

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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Director of Choirs: Benjamin Perry ([choirdir@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:choirdir@stjohnsudbury.org))  
Organist: Bart Dahlstrom ([organist@stjohnsudbury.org](mailto:organist@stjohnsudbury.org))

July 21, 2022

## UPCOMING AT ST. JOHN

July 22	7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group
July 24	9:30 am - Worship (In-person)
July 25	10:00 am - Seniorcise (self-led)
July 26	11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Book Group
July 27	10:00 am - Seniorcise (self-led)
July 28	10:30 am - Bible Study 4:00 pm - Discussion Group on Race/Anti-Racism
July 29	7:30 pm - Knitting Group
July 31	9:30 am - Worship (In-person) 2:00 pm - Memorial Service for Liz Tolbert
August 1	10:00 am - Seniorcise
August 2	11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Book Group 8:00 pm - Stewardship Meeting
August 3	10:00 am - Seniorcise
August 4	10:30 - Bible Study
August 5	7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group
August 8	9:30 am - Worship (In-person)

### 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.

**Michelle, our Director of Youth & Family Ministries, will be on vacation in Wisconsin from July 22-August 7. She will mostly be on the grid and will check emails, texts, and phone calls, but will be—potentially—slower to reply than when she is when in the office.**

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

## **JULY 28TH, 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.

## **NEW ARRIVAL**

We celebrate the birth of Perri Angelica Pompilio. Perri is the daughter of Brittany Bascom and her husband Chris Pompilo. She is also the granddaughter of Linda and Alan Bascom. Congratulations to all!



## **ST. JOHN SENIORS ON THE GO BOOK CLUB FOR JULY 26TH AND AUGUST 2ND**

Please join us!!!

ZOOM book club meetings will be on Tuesdays, July 26th and August 2nd, at 11:00 AM for a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read.

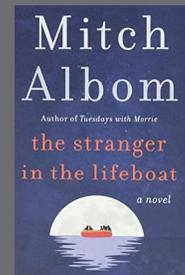
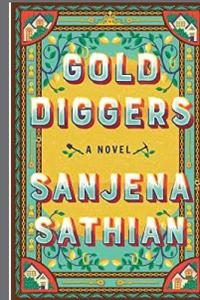
On August 16th, we will discuss “Gold Diggers” by Sanjena Sathian.

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

Next books:

August 16, 2022, “Gold Diggers” by Sanjena Sathian

September 20, 2022, “The Stranger in the Lifeboat” by Mitch Albom



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

Brian Young	Christopher Miller	Charles Miller
Norma Duane	John Duane	Helen Williams
Rhonda Tibbetts	Alexis Marsh	Ruth Avery
Bill Davis	Janice Potter	Wendy
Jan Nielsen	Marilyn Kunelius	Ann Kirk
Judy	Carolyn Sweeney	Claudine
Meg Davis	Joan LeDuc	George Stanley
Ed Holmgren	Gus Sullivan	Wanda Miller
The Rev. Tim Stein	Janet Erb	Joan Western
Pastor Ivan Bepalov (in Kyiv)	Barbara Locke	Rick Sarvela
Mark Sarvela	Joan Western	Christine Carosella
Bob		Sedona
The Tolbert Family (bereavement)		



## COMMON MEMORY AND BELOVED COMMUNITY

I write a good bit about stress, loss, and grief in my newsletter articles. I write these things, in part, because they're part of my own experience as a pastor. More though, this is the experience of human beings living in this time and place, in particular. I write these things, not because I'm a depressed person on the verge of burnout. I write them because everyone I talk to tells me that they're some version or combination of tired, worn out, worn down, burned out, let down, anxious, frustrated, shut down, feeling disconnected, and so on.

Identifying and writing about the feelings related to loss and grief reflect the state of mind that, possibly quite literally, everyone I know is wrestling with it. Perhaps it's just the malaise of the interminable COVID variants that refuse to leave us alone. The trouble is that it isn't only this, but COVID exacerbates our already fragile sense of security as people who dwell in this moment in history.

Shared memories create a sense of security. When we were feeling overwhelmed at home when I was a child — and even as an adult — one of us will say, "Well you know what Grandpa would say...". What follows may or may not be an actual quote from my grandfather, but it's shorthand for, "let's embrace our best thinking and wisest mind" when all else fails. In our congregation, the sense of shared memory for many longtime members is our cultural heritage of Swedish determination and the way our congregation has been able to stretch a dollar. For those of us who are newer, especially those of us who arrived during COVID, we're creating the shared memories that will see us through the years to come.

In the book *Subversive Witness: Leveraging Privilege to Create Systemic Change*, Dominique Dubois Gilliard ponders the role of common memory as being the most necessary component for establishing community. In fact, she says community cannot exist without it. This brought to mind for me that the common memory of our nation is fractured, and we've come to a space where we can't even agree on what's happening now, and it's due in large part because we've abandoned a lot of the common memory that used to hold us together — not by embracing a more diverse set of values, but by embracing narratives that whitewash our history and how it affects our present.

