

May/June 2024



The Eagle

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



*God of tempest,
God of whirlwind,
as on Pentecost descend!*

From the Pastor

You Are the Branches*

[Jesus said] "I am the vine;
you are the branches."

– John 15:5

In the last of his "I AM" statements in the gospel of John, Jesus adds a twist: I AM ... YOU ARE.

It's no accident that this I AM statement comes *last* of all – as Jesus is saying *goodbye*, as his disciples face an *unknown* future.

Here is both promise: "I AM the vine."

And possibility: "YOU ARE the branches."

In one breath, Jesus reminds them of the fundamental truth that their life comes *from him* and their *connection* to him – and that's *not going away*, even if it feels like it.

In the next breath, Jesus offers them a framework for *continuing* to experience life together in his absence. They are *connected to each other*.

They *belong* to God – *and* to one another.

"I AM the vine, YOU ARE the branches." As if to say: *It starts with me. It continues with you – and it only grows stronger in community.*

There is *nothing* – neither death, nor resurrection, nor ascension, neither Jesus' absence, nor the disciples' fearfulness – that can prevent them from experiencing the *fullness* of abundant life in relationship with one another.

There is *nothing* that can prevent them from *belonging*.

In the final poignant moments shared among friends, *mutual dependence* reaffirms a profound truth of what it means to *belong to each other* – a belonging that *not even death* can tear apart.

In the community of the church, *mutual dependence* beckons us, time and time again, back to Christ our vine, around font and table – *and* to the branches that enfold us along the way.

We *belong* to Christ *and* to one another. The vine needs its branches, just as much as the branches need their vine.

We need the vine *and* the branches – a reminder of our rootedness in Christ *and* our connectedness to one another.

WE ARE the branches – extending ever outward in welcome, until *all belong*, until *all* come to know this truth:

There is *nothing* that can prevent you from *belonging* – *nothing* that can prevent you from experiencing God's abiding love for you.

Be the branches,
dear church.

Josh +



* Adapted from a sermon preached at St. John's on the Fifth Sunday of Easter, April 28, 2024.

thank you

Our special thanks this month to...

- **everyone who donated much-needed pet care items to the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society** as a part of the March/April Albany Lutherans Together (ALT) outreach collection.
- **everyone who helped prepare meals for the Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter** at First Lutheran Church this season, including Karen Bielinski for faithfully coordinating this important outreach effort.
- **Paula & Jerry Schwab** who made the palm crosses for Palm Sunday / Sunday of the Passion during Holy Week.
- **all who donated toward this year's Easter flowers** to adorn our sanctuary for the Resurrection of Our Lord, and **those who took a flower or two to the members of our community who are homebound.**
- **George & Judy Klapp** for working to restore our chapel hymn board.

Please join us following worship on **Sunday, May 19 (Pentecost) for a special reception (with cake!) in honor of another splendid season of sacred music by our very own Saint John's Collegium and director of music Dan Foster.**

In Our Prayers

For whom or what shall we pray?



- For the family of Amelia Manetta, age 8 (extended family of Lindsay & Shea Stannard), who passed away following a courageous battle with bone cancer
- For Pastor Rahel Hahn (Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit) and her family as they mourn the death of her sister
- For continued healing and strength for Ginger Radley as she recovers at home

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.

You may also schedule a time to meet with Pastor Evans anytime at: calendly.com/revjoshevens.

Council Corner

St. John's congregation council met on **Tuesday, March 19 for its regular monthly meeting** and:

- nominated Mike Centanni and Lindsay Stannard to serve as voting members for the spring assembly of the Hudson Mohawk Conference. *(During assembly, only Lindsay ended up being able to attend, along with Pastor Evans.)*
- nominated Paula Schwab and Lindsay Stannard to serve as voting members for the annual assembly of the Upstate New York Synod.
- approved new signage designating the chapel building as pet-free (with the exception of trained service animals) in the interest of the health and safety of our members and guests.



