

January/February 2024

The Eagle

A Publication of St. John's Lutheran Church in Albany, NY

Beloved 
is where we
begin

– Jan Richardson

Happy New Year
2024

From the Pastor

A Happy Beginning

*This world is a big old mess of pain and stress
And people draggin' ya down
There's little chance of success
The bad guy's always winning
Happy endings don't exist
But here's a pearl you may have missed
Every day can be
A happy beginning*

—Cast of *Schmigadoon!*

Such is the lesson big city doctors Melissa and Josh learn by the end of season two of *Schmigadoon!* – also known as *Schmicago* – the 2021 musical comedy series currently streaming on Apple TV+. Where season one finds them struggling to mend their strained relationship and find “true love” after stumbling into the fictional town of Schmigadoon, season two brings them to the much darker and grittier Schmicago. It is here that Melissa and Josh, having previously returned from the magical Schmigadoon to their ordinary lives in New York City, must learn their second lesson: happy endings.

Ultimately, the couple, along with the cast of ... *unique* characters they meet on the way, learns a profound but simple truth: Maybe “happy endings” don’t exist, **but every day can be a happy beginning.**

New Year’s often gets us thinking about new beginnings. “Resolutions,” we call them, usually centered on improving our health or wellbeing. Which is all well and good ... until they inevitably fail ... usually before February 1st if you’re anything like me. So much for a “happy ending” for our New Year’s resolutions.

But here’s the thing: You don’t need to wait for a new year to set a resolution or to start again. Every day can be a happy beginning.

Said differently, to borrow a phrase from the recovery community: **one day at a time.**

In his *Small Catechism*, Luther speaks of baptism as a *daily* dying and rising, and in our scriptures, the writer of Lamentations puts it this way: “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, God’s mercies never come to an end; they are *new every morning*” (3:22-23).

From musical comedies to biblical theology, the lesson bears repeating: Every day can be a happy beginning.

New Year’s resolutions, as well-intentioned as they are, will almost inevitably fail. So if (or probably *when*) you break your resolution – or even if you don’t make one at all – remember this: **You are already, intrinsically, enough.**

“Beloved is where we *begin*,” [liturgical poet Jan Richardson reminds us](#).

To happy beginnings, every day,
Josh ☩



thank you

Our special thanks this month to...

- everyone who participated in **Advent Fest** on December 9 and helped decorate our Christmas tree, made crafts and ornaments, and decorated Christmas cookies for our homebound members, with a special shout-out to Paula Schwab and Karen Bielinski who baked cookies and provided decorations.
- Paula & Jerry Schwab, Karen Bielinski, Mike & Sheryl Centanni, and Lindsay Stannard who **delivered poinsettias** to our members who are homebound, ill, or grieving.
- our Sunday School kids and their teacher, Paige Pierle, for their delightful **Christmas program** during worship on December 17 (*watch it [here!](#)*).
- Director of Music Dan Foster and the St. John's Collegium for their **gift of sacred music** this Advent & Christmas season.



We also give thanks for the generosity of our members this holiday season who donated...

- gift cards or monetary contributions to the **Christmas Adopt-a-Child** appeal for the Sacred Heart Outreach Center in North Albany, with special thanks to Karen Bielinski for coordinating.
- 2024 calendars** for clients at Rehabilitation Support Services.
- care packages for seafarers for this year's **Christmas-at-Sea** appeal for the Albany Maritime Ministry.
- their time in preparing and serving a meal for the **Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter** at First Lutheran Church: Karen Bielinski, Linda Davis, Joy Pierle, and Karen Seiz.

In Our Prayers

For whom or what shall we pray?



- Ashley Barthelmas
- Family and friends of Raymond Heitzman, uncle of Alan (Mary) Heitzman, who died on December 12

Prayer requests are published in *The Eagle* so that the whole community can hold one another in prayer and support. Submit a prayer request [online](#) or [contact Pastor Josh Evans](#).

Pastoral Care

Hospitalized? Undergoing or recovering from surgery? Grieving a loss? Or just feeling alone? Please let us know. We care about you and want to accompany you in difficult times. **If you or a loved one would like a pastoral call or visit, please call or text Pastor Josh Evans at 518.250.9098.** If you would like communion brought to you, please let us know that as well.

Feeling tech-savvy? Book an appointment online at calendly.com/revjoshevens.

