

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)
Office Director: Valerie Ripley (office@stjohnsudbury.org)
Director of Choirs: Benjamin Perry (choirdir@stjohnsudbury.org)
Organist: Bart Dahlstrom (organist@stjohnsudbury.org)

September 9, 2022

UPCOMING AT ST. JOHN

- Sept 9 5:30 pm - Flashy BBQ
7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group
- Sept 11 9:30 am - Worship (In-person)
11:00 am - Rally Day Picnic @ Camp Sewataro
- Sept 12 10:00 am - Seniorcise
- Sept 13 11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Book Group
7:30 pm - Youth and Family
8:00 pm - Executive Committee
- Sept 14 10:00 am - Seniorcise
7:00 pm - Outreach
- Sept. 15 10:30 am - Bible Study
- Sept. 16 7:30 pm - Knitting Group
- Sept 18 9:30 am - Worship (In-person)
10:45 am - Sunday School
5:30 pm - Youth Ministry Collaborative
- Sept. 19 10:00 am - Seniorcise
- Sept. 20 11:00 am - Seniors on the Go Book Group
2:00 pm - Seniors on the Go Ice Cream Social
- Sept. 21 10:00 am - Seniorcise
- Sept. 22 10:30 am - Bible Study
4:00 pm - Discussion Group on Race/Anti-Racism
- Sept. 23 7:30 pm - Knitting/Crafting Group
- Sept. 24 9:30 am - Worship (In-person)
10:45 am - Sunday School
5:30 pm - Confirmation



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.

St. John Lutheran Church
16 Great Rd.
Sudbury, Ma 01776
978-443-8350
www.stjohnsudburyma.org

**SEPTEMBER 22nd at 4:00 PM
- ZOOM Meeting to Discuss
Race, Racism, and Antira-
cism.**

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 SEPTEMBER 13th AND 20th**

Please join us!!!

ZOOM book club meetings will be on Tuesdays, September 13th and September 20th, at 11:00am.

September 13th will be a get together to discuss prior books read and new books to read.

On September 20th we will discuss "The Stranger in the Lifeboat" by Mitch Albom.

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

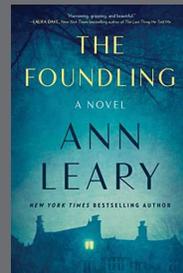
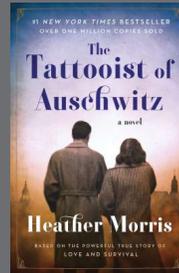
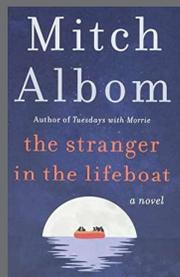
Next books:

September 20 - "The Stranger in the Lifeboat" by Mitch Albom

October 18 - "The Tattooist of Auschwitz" by Heather Morris

November 15 - "The Foundling" by Ann Leary

December 20 - "The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon" by Bill McKibben



PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS:

Brian Young
Norma Duane
Rhonda Tibbetts
Bill Davis
Jan Nielsen
Judy
Meg Davis
Ed Holmgren
Janet Erb
Pastor Ivan
Bob
Martha

Christopher Miller
John Duane
Alexis Marsh
Janice Potter
Marilyn Kunelius
Carolyn Sweeney
Joan LeDuc
Gus Sullivan
Joan Western
Barbara Locke
Sedona
George Wolf

Charles Miller
Helen Williams
Ruth Avery
Wendy
Ann Kirk
Claudine
George Stanley
Wanda Miller
Mark Sarvela
Christine Carosella
Liz Packard



WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION?

This piece is confessional in the sense that I'm sharing some of my own internal wrestling as a means of highlighting a universal human struggle. I hope it might prove useful to others who wrestle with similar internal dialogue.

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. - 1 Corinthians 13:12

Sunday's sermon hit on a topic that I've wrestled with quite a bit over the last week: reaction vs response, and the importance of asking "Why?". I'm arguing against myself a little bit in this article, or at least attempting to add more nuance.