St. John's congregation council met on **Tuesday, April 23 for its regular monthly meeting** and:

- received a written report from Dan Foster on the status of plans for the new building. At this time, plans are still be drawn up with the aim of a more efficient approval process, as we now know what the town requires from the last time around.
- discussed the need to replace the deteriorating carpeting in the sanctuary. Additional estimates will be obtained for consideration.
- directed the purchase of a gift card for Maggie Anderson in recognition of Administrative Professionals' Day.

**Next meeting:
Tuesday, June 18
6:00 p.m.**

Incoming, continuing, and outgoing council members will meet in-person for dinner at the chapel.

New officers will also be elected for the new council.

There will be no May meeting unless new business needs to be urgently addressed.

Albany Lutherans Together



May & June Outreach Ministry

During May & June, we are pausing from our regular ALT collection schedule and instead **encouraging our congregations to donate toward the Upstate New York Synod "Loaves and Fishes" appeal for ELCA World Hunger (more on [page 10](#))**. Donations may be made through your own congregation. Thank you for your generosity in supporting this vital ministry of our church to provide sustainable solutions to address the root causes of hunger and poverty in our communities and around the world.



First Lutheran Book Club

Tuesday, May 28 + 7:00 p.m.

Join via [Zoom](#)

Join us in May as we discuss [Worth Fighting For: Finding Courage and Compassion When Cruelty Is Trending by John Pavlovitz](#).

Pavlovitz's essays will guide us in conversations about how to live our calling as people of faith with courage and compassion when these are out of favor with the world at large.

Copies are available on the book club shelf at the Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza. Mention the book club to receive 20% off.

Stay tuned to your bulletin announcements and e-news for June's book group selection, or [email Pr. Lowell Chilton](#).



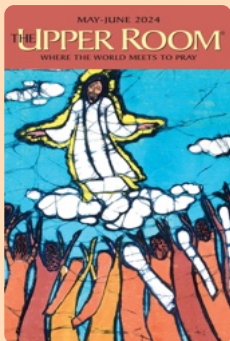
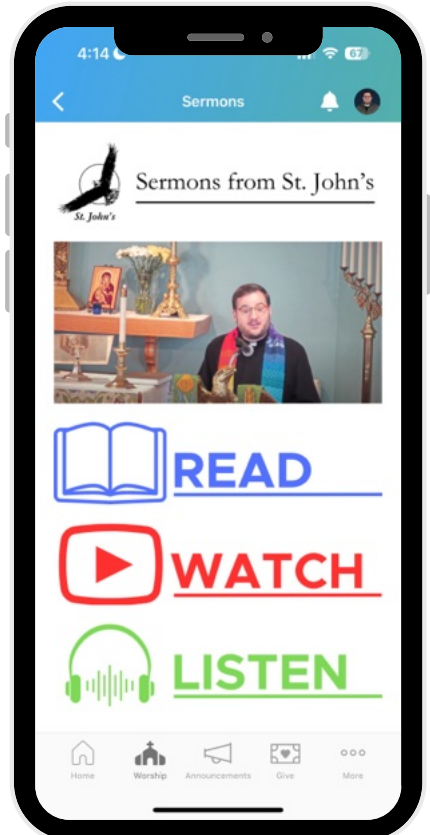
After worship on March 17, Sunday School kids and families baked muffins for guests of the Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter.



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](#).



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 May/June edition at church or [read online!](#)

Worship

The Season of Easter

Sixth Sunday of Easter + May 5

9:30 a.m. (in person & [livestreamed](#))

*The Rev. Dr. Becca Ehrlich,
guest preacher and presider*

Seventh Sunday of Easter + May 12

9:30 a.m. (in person & [livestreamed](#))



*Alleluia!
Christ is risen!*



The Day of Pentecost

May 19 + 9:30 a.m.

(in person & [livestreamed](#))

*Festival Eucharist
with Saint John's Collegium*

*Wear red!
(or other fiery colors)*



The Feast of The Holy Trinity

May 26 + 9:30 a.m.

