

## From the Pastor

"I am always the last to speak," Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber reflects on sitting through her congregation's quarterly new member welcome events. "I tell them that I love hearing [all the reasons that drew folks to House for All Sinners and Saints] ... and I wanted them to hear me: This community will disappoint them. It's a matter of when, not if. We will let them down or I'll say something stupid and hurt their feelings ... *Welcome to House for All Sinners and Saints. We will disappoint you.*"

Rarely do I think generalizations are useful, but this one seems, to me, to be universally true: At some point, in one way or another, community will disappoint you. Humans are imperfect, and our communities – made up of human beings – reflect that imperfection and often only expound on it.

Every year as Pride Month rolls around in June, I find myself reminded of the fact that the church of all places is not exempt from this reality. The church – with its long history of excluding those who are different (see Acts 15) – doesn't exactly have an amazing track record when it comes to not disappointing and alienating people from its pews.

And yet, every year at Pride, no matter what city I'm in, I'm also reminded how God's grace can fill in the cracks when we dare to show up and proclaim that the church doesn't have to be that way.

"Awesome to see so many churches!" one Instagram user commented on a photo we shared of the parade. Another person, commenting on the same photo on Facebook, wrote, "Out of all the cemeteries [our family] could have chosen [back in 1918], I am so thankful that the church outside the cemetery is this one. I'm not religious at all and honestly don't know if I will ever be... BUT this is the one church that maybe someday I will think about joining. Progressive. Caring. Nonjudgmental. Thank you!"

Community will disappoint us. It's not a matter of *if*, but *when* and *how*. But, Pastor Nadia goes on, reflecting on her time at HFASS, "I then invite them on this side of their inevitable disappointment to decide if they'll stick around after it happens. If they choose to leave when we don't meet their expectations, they won't get to see how the grace of God can come and fill in the holes left by our community's failure, and that's just too beautiful and too real to miss."

Disappointment is real. Grief is real. Feelings of shock and betrayal are real.

And so is God's grace – time and time again, picking up the broken pieces of what God's people have shattered and somehow, some way, making us whole again.

*In hope,*  
**Pastor Josh +**



## Capital Pride: June 8



*We had such an amazing time bearing witness to God's all-inclusive and extravagant love on June 8 at Capital Pride alongside our fellow area Lutherans!*

***Our Mission: Worship God. Serve Faithfully. Reach Out.***

Phone: 518.465.7545

Website: [stjohnsalbany.org](http://stjohnsalbany.org)

Address: 303 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205







### What's in a Logo? We're Glad You Asked!

Over the past few weeks, we've been rolling out our new St. John's logo, as you've likely seen.

(If not: *Surprise! We have a new logo!*) This has been a project in the works since last November, as the council and I have been engaged with a graphic designer based out of Mississippi, a referral from a colleague of mine in Illinois. (If you want to see the look that inspired me to reach out, click [here](#).)

Why a new logo? Why now?

A logo says a lot about an organization – who we are, what we value, our history, our mission and vision. The eagle has been with us for a long time, and its symbolism, associated with Saint John the Evangelist, our parochial namesake, goes back even further. That symbolism remains a part of our history and identity.

There are other symbols too. Imagine walking in to the chapel on Sand Creek Road for the first time: Coming in through the front door, what's the first thing you see? Front and center, behind the altar, is our chancel cross – itself a central symbol that has traveled with us from Central Avenue, linking us to our *history*.



Our chancel cross and Christ the Vine helped inspire our new logo.

But have you ever looked closer at the cross? What do you notice? Grapes. Leaves. A vine. In addition to honoring our history, this symbol honors our *center*. The cross, certainly, and also Christ the Vine – itself an ancient image in scripture and church history.

And in the gospel according to, you guessed it, *Saint John*, we read: "[Jesus said,] 'Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit.'" (John 15:4-5)

A logo says a lot about an organization. Here in this logo is our *history*, our *center*, and our *future*. Rooted in tradition and centered in Christ, we are branches of a life-giving Vine, with leaves, and hearts, and hands, outstretched in service, love, and welcome, bearing good fruit, as we continue to *Worship God, Serve Faithfully, and Reach Out*.

