

The Episcopal Church of St. John Baptist, Thomaston, Maine
Vestry Meeting, August 20, 2026, Minutes

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

Guests present: Jane Schroeder, Nathaniel Batty

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

Fr. Nutter+ led the group in discussion on the Bible passage 1Corinthians 12:1,4-12, which focuses on using the God-given gifts which we *all* have been granted. "All these (the variety of gifts) are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one (of us) individually just as the Spirit chooses."

The primary purpose of a Vestry is to nurture the health of the body of its church. Vestry members need to first recognize what gifts we each personally bring to the body of St. John's, and then to use our gifts to make certain that the gifted talent of each and every parishioner is recognized, fully appreciated, and utilized. The body of the church and the body of Christ may be viewed as one and the same. A church can only be healthy when first it fully understands that Jesus is its head and leader, and that each member of its body has an equally important role to play within its actions.

Fr. Nutter+ stressed that the healthier St. John's becomes, the more discerning we will be able to be in our selection of a new priest.

Discussion then moved to Stewardship as St. John's vestry moves forward using the SWEEPS (Stewardship, Worship, Evangelism, Education, Pastoral Care, Service) model.

Stewardship Sunday is traditionally held in connection with All Saints' Day, November 1st. This year St. John's will expand, both in time and message, on gaining the understanding that stewardship and discipleship go hand in hand. In the weeks ahead Fr. Nutter+ will be sharing with the whole parish what Christian stewardship means when understood based on the words of the Gospel. Personal testimonies from parishioners will be requested.

Jesus explained that God is the greatest of givers. We are created in His image, therefore we are created to give. Providing gifts of both talent and treasure are necessary and a vital part of the Christian's mission to serve His people.

A new pledge card will be created for this year's campaign. It will include a check-off list for the many opportunities available in which to serve within St. John's. Vestry members are each asked to bring to our September meeting an original creation of a pledge card which includes this listing.

Ruth Anne shared that her father's recent stewardship bequest to St. John's has provided an amount somewhat greater than was originally expected. She asked for feedback as to how this might best serve the parish. Her personal suggestions included upgrading the church website

and fully covering the cost of all materials needed to provide Godly Play as St. John's Sunday School Program. The consensus in feedback was totally positive, noting that the vestry (and her father) would support whatever choices she makes.

Worship: Ruth Anne provided an update on our search for a permanent organist. Great appreciation was extended to guest Jane Schroeder. She has rearranged her personal schedule so to be able to gift two Sundays each month to serve as St. John's as organist, up until a full-time organist is found. For the remaining Sundays each month either organist Paul Mueller, pianist Claire Bevin, or Bev Pacheco will be providing the music.

Fr. Nutter noted that Tony Antolini is assisting St. John's in its search for an organist. Tony recently mentioned that a talented 13-year-old is currently being trained by a friend of his. The Vestry stressed that St. John's would welcome this young man if he wanted to play for a Sunday service.

St. John's is in need of an AV person on Sundays to be in charge of the computer equipment that records our 10:00 service on UTube. Ruth Anne has contacted the Oceanside HS technology department in hopes that a student may be interested as a part-time job. Other suggestions/offers from parishioners are welcome.

Evangelism: Fr. Nutter+ announced that St. John's old, rusted, fallen Rte. 1 Episcopal Church sign has been removed and that a new sign has been ordered.

Jan will be reattaching the original wooden sign, which states Sunday mass times, to the Main Street St. John's sign. Changing the wording to simply saying "Communion" (rather than "Holy" Communion) is being considered in hopes that being welcomed at St. John's is in no way ever questioned.

Merrilee Brown suggested that a St. John's welcome poster be placed in our neighboring Knox apartment building. One has been created. Copies will be made available to all parishioners for placement throughout our community. Thank you, Merrilee, for the great idea!

Education: Our Children's Sunday Program is aiming for a "soft" opening on Sept. 20th.

The restart of EFM is fully in progress. Emily Rotch, at the time of this meeting, is in Cincinnati, being trained to renew her licensing as an EFM mentor. Graduate Mark Ranney will serve as her co-mentor. Emails have been sent to St. Thomas, St. Peter's, and St. Mark's with invitations to join in this year's EFM, hoping to start at the end of September. The new Diocesan title of Midcoast EFM welcomes other area churches, including the Lutheran. St. John's Education endowment is covering the cost of Emily's training, and also is available to cover the tuition for any St. John's participant in need of financial assistance.

Acolyte training: Mike Lindstrom has volunteered to train youth; Shirley Ferrero adults.

Pastoral Care: Parishioners are asked to provide the church office (Gillian) with prayer requests.

Service: Planning for September 27th's celebration in honor of Tony Antolini's years of service to St. John's is currently on hold due to his recent and ongoing battle with Lymes. He currently requests prayers; no visits nor gifts of food.

Treasurer's Report: Mike provided a verbal report, noting that a new format for providing itemized reports is in process. The only disbursement in the last month was payment in the amount of \$800 for the required upgrade to the church's emergency lighting system.

Under New Business, a letter from Bishop Brown to Midcoast Churches, discovered as having been received last fall but never in any way addressed, was discussed. The letter encourages that a bond of friendship be nurtured between St. John's, St. Peter's(Rockland), St. Thomas's(Camden), St. Margaret's(Belfast), and Nativity Lutheran(Rockland). In direct support of this request, the Diocese has organized a day for these churches to come together at Camp Bishopwood on Sunday, September 13th. To note: **There will be no 10:00am Sunday service on September 13th**. Mike will announce this at upcoming Sunday services; Carolyn at the 10:00. A service with communion will instead be held at Camp Bishopwood on that day. St. John's has been asked to provide a Eucharistic Minister for this service. Travel for parishioners needs to be organized.

Ruth Anne stated that a 3rd delegate is needed to represent St. John's at this year's Maine Diocesan Convention. Henry volunteered to fulfill this request. Molly Protheroe and Eliza Bailey are the other two delegates. The convention is being held in Portland on Saturday, November 7th.

Motion was made to adjourn this meeting at 4:20.

Moved by: Mike Lindstrom

Seconded by: Carolyn Garratt-Reed

Result: All in favor; motion carried

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Laidlaw, Clerk

Next meeting: Thursday, September 17, 2026, 3:00 pm