The need to challenge my *reaction* (worrying about what happened) rather than maintain the discipline to *respond* (by asking why someone might have done something) is strong. It's such a challenge because the question, "What are you *doing*?", is part of my own upbringing. Whenever I heard this, I heard the insinuation that my intentions were as bad as my behavior. Because it's so deeply rooted, I'm convinced that this practice of being attentive to responding rather than reacting is the work of my lifetime.

Laments: Not Just Mild Complaining

Most recently, this consideration started as a kind of lament. I always try to be honest with myself and others, so I feel compelled to clarify that though *lament* isn't necessarily a fancy word for *complaining mildly because I'm feeling a little bad for myself*, it did kind of start that way. Nearly all personal growth starts that way, so let it be noted.

My lament was that pastors spend a lot of time hearing about what we've done and how that makes people feel. This is mostly fine because we all knew what we were signing up for before going into ministry. Even so, people are people and we're *all* much more likely to share our displeasure than our pleasure, meaning pastors tend to hear more negative responses than positive ones. Sometimes it wears on a person because we're all human. Sometimes it wears on a person because we feel misunderstood, or because it's been a particularly challenging moment. This is just life as a human for the most part.

The issue was about choosing when to use my day off to schedule a meeting or not. In some ways, it boils down to "what constitutes an emergency?". This is always a tough one, because mileage really varies with what people consider to be important enough to interrupt a person's day off.

Though I provide my cell number for calling and texting to make certain I'm *always* available for emergencies, some of it boils down less to availability than it does to **perception** of availability. This is important.

Every pastor finds this part of the pastoral vocation challenging. We all want to do the right thing. We all want to be there when we're needed. Despite our best intentions, every pastor ends up on the business end of someone's disappointed expectations from time to time. *No good deed goes unpunished* is a cliché for a reason!

Dealing With the Human Reality of Disappointing People

You might be noticing right now that this isn't only something pastors face. Again, this is simply a human thing. I feel okay writing about it so plainly because I know pretty much everyone knows the struggle. I feel certain you can put yourself in this situation, in this struggle, in this momentary sense of, "Okay, I disappointed people. Now what?".

When a few people told me they thought I'd made a wrong decision about guarding my day off recently, it really bothered me; not because I people think I was wrong — okay, maybe a little... That aside, I felt *bad* because this generated enough energy in a few people that they made the effort to mention it to me. I felt bad for being the cause of this kind of disappointment. I try to do things that heal, not hurt. If I hurt someone, it always matters to me. It remains with me for quite some time as I make attempts not to repeat it, and when possible, repair it.

Being a human, it can be challenging not to react like one.

By the time Friday rolled around and I was rounding out my sermon planning, an important consideration came to light as a result of this wrestling. This experience is something every one of us has to deal with! I started thinking about interactions I've had with people who I hold close and with acquaintances. I started thinking about situations in my life when I've been so frustrated with what someone did that I didn't bother to stop and consider *why*.

The Best Defense is Vulnerability and Curiosity

We deal with the results of our choices in every aspect of our personal and professional lives. To make it worse, the harshest critic is most truthfully our own response to our own (un)reasonable shattered expectations. We all have to deal with the inner critic whose greatest talent is being disappointed in ourselves for rational and irrational reasons.

Feelings may not be facts, but they sure do *feel* factual!

The first reaction to Inner Critic was the defensive statement, "people keep telling me *what* I did, but not a single one of them has asked me *why!*" This was a little bit of self pity mixed with embarrassment. Confronting that fact, I wrestled with another reality that I believe is more universal: ***What I do*** has more impact on those around me than ***why*** I did it.

Reflecting on this allowed me to respond more dispassionately to Inner Critic.

Jesus calls me to love my neighbor, pray for those who persecute me, and to offer compassion to those who might intend me wrong — and this includes myself.