For a congregation, the net result of this sense of rootlessness caused by the last couple of years is a sense of loss of story among those who have been around awhile. For those of us who are newer, it can lead to a sense of rootlessness. For all of us, it leads us into a space of knowing we feel — *something* — but it's often so deeply seated in our core identity that it remains ineffable until we can process the depth of it.

Liz Tolbert died on July 10. I sat with her children before her death, and they told me their stories of who this congregation is to them. We're a congregation who rallied around their family when their father died of ALS in 1971, when they were still very young children. We're a congregation who supported Liz with friendship, inclusion, and true relationships that allowed her to feel so at home among us, that our community is among the last things she talked about.

A longtime member and friend of Liz came with her daughters to plan the funeral yesterday morning. I had the privilege of hearing stories about her time here at St. John, and what Liz means to this member and to this congregation. I heard stories of happy and hard times; funny and frustrating moments. Most of all, these common memories demonstrate the depth of connection and relationship we share.

We grieve her loss.

We rejoice in the gift Liz is to us, and the gift we are to her daughters in this moment.

I think that in this moment of so many struggles, this vignette of joy and sorrow coexisting in a moment illustrates the core struggle for this more generally shared moment in our larger story.

Common memory creates community, but in some very real ways, we have to *choose* it. It doesn't happen by accident. Our community *chose* to love Liz and her family. Our congregation *chose* to be a place where they — and so many others — were received with open arms. We *chose* to do things that *result* in the common memories that created community for this family. It likely wasn't a conscious decision as such, but it certainly didn't simply occur as a coincidence.

This is the nature of stress, loss, and grief. It isn't an ailment from which we're ever fully recovered because life keeps coming. If we try to do it alone, we find that the weight of it all becomes overwhelming so quickly. When we share with others and entrust our grief, sorrow, and pain alongside the joys, hopes, and celebrations to others for mutual care and support, we find our capability to bear each other up is much greater than our ability to carry all our own *stuff* on our own. The irony of community is that by taking on more, we bear somewhat less.

It remains true: COVID's uniquely oppressive weight changes how we deal with everything. It isn't that we're all just worse at dealing with things, it's that we have so much more to deal with.

Even so, what remains true is that in this challenging context, it's in sharing with others our weight and holding them up as we share it all that we find the blessed relief. Jesus tells us that his yoke is easy and his burden is light as he invites the weary, tired, and humble of heart to his feet. He knows what we still struggle to learn: when you bring people together to share in their vulnerability, we find a greater strength than anyone might ever be able to believe.

Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Eric

## REMEMBERING ELIZABETH TOLBERT

On July 10, the St. John family lost a faithful, dedicated, and beloved servant, Liz (Betty) Tolbert. She was busy doing the work of the church in many ways, but often behind the scenes. Liz was a member of St. John for about 60 years and contributed and participated in Altar Guild, Home Communion, Bell Choir, Bible study, Book Group, Senior Luncheon, St. John Seniors on the Go, Hand Puppets, St. John Players (a theater group), Sunday morning coffee and treats, and numerous special events at St. John. Liz will be remembered for her dry sense of humor, as a caring friend, and her love of life. After her husband, Henry Tolbert, passed away from ALS nearly 50 years ago, Liz was instrumental in creating our Memorial Courtyard in his honor and for others we have lost. She worked as a nurse at the Bedford VA for 32 years and an additional 10 years as a dental assistant. She is survived by her daughters, Lola and Amy as well as two brothers. She was much loved by all who knew her and will be greatly missed.



Her memorial service will be on Sunday, July 31, at 2:00 at St. John Lutheran Church.

### **Baked Goods for Liz Tolbert's collation.**

St. John will be hosting a reception after Liz Tolbert's funeral on July 31. If you would like to bake something to contribute please contact Valerie in the church office or Carol Leighton at 978-897-5938. Thank you!



# RUBY'S ROAD TRIP

Ruby has already hit the road this summer spreading love and smiles. Oh, and laughter—there's just something about her sweet face that makes people giggle—or laugh out loud. And isn't laughter a great way to share God's love? Well, we've thought of another way too. At stops that it's appropriate, Ruby will leave a You are Loved rock. Because sometimes, happening upon a sign of love is the lift that you need in an otherwise difficult time. Thanks to Jane and Al Miller for helping Ruby paint!

Ruby has already visited with some fun friends at interesting stops in North Adams, MA; Warner, NH; and Plattsburgh, NY. Where will she end up next?

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



# 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.

- Jane Miller
- Valerie Ripley
- Joan Niemi
- Morgan Rose
- Kirsten McLinn
- Was baptized by Pastor Hoyer
- Appeared as an extra in the Jason Mamoia action film, *Sweet Girl*
- Shares her first name with her grandmother, aunt, & godmother
- Attended a powwow as a guest of the Chief
- Used to play the harp

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

Mike Ripley is not just a Lego guy. He also loves to go to rock concerts.

Bart Dahlstrom has many talents. He was a drum major in the band and plays trombone.

