



From the Pastor

Words have power – and words have consequences.

As Jesus' inaugural address in the gospel of Luke – and its subsequent fallout – remind us. Reading from the scroll of prophet Isaiah, Jesus chooses his words carefully, finding the place where it is written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19)

But the initial amazement of the synagogue assembly quickly turns to rage, as the angry mob drives him out of their town and attempts to hurl him off a cliff. It wasn't so much they didn't like what they heard – this is "good news" after all – but to whom it applies. To a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. To Naaman the Syrian. In a word, to *outsiders*. The ones who haven't always gotten a place at the table. The ones who haven't always belonged.

And so jealousy consumes them. Or maybe fear of scarcity. ("Will there be enough 'good news' to go around? I should get it first; I've been here the longest!") Probably a little of both. And then to the cliff. When they realize they don't get to *control* this good news – that it is ultimately *for all*, even the people they don't like – they try to silence him.

Maybe you also heard Bishop Budde's homily at the inaugural prayer service.

(You can read a short excerpt and find links to the full manuscript and video on page 7.) Her pastoral and prophetic words, urging us to *unity*, pleading for *mercy and compassion*.

The accolades from the mainline progressive church came pouring in, flooding my social media. And so did the backlash, with those who *didn't* like what they heard quick to denounce the bishop's words, to hurl her off the metaphorical cliff, even one US representative who went so far as to draft a House resolution to "condemn" her homily for "promoting political bias instead of advocating the full counsel of biblical teaching."

Words have power – and words have consequences.

And let me be perfectly clear in these words:

Mercy and compassion are "biblical teaching."

Seeking justice and advocating for the most vulnerable among us is biblical.

Speaking out against words and executive orders and policies that blatantly disregard the full humanity of our immigrant and LGBTQIA+ neighbors is biblical.

On Sunday, January 26, we celebrated Reconciling in Christ Sunday, along with welcoming and affirming congregations across this church. On RIC Sunday, we recommitted ourselves to the ongoing work of being an ever more inclusive church for all of God's beloved children, expressed boldly and aspirationally in the words of our welcome statement, as affirmed unanimously by this congregation on October 15, 2023:

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.

In a church body that hasn't always been a safe place for its LGBTQIA+ members, and in many places still isn't, *we need to say these words out loud.*

In the face of words and actions that seek to harm our neighbors, the church is called to speak words of liberation and justice, to proclaim in word and deed God's extravagant love for all.

Perhaps now more than ever, the church is and must be a *sanctuary* – a safe place – for all, gathered in the name of the One who calls each of us beloved, and sent to put that love into action for the sake of those who are hurting and afraid.

The words we say, and preach, and pray, and sing, have power – power to remind us of the belovedness that is irrevocably ours in the waters of baptism, and power to sweep us up – as church *together* – in the current of our baptismal covenant to continue to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

In hope,
Pastor Josh +



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

Phone: 518.465.7545 | Website: stjohnsalbany.org

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Remember “CliffsNotes?” Here’s That Version of Our Annual Report for You!

St. John’s Annual Meeting was held on Sunday, January 26, 2025 at 11 am. A minimum of 13 persons/voting members was necessary to reach our quorum. With 22 members (plus 3 guests) in attendance, we met that requirement. **In addition to hearing/accepting Ministry Reports, several motions were passed, the two key being: Election of New Council Member(s):** To approve the recommendation of the nominating committee to elect Karen Bielinski to a new three-year term on the congregation council, beginning in June 2025. *APPROVED.*

Approval of 2025 Financial Plan for Mission: To adopt the 2025 Financial Plan for Mission for St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church & Cemetery as presented and recommended by the congregation council. *APPROVED.*

See below for just a few brief excerpts from our 2024 Annual Report. To see the full report, click [HERE](#). It can be found on our [News & Announcements web page](#).

PASTOR’S REPORT

In last year’s report, I wrote, “Ministry is never something that can be done in a silo” – words that continue to ring true with every passing day/week/month/year.... With every passing day I’m reminded none of us has to do it all, and certainly none of us can do it all alone. There is *grace* in that!