~ Pastor Josh +



### Welcome New Members!

New Member Sunday was held June 1.

We officially welcomed two new members to St. John's, though both are familiar faces: **Emily Buckingham** (below left), who has been worshipping with us for well over a year now, and **Ashley Brown** (formerly Walker, below right), who has been a part of St. John's before and is now recently returned.

We always welcome new (and new-ish) members! While membership is by no means required to participate fully in the life of our faith community, it is a public way of saying "yes" to being a part of what God is doing at St. John's. For more information on becoming a member, or if you are an existing member who wishes to reaffirm your membership, please contact [Pastor Josh](#) and we'll make it happen.



A warm welcome to Emily and Ashley!





### Welcome Guest Preacher Pastor Jeff Kroondyk on Sunday, July 20



On Sunday, July 20, we are excited to welcome guest preacher Pastor Jeff Kroondyk to the pulpit at St. John's! Pastor Jeff currently serves as campus pastor at

**Cornerstone Campus Ministry** at the University at Albany, an ecumenical campus ministry sponsored by both the Upstate New York Synod and the Capital Area Council of Churches.

During the program year, St. John's supports the students of Cornerstone by providing meals and devotions for "Food & Faith," as well as financially sponsoring a peer minister (student campus ministry leader).

A native of Michigan (clearly where all amazing pastors come from) and graduate of Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, Pastor Jeff has newly completed his first full year at Cornerstone this spring. Prior to Cornerstone, Jeff has served congregations as worship director, youth pastor, and lead pastor and is ordained in the Reformed Church in America (RCA), a full communion partner denomination of the ELCA.

When he's not on campus or sharing about Cornerstone with partner congregations like ours, Jeff worships with his spouse, Pastor Katy Kroondyk, and their two daughters, LillyAnn and Eliza, at Lisha's Kill Reformed Church on Central Avenue in Schenectady (the congregation where Katy serves).

Please help us extend a very warm welcome to Pastor Jeff when he joins us on July 20! We look forward to hearing him preach the good news!

### Join Us as Pastor Rahel Hahn Celebrates 25 Years of Ordained Ministry on Sunday, July 20



Come celebrate with Pastor Rahel Hahn of Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit as she marks the 25th anniversary of her ordination on Sunday, July 20 after 10 am worship at Holy Spirit. RSVPs are kindly requested to the Holy Spirit church office at [office@holyspiritbany.org](mailto:office@holyspiritbany.org) or 518-463-6224. Please join us!



*Thanks to all who joined us for our Pentecost Vigil held on Saturday, June 7.*



*Our first ALT: Sundays Together was held on June 22 at St. John's and was a wonderful time with our fellow ALT churches. We enjoyed a great turnout, with an attendance that was nearly equal among the congregations.*





## Tap into Faith on Tap: July 2 & August 6

**Faith on Tap will be at 6:30 pm on Wednesdays, July 2 & August 6.**

Join us for good conversation at the intersection of faith, life, and current events, as well as delicious local brews (soft drinks also available), at the Warbler Brewery (155 Delaware Ave., Delmar). No prep required; just show up!



## First Lutheran Book Club Meets August 19

The First Lutheran Book Club is taking a break over the summer. **Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 19, at 6:00 pm at El Rey Mexitalia.** It's located next door to First Lutheran, with parking at the church. At that meeting, we'll discuss what we've been reading and watching over the summer, and plan our books for next year. Keep your eyes and ears out for new books or scan your shelves for a classic to revisit together. If you haven't joined us before, this is an excellent time to start! Come for a tasty meal, a conversation about your summer, and help us plan next year's books.

