

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

16 Great Rd., Sudbury, Ma 01776
978-443-8350 www.stjohnsudburyma.org

Pastor: The Rev'd Eric Wolf (pew@stjohnsudbury.org) cell: 803-760-0222
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Office Director: Valerie Ripley (office@stjohnsudbury.org)
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Organist: Bart Dahlstrom (organist@stjohnsudbury.org)
Sexton: George LaBarge

March 9, 2023

UPCOMING AT ST. JOHN

- | | |
|----------|--|
| March 11 | 4:00 pm - Bible Study |
| March 12 | 9:30 am -Worship
10:45 am - Sunday School
NO Confirmation |
| March 13 | 10:00 am -Seniorcise |
| March 14 | 7:30 am - Lenten Morning Prayers (Zoom)
11:00 am-Seniors on the Go Book Group
7:30 pm - Youth, Family and Education Ministry |
| March 15 | 10:00 am-Seniorcise |
| March 16 | 10:30 am - Bible Study
6:45 pm - Lenten Devotions
NO Rehearsal |
| March 17 | 7:30 pm -Knitting Group |
| March 18 | 3:00 pm - Beach Party |
| March 19 | 9:30 am -Worship
10:45 am- Sunday School BRIDGE
12:00 pm - In person Council Meeting
5:30 pm - Confirmation |
| March 20 | 10:00 am - Seniorcise |
| March 21 | 7:30 am - Lenten Morning Prayers (Zoom)
11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Book Group |
| March 22 | 10:00 am - Seniorcise |
| March 23 | 10:30 am - Bible Study
4:00 pm - SOG Discussion on Race/ AntiRacism
5:45 pm - Bells
6:45 pm - Lenten Evening Prayers (in-person)
7:15 pm - Choir |
| March 24 | 7:30 pm -Knitting/ Crafting Group |
| March 26 | 9:30 am -Worship
10:45 am- Sunday School
5:30 pm - Youth Ministry Collaborative |



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)



**MARCH 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.



**ST. JOHN SENIORS ON THE GO BOOK CLUB FOR
MARCH 14th AND 21st**

Please join us!!!

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

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

On March 21st we will discuss “The Rent Collector” by Camron Wright.

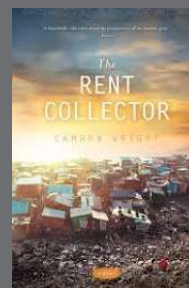
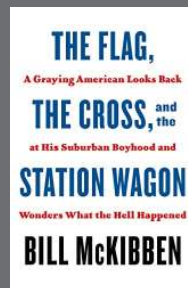
Any questions, contact Jan Nielsen at jrnielsen@charter.net or 978-549-3044.

Next books:

March 21 - “The Rent Collector” by Camron Wright

April 18 - “Sarah’s Key” by Tatiana de Rosnay

**May 16, 2023, “The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek”
by Kim Michele Richardson**



WE PRAY FOR OUR COMMUNITY:

Brian Young
John Duane
Joan LeDuc
Judy
George Stanley
Pastor Ivan
Liz Packard
Ara Bramantis
Wanda Miller
Nancy Quinn
Tom Toepfner

Christopher Miller
Helen Williams
Marilyn Kunelius
Carolyn Sweeney
Gus Sullivan
Janet Erb
Martha
Amber
Caryl Lundie
Glen Jorda
The Niemi Family (bereavement)

Charles Miller
Janice Potter
Rhonda Tibbetts
Claudine Selzer
Barbara Locke
Bob
George Wolf
Katie
Lauri Pekkala
Brian Fuller

Norma Duane
Jan Nielsen
Ann Kirk
Meg Davis
Mark Sarvela
Joan Western
Donna & Bob May
Gogi Woodward
Estela Gaudet
Joyce Fryklund



ALL MY BOXES & BAGGAGE

Every time anyone in my life has ever talked about moving, we all say the same thing: *how in the world and sweet name of sugar did we get all this stuff???*”. George Carlin said it best, observing that houses are a place to keep our stuff. When we fill them up, we buy bigger houses to hold our stuff, and then we get *more stuff* until we need a bigger house to store more stuff.

