



# The Messenger

January and February 2021

A Publication of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia

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## + January and February Greetings

### *Welcoming Blessing*

When you are lost  
in your own life.

When the landscape  
you have known  
falls away.

When your familiar path  
becomes foreign  
and you find yourself  
a stranger  
in the story you had held  
most dear.

Then let yourself  
be lost.  
Let yourself leave  
for a place  
whose contours  
you do not already know,  
whose cadences  
you have not learned  
by heart.  
Let yourself land  
on a threshold  
that mirrors the mystery

of your own  
bewildered soul.

It will come  
as a surprise,  
what arrives  
to welcome you  
through the door,  
making a place for you  
at the table  
and calling you  
by your name.

Let what comes,  
come.

Let the glass  
be filled.  
Let the light  
be tended.  
Let the hands  
lay before you  
what will meet you  
in your hunger.

Let the laughter.  
Let the sweetness  
that enters  
the sorrow.  
Let the solace  
that comes

as sustenance  
and sudden, unbidden  
grace.

For what comes,  
offer gladness.  
For what greets you  
with kindly welcome,  
offer thanks.  
Offer blessing  
for those  
who gathered you in  
and will not  
be forgotten—

those who,  
when you were  
a stranger,  
made a place for you  
at the table  
and called you  
by your name.  
—Jan Richardson

My love for Jan Richardson's blessings led me to find the blessing above in my Epiphany daily devotions. Reading the blessing I connected with it. For the first time in my life, I was away from my family for Christmas. The landscape of Christmas had shifted and changed. The holiday season was completely new for me without my regular traditions and family alongside me, as well as preaching Christmas Eve for the first time. I was not sure what the holiday season would bring for me, but I let what was going to come, come. What happened left me with a profound thankfulness for the congregations I am called to serve. I received multiple invitations for supper, breakfasts, and lunches, presents, texts and phone calls. I even had, to my surprise, my favorite breakfast cooked for me on Christmas Day! Christmas Day, I found myself crying in joy wondering how I will ever repay or return the favor to the people of St. John's and Mount Calvary for the feeling of connection, love, and warmth I received.

I am writing to say thank you. Thank you for making my first Christmas away from everything I have ever know, one of the best Christmases I have ever had. Thank you for the laughter, the

full belly, and the open doors. Thank you for making a place for me at your table. I hope one day I can pay it forward and provide a stranger a welcomed place at the table where they will be called by name, as you did for me.

A joyous and heartfelt thanks,

Pastor Brooklynn

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

At the 2019 National Church Assembly in Regina, Saskatchewan; our National Bishop Susan Johnson announced that she is personally inviting members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In Canada to spend four years striving to deepen our discipleship. She said, "God is calling us into a deeper relationship – a call to live out our baptismal covenants." This new initiative is called, **Living Our FAITH**, and will focus on **Prayer, Reading, Worshipping and Loving**.

From September 2020 – August 2021; Lutherans from coast...to coast...to coast are being encouraged to commit themselves to daily reading of the Bible..

- ✓ Set aside a bit of time each day to read the Bible. In this busy and hectic world, find time each day and commit to spending 5, 10, 15 minutes or more focusing on reading the Bible. Add it to your calendar so it becomes a regular part of your daily life.
- ✓ January 2021 is the book of Ecclesiastes. February is the book of Jeremiah.
- ✓ Take the month and work through the whole book at your own pace.
- ✓ Do not feel like reading? Listen to the Bible online for free. Checkout the website *The International Bible Society* or use link below.  
<https://www.biblica.com/bible/niv/deuteronomy/1/>
- ✓ Write down any questions, connections, or big aha moments that you have.
- ✓ Print or highlight verses you connect with and put them on your fridge, office wall, or somewhere you will see them daily.
- ✓ Find bible questions and an introduction to both books on our weekly email or at ELCIC Living Our Faith. Link is here-

<https://elcic.ca/livingourfaith/biblebookclub.cfm> December information is not out yet and will be made available when it is ready.

- ✓ At the end of each month, we will get together and discuss what we have read.

## + 2021 Congregational Annual Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 7th at 1 pm. Please submit your reports to the church office no later than January 15.

## + Winter Storm Policy

Our cancellation policy states that in the event of inclement weather, the chairpersons of council in consultation with Pastor Brooklynn, will make a determination by 9:30am. An announcement will be made on *CKBW*, and on our *Facebook* page.