First Lutheran  
Book Club

August 19 + 6 PM

El Rey Mexitalia  
215 Western Ave. Albany



## Join Us for Summer Nights: Poetry & Ice Cream on July 14 & 28 and August 11 & 25 at 6:45 pm

At its best, summer is a season of rest and joy – tapping into the ancient, sacred practice of sabbath restoration. This summer, we'll be using the poetry of Mary Oliver to help us reconnect with this dimension of summertime, savoring what she calls its "luminous sprawl of gifts." And ice cream too – obviously. **Join us on Monday nights on the St. John's patio: July 14 & 28; August 11 & 25 at 6:45 pm for a time of reading and reflecting on poetry and scripture, prayer and song, tasty ice cream, and just being together.**

Can't make it on Monday nights? Copies of the devotional *Summer Days: A Companion to Mary Oliver's "Devotions"* are available for pick up at church – the perfect companion for your summer travels and church away from church!

SUMMER  
→ DAYS ←



• • • A COMPANION TO • • •  
MARY OLIVER'S "DEVOTIONS"

*Join us for Summer Nights: Poetry & Ice Cream in July and August! Can't make it? Pick up a copy of this devotional at church.*

*"Summer would not be summer without ice cream. Ice cream is the favorite currency of love." ~ Puck, 1881*

## ALT: Sundays Together Continues September 21

It was such a joy to worship together with our ALT churches during Lent and Easter. To keep this energy and collaboration going and not wait until Advent to worship together again, we're trying an experiment this year. **On four Sundays through March 1, all four ALT congregations will worship together on a Sunday morning.**

These will be normal Sundays, avoiding high festivals, Advent, and Lent. We're not juggling times and scheduling worship leaders from all the churches. The plan is simply this: about once a quarter, all four congregations will worship together at one congregation's location and time, and in that congregation's normal way of worshiping. The first one was held June 22 at St. John's.

**Our next ALT: Sundays Together will be September 21 at 8:45 am at Good Shepherd** (510 Albany Shaker Rd., Loudonville). St. John's, First Lutheran, and Holy Spirit won't have worship at their building that day. All the pastors will be at Good Shepherd along with everyone else. **Mark your calendars now and plan to join us for our future dates:**

- **September 21:**  
8:45 am at Good Shepherd
- **January 4:**  
10:00 am at Holy Spirit
- **March 1:**  
10:45 am at First Lutheran

We have such great worship together, let's keep that going on ALT: Sundays Together and keep growing and walking in faith as Albany Lutherans Together!



### To Keep In Prayer

*For whom or what shall we pray?*

- In thanksgiving for **St. John's Collegium choir members** – their voices enhance our worship, support our congregational song, and enable our praise and prayer.
- In celebration of those **graduating** – from high school and college, elementary and middle school, and those preparing for new educational ventures in fall.
- **Prayers of peace for the Lundgren family** (relatives of Maggie & Mary Anderson)
- Diane Mead
- Diane Conley
- Sarah (wife of Bob Curtis)
- Bill Shuster
- Dianne Guarneri
- Levi (grandson of Dianne Guarneri)
- Freddy Boyzer



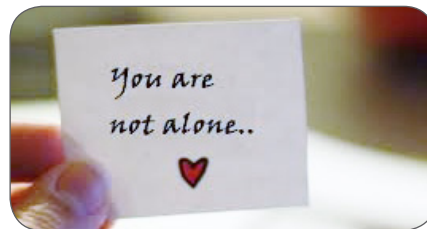
### Altar Flower Sponsors Needed! Can You Help?

Can you help sponsor Altar Flowers? It's a special way to honor the memory of a loved one or commemorate a milestone while beautifying our worship space. Sign up on the flower chart on the bulletin board in the kitchen (or [email us](#)). **Suggested donation: \$25.** You can [give online](#) (choose the "Flower Contributions" fund) or send your donation to the office (please specify "Flower Contributions" with your gift).



### Need Pastoral Care?

Hospitalized? Undergoing or recovering from surgery? Grieving a loss? *Feeling alone or stressed?* Please let us know. If you or a loved one would like a pastoral call or visit, please call or text Pastor Josh Evans at 518-250-9098, or schedule a time to meet using [calendly.com/revjoshevens](https://calendly.com/revjoshevens). If you would like communion brought to you, please let us know that as well. Remember that you are loved and you are never alone.



