

March/April 2024



The Eagle

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

O blessed spring

*where word and sign
embrace us into Christ the Vine:
here Christ enjoins each one to be
a branch of this life-giving Tree.*

—Susan Palo Cherwien, hymn writer (1953-2021)



From the Pastor

This Is the Night

*"This is the night," the chant proclaims.
Here is God's glory, in this candle.
Here is God's might, in this assembly.
Here is God's mercy, in this font,
this meal, this community.*

–Gail Ramshaw, *Words Around the Fire*

It was a little more than a decade ago when I experienced my first Easter Vigil at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Chicago. I didn't even know what the Easter Vigil was before Holy Trinity – my congregation growing up never did one – but wow, was I in for **something special** that night.

Carlos Manuel Rodríguez Santiago, the first Puerto Rican to be beatified by the Roman Catholic Church, says of the Easter Vigil, "**We live for this night.**"

That might as well be Holy Trinity's motto too. If Holy Trinity is known for one thing, it's the Vigil. From gathering outside the sanctuary, just two blocks west of Wrigley Field, around a fire, to hearing the stories such as we've heard throughout this Lenten season at our own midweek suppers, and finally to the moment – **the moment** when the lights come up, the organ swells, the streamer banners come out, the procession circles the sanctuary, the first "Alleluias" of Easter are sung – it's a moment of **unbridled, exuberant joy** – ending, of course, with a festive champagne reception (how else?).

We live for this night. Clearly I love the Easter Vigil, and I'm so excited to be able to share it with you again this year.

All Lent long, we've been tracing our journey toward the Great Vigil of Easter – toward gathering around the new fire, hearing again the stories of God's salvation, tasting the sweetness of the first Eucharist of Easter, and proclaiming that timeless and unshakeable truth: **Alleluia! Christ is risen!**

I hope to see **you** for our second annual Albany Lutherans Together (ALT) Easter Vigil (details on [page 6](#)).

In hopeful expectation,
Josh ☩



2023 ALT Easter Vigil at Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit
(photo credit: Josh Evans)

thank you

Our special thanks this month to...

- everyone who donated personal care items to the Schuyler Inn (family shelter) in Menands as a part of the **January/February Albany Lutherans Together (ALT) outreach collection.**
- Karen Bielinski, Linda Davis, Ginger Radley, and Kelly Conley who helped prepare the **February 6th meal for the Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter** at First Lutheran Church.
- all who made soup, came early to help set up, and stayed late to help clean for our **February 21 and March 6 Lenten midweek suppers** and evening prayer with ALT.

Cemetery Reminder

All winter decorations must be removed from gravesites in St. John's Cemetery by April 1. Thank you for helping Bob and our groundskeepers care for our sacred space.



Eagle Deadline

Submissions for the May/June edition of *The Eagle* are due by **April 22.**

[Submit your announcement\(s\) online](#)
or contact the church office.

In Our Prayers

For whom or what shall we pray?



- Ginger Radley

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.

Easter Flower Delivery

Can you help deliver an Easter plant to one or two of our members who are homebound? Plants will be available following Easter Sunday worship. Please [contact Maggie](#) or call the office at 518.465.7545 to sign up.



Council Corner

St. John's congregation council met on **Tuesday, January 16 for its regular monthly meeting** and:

- approved the purchase of a new locked mailbox to replace the existing mailbox at 303 Sand Creek Road, to be installed by Bob Curtis.
- nominated Joy Pierle and Lindsay Stannard to a second three-year term on council. (At the time of meeting, nominations for Staren Bielinski and Melissa Savage to new three-year terms were still pending.)
- approved a revised 2024 financial plan for the church and cemetery for final congregation approval at the annual meeting.



The **annual meeting of the congregation was held on Sunday, January 21** and:

- twenty-five voting members were present, satisfying the necessary quorum.
- Joy Pierle and Lindsay Stannard were each elected to a second three-year term on council, and Staren Bielinski and Melissa Savage were additionally elected to a new three-year term.
- the 2024 financial plan for the church and cemetery was approved without amendment.

The **February 20 regular meeting was postponed**, as no urgent business required council attention.

**Next meeting:
Tuesday, March 19
6:00 p.m.**



Missed the annual report?
Click [here](#)
to download.