Council Corner

St. John's congregation council met on **Monday, December 11** for its regular monthly meeting and:

- approved a bid for Asprion Landscaping, LLC, a local Colonie business, for **snow removal** for the cemetery roads and chapel parking lot for the 2023-24 winter season. (*Note: Additional bids were pursued; Asprion offered the best value.*)
- set the date for the **annual congregation meeting** on Sunday, January 21, 2024, following worship (with a back-up date for inclement weather on January 28).
- approved updated **membership rolls**, including active confirmed (voting) members, active baptized members, associate and active non-members, and inactive members.



Next meeting:
Tuesday, January 16
6:00 p.m.

Albany Lutherans Together



January/February Outreach Ministry

This month, the Albany Lutheran congregations are collecting items for families in need at **The Schuyler Inn**, an emergency housing shelter in Menands. **Requested items included: packages of diapers (all sizes), baby wipes, diaper rash ointment, socks (adult sizes), body wash, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes.** Items may be left in the collection basket at church anytime throughout January and February.



Save the Dates: Lent Wednesdays 2024

Lent is coming! Mark your calendars now to share a meal and worship with your fellow Lutherans in Albany. Each night, supper will begin at 6:00 p.m., with a simple liturgy of vespers to follow at 6:45. Using the beloved Holden Evening Prayer (Vespers '86) as a framework, our worship each night will take us on **A Lenten Journey to the Easter Vigil**. Worship will also be available via Zoom with more details coming soon.

February 21: St. John's

February 28: First

March 6: St. John's

March 13: Holy Spirit

March 21: Good Shepherd



This year, each host congregation will coordinate supper at their congregation. **Can you help with one or both of the meals at St. John's?** [Email Maggie](#) or call the church office.

Faith Formation

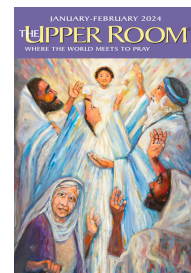
December at St. John's was an ADVENTure!



Sunday School

Will resume **soon!**
Stay tuned to our [website](#), [Facebook page](#), and [e-news](#) for upcoming dates.

Questions?
Contact: Paige Pierle
sundayschool@stjohnsalbany.org



January/
February
[Upper Room](#)
[devotionals](#)
are available
for pick-up
at church!

GOOD News of GREAT Joy!
Children's Christmas Program 2023

Watch it here!



Worship



Be renewed this year in worship.

Worship is at the heart of all we do. Our liturgical life forms the basis of our life together, as we are continually being gathered together around word and sacrament and continually being sent into the world. In a way, we are always on our way to and from the Sunday assembly.

Join us in person at the chapel or [on YouTube](#) at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday. Livestream broadcasts are always available to watch anytime after they air. *(In the event of streaming issues, a backup recording will be posted by Sunday evening.)*

Second Sunday after Epiphany



January 14

Third Sunday after Epiphany



January 21

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany



January 28

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany



February 4

(Click the image by each date for the direct livestream link.)



The Transfiguration of Our Lord ✝ February 11

The Sundays after Epiphany begin with Jesus' baptism and end with three disciples' vision of his transfiguration. In Mark's story of Jesus' baptism, apparently only Jesus sees the Spirit descending and hears the words from heaven. But now Jesus' three closest friends hear the same words naming him God's Beloved. As believers, Paul writes, we are enabled to see the God-light in Jesus' face, because the same God who created light in the first place has shone in our hearts to give us that vision. The light of God's glory in Jesus has enlightened us through baptism and shines in us also for others to see.



Lent Begins February 14

Begin your Lenten journey in community at St. John's.

Worship with Holy Communion and the imposition of ashes
will be offered at **12:00 p.m.** and **7:00 p.m.**

Serving This Month

Time:	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.
Date:	January 7	January 14	January 21	January 28
Presiding Minister	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans
Assisting Minister	Karen Bielinski	Lindsay Stannard	Paula Schwab	Karen Bielinski
Minister of Music	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster
Reader	Thaisa Beach	Avery Heaney	Melissa Savage	Thaisa Beach
Communion Assistant	Paula Schwab	Joy Pierle	Melissa Savage	Joy Pierle
Sacristan (Altar Guild)	Paula Schwab	Linda Davis	Linda Davis	Diane & Kelly Conley
Bread Baker	Josh Evans	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson
Usher	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley
Coffee Hour Host(s)	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson & Linda Davis	Maggie Anderson, Ruth Klee, & Barbara Ableman
Livestream Tech	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard
Altar Care (changing paraments & laundering linens)	Maggie Anderson & Paula Schwab			
Acolytes (pre-service)	OPEN (x2)	OPEN (x2)	Madelynn & Makayla Savage	OPEN (x2)
Acolytes (post-service)	OPEN (x2)	OPEN (x2)	Madelynn & Makayla Savage	OPEN (x2)
Crucifer (procession in)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
Crucifer (procession out)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
Book Bearer (procession in)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
Book Bearer (procession out)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN

