

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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May 7, 2021

OUTDOOR WORSHIP BEGINS ON PENTECOST, MAY 23 AT 9:30 AM

After much careful consideration and conversation, St. John will gather weekly for in-person worship beginning on Pentecost Sunday! We'll meet in the area near the Memorial Garden and celebrate Communion during worship.

Here are a few things to know:

- **Seating:** Bring a chair, socially distance.
- **Masks** are required.
- **Facilities.** We will have bathrooms available for emergencies.
- **Rain Plan.** In the case of rain we will worship in Heritage Hall which has limited seating capacity. First arrivals will have preference for indoor seating.
- **Special Accommodations:** Please contact the office if you need special accommodations: if you can't carry a chair with you, if you need special assistance, etc.
- **Music:** There will be lyrics in your bulletin, and you may sing. We'll be masked and outdoors so this is allowed.
- **Communion:** All bread will be gluten free rice wafers, option for wine or grape juice.
- **Bring Friends!** Since we're outdoors and it appears that we'll have space for extra, invite your friends to join you for worship!

We can't wait to see you on Pentecost!



Check us out!
@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

ST. JOHN SENIORS ON THE GO BOOK CLUB FOR MAY 11th

Please join us!!!

We will have a ZOOM book club meeting on Tuesday, May 11th at 11:00 AM for just a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read.

On May 18th, we will discuss "A Children's Bible" by Lydia Millet.

If you do not receive a ZOOM invitation email prior to the meeting time, please contact Jan Nielsen at jrnielsen@charter.net or 978-549-3044.

Next books:

May 18, 2021, "A Children's Bible" by Lydia Millet

June 15, 2021, "Girl, Woman, Other" by Bernardine Evaristo

July 20, 2021, "Seven Sisters: Book One" by Lucinda Riley

SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

5/9/21 No Class - Mother's Day
5/16/21 The Ascencion - Zoom: 11:00 (prek-3) and 11:45 (4-6)

CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE - ALL CLASSES 6:00 PM VIA ZOOM

5/9/21 No Class - Mother's Day
5/16/21 Vocation

MAY 13TH AT 11:00 AM - ZOOM MEETING TO DISCUSS RACE, RACISM, AND ANTIRACISM.

Our group meets the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 11:00 AM for informal, unstructured discussion about books, ideas, and experiences touching on race, racism, and antiracism.

Please join us.

If you do not receive a ZOOM invitation email prior to the meeting time, please contact Jan Nielsen at jrnielsen@charter.net or 978-549-3044.



SAVE THE DATE!

*Most Meetings are held via ZOOM
Call church office if you are having
trouble connecting.
(Zoom meeting information is below and is
the same for MOST church meetings)*

ZOOM Meeting

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

May 7th
May 9th

May 10th
May 11th
May 12th
May 13th
May 14th
May 16th

-7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group
-10:00 am - Coffee and Conversation'
-7:30 pm - Class with Pastor Eric-**Now What?**
-10:00 am - Seniorcise
- 11:00 am -Seniors on the Go Book Group (Jan's Zoom)
-10:00 am - Seniorcise
-10:00 am - Bible Study
- 7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group
-10:00 am - Coffee and Conversation'
-11:00 am - Sunday School - (Pre-K - Gr3)
-11:45 am - Sunday School - (Gr4-Gr6)
-6:00 pm - Confirmation
-7:30 pm - Class with Pastor Eric-**The World According to John**

BECOMING SOMEONE

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

— Acts 10:44-48

You don't eat with *those people*.

It's pretty easy to identify *those people*. They're the others; the not-like-us. They're from “off”. They root for the other team. They worship at another church or in another denomination or not at all. They vote differently or find different things important.

Those people feature frequently in my mind because I know what it's like to be one of *them*— I've been *them* an awful lot in my life because my personality is sort of borderline appropriate in a lot of circles. I'm fine with who I am, but I have to be careful in “polite” company because I grew up around impolite folks on construction sites, and it always sits at the back of my mind that I have to be careful not to be *too* honest about what I'm thinking most of the time. Even so, it's easy for me to pass when I know I need to or want to. My insecurities are inconvenient, but they aren't life threatening or career ending. My skin, my gender identity, my orientation, my social class, my employment status and chosen field; all of these put me in a set of very fortunate circumstances.

I remember a line in *Lethal Weapon*, where Danny Glover's character Murtaugh says to Mel Gibson's character Riggs, “sometimes I think God hates me”. Riggs replies with classic Gibsonian bravado, “well hate him back, it's always worked for me”. There's a logic in that, and we see it throughout the history of human existence.

“You hate me? Well I hate you more!”