Worship & Liturgy: Josh thanked ALL who serve in worship (and beyond), enrich our liturgical life, and deepen our spirituality.

Faith Formation: Josh thanked all who were involved in the Christmas Pageant and listed special highlights from the year, as well as ALT opportunities.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Thank you to everyone who has stepped in to help and serve in different ways (big and small) throughout the year. I am grateful for your commitment, your faithfulness, and your generosity. Also, my thanks and appreciation to council members for your dedication to leading St. John’s.

TREASURER’S REPORT

During 2024, St. John’s hired a third party bookkeeper to take on many duties the previous treasurer was completing. Judy Carlson joined the team in March and has been a wonderful asset.

MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT

Saint John’s Collegium

Looking back on 2024 and the past eight years... it’s well and good to reflect on how the beauty and richness of liturgical music has elevated the worship life of this congregation, and how our sacred musical education mission has been realized in our youngest members. Of our twelve musicians on Christmas Eve, three started training with us while they were yet in high school. Before going off to earn a bachelors and a masters degree in violin in Boston and Montréal, William Peltz Smalley started playing and singing with us when he was a senior in high school. Mikayla Malenfant, last year’s choral apprentice, just finished her first semester at the Crane School of Music. Maura Lander, our current high school apprentice, just passed her pre-screenings and will soon perform her live auditions at Ithaca College, SUNY Fredonia, and Crane.

Technical Projects

Sconces: Over the summer, I completed the custom cast-iron cross sconces; our lighting is now versatile and beautiful.

Hardwiring: To make a more reliable stream for our remote worshipers, we realized that for greatest bandwidth and video stream stability, the MacMini at the AV station should be on wired Internet, rather than WiFi.

Thermostat Upgrade: Cold air blows through a large hole so it’s impossible to maintain an even temperature in winter. Pastor Josh and I decided to install a smart thermostat and remote sensors.

CEMETERY REPORT

2024 Cemetery Statistic Summary

Full Burials	10
Cremations	7
Lots Sold	13
Cost of Foundations Constructed:	\$4,327.50



Appreciation is extended to Bob Curtis, Cemetery Superintendent, who handles sales, digging and responds to requests from Funeral Home Directors.

Postscript: Bob Curtis’ wife underwent cancer surgery. Being self-employed, Bob did not have medical insurance to cover the surgery but was finally able to purchase some kind of insurance which has helped them, but does not cover all expenses. If anyone is willing to make a contribution to pass along to the Curtis family, please speak with Karen Bielinski to make arrangements.

RENOVATION REPORT

A new Renovation Task Force has been established to assist Council regarding future building plans/renovations: Michael Centanni, Jerry Schwab and Karen Bielinski. Plans to build a new campus are on hold. **Post-Annual Report Update:** The task force met with a potential architect and contractor on January 22 to scope out the space and project ideas.



Pr. Josh Will Be on Vacation Feb. 11-16

Pastor Josh will be on vacation February 11-16. Pastor Kathy Donley (of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Albany) will be on call for pastoral emergencies. First contact [Maggie Anderson](#), who will reach out to Pastor Kathy as appropriate.

Pr. Christopher Hoyer to Guest Preach Feb. 16



We will welcome Pastor Christopher Hoyer as our Guest Preacher and Presider at our worship service on Sunday, February 16, at 9:30 am. (Pastor

Josh will just be returning from vacation.) Pastor Hoyer is a familiar face at St. John's— often worshipping with us, along with his wife Doris.

Pr. Lowell Chilton to Guest Preach March 2



We will welcome Pastor Lowell Chilton as our Guest Preacher and Presider at our worship service for the Transfiguration of Our Lord on

Sunday, March 2, at 9:30 am.

The pastors of Albany Lutherans Together (ALT) are doing a "pulpit swap" that day. (Pastor Josh will be at Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit that morning, and Pastor Rahel Hahn, normally at Holy Spirit, will be at First and Good Shepherd Lutheran Churches.) Pastor Kate Drefke was with us in September. Opportunities like these are excellent occasions to hear another voice and perspective and to strengthen the relationships between our congregations.

