

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Pastor: The Rev'd Eric Wolf (pew@stjohnsudbury.org) cell: 803-760-0222
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)

May 28, 2021

UPCOMING EVENTS!

- | | |
|----------|---|
| May 28th | -7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group |
| May 30th | -9:30 am - Worship at St. John |
| May 31st | -Office Closed - Memorial Day |
| June 1st | - 11:00 am -Seniors on the Go Book Group (Jan's Zoom) |
| June 2nd | -10:00 am - Seniorcise |
| June 3rd | -10:00 am - Bible Study |
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| | -6:00 pm - Confirmation |
| | - No Class! -The World According to John? |



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



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INVITATION & CHALLENGE

If I've learned anything in my life, and I had a math teacher tell me once that it's questionable whether this is possible for me, it's that the key to everything is relationship. I told our adult leaders of youth at events, "All we have to offer is Jesus and relationship, and if we don't offer relationship first then they won't care what we have to say about Jesus". I believe this in my core, and am actually becoming convinced that at the end of the day, maybe it's only relationship that we have to offer because this is what Jesus offers us.

In fact, when you get right down to it, relationship is really the only currency in this world. There are some things we discover money just can't buy, and there are some people that power can't persuade. In chatting with a friend who was significantly older than I was at the time in Waffle House over late night coffee one night, he was telling me about this company he worked for writing mortgages called Countrywide — yes, *that*

Countrywide. He made his money selling mobile homes and getting people loans with next to nothing in terms of collateral. I'll never forget him telling me, "Eric, I don't sell trailers. I sell them a dream. I offer them the dream of home ownership. I sell them their family sitting around their own table and sitting out on their own deck, and living someplace that provides security."

Looking back at the mortgage crisis and housing collapse, those words sound a lot more predatory than they did then, and I remember thinking to myself then that the terms he described weren't good terms for these dreamers. But it's the truth.

Most of the money we spend that isn't tied up in the necessities of life is invested in our dreams. If we save, it's investing in our dream for the future. If we buy a car, it's hard not to picture myself in it as I look at it. I find people who can share with me the story of who I could be with their product so engaging that whether I buy or not, I end up engaging with them around the dream of dreaming.

When I say that all we have to offer is relationship, what I mean is that all we have to offer is the invitation. Dreaming dreams, sharing visions, swapping stories, helping someone to see themselves differently are all invitations into something more. We hear Jesus tell the disciples, "You'll do greater things than these", and it's an invitation to those close to him to invest themselves into the mystery of God's love, and accept the challenge to invest their lives in the vocation of proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom of God.

The thing about invitations is that they let someone know that you value them enough to bring them along with you. The invitation tells them that they're important and they exist in someone else's world. It always feels so good.

Challenge is the act of living into relationship. Challenge is Jesus, after inviting the disciples to follow him so they'll fish for people or heal and perform miracles, telling them that people will hate them because of him. The challenge is the promise that they'll suffer for all their efforts, but that the suffering will be worth it. People make a lot of hay and murder millions of trees writing about what's wrong with (the world / kids these days / the church / whatever the flavor of the week is), but the books only sell when we offer an easy fix or Ten Simple Steps to a Better You, or offer to get more kids in church on Sunday mornings.

Our cultural religion is an idolatry that likes to tell people that faith will make things easy, that we'll be blessed with prosperity if we believe enough, and that any church can be busting at the seams with just a few small changes. This is a lie.

I know it's a lie because it's not what Jesus promised or experienced. The invitation into relationship with God is one that *begins* with sacrifice through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It's one that *begins* with the work in mind, and full knowledge that this will not be easy. Anyone who tells you faith is easy is selling something that isn't Jesus. Jesus' yoke is easy and burden is light, but the yoke of Jesus' teachings about our

love for God being demonstrated in following Jesus' commandments and the burden of bearing our cross and following Jesus exist.

Jesus promises suffering, and though he delivers, God promises that we aren't going to suffer alone.