## + Sunday School

Our Sunday School program is still suspended as Sunday School is not recommended during the amber stage. As we start to rethink opening Sunday School, we are looking for volunteers and a new Sunday School Coordinator. If you are interested in helping, being a coordinator or know of someone who you think would be a great coordinator please talk to Pastor Brooklynn.

## +Home Visits

At this time, in home visits are not taking place. Pastor Brooklynn will visit via telephone 306-550-1408, email correspondence, Skype, driveway/porch visit or set up a Zoom call with you. Communion-to-go can be dropped off at your door. Please do not hesitate to call Pastor Brooklynn if you would like a visit.

## + Winter Term Adult Education

As mentioned above we are reading a book of the Bible each month. We will meet at the end of each month to discuss what we have read. The book for the month of January is Ecclesiastes and the book for the month of February is Jeremiah. **January Book Club meeting is Thursday, January 28, 2:00 pm at St. John's. February book club meeting is Thursday, February 25, 2:00 pm at St. John's.** For more information, refer to the Living Our Faith bullet above or checkout the links below.

[Ecclesiastes Introduction](#)  
[January Book Club Questions](#)

[Jeremiah Introduction](#)  
[February Book Club Questions](#)

## + Offering Envelopes

Offering Envelopes are now available for 2021. If you would like to make arrangements for pick up please call the church office at 902 624 9660.

## + Lent

The season of Lent begins on February 17 with our Ash Wednesday Service at 7:30 pm. We will be joining the rest of the Eastern Synod watching a live streamed service lead by the Bishop Mike. The Imposition of Ashes will take place after the live streamed service. Midweek Services will be held on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm throughout the Lenten Season (February 24-March 24).

## + Christmas Hamper 2020 Campaign:

A sincere and heartfelt "thank you" to everyone who graciously donated food items & monetary donations towards the 2020 Christmas Hamper Campaign. It was a huge success. Thank you to everyone who packed & delivered the hampers. A special "thank you" to Rebecca for your dedication of time and commitment to this worthwhile project.

## + "DISCERNING THE BODY" DURING A PANDEMIC

"Your freedom to wave your arm ends precisely at the tip of my nose."

I can't remember where I first heard that maxim, or who said it. But it's stayed with me through the years. Translated: Every human freedom, even in the freest of societies, is never absolute. There are always constraints, restrictions, limits, on your freedoms. Those constraints have chiefly to do with your neighbour. With the needs of others. With an awareness of The Greater Good of other people in our society.

I thought of these words, and of those constraints and restrictions, when I read in our local newspaper yesterday of a demonstration planned for the city where I live, Waterloo, Ontario.

The demonstration was to be called a "Freedom Rally", and it was planned by its organizers as protest against the constraints and restrictions now familiar in our worldwide pandemic. The wearing of masks. The social distancing. The limits to the size of gatherings. All of these constraints limit our freedom, certainly.

I am sure those sympathetic to this cause would say. "Nobody is going to tell me what to do! Canada is a free country!" There are similar sentiments among a sizeable minority in the USA. Chiefly, I would guess, among conservative Christians.

All this brings me to St. Paul and his first letter to the Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 11: 1 - 34. In these verses, Paul is scolding his Corinthian congregation for their abuses at The Lord's Supper. These were days when the Bread and Cup were still included within the setting of a kind of weekly Agape Meal, and had not yet been separated out, as they are now, condensed and ritualized into what we recognize today as The Holy Communion.

The primitive Jesus Movement, in those earliest days, apparently met weekly in members' homes to gather to feast in a ritual meal that included the Bread and Cup of Jesus' memorial. And the Corinthians were abusing that meal, some members

gorging themselves, and the less fortunate leaving hungry.

Paul admonishes his hearers, in effect, “That ain’t right! That’s not The Lord’s Supper! You are not discerning the Body! Your selfishness, your disregard of others in this community, is an offense to Jesus!”

Important to note here is this: Paul is NOT arguing for proper theological discriminations concerning the Bread and Cup, in his choice of the word “body” here – as Lutherans often want to have it. He’s referring instead to a selfishness in the community that ignores the needs of the neighbour, the Body Politic. Even more precisely: The Body of Christ, the gathered community itself.

This single minded devotion to the rights of the individual, of the personal – at the expense of the corporate – is perhaps The Defining Pathology of our age, especially in North America. It has its source, as I have argued before in these postings, in North American idolatrous veneration of free market capitalism, where the chief and only virtue is often individual success and prosperity. Pulling yourself up by the bootstraps. The rugged individual, carving out your personal fortunes by brute willpower, often heedless of the needs of others.