Pew Bible and Hymnal Sponsorship Opp's

Our new pew Bibles are here! They reflect the newly updated version of the widely-used translation of the Bible – the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE) – which we also use in our worship services at St. John's. Nine of the twenty-five Bibles ordered have been generously sponsored, and additional opportunities are available for a suggested donation of \$17 each (cost of each Bible).

It's also not too late to sponsor a copy of *All Creation Sings*, which has been in our pews since the summer of 2023. Several "blank" copies are still available to dedicate in memory or honor of a loved one or special occasion. Suggested donation is \$15 each (the cost of each hymnal).

Sponsorships for Bibles and hymnals will be accepted as long as they are still available. Contact [Pastor Josh](#) for more info.

"We need to hear the Gospel every day, because we forget it every day."
"The bible is a remarkable fountain: the more one draws and drinks of it, the more it stimulates thirst."
~ both by Martin Luther

Mark Your Calendars for Lent & Holy Week

Lent will be here before we know it, and we don't want you to miss a thing as we journey to the cross the best way possible: together! In addition to special events, we'll have many opportunities to gather as a faith family. Mark your calendar with the dates below and join us ... every step of the way!

Wednesday, March 5
Ash Wednesday
Worship at noon & 7 pm

Wednesdays, March 12-April 9
Midweek ALT Soup & Worship
(Locations TBA)

Sunday, April 13
Palm/Passion Sunday
Worship at 9:30 am

Thursday, April 17
Maundy Thursday
Worship at noon & 7 pm

Friday, April 18
Good Friday
Worship at noon & 7 pm

Saturday, April 19
Easter Vigil
Worship at 7 pm
at Good Shepherd

Sunday, April 20
Easter Sunday
Worship at 9:30 am, followed by Easter Brunch & Egg Hunt



Journey to the cross with us!
Watch your emails and check our Facebook page for upcoming events as we draw near to Lent & Holy Week.
The best way to travel is together!



Join All Creation Sings on February 2 @ 1 pm

(Re)Introducing *All Creation Sings*, a Workshop with Julie Grindle, on Sunday, February 2, from 1:00-2:30 pm at Holy Spirit. Join us for an afternoon of singing and learning about "the purple book!" *All Creation Sings* is now almost five years old! Published during the pandemic, it is a resource that looks to fill musical and liturgical gaps in our ELCA liturgies. Join us for a brief overview of the book, and then we will sing! Come with your heart and voice and let's explore it together. **This 70-80 minute workshop begins at 1:00 pm, preceded by lunch at 11:45 am.** Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the workshop and to RSVP. (RSVPs are not required but are always helpful.) Bring your own hymnal if you have one, or borrow a copy. Holy Spirit is at 57 Hurlbut St. in Albany.



**All Creation Sings
A Workshop with
Julie Grindle**

February 2 @ 1 pm

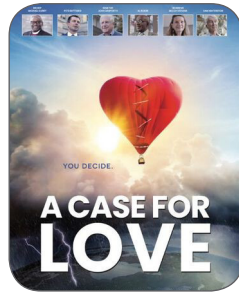
**Lutheran Church
of the Holy Spirit**

Sponsored by:
Albany Lutherans Together

Join Us for Faith on Tap on February 5 @ 6:30 pm

LCHS & St. John's invite you to join us for good conversation about faith and life, as well as delicious local brews (soft drinks also available), at the Warbler Brewery (155 Delaware Ave., Delmar). BYO dinner from a local restaurant (there are three in the same strip as Warbler). **The next Faith on Tap will be held on Wednesday, February 5, from 6:30-8:00 pm. Come tap into a good time!**

Watch A Case for Love on February 15 @ 2:30 pm at St. Andrew's Church in Carmichael Hall



All are invited to a free showing of *A Case for Love* on Saturday, February 15, 2:30 pm at St. Andrew's Church in Carmichael Hall.

This feature length movie examines whether or not love – specifically unselfish love – is the solution to the extreme societal and political divide facing the U.S. [Watch the trailer here.](#) Refreshments and popcorn provided. Following the movie there will be a discussion with the movie's director Brian Ide. St. Andrew's Church is at 10 N. Main Ave. in Albany. (This film was shown at St. John's during Adult Forum on November 3.)