Faith is costly. Faithfulness is hard.

In fact I don't think anyone actually believes that faith is easy, and that's borne out in the fact that all the easy love efforts of the last fifty years have led to a revolt against religion because people know when they're being lied to. Even though God's love, grace, and acceptance are free, if someone's just giving heaven away with no sense of commitment or sacrifice, there's something deep within us that rebels against that notion because we *know* it can't work that way.

Nothing this important comes cheap, even if it is free.

I'll make you a promise today: I promise I'll never tell you the work before us is easy. I'll never cheapen God's love by telling you that you don't need to do anything. My grandfather told us all the time, "Don't treat me like family, I want to be treated like a guest!" because guests get the easy life and family has to do chores and hold up their end of the deal or it all falls apart — and Jesus didn't invite us into the space God is preparing for us to be guests. Jesus calls us family — children of God through the waters of baptism. Like all members invited into all families, belonging to each other never comes without its challenges that we also accept in order to belong.

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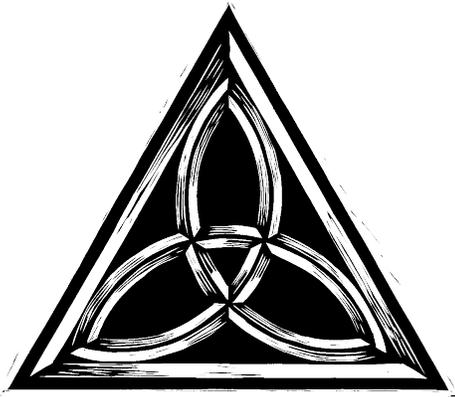
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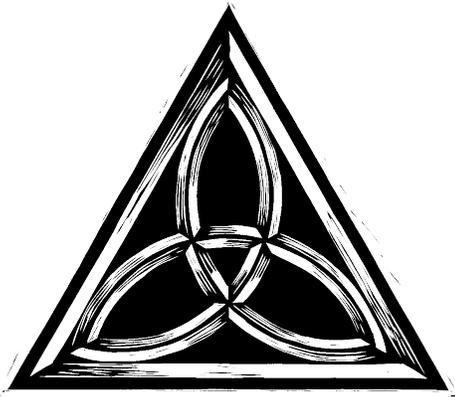
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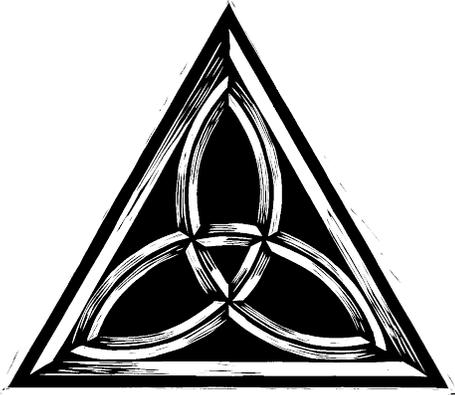
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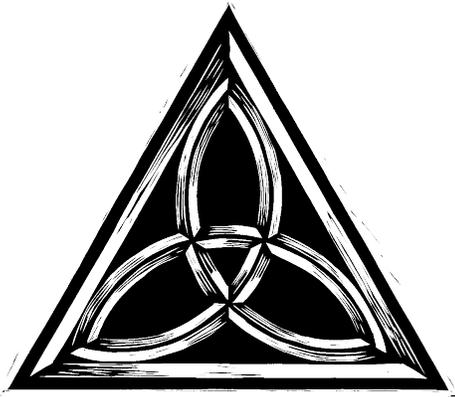
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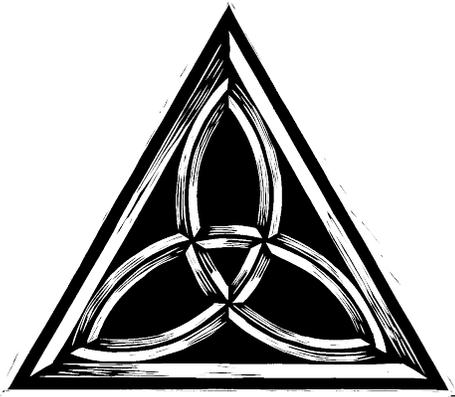
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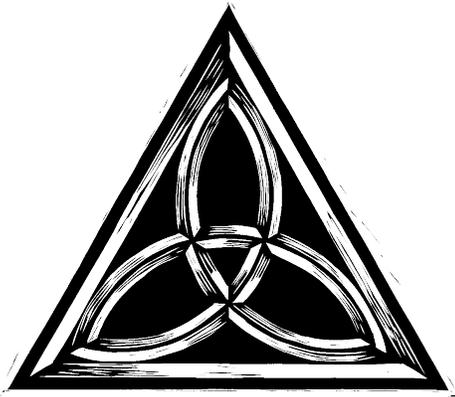
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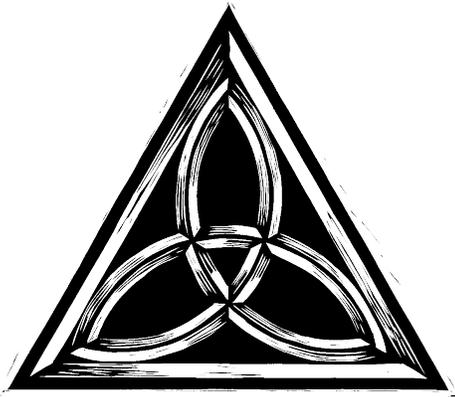
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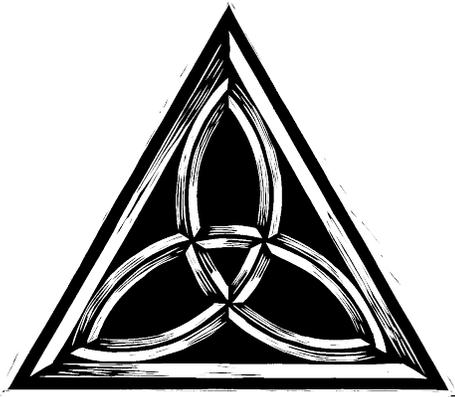
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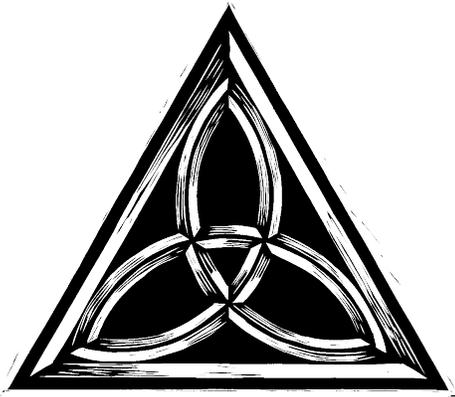
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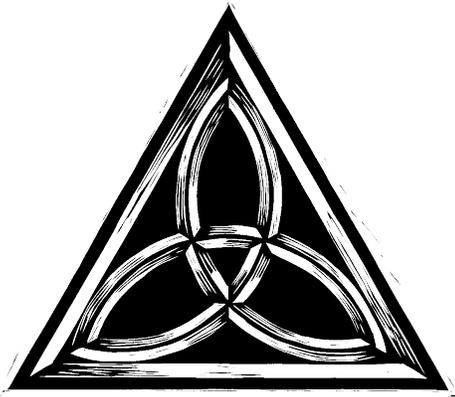
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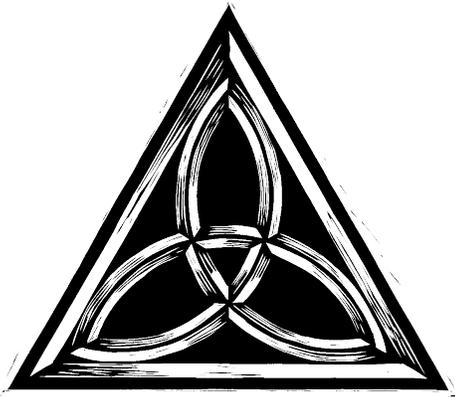
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SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