Our defensive reactions rather than empathetic responses are rooted in fear and shame, not love. Our desire to be understood rather than to understand when we do something that hurts someone else is a response to the experience of embarrassment and awkward social shame.

Jesus' command to put love for God and neighbor first reminds us the importance of living in the fact that *what* we do has more immediate impact on people around us than whatever reasons we may have for doing it. It's a calling to lay aside our own needs to tend to the needs of others first. As people of God, we're called to surrender our need for defense to embrace the needs of the people around us. As human beings, we're so absurdly and tragically bad at it a lot of the time that it's nearly comical.

It honestly doesn't matter *why* I chose to do whatever it is.

I am always called to attend to the hurts of others first. That's true for all of us. Tending to others despite our own hurt is holy work. It makes us vulnerable because we have to be aware of our own pain while we tend to the pain of others. We have to be compassionate with ourselves if we hope to have compassion for others. The act of loving neighbor and self means being honest in relationship, and accepting accountability or holding others accountable as is appropriate.

It's challenging, messy work.

Everything sacred builds up the community.

Everything sacred is therefore challenging, messy work.

From “What” to “Who and Whose We Are”

The act of holding each other in genuine mutual love as part of the body of Christ is an act of caring reconciliation. Our calling is to move past the *what* and into remembrance of *who and whose we are*. We are beloved, we are children of God. This is the core of the Christian identity.

When we can be real enough with each other to trust others with our own failings, we can show greater compassion for each other in tense moments. In this sacred relationship we feel heard and seen, and we practice healthy habits for *being* heard and seen.

In this mutual space, understanding why someone did something may help us move toward reconciliation - not because a person's reasoning will make a bad thing good; but because it humanizes the action. It gives context to what was done. Mutual compassion blooms in truth, and supplants the weeds of false social obligatory apologies and acceptances that leave the wounds untended. It also calls us to put the needs of others first, trusting that even if we feel misunderstood we'll still be loved.

In times when we're able to listen to someone else's why, it helps that person feel seen and heard. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13, “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, *even as I have been fully known*”. Knowing that someone has listened to our *why*, even if it changes *nothing* about what's happened, does change how both people feel about an interaction.

Ninety percent of the time, if someone who's been hurt feels truly heard, forgiveness and a restoration of relationship are possible as long as both parties are amenable to it. When someone who's hurt someone feels heard and knows that forgiveness has at least begun, it can lead to a grateful heart capable of showing greater compassion and restraint in the future.

In this way of thinking, *Why?* becomes a sacred question because it begins with the sacredness of our identity in Christ as children of God. This creates holy ground for understanding and mutual experience because it becomes an invitation to bring something valuable and maybe even vulnerable so we can share in a blessed exchange.

Shifting the question away from worrying about whether people understand why we did something to instead embrace loving curiosity about why someone feels a certain way becomes its own sacred gift; a blessed exchange. It becomes the kind of holy ground that gives us the urge to remove our shoes so we can feel the authenticity of its soil between our toes.

Ministry, and following the Way of Christ, provides many opportunities to grow in love and understanding. It turns out that these opportunities aren't found as frequently in things we do right as they are in times when we've missed the mark. Especially when we discover that something we did caused someone pain, stepping outside of our own reactivity to engage with loving curiosity is a practice that draws us closer to the heart of God by drawing us closer to each other.

May we all in every way seek to know others fully and, in the process, enjoy being more fully known.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Eric



FUN, FELLOWSHIP, & FOOD
AWAIT YOU AT OUR LAST 2022
FLASHY BBQ!

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!

Friday, September 9th 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.

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. Enjoying FLaSHY so much that you don't want it to end? We are too!
More FLaSHY events will be scheduled throughout the year.

If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Rose at mrose@stjohnsudbury.org,
(work) 978-443-8350 or (mobile) 508-320-7245.

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.