Synopsis of Film:

In a time of national chaos and lack of unity, watch as our film team travels the US searching for people living their lives selflessly. Join us as we interview random people on the street and well-known figures, including Pete Buttigieg, Al Roker, Becca Stevens, and more. Where have they witnessed unselfish love? Where have they seen its absence? Finally, watch Bishop Michael Curry place all we've seen into context. Learn more at acaseforlovmovie.com.

See Considering Matthew Shepard on March 9

Albany Pro Musica proudly presents the Capital Region premiere of *Considering Matthew Shepard* on Sunday, March 9, at 3 pm at Troy Savings Bank Music Hall.

This transformative work, by acclaimed composer Craig Hella Johnson, reflects on the life, death, and legacy of Matthew Shepard, a young man whose brutal murder in 1998 became a catalyst for social change and a pivotal moment in the fight for LGBTQIA+ rights. Through deeply moving music and thought-provoking storytelling, *Considering Matthew Shepard* explores themes of inclusion, resilience, and hope. It invites us to reflect on our shared humanity and challenges us to imagine a more compassionate and just world. [Get details HERE](#); [buy tickets HERE](#).

A personal note from Pastor Josh about *Considering Matthew Shepard*:

I have been privileged to hear this piece performed twice now, including once at Ravinia (just outside of Chicago) with Conspirare, the choral group under the direction of the oratorio's composer Craig Hella Johnson. It is a stunningly moving and important work, and I am very much looking forward to hearing APM (in which our very own Dan Foster sings) perform it on March 9, along with special guests from the Albany Gay Men's Chorus, including Daniel White. If you have the means and availability to hear it for yourself, I would heartily commend it to you. Myriad recordings, including [this full-length performance](#), also exist on YouTube.



Check out St. John's Facebook page for all upcoming events!



Thank You's!

Special thanks this month to ...

• **Everyone who contributed to the Upstate NY Synod "Ambulances for Advent" giving challenge.** Together with our tithe of the final distribution of the Turner estate, St. John's was able to give \$2,700 to the synod-wide appeal to support our siblings in Christ in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe.

• **Our Christmas pageant actors:** Lindsay Stannard, Makayla Savage, Lena Pierle, Olivia Lewis, Madelynn Savage, Lucian Lewis, Joe Pielre, Ivy Pierle, Silas Centanni, Karisa Centanni, Kelly Conley; as well as Staren Bielinski for costume design and Paige Pierle for assisting with rehearsals and "stage managing."

• **Christmas flower deliverers to homebound members:** Karen Bielinski, Paula Schwab, Jerry Schwab, Jenny Szesnat, Judy Szesnat and Linda Davis.

• **Everyone who donated 2025 calendars for RSS clients** – including Janice Logan for coordinating a collection at First Lutheran and dropping them off with our collection.

• **All who baked muffins as part of our Sunday School service project on January 12.** The delicious treats were delivered to Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless (IPH). Special thanks to Kelly Conley and Karen Seiz for helping, and to Karen Bielinski for coordinating the details.

• **Everyone who helped prepare a meal for Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless (IPH):** Karen Bielinski, Joy Pierle, Karen Seiz, Linda Davis, Ginger Radley, Mike Centanni, Sheryl Centanni and Kelly Conley. Meals were prepared after worship on Sunday, January 19, and delivered on Tuesday, January 21.

• **Members who dedicated new pew Bibles.** (Note: There are still pew Bible sponsorship opportunities available. More info on page 3.)

• **Dan Foster for fixing a (minor) leak in our gas lines in the garage.** In addition to being our Director of Music Ministry, he blesses us with his many talents!

• **All who attended our Annual Meeting on January 26.** Your votes truly matter to this congregation! (See picture on photo page.)

Lutheran Disaster Response: Wildfires

As we hold in prayer our siblings in Southwest California, whose lives, schools, places of worship, and businesses have been destroyed or are being threatened in the midst of wildfires, Lutheran Disaster Response is coordinating with the Southwest California Synod, Pacifica Synod, and other partners to assess the needs of people impacted by the wildfires. Give now to help with immediate and ongoing relief efforts. [Click HERE to give directly to LDR](#) or [HERE to give via your St. John's online giving profile.](#)



Need Pastoral Care?