(in person & [livestreamed](#))

Ordinary Time

Second Sunday after Pentecost + June 2

9:30 a.m. (in person & [livestreamed](#))

Third Sunday after Pentecost + June 9

 9:30 a.m. (in person & [livestreamed](#)) 

Pride Sunday

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost + June 16

9:30 a.m. (in person & [livestreamed](#))

Commemoration of the Emanuel Nine, martyrs

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost + June 23

9:30 a.m. (in person & [livestreamed](#))

Baptism of Silas Centanni

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost + June 30

9:30 a.m. (in person & [livestreamed](#))

*The Rev. Christopher Hoyer,
guest preacher and presider*

Serving in Worship

Time:	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.
Date:	May 5	May 12	May 19	May 26
Presiding Minister	Pr. Becca Ehrlich	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans
Assisting Minister	Karen Bielinski	Paula Schwab	Lindsay Stannard	Paula Schwab
Minister of Music	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster
Reader	Avery Heaney	Melissa Savage	Avery Heaney	Thaisa Beach
Communion Assistant	Joy Pierle	Melissa Savage	Gilda Fake	Lindsay Stannard
Sacristan (Altar Guild)	Paula Schwab	Linda Davis	Gilda Fake	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
Livestream Tech	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard
Offering Counters	Emily Coppenrath & Lindsay Stannard	Karen Bielinski & Shea Stannard	Jerry Schwab & Karen Seiz	Linda Davis & Lindsay Stannard



Time:	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.
Date:	June 2	June 9	June 16	June 23	June 30
Presiding Minister	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Christopher Hoyer
Assisting Minister	Lindsay Stannard	Karen Bielinski	Paula Schwab	Lindsay Stannard	Karen Bielinski
Minister of Music	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster
Reader	Thaisa Beach	Lindsay Stannard	Melissa Savage	Thaisa Beach	Lindsay Stannard
Communion Assistant	Gilda Fake	Joy Pierle	Gilda Fake	Joy Pierle	Gilda Fake
Sacristan (Altar Guild)	Paula Schwab	Linda Davis	Gilda Fake	Diane & Kelly Conley	Gilda Fake
Bread Baker	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
Usher	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley	Kelly Conley
Coffee Hour Host(s)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
Livestream Tech	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard
Offering Counters	Emily Coppenrath & Lindsay Stannard	Karen Bielinski & Shea Stannard	Jerry Schwab & Karen Seiz	Linda Davis & Lindsay Stannard	Judy Szesnat & Gilda Fake



Can't make your scheduled date?

Please contact **BOTH** [Maggie](#) AND [Pr. Josh](#).

Help us prepare the July/August schedule.

Please alert us of any dates you are **NOT** available **by** **June 15** so that we can accommodate your schedule.



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Rachel Beach, granddaughter of Charles and Thaisa Beach, on her graduation from the University of Florida on May 4. Rachel majored in Sustainability Studies. She has been accepted in the Disney College Program and on May 6 will begin working at Disney in Orlando, Florida.

Is there a graduate in your life? Let us know!

We want to celebrate with you and share the news in an upcoming Eaglet or Eagle.

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



Congratulations to the Rev. Jo Page, dean of the Hudson Mohawk Conference and former pastor of St. John's, on her upcoming marriage to her partner, the Rev. David Moore.

All are invited to attend the ceremony, which will be held on **Sunday, July 21, at 1:00 p.m., at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 103 S. Reynolds St., Scotia.** The Rev. Dr. Ken Simurro will preside. A simple 'cookies-and-punch' reception will follow.

Plants for Pentecost



Help us deck out the chancel in PENTECOST RED! You are invited to bring red geraniums to the chapel anytime between May 13 – 17, or you may make a donation to our flower fund for the purchase of additional plants. [Donate online](#), by cash/check on Sunday mornings, or by mail to the church post office box.