When we moved from South Carolina to Massachusetts, we sorted, sifted, and threw out so many things before packing them away to carry. When we arrived in Medford, we discovered that even some of what we brought could have been culled. As we complete our move from Medford to Sudbury, we find again that there are boxes we haven't opened, stuff we've collected, and things we don't even recognize that apparently belong to us but we have no idea how or when or who brought them! Some of these items we feel we need to bring with us, unopened. Some of these items we cleared out, and still will find a few more things that need to go, no doubt.

Whenever I move, I think about what I carry with me from one place to another in life. I carry my baptism, my history, my identity, and my life vocations and roles. I carry joys and sorrows, scars and wounds, healing and hope. I also notice each time I perform this inventory that I carry some unopened boxes that need to be dealt with, but often I just put them into my mental attic until it's time to sort them again.

This time, I made the active decision to use the time, solitude, and effort of packing and loading to open some of these interior boxes and choose more carefully what to keep.

I found I carry some residual pain and grief from our move north. Some of it turned out to be the sorrow of unfinished business, strained relationships, unrealized hopes and goals, and the possibilities that became moot when we moved. Some of it's the challenges of entering into COVID within about six months of arriving, the challenges of learning new cultural norms and practices. I still find I'm frustrated that I don't quite speak the language here well enough to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and *faux pas*.

I also appreciate finding a deep well of gratitude, and a hopeful future in so many ways that allow some of these packed and stacked corners where I store my baggage to remain in their little piles. I realized that I have no actual regrets despite that I do still have some tenderness. This became a surprising gift.

I also spent time considering that maintaining the space where I carry the baggage of grief, unfulfilled hopes, unrealized goals, and odd random hurts takes energy away from pursuits that I find much more meaningful. It robs me of energy I could use to pursue my passions and vocation, and steals time and energy from my family.

It turns out that holding on to the hurts of the past is *costly*. I don't mean to say that the persisting pain of loss and grief from loved ones who have died or major life disappointments that we'll continue to process can somehow go away. We may find relief, but grief is a companion we learn to accommodate. What I do mean to say is that to continue holding onto anger, insult, injury of pride, and disappointment in lost opportunities is detrimental to our own lives, health, wellness, and joy.

Why do you work for bread that does not nourish?, Jesus asked.

Why do we nurture, nurse, hold, embrace, feed, and otherwise care for grudges and anger that we could have long since put away had we chosen to do so?

The language around long-held anger and grudges is intimate, relational, and reveals time and effort to maintain them. Our grudges don't settle anything with anyone else but ourselves as we justify them. Hate is a poison that harms only our own hearts. Anger doesn't persist on its own, and even though we may not kindle it ourselves, its low burn is most certainly our own choice.

I find myself doing strange things that run counter to my values when I maintain such treacherous intimacy with these negative emotions. I find that I speak more and listen less, because my listening energy is depleted. I find it's harder to think openly and positively because I've been tending my anger and engaging in negative inner dialogue. It's hard sometimes to understand just how devious our choice to remain angry can be until we observe how clearly and completely our unwillingness to forgive ourselves or others has poisoned what truly means the most to us, and destroys the relationships we most dearly value.

Over my years as a pastor, I've observed people refuse to engage in other stewardship like leading or serving on committees because they're angry about some decision or slight from years ago. As hard as it is to believe, I've even heard people refusing to give offerings to support the ministries of the congregation just because they're angry at the pastor! It's astounding to realize just how much our intimacy with long-nurtured anger can allow us to justify destroying even relationships we deeply value.

I say that to say this: I invite you to forgive. I invite you to tend only to the boxes and not the baggage. I pray, as I tend to my own wasteful use of my interior space, that we might all take this opportunity to declutter, dust, clean, and renew those spaces in our hearts where we store those pains and grudges that are not only unnecessary, but corruptive to our very soul.

As we step forward into our vocation as the Church, I pray that God breaks our hearts so we can do all we're called to do in the spirit of love with which God calls us each and all to experience and share.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Eric

MORNING PRAYER TUESDAYS AT 7:30AM DURING LENT

Pastor Eric invites you to invite him on the St. John zoom Tuesdays at 7:30 during Lent for a morning prayer.

This will include a short passage of scripture, some discussion, and an opportunity to pray with and for each other and whatever's on our hearts.

The plan is that it will last 30-45 minutes, depending on how deeply we engage.

Hope to see you there!



