

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Pastor: The Rev'd Eric Wolf (pew@stjohnsudbury.org) cell: 803-760-0222
Director of Youth & Family Ministry: Michelle Rose (mrose@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)

June 25th, 2021

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN

- June 26th -7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting/Sewing Group
June 27th -9:30 am - Worship **at St. John**
-10:45 am - Congregational Meeting (in-person & Zoom)
June 28th -10:00 am - Seniorcise
June 29th - 11:00 am -Seniors on the Go Book Group
June 30th -10:00 am - Seniorcise
- 8:00 pm - Newish Parents
July 1st -10:00 am - Bible Study
-11:00 am - Racism/Anti-Racism
July 2nd - 7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group
July 4th -9:30 am - Worship **at St. John**



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

JOIN US THIS SUNDAY, JUNE 27TH FOR THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING.

This will be in Heritage Hall
immediately following in-person worship.
(around 10:45 am)

You may also attend via Zoom (see login above!)

We will be voting on new Council Members
so please attend to ensure that your vote is counted!



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

CHILDREN'S LENDING LIBRARY DEBUTS

"We trust that God intends to enrich our community through a deepening embrace of diversity and a unifying faith that transcends our differences. As we are freely loved and accepted by God, we will offer love and acceptance to all."

With these words from our welcoming statement we debut our children's lending library. These books will highlight diverse authors and different lived experiences. Books featured in the children's messages are also here.

While these are termed 'children's books' all are welcomed to browse, read or borrow them.

Social Justice Ministry



ST. JOHN SENIORS ON THE GO BOOK CLUB FOR JUNE 29th

Please join us!!!

On Tuesday, June 29th at 11:00 AM, we will have a ZOOM book club meeting for just a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read.

On July 20th, we will discuss "Seven Sisters: Book One" by Lucinda Riley.

Please note that we are using the church ZOOM.

Join Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 978 443 8350
Passcode: 8350

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

Next books:

July 20, 2021, "Seven Sisters: Book One" by Lucinda Riley
August 17, 2021, "Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind" by Ann B. Ross
September 21, 2021, "The Forgotten Garden" by Kate Morton
October 19, 2021, "The Last Train to Key West" by Chanel Cleeton

WELCOME MICHELLE ROSE!

Friends,

Since I arrived, we've done a lot of things that have walked us away from normals and new normals as we are hopefully seeing an end to the pandemic portion of our lives, and today I get to announce with great joy that we're returning to a normal for which we've prayed, worked towards, and hoped for over these last months. This week St. John hired Michelle Rose as our new Director of Youth & Family Ministry! Her first official day on staff will be June 27, and we're already excitedly thinking about the work ahead of us! Please also join me in giving thanks for Laura Kennedy, Carrie Stamos, and Beth Holmgren as our interview team, and to Earl Baucom and Albert Siu who worked in an advisory capacity on the backend employment tasks.

What a great day to be at St. John! Welcome to you, Michelle! We can't wait to see what God is up to now and next.

Grace & Peace, PEW

THANKS FOR MAKING ME THINK: IMPACT VS. INTENT

I got an email after last week's newsletter article addressing the closing sentence.

The article was exploring my continued grief regarding the murder and martyrdom of the Emanuel 9, and in a moment of (melo?) dramatic flair, I wrote something that felt particularly poignant to me in the moment that addressed our tendency to cut short the lives of people whose witness is actually making a change in the conversation. I ended with this:

Christianity isn't so much about believing things about Jesus, rather it's about believing the things that Jesus taught us about God and each other. In the fullness of Jesus' humanity and divinity, we see what our own full humanity looks like: one that ignores the barriers between us and sees faces beloved by God.

We love murdering people like that.

While I meant this "we" as inclusive of the whole human family, the email stated that they didn't want to be included in this statement and wondered what other members of St. John think about being included in this statement. It was such a helpful email because it caught me in something that happens from time to time for all of us — I hadn't given a lot of thought to what others might hear in a question like that. While I believe consideration of how we participate in the systems that murder the saints a poignant question for us to ponder as God's children, it's also true that there are ways to ponder this without being quite so blunt. Now no one's ever accused me of being particularly subtle, but there are moments for blunt force truth and there are moments for that same truth to contain a little padding to make it easier to catch.

The dynamic that came to mind is *Impact vs. Intent*.

"I didn't mean it that way!"

"Why aren't you hearing what I'm saying?"

"You didn't do the dishes!"

"When you say that, I feel unheard."

"That's racist."

"That's sexist."

"That's brings up too many uncomfortable memories, I can't talk about this."