### Note NEW Summer Coffee Hour Sign Up!

Want to be an important part of the fellowship we enjoy following our worship services? Please sign up to bring treats to share, make coffee, and help with set-up or clean-up following the 9:30 am liturgy every Sunday. Use our [NEW Summer Coffee Hour Sign Up!](#) All the details you need can be found on the sign-up page, so please help make this ministry happen! (Note: Coffee maker training can be provided; it's easy! And for treats, homemade or store-bought are equally welcome. We are an all-treat inclusive congregation!)



### N.O. ... M.O.R.E. ... P.O.

St. John's is moving! (Not really, but kind of... and it got your attention, didn't it?!) **Effective immediately, please direct all mailed correspondence to the church to: 303 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205.** Our P.O. Box is no longer active, though mail will be forwarded for up to one year. If you give by mail or bill pay through your bank, or regularly send us other snail mail, please update our address. Thank you!

#### NOTE NEW OFFICE EMAIL

To contact the office, the new email address is [office@stjohnsalbany.org](mailto:office@stjohnsalbany.org)

### Enjoy Our New Courtyard Furniture!

Looking for the perfect place to gather this summer? Enjoy the brand-new outdoor furniture in our courtyard area! Perfect for gathering in the warm sunshine for coffee hour... or when Pastor Josh decides to work al fresco. If you're around the area during the week, please feel free to use the space to gather with church friends or neighbors for a small picnic or casual get-together – this is *your* church, after all! We're also looking forward to future plans to beautify our cozy courtyard space – stay tuned!







### July: Donate Soups for Bread of Life Pantry

The Bread of Life Food Pantry at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Poestenkill (one of Pastor Kate Drefke's churches), has begun a new donation initiative. Please read Pastor Kate's letter below, and join us in supporting them!

#### Letter from Pastor Kate Drefke:

As the current economy and today's rising prices affect everyone in our community, the Bread of Life Food Pantry has had to make some changes to what we offer our guests. Unfortunately, we have removed non-food items (such as paper products, personal hygiene, laundry, dish soap, etc.) from our shelves. We are optimistic about returning those items in the future as things improve.

To help keep our shelves full and offer necessary items for those in our community who need help and have come to rely on our services, we are starting a new donation initiative. **Each month, we will highlight a requested item for donation.** If you would like to participate, please bring donations to service on Sundays or drop them off at the side entrance of church at any time. **Below is a list of what we are looking for in the months to follow.** Of course, we continue to accept any food or monetary donations offered and thank you in advance for your kindness. Questions? Please contact me at [drefkekate@gmail.com](mailto:drefkekate@gmail.com).

#### Items to donate each month:

- July: Soups
- August: Spaghetti Sauce
- September: Mac & Cheese

You can take items to Lutheran Church of Poestenkill at 772 NY Route 351, or drop them off at St. John's and either Tracy Baldwin or Pastor Josh will deliver them.

### ALT Collections in July & August for Schools

Throughout July & August, Albany Lutherans Together (ALT) will gather items for teachers and students at Delaware Community School and Giffen Memorial School. If you would like to donate items to specific classrooms, please click [HERE](#).

#### Suggested donations include:

- 3-hole looseleaf paper
- B/W marble composition notebooks
- Folders
- Index cards
- Crayons
- Markers
- Glue sticks
- Dry-erase markers
- Pencils (#2 & colored)
- Disinfectant wipes
- Paper plates
- Napkins
- Boxes of tissues
- Small brown paper lunch bags
- Ziploc bags: quart & gallon size



*Thanks for contributing toward a great school year for the kids!*



### See Living Lutheran for All Things ELCA!

**Did you know our denomination has its own magazine?** *Living Lutheran* (formerly known as *The Lutheran*) is your source for news, reflections, and stories from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its local and global companions, and covers religious news and social issues, congregational life, global and domestic mission, family matters, spiritual practices and resources, and more. Access *Living Lutheran* content online for FREE anytime at [livinglutheran.org](http://livinglutheran.org), and sign up for "LL Stories," a free email digest delivered right to your inbox, at [livinglutheran.org/subscribe](http://livinglutheran.org/subscribe). Prefer an ink-and-paper magazine? Good news! You can get that too. Individual subscriptions to the newly revamped quarterly print edition are now available for only \$19.95/year. Sign up online at the link above or call Customer Care at 1-833-444-1354, Monday through Friday, 9 am-5 pm.