Hospitalized? Undergoing or recovering from surgery? Grieving a loss? *Feeling alone or stressed?* 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, or schedule a time to meet using calendly.com/revjoshevens.** If you would like communion brought to you, let us know that as well.



"Let us love not in word or speech but with actions." ~1 John 3:18

In Our Prayers

For whom or what shall we pray?

- Dianne Guarneri
- Levi (Dianne Guarneri's grandson)
- Diane Mead
- Teri Rogers
- Bill Shuster
- Freddy Boyzer
- Sarah (Bob Curtis' wife)
- Sharon Mack (sister of Carolyn Lander, aunt of Maura)



"Faith is not without worry or care, but Faith is Fear that has said a prayer."

ALT Collections



Thank you for your generosity this past year! Albany Lutherans Together (ALT) has supported a wide range of ministries.

We are so very grateful for our generosity made stronger together! We look forward to our shared Lenten appeal, beginning on Ash Wednesday (March 5). Please watch for more information to be shared closer to the time.



Cornerstone Campus Ministry on February 4

Serve a meal and worship with Cornerstone Campus Ministry at UAlbany (1400 Washington Ave., CC375) on Tuesday, February 4, 6:00-7:30 pm.

- St. John's provides food for 25-30 students (plus any St. John's folks who are eating), including the main course, sides/salad, and dessert. Cornerstone provides beverages, plates, glasses, and silverware. Vegan and vegetarian options are encouraged.
- Dinner is served in CC375 from 6:00-6:45 pm. We begin with prayer and then serve buffet-style and eat like a big family around our table in the community room.
- During the meal, folks are asked to make introductions; we encourage conversation. It's a great opportunity for us to get to know the students and for them to get to know us, their congregational partners.
- At 6:45 pm, St. John's leads approximately 30 minutes of interactive worship/devotions/reflection, etc.
- At 7:15 pm, we clean up and are out the door by 7:30 pm.



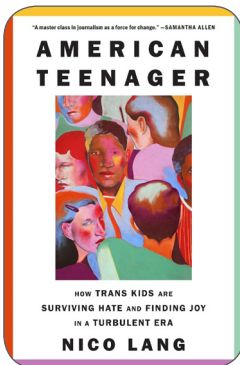
Help is needed to provide food, help serve, and plan devotions. If you can lend a hand, contact [Pr. Josh](#).

CACC Homeless Shelter Dinner on March 18

We have additional opportunities to prepare a meal for the Capital Area Council of Churches Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter, now at First Church in Albany: 110 N. Pearl St. A typical dinner is a main entrée, a starch, a vegetable or salad, and a dessert. Casseroles make a good choice. **St. John's will prepare a meal after worship on Sunday, March 16, to be delivered on Tuesday, March 18.** To help, please contact Karen Bielinski at 518-461-3650 or kbielins@nycap.rr.com.



First Lutheran Book Club: February 26 @ 6 pm



First Lutheran Book Club will meet on Wednesday, February 26, at 6 pm to discuss *American Teenager: How Trans Kids Are Surviving Hate and Finding Joy in a Turbulent Era* by Nico Lang.

Location will be in e-news & bulletin.

Happy Birthday!

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| February 1 | Shea Stannard |
| February 4 | Carol Mead |
| February 12 | Gilda Fake |
| February 19 | Evelyn Pitt |
| February 20 | Dana Wacksman |

"Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional." ~ Chili Davis



We'll Take Your Empty Cans and Bottles!

If you don't already return your recyclable cans and bottles to the store to get your deposit back yourself, we'll gladly take them off your hands! Drop off your empty and rinsed cans and bottles in or near the "Clynk" recycling box in the hallway, and we'll get them to where they need to be. Proceeds will be used to help fund Coffee Hour treats and supplies. Thank you!