"I just can't talk about this with you anymore."

I've heard all these things in my life in response to my own comments or actions. Some of them seem mundane. However, for people who recognize the truth of a person's love through acts of service it's not simply forgotten dishes, but a commentary on where they rate in your life. Probably one of my most uttered responses has been, "well I didn't mean it that way!" when I've made a borderline insensitive comment. I can dress it up all nice, but most responses to people who are upset do boil down to that true, but irrelevant, statement.

I learned a hard lesson about Impact vs. Intent on Facebook a few years back when I was trying to defuse a situation between a male colleague and a female colleague. After a few exchanges where it became apparent that we would never really come to terms with the issue, I said something like, "well, if we were all in one place together then we could sit down with some bourbon to talk it out and then we'd have a lot to apologize about".

What I *meant* was, usually when you sit down together for some real conversation in a friendly setting the conflict can melt away and those involved often trade "I'm sorry"s by the time it's all over as they hash things out.

What my female colleague *heard* was a crude statement that was interpreted as me making some sort of pass at her and / or diminishing her personally and professionally because she's a woman.

continued

Did it matter what I meant?

I thought it did.

I tried to explain, joke, and brush it away, but she felt unheard because I was *in fact* not hearing what she was saying. I was hearing what *I* was saying, and it wasn't until it really blew up and people were siding with her against me in a facebook group we'd both belonged to for some time that I did what I should have done in the first place. I stepped away. I called my bishop and scheduled a time with him, and emailed him the transcripts from the group so I could get his help figuring out where I went wrong. I was especially worried because I was on synod staff and didn't want to reflect poorly on him, and fortunately the other assistant to the bishop was there to offer her input as well. I was so intensely embarrassed by the whole thing and knew that it was somehow my fault, but I just couldn't figure out how things went south so fast and furiously.

"Well, you know there are smarter things you could have said, Eric". That was the bishop, and I agreed. He then pointed out, "here's where you were defensive", and my colleague pointed out, "here's where you missed what she said, and I can tell you this happens a lot with male colleagues and it's challenging". Though all of this is paraphrased, this is essentially what was said, and for the next hour we talked about *Impact vs. Intent*.

When someone challenges us on what we say, our first instinct is often to throw up a defense and try to dismiss it. *That's not what I meant!*, or my favorite, *Listen to what I meant, not what I said!*.

But what if...

What if, instead of reacting with our defensiveness we instead learned the reaction of curiosity?

I'm not my words. I'm not my beliefs. I'm not my thoughts. I'm not defined by anything but by the combination of my baptism and my guiding principles. The trouble is that when it comes to others, I'm chiefly identified by my words and actions because people don't have access to my principles, better nature, or what I meant to say.

Here's the hard part.

I believe Jesus' command to love one another means that *our Impact is more important than our Intent*. If my words or actions hurt someone, does it really matter whether I meant to do it? I've never intended to rear end someone, but it's happened. My intentions otherwise didn't reverse or prevent the accident. As Paul writes in Romans 14:7-9, we don't live to ourselves and we don't die to ourselves, but we live and die in Christ. Following the example of Jesus means that we have a true responsibility to the people we've been commanded to love.

I like what I wrote last week, it did what I wanted it to do in context, but at the end of the day I realize that my own experiences have taught me that I'm called to observe the impact of my behaviors from a posture of love and respect regardless of my intent.

Thanks for making me think.

Grace & Peace,
PEW

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS:

Rachel Florey

Johnny

David Donnelly

Trish Sarvela Leiva

Paul Simeone

Patricia Jolou

Ruth Avery

Janice Potter

June Carins

Erica Kivimaki

Rev. Angelika Zollfrank

Brian

Wendy

Christopher Miller

Alexis Marsh

Liz Tolbert

John Duane

Jim Hansgate

Ron Rakowsky

Peter Kindem

Bill Davis

Regina Mueller

Richard

Brian Young

Brennan McGinnis

Pat Quinn

Rhonda Tibbetts

Charlotte McNeil

Norma Duane

Steven Greene

Helen Williams





*Outdoor Worship
and Picnic*

July 18, 2021

Worship - 10:30 am

Picnic immediately following

AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM/

COLLINGS FOUNDATION

568 MAIN ST.

HUDSON, MA 01749

Caroline and Bob Collings have graciously invited us to use their property for outdoor worship and a picnic. We are asking that you bring your own chair and a brown bag lunch for your family.

If you would like to visit the American Heritage Museum that day, you may visit www.americanheritagemuseum.org to purchase tickets.