

The Episcopal Church of St. John Baptist, Thomaston, Maine
Vestry Meeting, July 23, 2026, Minutes

Members present: Rev. James Nutter, Ruth Anne Hohfeld, Carlton Winslow, Jan Gaudio, Mark Ranney, Carolyn Garratt-Reed, Gayle Elfast, Mike Lindstrom, Judy Laidlaw, Kathryn Turansky and Henry Hoecker in attendance via Zoom.

The meeting opened at 3:00pm with prayer led by Fr+ Nutter. Check-in questions included full names of all present, how long we have been at St. John's, and why it is our choice to make it our church. Guests were also invited to respond.

Fr. Nutter+ followed the check-in with statements regarding the importance of full transparency within a church. Unless in executive session, all Vestry discussions and decisions must invariably be open to parishioners. Secrets do damage; "You are only as sick as your secrets." Judy noted that this current Vestry, starting in February, has opened its meetings to parishioners and that each meeting's minutes are now posted on the church web page.

Citing, and having Vestry members read, Fr. Nutter+ used Ephesians 4:1-13 to stress that a vestry's overall purpose is to care for its church community. In this reading from Ephesians Jesus is providing instruction and guidance to His disciples before sending them on their missions. As members of Vestry we also have been given a mission, one which is to be guided and led by Jesus.

The Ephesians reading elicits three main points of instruction:

- 1) Unity. It is imperative that the Vestry is continually working toward unity within our church community.
- 2) Gifts. ALL members of our community have been given gifts for ministry. This means that for us to be a strong and healthy parish we need to find and create ways for *all* members to recognize and share their God-given gifts.
- 3) Purpose. As vestry members we take on the role of equipping our church for the work of building up the body of Christ. We are to recognize that through Baptism *all* parishioners are saints and ministers of Christ.

Vestry members should recognize themselves as disciples of Christ. Serving demands a combination of discipleship, fellowship, and leadership.

A parish priest serves only as a guide to us on our missions. Jesus is the head of the church; *all* of us are His stewards.

Fr. Nutter+ then introduced working with the SWEEPS model:

Stewardship
Worship
Evangelism
Education
Pastoral Care
Service

Explanations included recognizing that parishioner stewardship means a great deal more than just the giving of money, and that evangelism and pastoral care are the responsibility of *all* parishioners. It means being aware and caring for one another, and can also include being trained as a LEM (licensed eucharistic minister) bringing communion to the homebound.

Discussing education brought the welcome news that EFM will return. The format will be the same but will include welcoming all nearby churches and will henceforth be referred to as Midcoast Maine EFM. Fr. Nutter+ shared that he has met with Emily Rotch to discuss moving forward.

A reception to honor Tony Antolini will be held on Sunday, September 27th. A plaque in honor and appreciation for his many years of serving as St. John's organist will be presented. The plaque will then be permanently placed on the altar side of St. John's organ. Kathy Cuthbertson, as head of Hospitality, will be asked to oversee organization of the reception.

Sr. Warden's Report

Ruth Anne announced that Fr. Nutter+'s contract for the upcoming 12-18 months has been finalized and signed.

Music for the 10 o'clock service is now scheduled throughout August. Search for a permanent organist will commence.

Jr. Warden's Report

Carlton announced that the Undercroft windows have been replaced. Window screens are included with the new windows. Request was made to Pen-Bay Glass to also provide screens for the Parish Hall windows. Sexton Tim has installed new heat shields in the future Nursery area, but not in the Undercroft due to the discovery of some rot. This will be addressed.

It is hoped that the ongoing drainage issue on the Green St. side of the church will be remedied when the street is repaved. This future town project is scheduled to follow completion of the current Knox St. repaving.

Treasurer's Report

Mike noted that the recent roof and window replacement, plus the updating of all fire extinguishers and emergency lighting has now fully used the monies that remained in the capital campaign account. Cost of replacing the final portion of church roof came to \$15,835. A new heating contract for the upcoming year has now been signed with Maritime Oil.

Nursery

Kathryn expressed delight in the positive response she continues to receive in support of the nursery. She expressed appreciation not only for donations received but also for the number of volunteers now offering help once it opens. Safe Church training is being arranged. She suggests that St. John's start by offering care two Sundays each month, rather than just one – that this would be more likely to attract new families.

Discussion led to the determination that Nursery should be a line item on next year's church budget.

Fr. Nutter+ will meet with Jan to review and assess the original Discernment Committee's progress. While St. John's is waiting at least until November to move forward, there are things we can immediately work on to help make St. John's the church a priest would be attracted to. These include, amongst others, fully updating website pages and considering what can be offered for housing.

Motion was made to accept both the Clerk's minutes (June 18th and 25th) and the Treasurer's June report, as received.

Moved by: Jan Gaudio

Seconded by: Mark Ranney

Vote result: All in favor; motion carried

The meeting closed with prayer led by Fr. Nutter+ and adjourned at 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Laidlaw, Clerk

Next meeting: *tentatively scheduled* for Thursday, August 20th 3:00pm