(Or contact
the church office
for a mailed copy.)

St. John's 2024 Council

Terms ending in May 2024:

Jackie Campbell
Mike Centanni
Gilda Fake
Paula Schwab

New terms beginning in June 2024:

Staren Bielinski
Melissa Savage

Second terms beginning in June 2024:

Joy Pierle
Lindsay Stannard

Continuing current terms:

Emily Coppenrath
Jerry Schwab

Thank you to all our leaders who serve!



Sunday School

Meets on **March 17** following worship for a special service project. Kids and their families are invited to help us bake muffins for the CACC Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter. No RSVP or prep needed – just show up!



Easter Egg Hunt

Following worship on Easter Sunday (March 31). Kids of all ages welcome!

Regular gatherings will resume **soon**.

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



Nurture your spirituality with daily devotions

The Upper Room is a daily devotional written by readers of the magazine and others interested in sharing their faith experiences through writing. **Pick up a copy of the March/April edition at church or [read online!](#)**

Jesus was offering a hopeful invitation with his actions that day – to put an end to systems that exploit and harm.

Yet that hopeful invitation is not about ignoring the realities of the world – the hunger, death, brokenness...

Rather following the call of Jesus, accepting that hopeful invitation, is about trusting in the promise of resurrection, trusting in the promise that **hope will show up.**

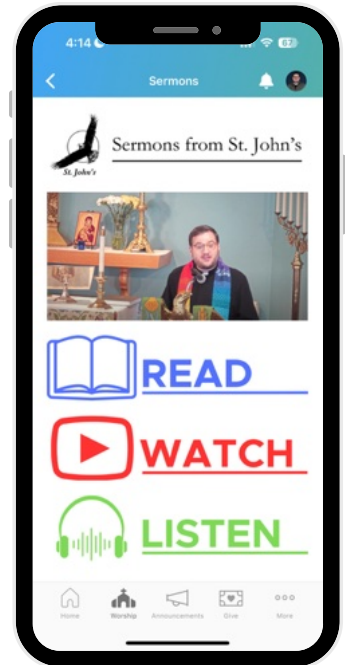
— Pastor Ben Hogue



On Sunday, March 3, the Rev. Ben Hogue, ELCA Director of Giving for Christian Community & Leadership, joined us for worship at St. John's as guest preacher.



Read or listen to his full sermon [online](#).



Miss a Sunday?

Catch up on our [app](#) or [website](#) with full manuscripts, audio, and video of (most) sermons!

Prefer a printed copy? Get in touch with [Pr. Josh](#).

Worship

Mark your calendars for Holy Week & Easter liturgies



Sunday of the Passion + March 24
9:30 a.m. (in person & [livestreamed](#))
Holy Eucharist with Palm Procession, the Passion According to Saint Mark, & Saint John's Collegium



Maundy Thursday + March 28
12:00 p.m. (in person)
Holy Eucharist with the Laying On of Hands
7:00 p.m. (in person & [livestreamed](#))
Holy Eucharist with the Laying On of Hands, Stripping of the Altar, & Saint John's Collegium



Good Friday + March 29
12:00 p.m. (in person)
The Passion According to Saint John, Veneration of the Cross, & Saint John's Collegium
7:00 p.m. (in person & [livestreamed](#))
The Passion According to Saint John, Veneration of the Cross, & Saint John's Collegium



Great Vigil of Easter
March 30

7:00 p.m. (in person)
This is the night!
New fire, stories by candlelight, the first Eucharist of Easter, and a festive reception.

Hosted by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
510 Albany Shaker Rd.,
Loudonville



Easter Sunday
March 31

9:30 a.m.
(in person & [livestreamed](#))
Festival Eucharist with Saint John's Collegium