“You hurt me, I'm going to hurt someone else.”

Maybe we don't say that out loud, but what the scene from both *Lethal Weapon* and the following two sentences say is true of many people who are (or feel) abused and marginalized. Hurting people hurt people. The cycle of abuse has less to do with any of the actual issues at hand and more to do with the sense of pain spinning up unspendable impotent energy and emotion that needs somewhere to go, and most frequently our targets are the ones we love. If you want to know when spouses fight most, it's when one of them is hurting and can't even begin to share it in a healthy way.

The cycle of abuse comes in a lot of forms, but very few of them are because someone's just a bad egg. It's just the case that these sorts of wounds just roll downhill until it finds someone vulnerable enough to take the pass.

Cain made an offering to God, but God preferred Abel's offering to Cain's. We don't have to stretch very far to come up with an internal dialogue for this one. “Isn't that just the way? Everyone prefers Abel to me. Mom and Dad are constantly talking about what a good guy he is. But me? Nope. Even God prefers Abel to me, and look, there he is now...let's see them prefer this”.

The older brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son, in which we learn the one who was truly prodigal was the older brother. He was always jealous of the fact that his younger brother never seemed to face any consequences no matter how badly or often he fouled things up. We end that parable with the words of

continued on next page

grace from their father to his faithful angry son, and are left to wonder what happened after. Life can be like this, lots of pain and very few answers.

This can be true theologically as well.

In the Bible, there are many Psalms that look for the righteous deliverance of God, a restoration of fortunes, anew hope and an indwelling of God's presence. It's all fun and games until the psalmist begins calling for the blood of their enemies, for the death of their children, for the razing of their cities and the desolation of their whole nation — all because, conveniently, God hates the same people the psalmist hates.

Pain, anger, and a feeling of unfairness are powerful narcotics and cause hallucinations in all sorts of ways.

God's people had been in and out of slavery, domination, subjugation, and bad situations for generations. It seemed like the most constant constant for their entire existence was that they would fall into and out of favor with God. It doesn't matter to me that they're Jewish; it doesn't really have a thing to do with their religion. The important thing is that they're *people*, and their real identity is, "we are those people".

In order to preserve their culture, their language, their religion, their land, their own sense of identity, they developed a tightly knit cultural ethic that kept *those* people out. After generations of abuse, suspicions about anyone who isn't *us* were at an all-time high. They identified who was in and who was out by where they prayed, to whom they prayed, what they ate, what they wore, who they associated with, and so many other rules and customs that were designed to protect them, but in the end just caused rift after rift after rift.

They were good people, and they were hurting people. They were good people, and they hurt people by excluding them and punishing insiders who transgressed. The Jewish people aren't extraordinary for this in any way except that they are the ones who represent a of us by being extraordinarily human so that we can see God, who is in no way ordinary, demonstrate just what love can do.

Don't we all imagine sometimes that God only likes us? That only we really get it? That everyone else is close, but holy cow, we've got it?

The beginning of Acts 10 is God instructing Cornelius to send for Peter, and Peter having a vision in a dream of a sheet with all sorts of animals that he was instructed to eat, and Peter's protest that he's a good Jew and hasn't ever eaten anything unclean.

What God has made clean, you must not call profane.

Gentiles wanted to hear the Gospel, but Jesus didn't come for the Gentiles, did he?

What God has made clean, you must not call profane.

Gentiles heard Peter preach, and the faithful were startled that they appeared to listen.

What God has made clean, you must not call profane.

Peter preached, and God's Holy Spirit descended and caused them to speak in tongues, praising God.

What God has made clean, you must not call profane.

Finally, Peter understood.

God's Holy Spirit fills us all, calls us all, heals us all. We receive God's Spirit, still hurting and hurting others, but we're called to heed these words spoken to Peter in a vision.

What God has made clean, you must not call profane.

It's not just about *those people*. Well, it is, only not in the way we think. It's about that place in our hearts where we fear that we are those people, and in that pain we hurt others by *making them become others to us*.

What God has made clean, you must not call profane.

This is a message to remind us how to treat our neighbor, but maybe more it's about having mercy on ourselves so that we might show that mercy to others.

God has made you holy, don't dare treat yourself otherwise.

PEW

FAMILY DINNERS WITH THE PASTOR'S FAMILY

Friends,

My family would like to invite your family to (ZOOM) dinner!

Over the next few months, Valerie will be calling the folks on our roster to invite you to ZOOM dinner on Thursdays at either 5:30 or 6, or another time that evening if those times just don't work. Each of us will fix a meal for our own family, chat, and eat together on ZOOM. Yes, this is a little weird, but so is the moment — also, we have a toddler and this allows her to get to bed on time.

