

Saint John Lutheran Church, ELCA

Newsletter

AN EASTER MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON

It all started with such promise – the angel announcing to Mary that the child she would bear would be called Son of the Most High; the conviction of Mary that this child would be the embodiment of God’s promised justice, that the hungry would be filled with good things and the rich sent away empty; angels announcing his birth; thousands being fed; the sick healed; the dead raised.

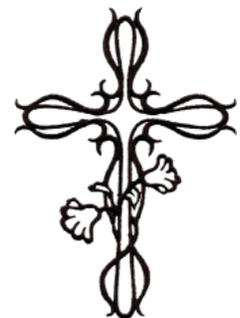
And then, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” It was over. The world hadn’t changed. Might still made right. How ridiculously naïve to believe that any reversal of the old order could come about. Hope is for the gullible. Looking at this broken man hanging utterly helpless, naked and broken on a cross, the powers and principalities, earthly and spiritual, death and the devil must have said, “You fool.”

This, as St. Paul reminds us, is the wisdom of the world. And the world can present plenty of hard evidence that it is right: children killing children in horrific school shootings, 60 million displaced people – all of this supported by our rebellion against God, our idolatrous claim that we are in control and the world is ours. In the face of this and all of the suffering others cause and we cause others, we, too, might cry out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

I believe that the beginning of Psalm 22 expresses the anguish of the psalmist and the anguish of our Lord, but there is more going on here. Citing the first words of a text was, in the tradition of the time, a way of identifying an entire passage. The psalm ends this way: “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. . . . Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.” This is the wisdom of God. Jesus’ crucifixion is the death of our death. His innocent suffering has reconciled all of creation to God. He has done it. We stake our lives on this.

This year, Easter falls on April 1. We shall have come through the Lenten desert to the Easter garden. We shall say, “Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!” And we shall confess this and live this in the face of worldly wisdom that is based on death. Life wins. Love wins. And if the world wants to call us April fools, we are glad to claim that title.

*Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed.
Alleluia!*



April 2018

Youth and Family News by Karen LaCure



“Christ is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!”

After Easter breakfast and then a festive Eucharist, join us for an Easter egg hunt for children 10 and under. Be sure to bring your Easter basket as we hop the bunny trail.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

April 1st *No Classes No Confirmation*

April 8th *Regular classes resume*
Youth Group in Kitchen
Sunday school teacher meeting after class
6:00 PM Confirmation

April 15th *No Classes school vacation week*
No Confirmation

April 22nd *Regular classes*
****Special Adult Forum: Estate Planning and Healthcare Planning ALL Invited.*
This will be followed by “Pizza and Proxy” hosted by Karen/Parish Nurse to further discuss
healthcare planning in a more intimate setting 6:00 PM Confirmation

April 29th *Regular classes*
Youth Group Service Day
6:00 PM Confirmation

APRIL IS HEALTHCARE DECISION MONTH

Make Your Own Plan. You can do-it-yourself!

You can direct your health care choices to get the best possible care all through your life, and write down your choices in personal health care plan. It's simple to do using the The Getting Started Tool Kit. Your personal plan protects your right to get the care you want today and everyday, helps your family know how to care for you, and helps your doctors match quality care to your goals, values and choices.

The Getting Started Tool Kit includes:

1. MA Health Care Proxy to appoint your Health Care Agent,
2. MA Personal Directive (Living Will) to give instructions to your Agent & family for the kind of care you want, and
3. "5 Things To Talk About With Your Care Providers" a handy discussion guide.

<https://www.honoringchoicesmass.com/make-a-plan/whos-your-agent-program-tool-kits/getting-started-tool-kit/>

Sunday April 22nd Adult Forum will be hosting Margaret Hoag J. D. from the law firm of Eckel, Morgan, and O'Connor. She will be discussing estate planning and financial planning. There will also be discussion about healthcare planning, proxy forms, and final wishes. This topic is for everyone! All individuals over the age of 18 can and should have a Health Care Proxy. All families should have a will. To facilitate more individual discussion, we will have "Pizza and Proxy" after the Adult Forum in HeritageHall. Join Karen LaCure our Parish Nurse to further talk about Health Care Planning.

NEW ENGLAND YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SUMMIT

Sponsored by the New Hampshire Conference of the UCC, this Summit for youth in grade 8 and up through college. While the focus is on youth, we welcome interested adults as well. Learn about climate change and efforts to create a just and sustainable future for all! Find out from UCC leaders and partners about how youth are engaging and how YOU can use your gifts to help build the future we want to live in.