Time:	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.
Date:	February 4	February 11	February 18	February 25
Presiding Minister	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans
Assisting Minister	Lindsay Stannard	Karen Bielinski	Paula Schwab	Karen Bielinski
Minister of Music	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster
Reader	Karen Bielinski	Avery Heaney	Melissa Savage	Lindsay Stannard
Communion Assistant	Paula Schwab	Joy Pierle	Melissa Savage	Lindsay Stannard
Sacristan (Altar Guild)	Paula Schwab	Linda Davis	Linda Davis	Diane & Kelly Conley
Bread Baker	Karen Bielinski	Karen Bielinski	Karen Bielinski	Karen Bielinski
Usher	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley
Coffee Hour Host(s)	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson & Linda Davis	Maggie Anderson, Ruth Klee, & Barbara Ableman
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Crucifer (procession in)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
Crucifer (procession out)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
Book Bearer (procession in)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
Book Bearer (procession out)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN



NEW!

Manage your (and your kids') schedule online!

Log in at:

services.planningcenteronline.com

Your email is the address we have on file for you. If you've never logged in to the Church Center app or Services before, you will need to create a password. Not sure if you have an account? [Email Pr. Josh.](#)

Helpful Links:

[Manage Your Schedule](#)
[Household Scheduling](#)
 (managing kids' schedules)
[Block Out Dates](#)

Can't make a scheduled date?
 Update your schedule in Services to automatically let us know, or email **BOTH Pr. Josh AND Maggie.**

Download the free
Services app:



There's a role for **everyone** in St. John's liturgy.
 We'll even train you!
 Contact [Pr. Josh](#) for more info.

News & Announcements



Annual Meeting January 21, 2024

Join us as we celebrate our ministry together over the past year, elect new leaders, and adopt a financial plan for the year ahead. **A full annual report will be available soon.**

Attend remotely:

[Join via Zoom](#)

Or by phone:

Dial 646.558.8656

and input meeting ID 687 073 9105
when prompted.

Note: Only active confirmed members of St. John's Lutheran Church are eligible to vote at the meeting, but all are invited to attend.



Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter Dinners

This year, St. John's is providing hot meals for the Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter at First Lutheran Church on **February 6, April 2, and April 30 (tentative)**. A typical dinner consists of a main entrée (casseroles are a great choice), a starch, a vegetable or salad, and dessert. If you'd like to help prepare the meal, please contact Karen Bielinski at 518.463.6224 or kbielins@nycap.rr.com.



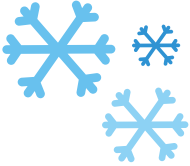
Additional Shelter Needs

In-kind donations this month for the Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter are also welcome, including: **coffee, powdered coffee creamer, paper hot/cold cups (8-9 oz.), paper bowls (20 oz.), paper plates (9-10 in.), powdered drink mixes (lemonade, iced tea, fruit punch), NEW men's white t-shirts (L, XL, or 2XL)**. Donations may be dropped off at St. John's.



Download the St. John's app!

Reading this on your phone? [Click here](#) to download. Or search for **Church Center** (look for the icon to the left) in the Apple App Store or Google Play and find us by location when you first open the app.



Winter Weather Closures

The safety of our community members is our priority. In the event of inclement weather that requires the cancellation of a liturgy or other church event, we will communicate that information promptly via email and local news media. Information will also be posted on our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#), as well on our phone recording.



Offering Envelopes Now Available

For members and friends of St. John's with assigned envelope numbers, your boxes of offering envelopes for 2024 are now available for pick-up on the island in the kitchen. **Please check off your name when you pick up your box.** If you would like us to mail you your envelopes, please [let Maggie know](#). If you do *not* have an envelope number and would like a box of envelopes, please [speak with Pr. Josh](#) so we can assign you an available box.



Give Securely Online

Online giving is always the most secure option to support the mission and ministry of St. John's. Visit stjohnsalbany.org/give to make a one-time gift or set up a recurring donation. No envelope number needed. Select "General" to make a regular contribution (including pledged giving) or another fund for a special offering. You can also optionally elect to cover the nominal processing fee (which St. John's pays). [Contact Pr. Josh](#) with any online giving questions.



