

The Episcopal Church of St. John Baptist, Thomaston, Maine
Vestry Meeting, October 8, 2026

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

Guests present: Merrilee Brown, Jim Cuthbertson

Fr. Nutter+ opened the meeting at 3:00pm with a prayer. He then led those present in a reading of 1Chronicles 29:10-13, making reference to its connection with **Stewardship**. October sermons on the 18th and 25th will focus on how stewardship is addressed in Scripture. There are 8 testimonies in the Old Testament, 8 in the New Testament. Jesus often spoke directly about money.

A letter, written by Fr. Nutter, along with the newly designed pledge card, will be mailed to all parishioners on October 23rd. On Covenant Sunday, November 1, placing pledge cards on the altar as gifts of thanksgiving to God will be encouraged.

The total number of pledges received, comparing this year's to last, will be provided both now and at the first-of-the-year Annual Meeting. Parishioners who pledged last year but not this year will be personally reached out to. Discussion surrounded this year's goal for 100% participation, not in terms of dollars but in terms of stewardship as a whole. Mark noted that the definition for stewardship is "the care and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care." The overall hope is that each and every parishioner takes whatever role they can in commitment to their caring for St. John's. All who respond, both monetarily and with offers of time and talent, will be personally responded to.

Further discussion surrounded how best to provide the parish with information about the personal tax advantages of giving in relation to RMD end-of-year withdrawals, as well as how to establish eventual gifts from wills and estates. The Diocese will be contacted to see if there are pamphlets or brochures available. Inviting a financial advisor or fiduciary to speak was suggested. A planning team was appointed to address this. The team includes Carlton, Mike, Mark, and Thomas Turansky.

Education

Kathryn provided an update on plans for Sunday School. A committee has been formed for this purpose. It includes Kathryn, Fr. Nutter+, Paula Hannah-Mauri, Ruth Anne Hohfeld, Wilhelmina Ulbrich, and Judy Laidlaw.

New names have been chosen. The program, which is aimed to eventually serve children 18 mos. – age 18, will be known as *St. John's Youth Ministry* and will include an acolyte program. The room adjacent to the Parish Hall is now to be known as *The Children's Chapel*. Discussion led to the decision that a child caregiver will be hired for each Sunday. She will be assisted by volunteers, but the consistency of a long-term caregiver will create the trust desired for both children and parents.

Further discussion surrounded how best to invite parents and their children to St. John's. This will be a focus in the coming weeks and especially during Advent.

Evangelism

St. John's website is being updated. The importance of this was stressed in relation to presenting a best possible image as we move toward discernment for a new priest. It is likely to be a first impression of St. John's for a priest when considering a parish to move to. Gillian has been updating the site; Merrilee Brown is volunteering her editing skills. It is requested that pictures be taken during all upcoming church activities and sent to Gillian. It is important that the site be kept current with its information and pictures will be used to supplement its events and activities.

Pastoral Care

Fr. Nutter+ announced that parishioner Neal Chase has been moved from the Lucette House to the Magnolia House in Belfast. Fr. Nutter+ has contacted the priest at St. Margaret's in Belfast, explaining Neal's situation and requesting that she reach out to him. A card for him will be available for signing on this coming Sunday during the 10:00 coffee hour. Neal will be missed.

Service

Carolyn provided an update on recent and future Outreach activity. The Tissue Drive continues through October. A full meal of mac&cheese (with sides) will be made for the Landing Place on October 27th. Parishioners are invited to provide items needed for this. There is a sign-up sheet located on the kitchen refrigerator.

Recent donations of \$500 each were made to K.I.T.S. (Knox Cty Interfaith Teens/Tots Safe Haven) and to New Hope Midcoast (domestic violence resource center).

Plans are being made for an "Outreach Café" to take place in conjunction with Thomaston's Downtown Christmas Festival on December 5th. Opening the church to tours of St. John's plan to be included in the planning.

Jr. Warden's Report

Carlton announced that David Hynd (contractor) has been contacted to provide an estimate for replacing the Undercroft's wall adjacent to the staircase. This would involve removal of wet plaster board and full repair.

Kathryn suggested the removal of the deteriorating awning on the rear parking lot side of the church, along with a number of plants there remaining from the last plant sale.

A fall cleanup is scheduled for Sunday, October 18th following the 10:00 service. Lunch will be provided.

It was noted that a plan and design, including a meditation garden, for the church grounds was created by Anne Perkins and Paula Hannah-Mauri a while back but has yet to be in any way addressed.

New/Old Business

Mike announced that an old St. John's safe deposit box, discovered several months ago, had recently been opened and inventoried. Most exciting is that it contained the original deed to

the St. John's property, plus past details of the burial plot. These two items provide extensive information about the history of those who originally founded St. John Baptist.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Laidlaw, Clerk

Next meeting: November 19, 2026, 3:00 pm