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

THE NEGRO SPIRITUALS ROYALTY PROJECT

Last fall, the church Council approved \$2,000 annually to fund a “Negro Spirituals Royalty project.” The aim of this project is first to recognize that we have benefited for many decades from the use of music written by unknown Black composers and lyricists who have never been compensated for their work. The second aim is to send financial support to organizations that train Black musicians or perform historically Black music, as a means of repaying what we owe for the use of this music. We have selected three such organizations: The Fisk Jubilee Singers (Fisk University); Hamilton-Garrett Music and Arts Academy; and the DC Strings Workshop. Our first donation this year, one-third of the budgeted \$2000, will go to the Fisk Jubilee Singers (more information on them appears below).

For next Sunday, March 19th, Bart has programmed three such pieces of music—two hymns, “I Want Jesus to Walk with Me” (ELW 325), and “Jesus is a Rock in a Weary Land” (ELW 333); and a postlude, “Were You There,” arranged by black composer Eugene Hancock. On that Sunday, we’d like to give the congregation an opportunity to participate more actively in this program by augmenting the budgeted donation to Fisk with a free-will offering in support of the Fisk Singers. I hope you’ll join us in supporting this worthy cause!

THE FISK JUBILEE SINGERS

The Fisk Jubilee Singers (<https://fiskjubileesingers.org/>) are vocal artists and students at Fisk University in Nashville, TN., who sing and travel worldwide. The original Fisk Jubilee Singers introduced ‘slave songs’ to the world in 1871 and were instrumental in preserving this unique American musical tradition known today as Negro spirituals. They broke racial barriers in the US and abroad in the late 19th century and entertained Kings and Queens in Europe. At the same time, they raised money in support of their beloved school. The Fisk Jubilee Singers continue the tradition of singing the Negro spiritual around the world. This allows the ensemble to share this rich culture globally, while preserving this unique music. There is an American Experience episode about the group (https://youtu.be/g_jLGZrUuMI) for further information.

IT'S TIME TO START THINKING ABOUT PUMPKINS!!



It is only March—not even spring, much less fall, BUT St John has been approved as a Pumpkin Patch site in October and we need to start planning to ensure we have a successful Patch!

For instance, if you have any old wagons or plastic crates/baskets that you are considering getting rid of, please consider giving them to St John! Providing wagons for folks to haul their pumpkins to their cars with and baskets for organizing the pumpkins will improve our customers’ shopping experience and increase our sales!

We also would like to provide fun photo opportunities for our visitors like the painted wooden pictures that you stick your face in so if you have some wooden boards that you don’t know what to do with, we would love to put them to good use!

If this sounds like fun to you and you would like to get more involved, please contact Michelle Rose at mrose@stjohnsudbury.org or 508-320-7245.

FAMILIES,
On **SATURDAY, MARCH 18TH**
3-5 PM



we will turn
Heritage Hall into
a Beach—of sorts.

We will turn up the heat and enjoy
sand and water tables, beach crafts
and games, & summertime food. Wear
your favorite beach clothes or bathing
suits and bring a beach towel. If you have a
favorite beach snack you would like to share,
please let Michelle know.

**PLAN TO JOIN THE FUN! AND
BRING A FRIEND!**

RSVP to Michelle Rose at mrose@stjohnsudbury.org
or 508-320-7245



Jesus Blesses the Children

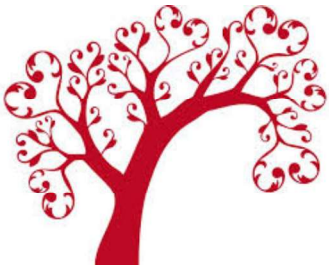
And on March 19th, we will bring **all ages** of God's
children together for our next

BRIDGE

(Building Relationships In-between Different Generations Event)

March 19th during the Education Hour

You may have guessed our topic: Jesus Blesses the Children. We will engage in conversations in creative ways and create art together! Not only is this for folks of all ages—it is for folks of all artistic abilities. Make sure to join us for the fun!