- Dorene Glynn
- Devon McLinn
- Ellen Baucom
- Paul Haugsjaa
- Mike McLinn
- Road tripped across the United States on a motorcycle
- Has been kissed by a camel.
- Lived on a sailboat for the first 9 months of life.
- Worked as a reporter for the local paper reporting real estate transactions and deaths.
- Chased parts for a Ford dealership as a first job.

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

Carrie Stamos started the "The Pony Cart Corn & Apple Company" seasonal business with her sisters when she was younger.

Suzanne Steinbach played a street urchin in a college production of *La Boheme*.

Jared Kennedy was born in Canada on Prince Edward Island before moving to northern Maine.

Emily Smith hiked in Peru this summer.

Royce Fuller was born in Pipestone, Minnesota, where stone quarries were mined by Native Americans for ceremonial pipes, which still continues to this day.

Lunchtime with Cambridge's Outdoor Church



It was a beautiful day on Carl Batton Plaza in Central Square in Cambridge. The benches were full of friends chatting as they munched sandwiches, fruit, chips and cookies. On August 27th the background noise was just cars and the screech of the MBTA buses. Other days we have been treated to reggae music blasting from a boom box.

What brought us and the folks who filled those benches to Central Square that day? On the fourth Saturday of every month a group of youth, parents, and youth leaders

from the Youth Ministry Collaborative ventures into Cambridge to distribute bagged lunches to the unsheltered and street-dependent population in conjunction with the Outdoor Church.

It takes coordination to get us to that day every month. At the beginning of each month, there is an email asking folks to provide some part of the 120 meals we bring into Cambridge each month: 20 turkey & cheese sandwiches, 20 ham & cheese sandwiches, 20 vegetarian sandwiches, 120 bags of chips, 120 bags of cookies, 50 bananas, 50 clementines, 50 muffins. The email goes to folks from several local churches who have asked to be on the list. Some months they can help. Some months, it doesn't work out. But somehow, some way, the Lord provides, and every fourth Saturday of the month for three years, this group has provided and distributed these bagged lunches.

The Youth Ministry Collaborative brings together middle- and high-school age youth and their youth leaders for fun, faith, and service. Folks come from churches in Sudbury and Wayland. We gather one Sunday a month to share fun, games, and devotions with our friends of faith. We also work together on the fourth Saturday of every month to serve lunch to our Cambridge neighbors.

You do not have to be a youth to help with our Lunch Effort. Would you like to be part of the group that helps provide lunches? Would you like to be on our Cambridge lunch distribution team for an outing? If so, please let Michelle Rose know at mrose@stjohnsudbury.org. She will happily answer your questions and add you to her monthly email list.

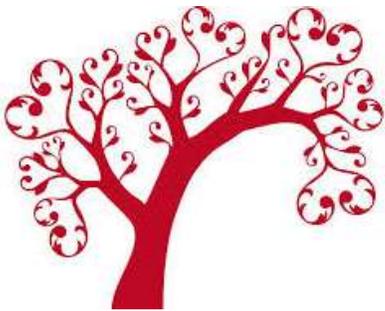
FAITH FORMATION CLASSES KICK OFF IN SEPTEMBER!

**SUNDAY SCHOOL WILL BEGIN ON SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 18TH!**



We look forward to welcoming all students from preschool through grade 5 for Sunday School. Classes will run directly following worship from approximately 10:45-11:45 AM. Each week all classes will meet together for group snack, songs, and games for a few minutes before breaking out into age-based classes.

Throughout the year, we will continue to offer periodic Family Sunday School classes, as well as quarterly BRIDGEs (Building Relationships In-between Different Generations Experiences).



Calling All 6th, 7th, 8th Graders and Above!

We will begin our newly overhauled Confirmation Program in September. Our program will continue to provide the foundations of faith that we have always included such as books of the Bible, prayer, Luther's Small Catechism, the Ten Commandments, and the sacraments while also incorporating 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 6 weeks 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 or call or text at 508-320-7245.

We look forward to exploring and growing together in faith and love!



