enjoy God's World Together**

Grab your hiking boots or snow boots and your winter weather gear and join us for a family-friendly Creation Hike after worship and snack on Sunday, January 22nd. Note: this will be in place of Sunday school this week. Our trail is still to be determined, but it will be nearby and provide an easy hike and opportunity to appreciate God's winter world.



If you would like to join us, please email Michelle Rose at [mrose@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:mrose@stjohnsudbury.org) so we can make sure you know the details.

# New Star



Our youngest St John members shared our Christmas Gospel, **New Star**, on December 18th. The Gospel portrayed the story of Jesus' birth and the meaning of Christmas from the perspective of Old Star, who turned out to be the star that appeared in the sky upon Jesus' birth.

Thank you to everyone helped with the program from the teachers, pianists, sound team, singers, and actors! You were all wonderful!

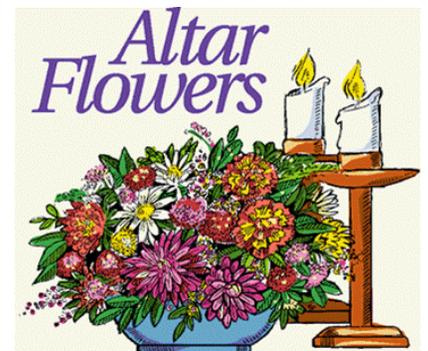
## ALTAR FLOWERS

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 \$45.00 this year.



# St John's Super Bowl Squares to Benefit the



Help our youth raise \$1000 for local food pantries by buying one—or more—square(s) for \$10 between now and Wednesday, February 8th. On February 9th, 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! Four dinners up for grabs!

To join the fun, you can click this link to our Google Form  
[https://forms.gle/mVp6RbS4NqRBF3G19!](https://forms.gle/mVp6RbS4NqRBF3G19)

Mail \$10 per square you are purchasing to St John, 16 Great Rd, Sudbury, MA 01776 or place your donation in the offering plate. Be sure to note Souper Bowl of Caring in the memo section or with a note.

Another way to help is to purchase non-perishable food items and place them on the Food Pantry cart in the lounge by Sunday, February 12th. Outreach will deliver food donations to the Acton Food Pantry!

Note: St John Outreach will match raised funds by up to \$1000 for a total of \$2000 for our neighbors experiencing food insecurity!



## COOKIE SWAP SUCCESS!

Many thanks to Seniors on the Go for organizing St. John's first Cookie Swap in a very long time. Many talented bakers gathered on Saturday December 10th for a festive gathering to share so, so many wonderful homemade treats. The group also wrapped up cookie gift baskets for St. John's homebound members.



# GREENING OF THE CHURCH

*Thank you to all who helped to adorn  
our sanctuary for Christmas.  
It looked absolutely lovely!*