***Saturday, April 7, 2018 at 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Brookside Congregational Church
2013 Elm Street
Manchester, NH 03104***



Anyone interested in attending please let Karen know by April 2nd

COMFORT CASES: OUR MISSION:COMFORT.

On any given day, nearly 437,500 youth in the foster care system in the United States. Of the thousands of youth who enter the system each year, most arrive carrying little more than the clothes on their backs. If they are afforded the opportunity to collect any personal belongings, many are then given a trash bag in which to place and carry their personal items. It is a time of great upheaval and instability, and their first foster home placement is unlikely to be their last. Many youth in foster care will be moved from home to home multiple times, carrying their life's treasures in a trash bag. At Comfort Cases we believe that every child deserves to feel a sense of dignity. Every child deserves to pack their belongings in a special bag that they can call their own. It is our mission as a charity to provide a proper bag, filled with comfort and essential items, to these brave youth in foster care on their journey to find their forever home. We will be collecting the essentials for Comfort Cases throughout the month of April. The "cases" will be assembled on April 29th by the Youth Group, under the direction of Maddy LaCure who brought this mission to us. They will then be delivered to Mary's Center for Women and Children in Dorchester. For more info go to <https://www.comfortcases.org/> A list of supplies can be found in the lounge as well as on the website. A goal of 20 complete Comfort Cases is the vision! Thank you in advance.

Senior Ministry News

ST. JOHN SENIORS ON THE GO BOOK CLUB FOR APRIL

On April 17, 2018, we will discuss “Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis” by **J. D. Vance**. **Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis** is a memoir by J.D. Vance about the Appalachian values of his upbringing and their relation to the social problems of his hometown in Ohio, where his family moved when times got too hard in Kentucky. Gives a good understanding of a segment of the White working poor in the U.S.

Join us at the church at 11:00 AM on April 17, 2018 to socialize and stimulate your brain cells. All St. John seniors and their guests are welcome whether you are committed or just curious. No need to register in advance, but it is suggested that you read the book before you attend. Please contact Jan Nielsen at jrn Nielsen@charter.net or 978-549-3044 if you have any questions.

On May 15, 2018, the St. John Seniors on the Go Book Club will discuss “The Elephant Whisperer: My Life with the Herd in the African Wild” by Lawrence Anthony.

On June 19, 2018, the St. John Seniors on the Go Book Club will discuss “Still Life: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel (A Chief Inspector Gamache Mystery Book 1)” by Louise Penny.

AED/CPR

We have scheduled a training class for CPR/AED and oxygen use, which will lead to CPR certification for two years. The class will be held in the youth room, on Saturday May 12, from 9:00 to about 12:30. Participants are asked to come 10 to 15 minutes early to complete paperwork so the class can start on time. The class is limited to 10 participants and will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. This training is paid for by Senior Ministry, so there is no cost to you.

Contact Royce Fuller if you have any questions (978-897-8397).

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this very important and possible life saving training.

TOWER HILL DAFFODILS, VIEWS, LUNCH

Flowers! Food! Fun! St. John Seniors on the Go will visit the Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston on Wednesday, April 25. Join us to stroll through the beautiful outdoor flowering gardens, and then enter Twigs Cafe between 11:00 and 11:30 to enjoy an optional delightful lunch and a sweeping view of the Wachusett Valley. Twigs features delicious healthy, light fare that is often prepared using locally-sourced food. (See their website for a sample menu that can change. Separate checks are not available so please bring cash.) An excellent gift shop is also available. Car pool rides will be available from the church at 9:15. Please contact Betty Lewis 978-897-8923, or blewis0523@gmail.com for arrangement and any questions. All St. John seniors and their guests are welcome.

Tower Hill is open from 10 am to 5 pm, is convenient to I-495 and I-290 and is handicap accessible. From I-495 take Exit 25, I-290 West toward Worcester. Then take Exit 24, Church Street, towards Northborough/Boylston. Follow Church Street toward Boylston for 3 miles. The entrance to Tower Hill is on the right; a dark red sign designates the entrance. Then proceed to the Stoddard Education & Visitors Center and the outdoor gardens. There is free parking and also four disabled parking spots. Wheelchairs can be requested in advance. No pets allowed. Admission, not including lunch, is \$10 per senior (65+). Passes may be available at your local library. Visit their website at www.towerhillbg.org.

Miscellaneous News

ADULT FORUM SCHEDULE FOR APRIL

April 1: No Adult Forum (Easter)

April 8: Time for a change? Pastor Larson will lead a discussion of possible innovations to our worship service and faith ministry at St. John. What ideas have been suggested over time, how would they benefit our worship, and should we move forward with trying some?