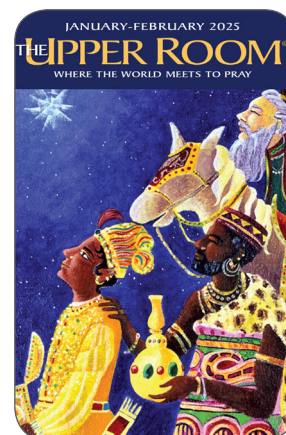


Winter Weather



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

Your Daily Devotions



You can pick up the January-February edition of *The Upper Room* at church or [read it online](#). Want us to mail you a copy? Please contact [Maggie](#).

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



Bishop Budde’s Sermon at Service of Prayer

No doubt you have seen soundbites and endless news commentary about Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde’s sermon preached at the Service of Prayer for the Nation at the Washington National Cathedral on Tuesday, January 21. **If you haven’t already done so, we encourage you to listen to or read Bishop Budde’s full sermon.** (You can also watch the full service [HERE.](#)) In a time of great division, Bishop Budde’s prophetic and pastoral words call us to **unity**, rooted in honoring the inherent dignity of every human being, honesty in both private conversation and public discourse, and humility:

“Unity is relatively easy to pray for on occasions of solemnity. It’s a lot harder to realize when we’re dealing with real differences in the public arena. But without unity, we are building our nation’s house on sand.

“With a commitment to unity that incorporates diversity and transcends disagreement, and the solid foundations of dignity, honesty, and humility that such unity requires, we can do our part, in our time, to help realize the ideals and the dream of America.”

~ The Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, Bishop of Washington



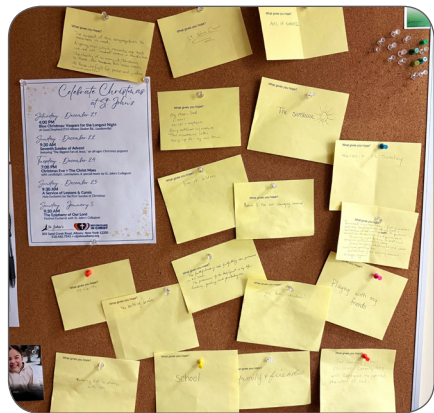
Council Corner by Staren Bielinski

St. John’s Congregation Council met on Tuesday, January 21, 2025 for its regular monthly meeting. During that meeting, we:

- Received a property report from Dan Foster and discussed the recent gas leak.
- Approved new cemetery rates, effective immediately.
- Discussed plans for Lent and Holy Week services. Stay tuned for further communication regarding transportation opportunities for evening services.
- Discussed plans for future placement of candelabras, which have been in storage since Christmas. Due to limited space on the altar, it was agreed to keep them in storage at this time.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 18, 2025.

You can email our Council at council@stjohnsalbany.org and your message will be sent to all of our Council members. It’s a convenient and efficient way to communicate with your Church Council!



Thanks to all who answered our question, “What gives you hope?” See your responses at right!

St. John’s: We Asked, You Answered!

During our Christmas pageant, yellow slips of paper were passed out containing the question, “What gives you hope?” Below are of your responses!



- My faith.
 - St. John’s Church.
 - The birth of Jesus.
 - Acts of kindness.
 - The sunshine.
 - Family & friends.
 - Love of children.
 - Worship on Sunday.
 - School.
 - Playing with my friends.
 - You! Kids! Christmas!
 - Our Sunday School children.
- Knowing they will continue to spread the word of God.
- Knowing God is always with us.
 - The faithfulness of God fulfilling his promise in his time.
 - The presence of the Holy Spirit in my life, leading, guiding and protecting me.
 - My Mom & Dad. Sisters. Nieces & Nephews. Being outdoors with nature. The mountains, lakes. Saving up for my own home.
 - The support of this congregation to members in need.
 - A spring rain, which reminds me that we are all “washed” anew in Christ’s love.
 - The charity of so many at Christmas who lack basic needs.
 - All those who fight for peace and justice in our world.
 - Sunset – another day – filled with dreams, activities, laughter, tears, to-do lists and relaxation at the end – its failures & successes – put to rest. The coming night, a time to rest and prepare for the coming day. A time to reflect on what went well, what could have gone better. And the hope of the coming dawn to begin again.

Thanks for sharing your HOPE!



Updates on Giving ... and a Heartfelt THANK YOU!