*Our shiny new flag was hung on May 27, just in time for Pride Month! Thanks to Jerry and Paula Schwab for their special donation, and thanks to our members for their inclusive, all-encompassing love.*



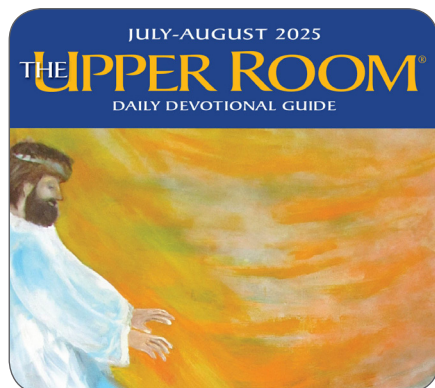
## Lutheran Night at the ValleyCats on July 6

Join with your fellow Lutherans of the Capital Region as the Tri-City ValleyCats take on the New Jersey Jackals on Sunday, July 6, from 5:00-8:00 pm! We have a block of group seating reserved, and individual tickets (\$11) can be purchased through the ValleyCats group ticket portal by clicking [HERE](#). The password is **sjlc** (lowercase, no spaces). Questions? Contact [Pastor Josh](#).



## Your Daily Devotions

Pick up the **July-August edition of The Upper Room** at church or [read it online](#). To be mailed a copy, please contact the [office](#).



## Summer Movie Night: 1946 on July 13 @ 6:30

In partnership with the Pride Center of the Capital District, join us on Sunday, July 13, at 6:30 pm at Emmanuel Baptist Church (275 State St., Albany) for a screening of *1946: The Mistranslation That Shifted Culture*. This 2022 documentary film follows the story of tireless researchers who trace the origins of the anti-gay movement among Christians to a mistranslation of the Bible in 1946. It chronicles the discovery of never-before-seen archives at Yale University which explain the misinterpretation of ancient Greek which led to the word "homosexuality" being introduced into the Bible for the first time. It features commentary from prominent scholars as well as opposing pastors, including the personal stories of the film's creators. This event is free and open to the public. [View the trailer HERE!](#)

Parking for those with mobility limitations is available on the east side of the Emmanuel building near a ramp entrance. Additional parking options: street parking on State Street, especially towards the Capitol building and across the street at Westminster Presbyterian (enter at 85 Chestnut and cross State Street to find Emmanuel).

Questions? Call Emmanuel's office at 518-465-5161 or e-mail [pastorkathy@emmanuelalbany.org](mailto:pastorkathy@emmanuelalbany.org).



## Sundaes on Sunday Open House August 24

The Albany Maritime Ministry invites you to the Second Annual Sundaes on Sunday Summer Open House. Join us on Sunday, August 24, from 1-3 pm at the William G. Hempel Seafarers' Center at the Port of Albany. Come have ice cream, check out the Seafarers' Center, tour the port by van, see a ship (if any are in port), meet AMM's chaplains and volunteers, and learn about the life of a seafarer and how you can support this ministry of hospitality right here in Albany.

## Sundaes on Sunday



AMM SUMMER OPEN HOUSE  
AUGUST 24 ~ 1-3 PM

## Happy Birthday to Our Members!

July 3	Paula Schwab
July 7	Joy Pierle
July 11	Lindsay Stannard
July 14	Ginger Radley
July 24	Josh Evans

*"Age does not diminish the extreme disappointment of having a scoop of ice cream fall from the cone." ~ Jim Fiebig*

If you prefer *not* to have your birthday in the newsletter, contact [Pr. Josh](#). If we missed your birthday, we will share it in the next issue!