RUBY'S ROAD TRIP



Ruby has had quite the summer traveling all over the country. Her joy is contagious. And she helps remind folks that God's love is for everyone. Lately, she's been keeping it local. Do you recognize any of Ruby's latest stops?



- Hiking Mine Falls in Nashua, NH
- Watching clouds with Bessie the Dinosaur, Boston's BEST Dinosaur at the Discovery Museum in Acton
- Catching a lift from her buddy Owl at ArtSpace in Maynard



Ruby has caught the travel bug, and she has yet to find the cure. 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

Let's Enjoy God's World Together



Grab your hiking boots (or just a comfy pair of walking shoes), caps, and bug spray, and join us for a family-friendly Creation Hike after church and lunch on Sunday, October 16th. Our trail is still to be determined, but it will be nearby and provide an easy hike and opportunity to appreciate God's autumn world. If you would like to join us, please email Michelle Rose at mrose@stjohnsudbury.org so we can make sure you know the details.



CROP WALK and the St John Step-Ups NEED YOU!

CROP WALK for the Hungry: The 42nd Annual CROP Walk for the Hungry will take place in Concord on **Sunday, October 23**. The 2 ¼ mile Walk kicks off at 2:15 pm from First Parish Church, 20 Lexington Road, Concord, MA. Participating walkers can enjoy the autumn beauty of some of Concord's most historic country roads, as they walk to raise money for the hungry of local communities and around the world. Come early at 1:30-2:00 pm to register and enjoy music by the Concord Carlisle High School Pep Band.

Local funds raised will be allocated to nine area community supper/pantry hunger programs: Open Table; the Community Supper/Food Pantry in Acton; Mt. Calvary Community Supper in Acton; the Sudbury Community Food Pantry; the Maynard Food Pantry; the Bedford Community Table/Pantry; Loaves and Fishes in Groton; Westminster Community Food Pantry; and also to Gaining Ground. In addition, the CROP Walk funds go to Church World Service for worldwide emergency relief of disasters, such as floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes, and for fighting the root causes of hunger through community development programs in 30 underdeveloped countries.

For more details, see the CWS web site: www.cwsglobal.org and the Concord area CROP Walk web site: www.concordcrop.org.

To join our St John Step-Ups team, please contact Michelle Rose at mrose@stjohnsudbury.org or 508-320-7245 or register with our team at <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2022/teams?event=concordma>.

We look forward to building community as we walk together and sharing with our community as we raise money to feed our neighbors.

Indigenous Peoples' Day Weekend

Sunday, October 9, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

[The Old North Church 193 Salem Street, Boston](#)

Service of Holy Eucharist

The Rev. Canon Cornelia Eaton, Guest Preacher



Monday, October 10, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. (doors open at 10:30 a.m.)

Registration required. <http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=s4blzzbab&oeidk=a07ejc90hz1d16c469f>

[Christ Church 149 Court Street, Plymouth](#)

Symposium, Lunch, and Special Service of Lament and Commitment

Please join the Right Reverend Alan M. Gates, Bishop Diocesan of Massachusetts, the Right Reverend Gayle E. Harris, Bishop Suffragan of Massachusetts, the Right Reverend Douglas John Fisher, Bishop Diocesan of Western Massachusetts, special guest the Reverend Canon Cornelia Eaton of the Episcopal Church in Navajoland, and Indigenous leaders from the Commonwealth.

This event is free of charge. To make a donation visit this website: <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/1409645>

Designation "Immigration/Multicultural Ministries"



The Rev. Canon Cornelia Eaton served in many lay positions in the Episcopal Church prior to being ordained to the priesthood on February 7, 2015. She is currently the canon to the ordinary for the Episcopal Church in Navajoland. Cornelia is dedicated to serving the beloved people of God and to encouraging the laity to have active roles in the life of the Church, believing that we all live into our baptismal covenant. She enjoys sharing God's love, hope, and grace with all of God's people through Holy Scripture and Navajo spirituality of Hozhó—Peace and Beauty Way. She is a storyteller and a writer of poetry with a particular focus on the Navajo way of life known as lina Biké Hozhó—being in harmony with divine creation through spirituality, culture, tradition, and relationship. She has deep love and appreciation for the outdoors and enjoys mountain biking, fly-fishing, camping, hiking, and tending to her family sheep camp.