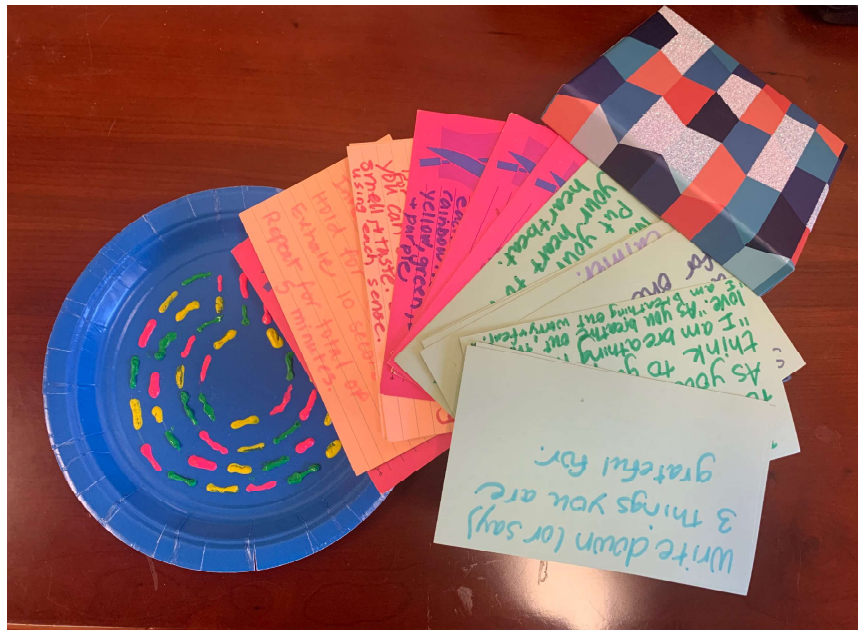
CONFIRMATION CONNECTION

In Confirmation class, we are currently focusing on faith practices: why we do and what we do. On February 26th, families came to class together to share ideas about their faith practices and to sample some new practices that they might want to add to their family activities.

We began thinking about various things we have practiced throughout our lifetimes—usually with the goal of practice makes perfect. And we considered how faith practices are different than that because we are not striving to be perfect; we are simply trying to work in God’s world in the ways that God wants.

We explored personal faith practices such as prayer (more on this next class), following the Commandments, helping in our St John community, making choices that feel like the right personal choices, and loving God with all our passion and intelligence.

And we experimented with various family faith practices moving from station to station. Hopefully everyone found a new activity—or two!—to add to their family’s faith practice repertoire.



Calling All Girl Scouts: Current and Former!

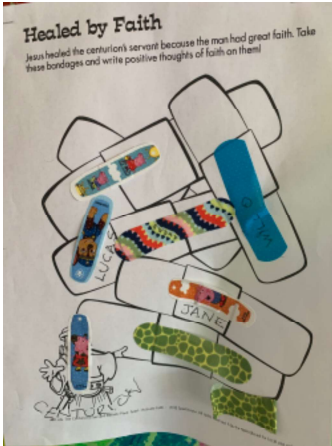
St. John will once again be celebrating Girl Scout Sunday on Sunday, March 12th. Girl Scouts will assist with worship and connect their faith with the Girl Scout Promise.

*“The motivating force in Girl Scouting is spiritual.” - Preamble, Constitution of Girl Scouts of the USA.
Girl Scout Sunday celebrates the powerful ties between Girl Scouting and faith. Girl Scouts are encouraged to connect their faith to the Girl Scout Law and earn the religious recognitions of their faith. Let’s honor the Girl Scouts and adult volunteers who give their time and talents in service of others!”*

- Girl Scouts Celebrate Faith, girlscouts.org/faith

If you are interested in participating and/or assisting, please contact Laura Kennedy at Kennedy.LKK@gmail.com. Thank you!

SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP



Our lesson on February 26th focused on requesting help, giving help, and asking Jesus for help as we considered the story of The Centurion's Servant. We enjoyed using fun band-aids to pray for each other!



We love a good parable in Sunday School, and on March 5th we discussed the parable of The Sower. We considered lots of items that might be helpful for growing plants successfully. Things that come immediately to mind like seeds, soil, sunlight, water; and things that might not—like piano music, a blanket, gentle voices, and food. As we shared the story of The Sower, we held up the items that Jesus talked about to grow plants, and we considered what kind of soil we would like to grow in if we were plants. We agreed that good, rock-free, weed-free soil is best!



We enjoyed various stations around growing plants: decorating pots, planting seeds, making seed ornaments, and a felt board where we could take a plant through a growth cycle! We are ready to grow in God's good "soil."



SINGING WITH THE LUTHERANS

MARCH 19, 2010 AT 10:16AM

BY GARRISON KEILLOR

I have made fun of Lutherans for years - who wouldn't, if you lived in Minnesota ? But I have also sung with Lutherans and that is one of the main joys of life, along with hot baths and fresh sweet corn.