In short, not Discerning the body!

I’m arguing here that THAT is the spirit behind these calls for “Freedom” from the constraints and restrictions that this current pandemic impose. That the best scientific, medical evidence mandates!

When you rebel against those scientific constraints in the name of your personal freedom, you are simply not Discerning the Body.

And THAT ain’t humane. Much less Christian.

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## + Joy Journal

*Birthday greetings are extended to the following:*

Jan. 1	Ruth Wawin,
Jan.3	Mitchell Inglis
Jan. 4	Emma Lohnes
Jan. 7	Jane Kristenson, Burleigh Ernst, Arnold Fralick
Jan. 11	Pr. David Maginley
Jan. 13	Donna Naugler
Jan. 15	Justin Barkhouse
Jan. 19	Christopher Barry
Jan. 22	Rachel Whynot
Jan. 23	Kevin Swinimer
Jan. 24	Valreta Langille
Jan. 25	Larry Eisnor
Jan. 28	James Bowles
Jan. 30	Beverly Eisnor, Juliet Wamboldt
Jan. 31	Ruby Bowles, Colleen Joudrey , Alex Roy
Feb. 1	Lynn Slack
Feb. 2	Evelyn Knickle, Sheila Barkhouse
Feb. 5	Isen Norman
Feb. 11	Kaylee Temple
Feb. 13	Michelle Temple
Feb. 14	Katherine Kelley
Feb. 18	Roxanne Martin, Jane Winchcombe
Feb. 19	Jean Crossland
Feb. 20	Vicky Hirtle
Feb. 21	Lydia Brake
Feb. 23	Myrtle Andrews
Feb. 26	David Eisnor
Feb. 28	Nevaeh Corkum

If your birthday is missing and you would like it add to the Joy Journal let Kelly know.

## + Stay Connected!

Are you a member of the Atlantic Ministry Area - Lutheran ELCIC Facebook page? (@atlanticlutherans) This page posts events offered by Lutheran churches across the Atlantic Ministry Area. The posted events are your invitation to attend.



# St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church + January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				9am-2pm - Office	1 9am-2pm - Office	2
3 11am - Worship (Service of the Word)	4	5 9am-2pm - Office	6	7 9am-2pm - Office	8 9am-2pm - Office	9
10 <i>Baptism of our Lord</i> 11am - Worship (Communion)	11	12 9am-2pm - Office	13	14 9am-2pm - Office	15 9am-2pm - Office	16
17 <i>Epiphany 2</i> 11am - Worship (Service of the Word)	18	19 9am-2pm - Office 7 pm - Council Mtg	20	21 9am-2pm - Office	22 9am-2pm - Office	23
24 <i>Epiphany 3</i> 11 am - Worship (Communion)	25	26 9am-2pm - Office	27	28 9am-2pm - Office 2pm-Bible Study Book Club	29 9am-2pm - Office	30
31 <i>Epiphany 4</i> 11 am - Worship (Communion)						

*Updates to the January/February Calendar will be announced in our weekly church bulletin.  
Please contact the church office with any questions or for additional information about these notices.  
Announcements for the March/April newsletter is due to the church office by February 23, 2021.*

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 <b>9am-2pm</b> - Office	3	4 <b>9am-2pm</b> - Office	5 <b>9am-2pm</b> - Office	6
7 <b>Epiphany 5</b> <b>11 am</b> - Worship (Service of the Word) <b>12 pm</b> Annual Meeting	8	9 <b>9am-2pm</b> - Office	10	11 <b>9am-2pm</b> - Office	12 <b>9am-2pm</b> - Office	13
14 <b>Transfiguration</b> <b>11 am</b> - Worship (Communion)	15	16 <b>9am-2pm</b> - Office <b>7pm</b> -St. John's Council Mtg.	17 <b>Ash Wednesday</b> <b>7:30 pm</b> - Worship	18 <b>9am-2pm</b> - Office	19 <b>9am-2pm</b> - Office	20
21 <b>Lent 1</b> <b>11 am</b> - Worship (Service of the Word)	22	23 <b>9am-2pm</b> - Office	24 Lenten Service <b>7:00pm</b>	25 <b>9am-2pm</b> - Office <b>2 pm</b> -Bible Study Book Club	26 <b>9am-2pm</b> - Office	27
28 <b>Lent 2</b> <b>11 am</b> - Worship (Communion)						

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