Our hope is to have dinner with every family and get to know you while enjoying some good food and conversation. Lauren, Willo, and I can't wait to see you for dinner! PEW

NEW(ISH) PARENTS, MAY 12 AT 8:00 PM BY ZOOM

Beginning Wednesday May 12 at 8:00 pm, a group for New(ish) Parents will meet every second and fourth Wednesday of the month for about an hour. Our aim is to provide a chance to get to know each other, build new friendships, talk about what brings us joy and what we find challenging, and share some time with by ZOOM while enjoying a beverage of your choice. We're hoping to each leave the first session with a "buddy" family to keep in closer contact with during the off weeks so we can get to know some people more personally. We'll work out the other details as we go.

This group is for parents of children from birth through middle school, can't wait to see you there!

There's also a plan in the works to begin a group for parents of high schoolers and older as well in the near future once this group is established. If you're interested in helping Pastor Eric come up with times for this one, please let him know! This won't make you "in charge" unless you'd like that!

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS:

Rachel Florey	Brian	Bill Moldwin
Regina Mueller	Johnny	Wendy
Richard	David Donnelly	Christopher Miller
Brian Young	Trish Sarvela Leiva	Alexis Marsh
Robin Hartford	Brennan McGinnis	Paul Simeone
Pat Quinn	Patricia Jolou	John Duane
Rhonda Tibbetts	Ruth Avery	Jim Hansgate
Charlotte McNeil	Janice Potter	Ron Rakowsky
Isla Rose Kelley	Norma Duane	June Carins
Peter Kindem	Steven Greene	Erica Kivimaki
Bill Davis	Inger Rhoads	Larry Wolff
Liz Tolbert	The Siu and Kindem Family (bereavement)	





KITCHEN STARTER KITS

The Confirmation Class is planning a service project to create Kitchen Starter Kits for the Household Goods Recycling Ministry. You can help in one of 2 ways.

Pick up any of the items listed below and dropping them off in the box just inside the church entrance on North Rd (most can be found at the Dollar Store); or, Send a check payable to St John Lutheran Church with a note in the memo section designating it for the HGRM service project.

Most Needed Items:

- Can Opener
- Pot Holders (2)
- Dishcloth or Sponge
- Dish Towels (2)
- Set of Measuring Cups
- Measuring Spoons
- Slotted Cooking Spoon
- Wooden Spoon
- Spatula/Lifter
- Tongs
- Paring Knife
- Vegetable Peeler
- Cooking Fork
- Carving Knife

Additional Useful Items:

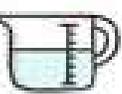
- Liquid Measuring Cup
- Spaghetti Spoon Server
- Ice Cream Scooper
- Pizza Cutter Wheel
- Potato Masher
- Wire Whisk/Beater
- Rubber Scraping Spatula
- Cheese Slicer
- Calendar

Please deliver items and checks to church by
 Monday, May 24th!
 Thank you in advance for your help!



HOUSEHOLD GOODSSM

Helping People Make a Home.



Outreach is donating \$1000.00 to the Covid-19 Crisis in India. If you would also like to contribute you may send a check to St. John with "COVID-19 - India" in the memo line or make checks payable to "Lutheran Disaster Response" and mail directly to: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
P.O. Box 1809
Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

SITUATION REPORT

COVID-19 CRISIS IN INDIA

MAY 3, 2021

SITUATION

In the past weeks, a surge of COVID-19 cases has ravaged India. India recorded over 400,000 new COVID-19 cases on April 30, the most ever recorded in any country during the pandemic. While thousands of deaths are recorded each day, the number of deaths is suspected to be much higher than reported.



Photo: Lutheran World Service India Trust

RESPONSE

For the past year, Lutheran Disaster Response has continuously supported partners and companion churches throughout India to respond to COVID-19. These partners include:

- Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Bodo Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Lutheran World Service India Trust
- Manipur Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Padhar Hospital in Madhya Pradesh
- United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India

They are supporting communities by distributing food and hygiene kits to vulnerable populations, conducting livelihood training for migrants, sharing information about COVID-19, and promoting prevention practices.

LDR is currently gathering updates from partners and companion churches to plan for continued support.

CALL TO PRAYER

God, our peace and our strength, we pray for India as it faces renewed uncertainties around COVID-19. Protect the most vulnerable, especially all who are currently sick and unable to receive medical care. Grant wisdom, patience, and clarity to health care workers, especially as their work caring for others puts them at great risk. Give those in India courage to face these days not with fear but with compassion, concern, and acts of service, trusting that you abide with us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Adapted from "Prayers for Times of Public Health Concern," ELCA



Lutheran Disaster Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.