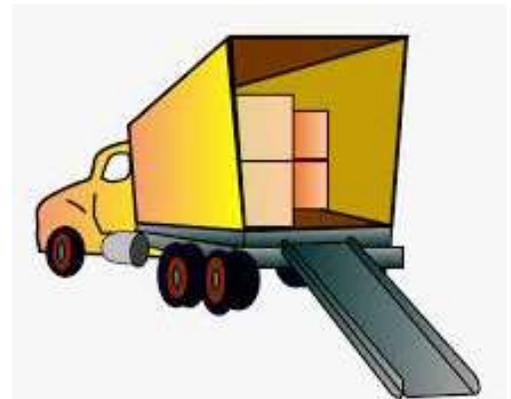
Kathy Menzel was a scuba diver in Belize.

Mike Misslin rarely misses yoga class.

Laura Kennedy is a boat captain.

## MISSION MOVES OPPORTUNITIES!

The Mission Moves program is supporting folks in transition with a moving team of volunteers and furniture from Household Goods as they get settled into a new home. In an effort to extend further care and support to the clients, we have started to send a follow up card of well wishes on their new home, including a grocery store gift card to each client. We are seeking donations to support this initiative and would be very grateful for any contributions!



Here is how you can help...

- Donate to support the costs for the rental trucks and moving supplies.
- Volunteer to support with moves one Saturday morning a month. Upcoming moves are scheduled for July 30th and August 27th!

Donations can be made to St. John with the subject line 'Mission Moves Gift Cards' and sent by mail or left in the Social Justice mailbox in the work room. Please contact the Social Justice Ministry at [socialjustice@stjohn-sudbury.org](mailto:socialjustice@stjohn-sudbury.org) with any questions! Thank you!

## CREATION HIKE CREATES FUN AND COMMUNITY

It may have been hot, but our first Creation Hike on the Mt Misery parcel in Lincoln was filled with beautiful scenery, bird songs, and fun! Kirsten McLinn planned our hike and provided thoughtful reflections that encouraged us to enjoy the clouds and the bird calls and let the birds do our heavy lifting. Most of our hike was through the forest with a breeze to keep us cool. We examined a fallen tree to figure out how old the tree was when it fell. We found some bugs. We found wintergreen in bloom. We found a tree to climb. And got to throw rocks in the pond. It was a great opportunity for St John family members of all ages to spend time together. Special thanks to Kirsten McLinn for her planning and leadership and to Jeannette Jones for sharing her extensive nature knowledge with us!

We will plan our next Creation Hike soon. Look for it in the coming months!



## CONFIRMATION CLASSES TO RESUME!

We will begin our newly overhauled Confirmation Program in September. For concerned parents, yes, we will still cover books of the Bible, prayer, Luther's Small Catechism, the Ten Commandments, and the sacraments. We will also work together on 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 month 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!



FUN, FELLOWSHIP, & FOOD  
AWAIT YOU AT OUR NEXT  
**FLASHY BBQS!**

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!

Wednesday, July 27th                      5:30-7 PM  
Friday, August 12th                      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.

During the months of July and August, we would like to help others benefit from our gatherings.  
Please bring family-friendly items for the Food Pantry so we can share our gifts with others.

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.

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.

## *There was a Flamingo Fest at St John?!?!?*

You know how sometimes you are asked to do something, and you say yes without really knowing what you are getting yourself into? Well, that's the leap that I took back in October 2020 when Karen LaCure, our parish nurse and Seniorcise instructor, took a new position outside of St John. I had never attended a Seniorcise class—in person or on Zoom—but I had participated in plenty of exercise classes. We had a hole in this wonderful community outreach program, and I figured I could fill it while we resolved our staffing needs. So I attended one Zoom class led by Karen, and armed with her list of exercises, I began leading St John's long-running (at least 15 years!) Seniorcise class.

We had some bumps along the way. Times when the ladies, who had only met me on Zoom, had to say, "Michelle, I don't think you are doing the exercise properly." And there are still times when I forget to do leg raises to the back or shoulder rolls, and they need to interrupt and say, "Michelle, did you miss this exercise?" And times when illness or injuries or family obligations kept us apart. And times when we sent cards and notes and prayed for each other.

One of our most troubling bumps was that due to COVID, I had never met many of them in person—and while many of them knew each other from attending the in-person classes (pre-COVID) or living in the same neighborhood or working in the same places, no one had met everyone in person. And over the last year and a half as we twisted our trunks, worked our triceps, stretched our muscles, and practiced balancing exercises—



like flamingos—we have woven ourselves together in friendship and support. We have become the Flamingo Gals. And the Flamingo Gals needed to flock together!

Finally, on July 11th, we gathered in person for our Flamingo Fest! We had lunch together on a warm, breezy afternoon under our canopies in our St John backyard. It was so wonderful to be able to see each other and at least give air hugs and kisses from mere feet away instead of over Zoom. And, I realized again, what I have known for more than a year, when I said yes to leading Seniorcise, I said yes to friendships that I treasure deeply and laughter—and exercise—every Monday and Wednesday morning.

*Seniorcise meets Monday and Wednesday mornings from 10-11:15 AM on the St John Zoom. We welcome anyone who wants a work out—with a side of laughter.*