Memorial Day Service

Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit invites you to a Memorial Day service on **Monday, May 27, at 3:00 p.m., at their cemetery, 422 Feura Bush Rd., Glenmont.** Please bring a chair (and an umbrella in case of inclement weather).

This service is dedicated to the remembrance of those members of the military who have died in war. Please feel free to bring and share the names of members of your extended family who are part of that group remembered on Memorial Day as the fallen.



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.

SPRING CLEANING

After a long winter,
help up spruce up our chapel grounds!
Sunday, June 2, after worship
Lunch will be served for all volunteers.

Sign up to bring treats to
share (homemade or
store-bought are equally
welcome!), make coffee,
and help with set-up or
clean-up – following the
9:30 a.m. liturgy every
Sunday.

Sign up online
for [May](#) or [June](#)
or on the bulletin board
at church.

Summer Coffee Hour Hosts



Church Staff Update



Following mutual conversation and discernment, **we are excited to announce that Maggie Anderson, long-time parish secretary, is now Community Care Coordinator.**

What does this mean? In many ways, this is a change in name only. But it also conveys a better understanding of Maggie's role as it has evolved – as indeed the 21st-century, post-COVID church at-large has evolved.

In addition to continuing to provide administrative support and office coverage, the Community Care Coordinator is a critical part of the ministry team of St. John's, **servicing our church community through ministries of care and hospitality** – coordinating fellowship events, such as coffee hour, and keeping in touch with those who are homebound, ill, or grieving, making pastoral referrals as needed.

For now, you can continue to reach Maggie at her current email address:

parishsec@stjohnsalbany.org

Thanks be to God for Maggie's faithful ministry of care, hospitality, and administration among us!

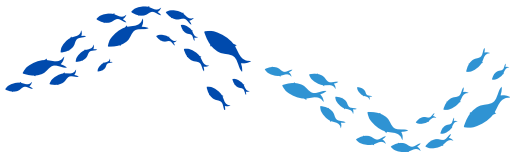
News & Announcements



The Upstate New York Synod Hunger Justice Team invites us to participate in “Loaves and Fishes,” inspired by Jesus’ miraculous feeding of the five thousand with only five loaves and two small fish (Matthew 14:17-20).

Help us raise our congregational goal of \$500 to provide long-term solutions to ending hunger by establishing fish farms and irrigation systems in communities living with food insecurity.

[Donate online](#) or by cash or check on **Sunday mornings** (please mark your gift for “World Hunger”). To have your contribution included in this year’s check that we’ll take to synod assembly, **all donations must be received by Sunday, May 26.**



**Buy a jar,
support
World Hunger!**

**\$8 each
or 2 for \$15**



Stop by the office to purchase one (or more!) of these **one-of-a-kind, St. John’s branded mason drinking jars!** All proceeds will help us raise funds for our World Hunger offering for synod assembly.



Congratulations to **the Rev. Dr. Becca Ehrlich, dean-elect of the Hudson Mohawk Conference.**

Pastor Ehrlich will begin her new 4-year term on June 1.

We also give thanks for the last eight years of the faithful ministry of the Rev. Jo Page, as she now embarks on retirement.



Eagle Deadline

Submissions for the July/August edition of *The Eagle* are due by **June 17.**

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

Thank You!

To our St. John's Family ~

Thank you so much for your prayers, cards, wellwishes and flowers during mom's recent rehab. Your thoughtfulness meant the world to her, and to me and really helped her through a rough time. Turns out rehab ~~is~~^{is} as tough as they say it is, but the good news is that the worst is

now behind us ~~at~~ and mom continues to make steady progress. Having you all behind her and encouraging her really made a difference!

We appreciate you all -
Thanks again.

Karen and Ginger



NEW Office Hours

10 AM - 4 PM

Monday

Pastor Josh Evans (10 AM - 4 PM)
Maggie Anderson (12 - 4 PM)

Tuesday - Thursday

Pastor Josh Evans

Friday

Maggie Anderson

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



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St. John's

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

Community Care Coordinator

parishsec@stjohnsalbany.org