We make fun of Lutherans for their blandness, their excessive calm, their fear of giving offense, their lack of speed and also for their secret fondness for macaroni and cheese. But nobody sings like they do.

If you ask an audience in New York City , a relatively Lutheranless place, to sing along on the chorus of ' Michael Row the Boat Ashore', they will look daggers at you as if you had asked them to strip to their under-wear. But if you do this among Lutherans they'll smile and row that boat ashore and up on the beach! And down the road!

Lutherans are bred from childhood to sing in four-part harmony. It's a talent that comes from sitting on the lap of someone singing alto or tenor or bass and hearing the harmonic intervals by putting your little head against that person's rib cage. It's natural for Lutherans to sing in harmony. We're too modest to be soloists, too worldly to sing in unison. When you're singing in the key of C and you slide into the A7th and D7th chords, all two hundred of you, it's an emotionally fulfilling moment.

I once sang the bass line of Children of the Heavenly Father in a room with about three thousand Lutherans in it; and when we finished, we all had tears in our eyes, partly from the promise that God will not forsake us, partly from the proximity of all those lovely voices. By our joining in harmony, we somehow promise that we will not forsake each other.

I do believe this: These Lutherans are the sort of people you could call up when you're in deep distress. If you're dying, they'll comfort you. If you're lonely, they'll talk to you. And if you're hungry, they'll give you tuna salad!

The following list was compiled by a 20th century Lutheran who, observing other Lutherans, wrote down exactly what he saw or heard:

1. Lutherans believe in prayer, but would practically die if asked to pray out loud.
2. Lutherans like to sing, except when confronted with a new hymn or a hymn with more than four stanzas.
3. Lutherans believe their pastors will visit them in the hospital, even if they don't notify them that they are there.
4. Lutherans usually follow the official liturgy and will feel it is their way of suffering for their sins.
5. Lutherans believe in miracles and even expect miracles, especially during their stewardship visitation programs or when passing the plate.
6. Lutherans feel that applauding for their children's choirs would make the kids too proud and conceited.
7. Lutherans think that the Bible forbids them from crossing the aisle while passing the peace.
8. Lutherans drink coffee as if it were the Third Sacrament..
9. Some Lutherans still believe that an ELCA bride and an LC-MS groom make for a mixed marriage. (For those of you who are not Lutherans, ELCA is Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and LC-MS is Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, two different divisions of the same Protestant religion.. And when and where **I grew** up in Minnesota , intermarriage between the two was about as popular as Lutherans and Catholics marrying.)

10. Lutherans feel guilty for not staying to clean up after their own wedding reception in the Fellowship Hall.
11. Lutherans are willing to pay up to one dollar for a meal at church.
12. Lutherans think that Garrison Keillor stories are totally factual.
13. Lutherans still serve Jell-O in the proper liturgical color of the season and think that peas in a tuna noodle casserole add a little too much color.
14. Lutherans believe that it is OK to poke fun at themselves and never take themselves too seriously.

And finally, you know you're a Lutheran when:

- *It's 100 degrees, with 90% humidity, and you still have coffee after the service;
- *You hear something really funny during the sermon and smile as loudly as you can;
- *Donuts are a line item in the church budget, just like coffee;
- *The communion cabinet is open to all, but the coffee cabinet is locked up tight;
- *When you watch a 'Star Wars' movie and they say, 'May the Force be with you', you respond, 'and also with you';
- *And lastly, it takes 15 minutes to say, 'Good-bye'.

May you wake each day with His blessings, Sleep each night in His keeping, And always walk in His tender care.

COFFEE HOUR HELP NEEDED!

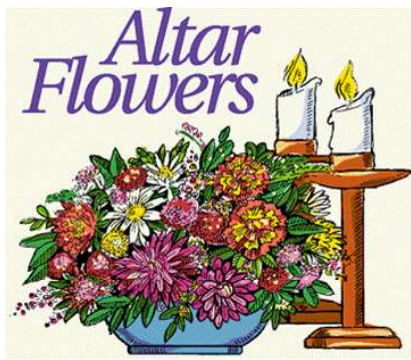
Please consider signing up to host coffee hour.
We are in need of goodies and people
who are willing to make coffee,
especially in the next few weeks,
while one of our dedicated hostesses is on vacation.
It would be a huge help to have a few new faces
providing this much enjoyed fellowship!
The sign up is on the rolling white board with
the worship assistant sign-up, or you may call
the church office (978-443-8350) or Carol Leighton.