The Eagle Goes Bi-Monthly

Beginning with this issue, *The Eagle* will be published every other month. Submissions may be sent to [Maggie](#) or [Pr. Josh](#) by the deadline listed below:

Issue:	Deadline for submissions:	Emailed/mailed on:
March/April	February 19	March 4
May/June	April 22	May 6
July/August	June 17	July 1
September/October	August 19	September 3
November/December	October 21	November 4

News & Announcements

RE: Thank You for your Donation of \$12,000. to Capital District Latinos (CDL)

Dear Reverend Josh Evans

On behalf of Capital District LATINOS (CDL) and our umbrella organization, Acacia Network, we would like to extend our sincerest appreciation for your recent donation in the amount of \$12,000 on October 16, 2023.

Your support ensures that our organization is able to continue providing critical services and resources to vulnerable individuals and families in underserved communities across the Capital District and beyond.

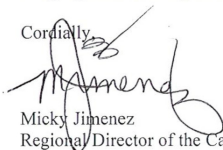
Because of your monetary donation, we can provide culturally responsive food, clothing, and other key essentials to help our newly arrived migrants feel loved and welcomed to the Capital District.

Capital District Latinos, Inc. is a 501c3 organization, with EIN: 45-3647494. Please save this letter of acknowledgement for your records.

Should you have any questions, please reach out to Micky Jimenez – Regional Executive Director at 518-491-1019 or at mjimenez@capitaldistrictlatinos.org.

Our heartfelt gratitude to you, the estate of Leland and Caroline Turner and the entire congregation once again for your generous contribution, and for thinking of us.

Cordially,



Micky Jimenez
Regional Director of the Capital Region
160 Central Ave, Albany, NY 12206
Mjimenez@capitaldistrictlatinos.org

Sharing Gratitudes

In October 2023, St. John's was able to make **five gifts of \$12,000 each to five of our ministry partners**, thanks to a generous bequest from the estate of Harvey & Caroline Turner, including:

- [Albany Maritime Ministry](#)
- [Capital Area Council of Churches](#)
- [Capital District Latinos](#)
- [Lutheran Disaster Response](#)
- [Upstate New York Synod](#)



Upstate New York Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
The Rev. Josh Evans
PO Box 5085
Albany, NY 12205

October 16, 2023

Dear Pastor Evans, and God's people of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church,

Grace and peace to you in the name of the One who makes all things new, Jesus Christ our Lord!

"I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers." (Ephesians 1:15-16)

Thank you for your undesignated gift of \$12,000, received on October 15, 2023. You have been extremely generous to the Synod financially, as we partner with you to bring Jesus' message of justice, mercy, and generous love. May God bless the lives and ministries impacted by this gift.

Thank you! – for the blessing you bring to the Albany community; for sharing your abundance throughout the ELCA; and for continuing to love and serve your neighbors. Thanks be to God!!

Yours In Christ,



THANK
😊 YOU

News & Announcements

Dear friends at St. John's Albany, Congregation Council, and Rev. Evans,
Fall blessings to you all! This is a small note of thanks and sincere appreciation for your incredibly generous gift to Lutheran Disaster Response. Thank you. Allowing LDR to use it 'where needed most' will ensure the funds are going immediately to where ministry and work is happening around the world, as well as with neighbors nationally. From psychological and emotional support to those fleeing violence, basic needs for people after natural disasters, to the accompaniment of migrant children, you are helping to provide God's hope to many. Please be in touch if there are ways I can share more information or answer any questions. In Christ, Pastor Ben



from all of us at St. John's!

Office Hours

10 AM – 4 PM

Monday & Friday
Maggie Anderson

Tuesday – Thursday
Pastor Josh Evans

Please call ahead before stopping by to ensure someone is in the office.



Connect with Us



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office@stjohnsalbany.org



St. John's

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

PO Box 5085

Albany, New York 12205

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Our Mission

We worship God, serve faithfully, and reach out.



We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

Trusting in the extravagant grace of God that sets us free,
we affirm the sacred worth and dignity of our siblings in Christ
– of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions,
racial and ethnic identities, ages, abilities, and socio-economic statuses.

We confess the church's complicity in systems that harm God's people,
including homophobia and transphobia, sexism,
racism and white supremacy, and ableism.

Together, as a community of Jesus followers, rooted in grace,
we commit ourselves to the work of racial equity and anti-racism
and to confronting and dismantling all systems of injustice and oppression
in all we do and say.

Church Staff

The Rev. Josh Evans

Pastor

pastorjosh@stjohnsalbany.org

Dan Foster

Director of Music

danfoster@stjohnsalbany.org

Maggie Anderson

Parish Secretary

parishsec@stjohnsalbany.org