

The Episcopal Church of St. John Baptist, Thomaston, Maine
Vestry Meeting, June 18, 2026, Minutes

Members present: Ruth Anne Hohfeld, Carlton Winslow, Jan Gaudio, Kathryn Turansky, Mike Lindstrom, Gayle Elfast, Judy Laidlaw

The meeting opened in prayer led by Mike.

Motion was made to approve and accept minutes from the previous (May 21st) meeting.

Moved by: Jan Gaudio

Seconded by: Mike Lindstrom

Vote result: All in favor; motion carried

Pen Williamson presented a report on the Diocesan Faithful Givers Workshop which he recently attended as St. John's representative. While the overall focus of the day was fund raising, speakers also stressed the importance of spiritual giving. Pledging becomes more successful when understood by parishioners as making an investment in each other and in the future, rather than just in terms of dollar amounts. The 2nd portion of the workshop focused on the value of parishioner long-term Plan Giving, and provided information on endowments and bequest-making.

Discussion that followed focused on how important the endowments and bequests that have been made in the past still are to St. John's financial stability. St. John's ongoing goal is to access only the interest that accrues. It was suggested that material be made available to current parishioners explaining the process of how to make a bequest or other long-term gift. Pen will check with Diocesan staff to see what pamphlets, etc. may be available for this purpose.

Sr. Warden's Report

Ruth Anne reported learning from Suzanne Roberts (Diocesan Transition Officer) that 2 priests have applied for St. John's Priest in Charge position. One is Rev. Jim Nutter who has recently been with St. John's a number of times as supply priest. The 2nd is Rev. Vickie Sorota from Searsmont.

An immediate motion was made to accept Rev. Nutter as Priest in Charge.

Moved by: Gayle Elfast

Seconded by: Carlton Winslow

Vote result: Yea: 3, Nay: 4; motion not carried

Discussion followed. Those casting votes against the motion explained that, in fairness, they thought both candidates should be equally vetted for the position.

Motion was made to arrange interviews with each candidate as soon as possible.

Moved by: Mike Lindstrom

Seconded by: Judy Laidlaw

Vote result: All in favor; motion carried

Ruth Anne will contact both candidates, suggesting the date of Thursday, June 25th, for interviews.

At this point, supply priests have been arranged through July 5th. Music has been scheduled through to the end of August.

Tony Antolini has made a request to the Vestry that St. John's old pump organ, sitting unused in the Parish Hall, be donated to St. Euphemia Orthodox Church in Rockland. The organ was originally donated to St. John's by Cecille Lampton; her family has approved of the donation. St. Euphemia will be responsible for both removal and transport to Rockland.

Motion was made to donate the organ located in the Parish Hall to the St. Euphemia Orthodox Church.

Moved by: Jan Gaudio

Seconded by: Gayle Elfast

Vote result: All in favor; motion carried

Ruth Anne announced that Tony Antolini has requested that the Celebration of Music, to be held in his honor on August 1st, be cancelled. A brass plaque honoring Tony's tenure as St. John's organist will still be placed on the church organ in September. Tony will be invited to that happening.

The suggestion was made to make an immediate effort to check in with parishioners, especially those that have not attended church recently. Discussion led to the decision to forestall acting on this until St. John's has a Priest in Charge in place.

Also discussed was the possibility of scheduling a 2nd parish meeting led by Fr. Ambler. Ruth Anne will pursue this possibility.

A Mid-Coast Sunday service and meal is being arranged to bring together parishioners from St. Margaret's (Belfast), St. Thomas (Camden), St. Peter's (Rockland), and St. John's. It is scheduled for September 13th and will be held at Camp Bishopswood. Further details will be provided.

Brief discussion surrounded possibilities for providing housing for our new (future) priest in the Thomaston area. If younger and with a family, being able to provide housing would undoubtedly be a positive. Ruth Anne shared that how to provide housing for priests coming to Maine is a topic currently being addressed by the Diocese.

Nursery Update

A sign-up for training to volunteer in the Nursery will be posted on a downstairs bulletin board. Kathryn is currently in the process of arranging for the Safe Church Training required to volunteer.

Jr. Warden's Report

Carlton announced that the final phase of new roofing on the church has been completed. Fire extinguishers throughout the church have all been replaced and emergency lighting has been serviced and is working properly. Four Undercroft windows are on Pen-Bay Glass' schedule to be replaced. The new windows will include screens. Replacement of the Green St. door ramp is underway.

Sexton Tim suggested to Carlton that a weed whacker is needed to more efficiently trim and care for the church grounds. Cost is estimated at about \$100. Mike Lindstrom has graciously volunteered to purchase and donate this item to St. John's.

Carlton and the Vestry received information from Diane Strange that Richard Schneller, an arborist with family connections to St. John's, has offered to remove the dead tree by the bell tower free of charge. He is also willing to handle the planting of its replacement. Diane is hoping to have a tree planted there in memory of her son who died this past year. Kathryn Winslow has offered to purchase Diane's choice of tree. The Vestry unanimously provided approval for Carlton to pursue both offers.

Jan announced that the church security plan is near completion, that parishioner comments and suggestions have all been addressed. The plan will soon be published.

Judy volunteered to provide prayers for July's meeting.

Adjournment was at 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Laidlaw, Clerk

Next regular meeting: Thursday, July 23, 2026, 3:00pm