April 15: No Adult Forum (Patriot's Day Sunday)

April 22: The St. John Senior Ministry is pleased that Margaret Hoag, Attorney at Law at Eckel, Morgan & O'Connor in Acton will be leading our forum and discussing mandatory medical documents and estate planning. Attorney Margaret Hoag offers free 20-minute consultations at the Acton Senior Center to Acton Seniors.

The talk will focus on the following topics:

Medical Documents:

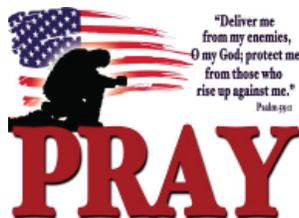
- Health Care Proxy (18 years and older)
- Massachusetts Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment—MOLST
- Living Will and Advance Directives

Estate Documents:

- Durable Power of Attorney
- Will

Attorney Hoag will discuss why and when the documents are needed. She will emphasize the importance of updating as life circumstances change. There will also be a brief discussion of ways to avoid probate including revocable and irrevocable trusts, and homestead protection. At the end of the talk, there will be an opportunity to ask questions.

April 29: St. John is very pleased to welcome as a guest speaker Pastor Jay Ridenouer of the First Baptist Church of Sudbury. Pastor Jay has graciously accepted Adult Forum's invitation and arranged his schedule to be with us on this Sunday. He has chosen to discuss in Forum one of his favorite books of the Bible, the Book of Hosea. You are invited to review Hosea's fourteen chapters and arrive with questions. Pastor Larsen will also schedule a discussion of Hosea for his weekly Bible study.



Thank You For Your Service

Ryan Higgins Scott Griffin Tyler Francis
Derek Yanchewski Victor Osweiler

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS:

Fred Ripley	Rachel Florey	Brad Allen	Brian
Richard	Philip Mueller	Ruth Fields	Christopher Miller
David Donnelly	June Parker	Linda Uglevich	Brian Young
Lauren Rico	Rohit Jangi	Kim Corbett	Brennan McGinnis
Rhonda Tibbetts	Paul Simeone	Barb Weiblen	Dale Cali
Raoul Smith	Bill Moldwin	Lee Weber	Liisa Colby
Trish Sarvela Leiva			



ELCA News

ELCA PRESIDING BISHOP, OTHER CHURCH LEADERS SUPPORT JERUSALEM CHURCHES

3/14/2018 10:30:00 AM

CHICAGO – Addressing recent efforts in Jerusalem to confiscate church lands and tax church properties, the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), along with leaders from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Armenian Church of America and The Episcopal Church, have sent a letter of support to the heads of churches at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

In addition to Eaton, the letter was signed by His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, archbishop of Galveston-Houston and the president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; His Eminence Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, ecumenical director and legate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern); and the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, presiding bishop and primate, The Episcopal Church. The letter expresses "fervent solidarity with you, your churches and the entire Christian community in the Holy Land as you face repeated challenges to the Status Quo that ensures a Christian presence in this most holy of places."

Your Beatitudes, Your Excellencies, Your Graces,

We write today to express our fervent solidarity with you, your churches and the entire Christian community in the Holy Land as you face repeated challenges to the Status Quo that ensures a Christian presence in this most holy of places.

We affirm your protest against the recent efforts to confiscate church lands or tax church properties whose function is integral to the churches' mission. These efforts contravene the historic Status Quo that has prevailed in Jerusalem for centuries.

We note with grave concern that the ability of a number of the churches to continue their important activities already has been impaired or even halted by tax liens against several of their bank accounts. These acts stifle the immediate work of the church as well as create a long-term situation that threatens the very existence of the Christian community in the Holy Land. We join you in advocating strongly against these proposals. We will continue to press the Israeli government on your behalf.

We pledge to you our unwavering support for all peaceful and lawful measures you may undertake to ensure the preservation and flourishing of your communities both now and in the future.

The four church leaders also sent a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat expressing concern about the recent proposals and tax plans. The letter states, "If enacted, these measures would have the effect of creating a situation that jeopardizes the very survival of the Christian community in the Holy Land."

Dear Mr. Prime Minister, dear Mr. Mayor,

As heads of churches and communions in the United States, we write to express our strong concern about recent legal proposals and tax plans that would severely inhibit the work of the churches in and around Jerusalem. If enacted, these measures would have the effect of creating a situation that jeopardizes the very survival of the Christian community in the Holy Land.

We have expressed to the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, in the enclosed letter, our firm solidarity with them during this crisis, including by strong advocacy before our own government.