Serving in Worship

Time:	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	Sunday of the Passion of the Palm Sunday) 9:30 a.m.	Easter Sunday 9:30 a.m.
Date:	March 3	March 10	March 17	March 24	March 31
Presiding Minister	Pr. Josh Evans <i>Pr. Ben Hogue</i>	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans
Assisting Minister	Paula Schwab	Lindsay Stannard	Lindsay Stannard	Karen Bielinski	Karen Bielinski
Minister of Music	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster
Reader	Thaisa Beach	Lindsay Stannard	Thaisa Beach	Melissa Savage	Karen Bielinski & Thaisa Beach
Communion Assistant	Pr. Ben Hogue	OPEN	Joy Pierle	Lindsay Stannard	Melissa Savage
Sacristan (Altar Guild)	Paula Schwab	Linda Davis	Linda Davis	Diane & Kelly Conley	Paula Schwab
Bread Baker	Karen Bielinski	Karen Bielinski	Karen Bielinski	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson
Usher	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley & OPEN (x2)
Coffee Hour Host(s)	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson & Linda Davis	Maggie Anderson, Ruth Klee, & Barbara Ableman	Maggie Anderson
Livestream Tech	Jerry Schwab	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard
Altar Care (changing paraments & laundering linens)	Maggie Anderson & Paula Schwab				
Offering Counters	Jerry Schwab & Emily Copenrath	Karen Bielinski & Shea Stannard	Jerry Schwab & Karen Seiz	Lindsay Stannard & Linda Davis	Judy Szesnat & Karen Seiz



Time:	Maundy Thursday 12:00 p.m.	Maundy Thursday 7:00 p.m.	Good Friday 12:00 p.m.	Good Friday 7:00 p.m.
Date:	March 28	March 28	March 29	March 29
Presiding Minister	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans
Assisting Minister	Paula Schwab	Karen Bielinski	Paula Schwab	Lindsay Stannard
Minister of Music	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster
Reader	Thaisa Beach	Lindsay Stannard	Thaisa Beach	Karen Bielinski
Communion Assistant	Joy Pierle	Lindsay Stannard	n/a	n/a
Sacristan (Altar Guild)	Paula Schwab	Paula Schwab	n/a	n/a
Bread Baker	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson	n/a	n/a
Usher	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Coffee Hour Host(s)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Livestream Tech	n/a	Shea Stannard	n/a	Shea Stannard
Altar Care (changing paraments & laundering linens)	Maggie Anderson & Paula Schwab			
Offering Counters	n/a (counted on 3/31)	n/a (counted on 3/31)	n/a (counted on 3/31)	n/a (counted on 3/31)

Time:	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.
Date:	April 7	April 14	April 21	April 28
Presiding Minister	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans
Assisting Minister	Lindsay Stannard	Karen Bielinski	Paula Schwab	Lindsay Stannard
Minister of Music	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster
Reader	Thaisa Beach	Avery Heaney	Melissa Savage	Karen Bielinski
Communion Assistant	Paula Schwab	Lindsay Stannard	Joy Pierle	Karen Bielinski
Sacristan (Altar Guild)	Paula Schwab	Linda Davis	Linda Davis	Diane & Kelly Conley
Bread Baker	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
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			
Offering Counters	Lindsay Stannard & Emily Copenrath	Karen Bielinski & Shea Stannard	Karen Seiz & OPEN	Lindsay Stannard & Linda Davis



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](mailto:pr.josh@stjohns.org).

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](mailto:pr.josh@stjohns.org) **AND** [Maggie](mailto:maggie@stjohns.org).

Download the free **Services** app:



There's a role for **everyone** in St. John's liturgy. We'll even train you! Contact [Pr. Josh](mailto:pr.josh@stjohns.org) for more info.

News & Announcements



**March 13:
Holy Spirit**

Lent Wednesdays continue through March

Share a meal and worship with your fellow Lutherans in Albany on Wednesdays during Lent. Supper begins at 6:00 p.m., with a simple liturgy of vespers to follow at 6:45. Worship will also be available via Zoom ([connect here](#) or dial 929-436-2866 and input meeting ID 518-463-1326 & passcode 1 to join by phone). Download the bulletin [here](#).

**March 21:
Good Shepherd**

Support the work of [Global Refuge](#) (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service) this Lent with a special offering appeal. Give in person by cash or check (payable to *St. John's Lutheran Church*) or [online](#).



Albany Lutherans Together (ALT) March/April Outreach Collection: *Mohawk Hudson Humane Society*

With a recent influx of rescue animals, the Humane Society is in great need of supplies. View current needs [online](#) or contact the church office.

Items may be dropped off directly at the shelter in Menands (3 Oakland Ave) daily (except Sundays) from 12-6 pm.



Jackie's walking!