First and foremost, **THANK YOU** for your support of the mission of St. John's Lutheran Church and our ministry partners throughout the past year. Giving statements for 2024 have been sent as of mid-January. If you have an email address on file, you should have received it there; if you're not an email person, a paper copy went out via regular mail. If you did not receive your statement, or if you have any questions on it, please let Pastor Josh know.

Your faithful giving enables us to continue to live into our mission to "Worship God, Serve Faithfully, and Reach Out," embodying God's love for our neighbors on Sand Creek and beyond. **Because of your generosity this year, we were able to...**

- Support our vibrant music ministry of ten full-time choristers and another high school apprentice (for the second year in a row);
- Offer meaningful liturgies and preaching every Sunday and special midweek liturgies for Lent and Holy Week;
- Support the learning and faith formation of our Sunday School students (and their families), including this year's fabulous all-ages Christmas pageant, "The Biggest Fan of Jesus;" and
- Share \$12,949 in benevolence support beyond our walls with the Capital Area Council of Churches, Upstate New York Synod, Hudson Mohawk Conference, Cornerstone Campus Ministry (UAlbany), New York State Council of Churches, ReconcilingWorks, ELCA World Hunger, and Lutheran Disaster Response.

Your financial support is why we can do all of the above and more – again, THANK YOU!

Did you know you give online easily and securely? Head on over to stjohnsalbany.org/give to make a one-time gift or set up a recurring (monthly, weekly, etc.) offering. Note that any giving to the "General" fund counts towards your pledge (if you made one). Need help setting up online giving? [Pastor Josh](#) can help!

Prefer giving the "old fashioned" way? That's cool too. If you requested a box of offering envelopes, you should have your set for 2025 already. If not, we have a few unnumbered, undated boxes in the office.

In addition to the regular white Sunday envelopes and special holiday/holy day envelopes, three colored envelopes are included for designated giving every month: yellow for contributions to our building renovation fund, green for contributions to ELCA World Hunger, and (new this year) blue for gifts to the music ministry of St. John's. (No envelopes? You can also select each of these funds [online](#) if you wish to contribute to these monthly appeals that way.)

For giving by mail, please always use our PO Box address for the most secure route: St. John's Lutheran Church, PO Box 5085, Albany, NY 12205.

It can't be said enough: THANK YOU!



New WiFi Password!

Since Verizon was installed to improve our live-streaming capability, **please note the Chapel's new WiFi info:**
Network: StJohn-Guest
Password: sandcreek



Stay Connected!

- Facebook: facebook.com/StJohnsAlbany
- Instagram: **(NEW!)** instagram.com/saintjohnsalbany/
- Website: stjohnsalbany.org
- YouTube: youtube.com/@StJohnsAlbany
- Email: office@stjohnsalbany.org



INSTA NEWS: St. John's is now on INSTAGRAM!
Check out the link above!

Church Office Hours

Monday
Pastor Josh Evans
10 AM–4 PM
Maggie Anderson
12 PM–4 PM

Tuesday–Thursday
Pastor Josh Evans
10 AM–4 PM

Friday
Maggie Anderson
10 AM–4 PM



Please call ahead before you go to ensure someone is in the office.

Eagle Deadline

Please note: Submissions for the March 2025 edition of *The Eagle* are due by **Friday, February 21**. Send your announcements to barb.hegna@samepagecom.com or contact the church office.



SERVING IN WORSHIP

We Need Your Help to Make Worship Happen!

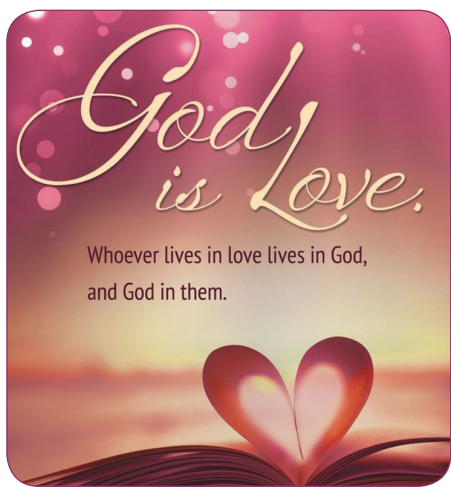
There's a role for everyone in Sunday worship, and we eagerly welcome new volunteers. Whether front-and-center as an assisting minister or behind-the-scenes on altar guild, there's a role for you! [Contact Pastor Josh](#) for details. **Can't make your date?** Contact BOTH [Maggie](#) AND [Pastor Josh](#). **Help us prepare the March schedule.** Notify us of dates you are NOT available by **Friday, February 14** through [Planning Center Services](#) or by emailing [Pastor Josh](#).