For more information: <https://www.diomass.org/event/2022-indigenous-peoples-day-gathering>



Episcopal Diocese
of Massachusetts

Sponsored by the Office of Immigration and Multicultural Ministries of the Diocese of Massachusetts, together with the Racial Justice Commission of the Diocese of Massachusetts, the Beloved Community Commission of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, and the Indigenous Peoples' Justice Network of the Dioceses of Massachusetts and Western Massachusetts.





SAVE THE DATE!

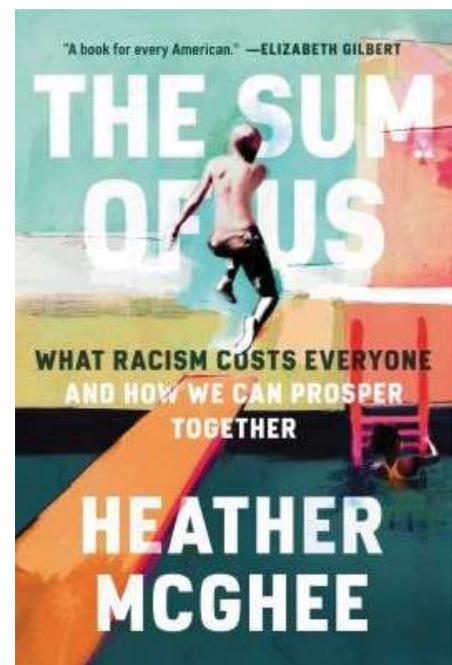
JOIN WITH OUR ST JOHN FAMILY ON
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH
FOR OUR RALLY DAY
ALL-MEMBER PICNIC!

Following worship, we will head down the road to Camp Sewataro in Sudbury (about a mile from church) for congregational fun, food, and fellowship in their large, covered pavilion. We will have games and activities for all ages as well as access to the pickle ball and basketball courts.

You may call the office, sign up on the kiosk, or use sign up genius
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0b4ea8af23a3f58-stjohn3>



Save the Date:
Social Justice
Book Discussion
The Sum of Us
by Heather McGhee
Tues Sept. 27th
at 7:00pm via Zoom



On Saturday September 24 from 10-3,
Pastor Eric is hosting the
Pastor's Pick Up Picnic!

We'll trim bushes, cut brush, pull weeds,
and do some general yard maintenance to
spruce up for the program year.
Pastor Eric will make ribs, pulled pork, and bring
bottled water too. People are encouraged to bring
a side or a dessert as they desire.

We're looking forward to a wonderful day of
fellowship and shared work, and hope to see you there!

You may use sign-up genius, call the church office
or sign up in the lounge at church.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Eric

FEATURED CHILDREN'S BOOK FOR SEPTEMBER

This month's book is *The Proudest Blue: a Story of Hijab and Family* by Ibtihaj Muhammad with S.K. Ali and illustrated by Hatem Aly. We will share the book on during the Children's Message on September 18th.

The themes of this book cover the bond between sisters, the universality of new experiences and the strength to stay true to one's identity.

Ibtihaj Muhammad is an author, social activist and an Olympic Bronze medalist in fencing. She is the first American woman to wear a hijab while competing. This book is based on her experiences of wearing a hijab in elementary school and the bullying she encountered.

The monthly Children's Book becomes part of our Children's Diversity Library, which is curated by the Social Justice Ministry in conjunction with the Youth, Family, & Education Ministry. Stop by the Children's Diversity Library located in the Lounge and borrow any of our books. Share the joy of books and celebrate God's love for all of us!