Jackie Campbell will be Walking for Hospice, June 15 at Siena College. **To make a donation, please see Jackie during coffee hour April 28 – June 9.**

Give back with opportunities for generosity and service



Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter

Help us prepare a hot meal for the shelter on **April 2 & April 30.**

[Contact Karen Bielinski](#) or call her at 518.463.6224 for more information.



Help with ongoing needs, including: coffee & powdered creamer, paper hot/cold cups (8-9 oz.), paper bowls (20 oz.) & 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 in the collection basket outside the office.

From Our Partners in Ministry



Upstate New York Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Dear Beloved Congregations and leaders of our Upstate New York Synod,

As we journey through this solemn season of Lent, a time of reflection, renewal, and preparation, all of us in the synod office would like to extend our deepest gratitude to each and every one of you. Your unwavering faith, generosity, and commitment to the life and mission of our church have been a beacon of hope and transformation and embodies the G.R.A.C.E. mindset.

This Lenten season calls us to introspection and to engage deeply with our faith and the world around us. It is in this spirit that we acknowledge the remarkable ways in which your contributions have empowered our synod to address some of the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing our congregations today.

Thanks to your support, we have been able to facilitate critical and necessary conversations around church vitality. These discussions have not only helped us to understand the evolving needs of our communities but have also paved the way for innovative approaches to ministry, in contexts that honor our rich traditions, while embracing the future church of God's love made real.



Through Generous Love we are rebuilding and strengthening relationships within and beyond our church walls: from a trip to the Holy Land we have two new candidates for rostered ministry from the Christian church in Palestine. In a world where division often seems to prevail, the love and unity you have shown for those outside of our Synod stand as a testament to the power of our shared faith, to bring people together in pursuit of a common good.

Moreover, your contributions have enabled us to develop **new strategic ministries** in partnership with the ELCA, like Hagar's Kin, Loads of Love, and Sanctuary worship, that respond to the unique needs of our communities by providing **restorative justice** to those who need it most. These initiatives are already making a tangible difference in the lives of many, offering hope, support, and spiritual nourishment to those who need it most.

(continued on next page)

From Our Partners in Ministry

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Your mission support, in addition to encouraging congregation vitality, is at work raising up lay and rostered leadership across the synod. Together, we celebrated five ordinations of pastors accompanied by the work of our Candidacy Committee. Twenty-seven folk from across the Upstate New York Synod serve congregations as Certified and Assigned SAMs, proclaiming the gospel, and accompanying congregations in new ways.

As we continue to walk this Lenten path together, **let us remain steadfast in our commitment to each other** and to the work God has called us to do. May the stories of transformation and renewal that have emerged from our collective efforts inspire us to keep moving forward with faith, hope, and love.

Once again, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. **Your generosity and faithfulness are a powerful witness to the grace and goodness of God at work in the world.** May you be blessed with peace and joy this Lenten season and always.

In Christ's love and service,

The Rev. Imani Olear

Bishop Lee M. Miller II

**Thank you from
Rehabilitation
Support Services
(RSS)**

Dear Family & Friends of St. John's,
It will be another year full of beautiful
calendars for the clients and staff of
Rehabilitation Support Services, Inc.!!

The calendar ministry at St. John's has
been at work for many years. Hundreds of
calendars have been collected & distributed.
It is so appreciated by the clients & staff
of RSS, Inc. to receive a beautiful calendar each
year. The very best part is that someone (you!)
has passed on kindness and generosity to
enrich the lives of others.

The calendars are greatly appreciated by all.
Thank you so much! Wishing our St. John's
Family & Friends a year of health & happiness. -

THANK
😊 YOU

Sincerely,
Joy DeRita
on behalf of RSS, Inc.



Easter Memorials

Scan to donate



Please fill out a new form for each memorial.
All memorials must be received by **Sunday, March 24.**

Donations may be made online (using the fund “Flower Contributions”) or by cash/check in the church office.

Given by:

Please write your name as you would like it printed, or write “anonymous” if you do not wish to appear by name.

In memory of In honor of Other: _____

Please write your memorial as you would like it printed.

Return completed form to the church office or mail to:
St. John’s Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 5085
Albany, New York 12205

Or fill out this form online: stjohnsalbany.org/forms.
Additional paper forms are available in the office.



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.



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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