We know of the myriad of activities in which the churches there are engaged, such as education, health care and pilgrimages, and we recognize that they are integral to the churches' mission and of major benefit to the Jerusalem community beyond the churches.

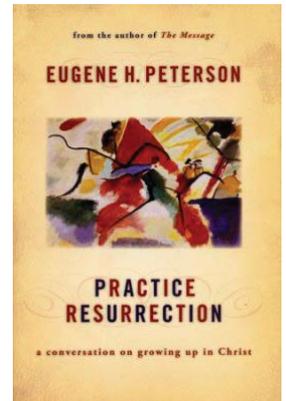
We ask that you end measures that disrupt the Status Quo. We have pledged to the church leaders in Jerusalem our unwavering support for all peaceful and lawful measures they may pursue to ensure the preservation and flourishing of the Christian community now and in the future.

About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with more than 3.5 million members in more than 9,400 worshiping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. Known as the church of "God's work. Our hands," the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world. The ELCA's roots are in the writings of the German church reformer Martin Luther.

Take Up and Read

Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ. By Eugene Peterson. Eerdmans, 302 pp. \$14.00 paperback

Peterson is best known for his engaging paraphrase of the Bible, *The Message*. Here is his version of the famous John 3:16-17. “This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn’t go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again.” Peterson’s way with words makes *Practice Resurrection* a joy to read. His title quotes the final line of *Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front*, Wendell Berry’s famous poem. With this book Peterson initiates “a conversation on becoming a mature Christian, Christian formation, growing up into the stature of Christ.” His chief dialogue partner is the New Testament Letter to the Ephesians. He argues that “the resurrection of Jesus establishes the conditions in which we live and mature in the Christian life and carry on this conversation:



Jesus alive and present. A lively sense of Jesus’ resurrection, which took place without any help or comment from us, keeps us from attempting to take charge of our own development and growth... [As Christians] we live our lives in the practice of what we do not originate and cannot anticipate. When we practice resurrection, we continuously enter into what is more than we are. When we practice resurrection, we keep company with Jesus, alive and present, who knows where we are going better than we do.”

I recommend this book for reading during the Easter season. It is itself a mature reflection on what it means to grow in Christ. You might also pick up his earlier book, *Living the Resurrection: The Risen Christ in Everyday Life*.

A Community of Moral Deliberation

At its second Churchwide Assembly in 1991, the ELCA adopted a social statement entitled “Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective.” Perhaps the most important affirmation of the statement is its insight into an essential aspect of churchly life. The statement affirms that the Church is created by the Spirit in order to be “a community of moral deliberation” in the world. “Christians fulfill their vocation diversely and are rich in the variety of the gifts of the Spirit. Therefore, they often disagree passionately on the kind of responses they make to social questions. United with Christ and all believers in baptism, Christians welcome and celebrate their diversity. Because they share common convictions of faith, they are free, indeed obligated, to deliberate together on the challenges they face in the world.” The statement goes on to express the ELCA’s commitment to foster moral deliberation on pressing social questions.

Gun control is certainly one of the most pressing issues of the day. As we participate in the debate around this issue in society, it’s worthwhile to take deliberative statements from the ELCA into account as well as opinion pieces by Lutheran ethicists. Here is a sampling.

“Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective”

<https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Church-in-Society>

“Community Violence”

<https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Messages/Community-Violence>

“Gun Violence and Christian Witness”

<https://www.elca.org/JLE/Articles/65>

Don Larsen

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HOLY WEEK AND EASTER AT ST. JOHN

Friday, March 30th Good Friday 12:00 & 7:30 pm

Saturday, March 31st Saturday Easter Vigil 7:00 pm

The Vigil of Easter is a beautiful service. In ritual, story and song, we move with Jesus from death to life. This year we will mark the Vigil at St. John for the first time in many years with a simple version of the liturgy. We celebrate Vigil on Saturday, March 31, at 7:00 PM. (When the service is over, we'll have smores!)

Sunday, April 1st Easter Breakfast No need to sign up. Come on over. 7:00 am

Festive Eucharist 9:00 & 11:00 am

There will be an Easter Egg Hunt in between the morning liturgies! Join us on the lawn for the fun!



Our Staff

Donald Larsen, Pastor
Karen LaCure RN, Parish Nurse
Director of Youth and Family
Valerie Ripley, Admin. Assist.
Corey De Tar, Director of Choirs
Bart Dahlstrom, Organist
Ron Hagopian, Sexton

Visit us on the web! www.stjohnsudbury.org