THANK YOU NOTE

*Dear Prayer Shawl Ministry,
What a lovely surprise gift! Thank you for the caring and blessings you sent me in the beautiful shawl as I heal from cancer surgery. I am so thankful for your prayers as I truly believe in the power of prayer. God bless you for your kindness.
St John Lutheran Church will always be a part of me.*

In Christian love, Doris Peterson (member 1971-1974)



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.

A CHANCE TO SERVE...

Have you always thought that you would like to be a
reader on Sunday mornings?

This is the perfect time to get involved! We need you!

GOOD NEWS.. there is NO age restriction!
it doesn't COST anything!
there's no TEST!

What...you don't know about the microphone???

MORE GOOD NEWS...

Mike Ripley will host a session for readers on **Sunday,**
March 12 following the service. This is for experienced
readers as well as those who would like to help with our
service .

Please come and participate!

EASTER OPPORTUNITIES

It's time to sign up for Easter flowers! The sanctuary looks and smells so lovely on Easter morning thanks to these special offerings. As always you may designate whether you want to dedicate your flowers in memory or in honor of a loved one.

The cost for the flowers this year will be \$15.00 per plant. You are welcome to take them home and plant the bulbs in your home garden after Easter!



This year we are adding another opportunity for you to participate in our Easter celebration services. Perhaps you can't sing in the choir or play a brass instrument but you can still participate by making a donation in the amount of your choosing toward our special Easter music.

Please use the envelopes in the pews and note whether your donation is for flowers or music. Thank you.

2023 LENTEN WORSHIP

Weekday Lenten Services

Every Tuesday during Lent (Zoom) 7:30 am*
Every Thursday in March at 6:45 pm

Holy Week

Palm Sunday	April 2 at 9:30 am
Maundy Thursday	April 6 at 7:30 pm
Good Friday	April 7 at 7:30 pm

Easter Sunday

April 9 at 9:30 & 11:00 am
Easter Egg Hunt in between the services.

**Pastor Eric invites you to join him on the St. John Zoom Tuesdays at 7:30 during Lent for a morning prayer service. This will include a short passage of scripture, some discussion, and an opportunity to pray with and for each other and whatever's on our hearts. The plan is that it will last 30-45 minutes, depending on how deeply we engage. Hope to see you there using the main church Zoom account listed on page 1 of the newsletter.*

A Film About Confronting Racial Injustice

Legacy of Courage: Black Changemakers in Massachusetts Past, Present, Future

Sunday, March 12 from 9:00 - 10:15 AM



~ Honor Black History Month and Women's History Month ~

Join us for *Legacy of Courage*, an inspiring 20-minute film about Black women in Massachusetts history who confronted slavery and racial segregation. The film will be followed by small group discussions exploring what we can learn from these changemakers and how to apply that learning to today's challenges. Bagels and coffee will be available.

Registration is required. Click here to register>

For additional information email antiracism@bethelsudbury.org.

Sponsored by Beth El Antiracism Working Group, BE InSpirEd Program and Sudbury for Racial and Social Justice (S4RSJ).



THRIVENT ACTION TEAM OPPORTUNITY!

Are you a Thrivent Member? Are you familiar with Thrivent Action Teams? Simply gather a team of friends, family or neighbors to put on a fundraiser, educational event or service activity. They'll provide the resources you need to get started – including up to \$250 in seed money.

Then you and your team can get busy bringing your project to life. You may apply on-line at <https://www.thrivent.com/about-us/membership/thrivent-action-teams>

This month, St. John members **Walter and Janet Sarvela** are sponsoring their own service activity with Thrivent's help. They will be shopping and filling the food pantry cart at St. John with lots of pantry staples that will help out the clients of the Acton Food Pantry.

Please help further fill the food cart in the lounge by bringing in the current most critical needed items listed below:

Baking mixes-brownie, cake, cookie

Canned fruit

Dish soap

Gluten free bread

Jarred pasta sauce

Laundry soap

Oatmeal-flavored packets

Sugar

Canned chicken

Canned soups

Dried beans (kidney, pinto, etc)

Individually packaged nut-free kids' snacks

Jelly

Nuts-pecans, pistachios, walnuts, almonds

Protein bars (such as Kind, Luna, Clif, Rx)

Thank you for your support, and if you are a Thrivent Member please think about sponsoring your own service activity.