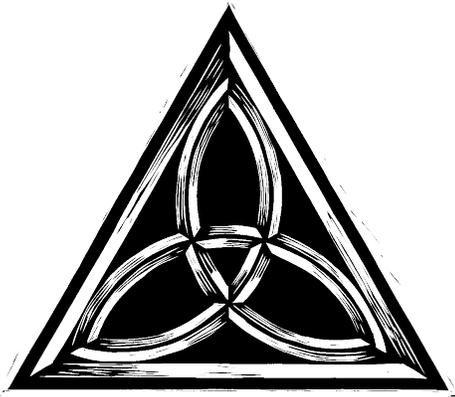
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For any questions please send an email to: SudburyRacialJustice@gmail.com

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Pastor: The Rev'd Eric Wolf (pew@stjohnsudbury.org) cell: 803-760-0222
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)

May 28, 2021

UPCOMING EVENTS!

May 28th	-7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group
May 30th	-9:30 am - Worship at St. John
May 31st	-Office Closed - Memorial Day
June 1st	- 11:00 am -Seniors on the Go Book Group (Jan's Zoom)
June 2nd	-10:00 am - Seniorcise
June 3rd	-10:00 am - Bible Study
	-7:00 pm - Stewardship Meeting
June 4th	- 7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group
June 6th	-9:30 am - Worship at St. John (with Pastor Zollfrank)
	-6:00 pm - Confirmation
	- No Class! -The World According to John?



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



**WHAT HYMNS SHOULD WE
SING THIS SUMMER?!**
Please send your suggestions to
Bart at organist@stjohnsudbury.org

PASTORAL CARE

The Rev. Barbara Smith-Moran is on call while Pastor Eric is on vacation next week. In the event of a pastoral emergency, you may reach her at 617-791-7919. Thank you to Pastor Barbara for making herself available!



Check us out!
[@stjohnsudbury](https://www.facebook.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.stjohnsudbury.org

INVITATION & CHALLENGE

If I've learned anything in my life, and I had a math teacher tell me once that it's questionable whether this is possible for me, it's that the key to everything is relationship. I told our adult leaders of youth at events, "All we have to offer is Jesus and relationship, and if we don't offer relationship first then they won't care what we have to say about Jesus". I believe this in my core, and am actually becoming convinced that at the end of the day, maybe it's only relationship that we have to offer because this is what Jesus offers us.

In fact, when you get right down to it, relationship is really the only currency in this world. There are some things we discover money just can't buy, and there are some people that power can't persuade. In chatting with a friend who was significantly older than I was at the time in Waffle House over late night coffee one night, he was telling me about this company he worked for writing mortgages called Countrywide — yes, *that*

Countrywide. He made his money selling mobile homes and getting people loans with next to nothing in terms of collateral. I'll never forget him telling me, "Eric, I don't sell trailers. I sell them a dream. I offer them the dream of home ownership. I sell them their family sitting around their own table and sitting out on their own deck, and living someplace that provides security."

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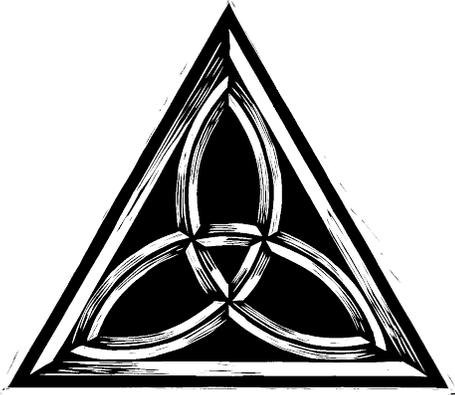
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