Sunday Worship Services at 9:30 am					
	February 2	February 9	February 16	February 23	March 2
Presiding Minister	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Christopher Hoyer	Pr. Josh Evans	Pr. Lowell Chilton
Assisting Minister	Karen Bielinski	Lindsay Stannard	Karen Bielinski	Lindsay Stannard	Paula Schwab
Minister of Music	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster	Dan Foster
Reader	Lindsay Stannard	Thaisa Beach	Avery Heaney	Karen Bielinski	Melissa Savage
Communion Asst.	Paula Schwab	Joy Pierle	Lindsay Stannard	Karen Bielinski	Melissa Savage
Sacristan	Paula Schwab	Linda Davis	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson	Paula Schwab
Bread Baker	Josh Evans	Josh Evans	Josh Evans	Josh Evans	Sheryl Centanni
Livestream Tech	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard	Shea Stannard
Offering Counters	N/A	Karen Bielinski Shea Stannard	N/A	Linda Davis Lindsay Stannard	N/A

Calendar ~ February 2025

- Sunday, February 2**
9:30 am: WORSHIP
10:30 am: Coffee Hour
1:00 pm: *All Creation Sings* at Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit
- Tuesday, February 4**
6:00 pm: Food & Faith: Cornerstone Campus Ministry at UAlbany
- Wednesday, February 5**
6:30 pm: Faith on Tap at Warbler
- Thursday, February 6**
7:00 pm: Choir Rehearsal
- Sunday, February 9**
9:30 am: WORSHIP
10:30 am: Coffee Hour
- Thursday, February 13**
7:00 pm: Choir Rehearsal
- Friday, February 14**
Deadline: Block Worship Volunteering
- Saturday, February 15**
2:30 pm: Movie at St. Andrew's Church: *A Case for Love*
- Sunday, February 16**
9:30 am: WORSHIP (Guest Preacher Pr. Christopher Hoyer)
10:30 am: Coffee Hour

- Thursday, February 20**
7:00 pm: Choir Rehearsal
- Friday, February 21**
Deadline for *The Eagle* submissions
- Sunday, February 23**
9:30 am: WORSHIP
10:30 am: Coffee Hour
- Wednesday, February 26**
6:00 pm: First Lutheran Book Club; Location TBA
- Thursday, February 27**
7:00 pm: Choir Rehearsal



Come for Coffee!

So... what are you doing *after* worship? **Stay for coffee and some yummy treats!** (Besides... there's no calories in anything you eat at church, right?) At St. John's, one of the things we value about being in community with one another is our weekly fellowship opportunity over coffee (or tea, juice, etc.) and treats following the liturgy every Sunday. **Are you able to help with that?** Providing treats for coffee hour is a simple way to volunteer and help foster a sense of community among our faith family. Please sign up online on our [SignUpGenius](#) page or on the bulletin board in the kitchen.





ST. JOHN'S IN PICTURES!



On Sunday, December 22, our amazing actors performed this year's Christmas Pageant, "The Biggest Fan of Jesus."



On Christmas Eve our congregation gathered to celebrate a meaningful and beautiful "silent night, holy night."



Thanks to all who helped prepare a meal for Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless (IPH) on Sunday, January 19.



Thanks to everyone who showed up and participated in our annual congregation meeting on Sunday, January 26 – celebrating another year of amazing ministry together at St. John's and looking ahead to our future. (Special thanks for putting up with the needlessly complicated request for a group selfie and a millennial pastor who forgot how a phone camera works. LOL!)

There is a place **for you** here.
Sunday Worship \pm 9:30 a.m.



St. John's

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

