

The Episcopal Church of St. John Baptist, Thomaston, Maine
Vestry Meeting, September 17, 2026

Members present: Rev. James Nutter, Ruth Anne Hohfeld, Carlton Winslow, Jan Gaudio, Mike Lindstrom, Gayle Elfast, Mark Ranney, Judy Laidlaw
Kathryn Turansky joined via Zoom
Guest present: Nathaniel Batty

The meeting opened at 3:00pm. Judy provided an opening prayer.

Fr. Nutter+ led those present through readings from Matthew 22:36-40 (the Great Commandments) and Matthew 28:18-20 (the Great Commission). He used these two Scriptures to lead us, as a vestry, in thinking about St. John's as a *great* church, and how we can become an even *greater* church. Unbelievably great things happen within a church that is solidly in alignment with Jesus. Those who live into a path led by Christ will be blessed.

Stewardship:

October will be the "season" of stewardship at St. John's. Each Sunday will focus on an aspect of what it means to be a steward, a trusted caretaker, of St. John's. Lay speakers will provide brief testimonies on at least two of the October Sundays. It will not be a "beg-a-thon."

The Vestry is in the process of designing a new pledge card, one which includes a check-off for the many different ways available to contribute to the life of St. John's. Each parishioner will receive this card along with a letter written by Fr. Nutter+. The possibility of a QR code being added to the pledge card was suggested.

As Vestry made a listing of opportunities for the card's check-off, discussion also surrounded tonight's Scripture readings in relation to monetary pledging. Fr. Nutter+ stressed that Jesus didn't hesitate to openly address either money or His views on the tenor of societal politics. Focusing only on the social guidance provided within the Gospel eclipses Jesus' full instruction on how to live as a Christian.

St. John's has thus far improved and cared for its facilities while staying within budget and using only the interest gained from endowments. Questions were raised about educating parishioners on how to save on personal taxes while at the same time providing for St. John's, both now and in future. The Diocese will be contacted to see if pamphlets may be available which explain endowment procedures.

Stewardship season will close on Covenant Sunday, November 1st. Parishioners will be provided the opportunity to personally place their pledge cards on the altar as a gift to God.

Worship:

Michael Lindstrom is gifting his wife's liturgical vestments to St. John's in her memory. They will be blessed during the Sunday service on September 27th.

On the same Sunday a new Tabernacle will be blessed; this a gift given by Ruth Anne Hohfeld and Cathleen & Todd Kilpatrick in memorial for James and Ruth Farquharson. The Tabernacle was personally built by Todd.

The Vestry expressed gratitude to Mike and Ruth Ann. These two gifts, both of which will be used repeatedly in services, bring alive the memories of Rev. Marjorie Lindstrom and James & Ruth Farquharson.

Sunday, October 4th is St. Francis Day, a day to have our pets both blessed and, for those that have passed, remembered. Parishioners may place a picture of their pet(s) on the retable (raised shelf) directly behind the altar. Fr. Nutter+ will include prayers for St. John's pet family within that Sunday's Prayers of the People. Also included will be an opportunity to call out pets' names.

During Advent Evening Prayer services will be held each Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Addie and Nathaniel Batty have generously offered to lead these services.

Education:

Kathryn reported progress leading to the opening of Sunday School. She is reaching out to those who will be assisting on Sundays and is overseeing their required Safe Church training. A committee is currently being formed to support the Sunday School.

EfM is aiming for October 4th as this year's start date. Emily will be emailing the Swanee registration link this coming week to all who have expressed interest. Weekly EfM sessions will be held on Sundays following coffee hour in St. John's upstairs library.

Wednesday's Bible Study, led by Fr. Nutter+, held its first session on the 16th with 20+ parishioners attending. 1st Corinthians is being studied. Morning Prayer precedes the Bible Study at 11:00.

Evangelism:

Response has been positive to St. John's welcome posters recently distributed throughout local communities by parishioners. As result it was decided to also distribute poster invitations to Wednesday's Bible study.

Ruth Anne reported that there has been no response to attempts made in looking for someone to man the You Tube coverage of each Sunday's 10:00 service. Mark offered a possibility that he will follow up on.

The goal to update and revamp St. John's website is underway, starting with the possibility of using a different platform. A committee was formed to review the website as it currently is and report back at October's vestry meeting. The committee includes Kathryn, Jan, and Nathaniel Batty.

Mike displayed one of two new St. John's Church signs being placed on Atlantic Highway. The new signs will be clearly visible when traveling either north or south on Rte. 1.

Pastoral Care:

Eucharistic Lay Minister training will be offered between services during the month of October. The goal is for Lay Ministers to be prepared to take Communion to the homebound or hospitalized whenever it is requested. Lay Ministers make visitations in pairs of two.

Service:

Judy announced that this year St. John's Outreach is hoping to join Thomaston Main St. businesses in their annual Christmas Fair, the town's start to the Holiday season, on Saturday, December 5th. An "Outreach Cafe" can be created downstairs, while visitors could also be offered a tour of the church sanctuary if desired. Parishioners would be invited to join Outreach members as tour guides in shifts throughout the day.

Most recently, Outreach delivered requested hygiene products and art materials to the Landing Place in Rockland. Monetary donations in September were made by Outreach to KITS (Knox Interfaith Teens & Tots Safe Haven) and also to New Hope Midcoast.

The meeting was adjourned and a closing prayer was provided by Jan at 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Laidlaw, Clerk

Next meeting: Thursday, October 8th at 3:00pm