## “Meet” Outgoing Council Member, Jerry Schwab

*Thanks to Staren Bielinski for this contribution.*

**As a member of St. John’s for over 70 years, Jerry Schwab has been a quiet force behind so much of what makes our church feel like home.**

Whether he is baking one of his legendary cheesecakes, tending the cemetery gardens, overseeing repairs or stepping into whatever role needs filling, Jerry does it all with humility and heart. Together with his wife, Paula, he has been a pillar of our community. As he stepped down from his role on the council, we caught up with Jerry to reflect on his years of service and the memories that have meant the most.

**Q: What initially inspired you to join the church council?**

A: I was tired of everyone picking on me and nagging me to join! Also, I was nosey as to what actually goes on.

**Q: Looking back on the last 6 years, what are you most proud of accomplishing during your time on the council?**

A: Helping to elect our new pastor! As a member of the Call Committee, I was honored to play a vital role in one of the most important decisions a church can make.

**Q: What was the most challenging aspect of serving on the council, and how did you navigate it?**

A: Sometimes things did not move as quickly as we would have liked, but I am excited about what is ahead—especially the plans for a new fellowship area.

**Q: How do you think the church has changed or grown during your time on the council?**

A: During my time on council, we have had two different pastors. It has been a time of transition, but I believe we are moving forward in a positive direction.

**Q: What advice would you give to someone considering council service for the first time?**

A: Serving on Council provides a lot is a good opportunity to have your opinions heard. Just do it!



**To contact anyone on council, simply email [council@st.johnsalbany.org](mailto:council@st.johnsalbany.org).**

## CALENDAR ~ JULY 2025

**Wednesday, July 2**

6:30 pm: Faith on Tap at Warbler

**Thursday, July 4 ~ Independence Day**

**Sunday, July 6 ~ Holiday Weekend**

9:30 am: WORSHIP

10:30 am: Coffee Hour

5:00 pm: Lutheran Night: ValleyCats

**Sunday, July 13**

9:30 am: WORSHIP

10:30 am: Coffee Hour

6:30 pm: Movie: 1946 at Emmanuel

**Monday, July 14**

6:45 pm: Summer Nights (see p. 4)

**Sunday, July 20**

9:30 am: WORSHIP with Guest

Preacher Pastor Jeff Kroondyk

10:30 am: Coffee Hour

11:00 am: Pastor Rahel Hahn’s 25th Anniversary: Holy Spirit

**Friday, July 25**

Deadline: Newsletter submissions

**Sunday, July 27**

9:30 am: WORSHIP

10:30 am: Coffee Hour

**Monday, July 28**

6:45 pm: Summer Nights (see p. 4)

## Churchwide Assembly

**Please keep in prayer all those traveling to Phoenix for the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to be held July 28–August 2** – including St. John’s and ALT members attending as voting members on behalf of the Upstate New York Synod: Lindsay Stannard, Pastor Rahel Hahn (Holy Spirit), and Atif Dean (Good Shepherd).

The ELCA Churchwide Assembly, the primary decision-making body of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, is a process of communal spiritual discernment.

**To learn more, click [HERE](#).**

Among other items of business, this year’s assembly will include the election of a Presiding Bishop and Secretary.

The Churchwide Assembly is typically livestreamed on the ELCA YouTube channel. If you’d like to follow along, click [HERE](#).



## Can We Text You?

To improve our communications, including weather-related closings or other urgent announcements, we added text messaging to our line-up, in addition to email, web, and social media. **Please fill out the Consent to Text Form by clicking [HERE](#) to consent to receive occasional text messages from us.** You can unsubscribe at any time. These text messages will come from a different number – 866-788-1980 – and are one-way only. To communicate with the office by text, use the main church number – 518-465-7545 – or use 518-250-9098 to reach Pastor Josh.