

St. Peter's Bald Head

St. Peter's By The Sea Episcopal Church † 535 Shore Road † Cape Neddick, Maine † Since 1897

www.st-peters-by-the-sea.org • Editor: Michael L. Smyser IV • mikecalifguy@comcast.net

Opening earlier this year with 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. Eucharist services starting MAY 11, 2025

From the President of the Board of Trustees



Dear Friends,

When my mother moved to Washington, D.C. to begin her married life with my father who was just beginning as a junior partner in his law firm, her sister Joan Baldwin painted a painting for her which always hung over the fireplace in our family room. It was a modern impressionist rendition of a cloud on a large rectangular canvas with a sunrise over the ocean within the cloud, and a lobster boat on the ocean checking a trap as they do in the mornings just outside our family's house. She called it "Dreaming of Maine," which was her reminder to her little sister of where "home" for them really was.

True to form, in early June after school was over, my mother was ready to leave. My poor father had to pack up the station wagon and drive us to Cape Neddick for a summer with our grandparents and aunts while he commuted back and forth as best he could from a hot and humid Washington.

Many of you live in Maine, as I will when I retire. Others like me now are only able to travel to Maine for the restricted length of time when our duties and responsibilities elsewhere allow. For some, this is for a week or a month, and for others, several months until it gets cold again, so the community that gathers is different every Sunday.

But for all of us, for however long we are there, St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal is our common home, the place where we gather to worship God as his people in song and prayer and sacrament, to give thanks for our many blessings, and to hear his holy word.

How blessed are we then to have such a "home" and to have each other – each of us with our own stories and experiences of work, place, friends, and family.

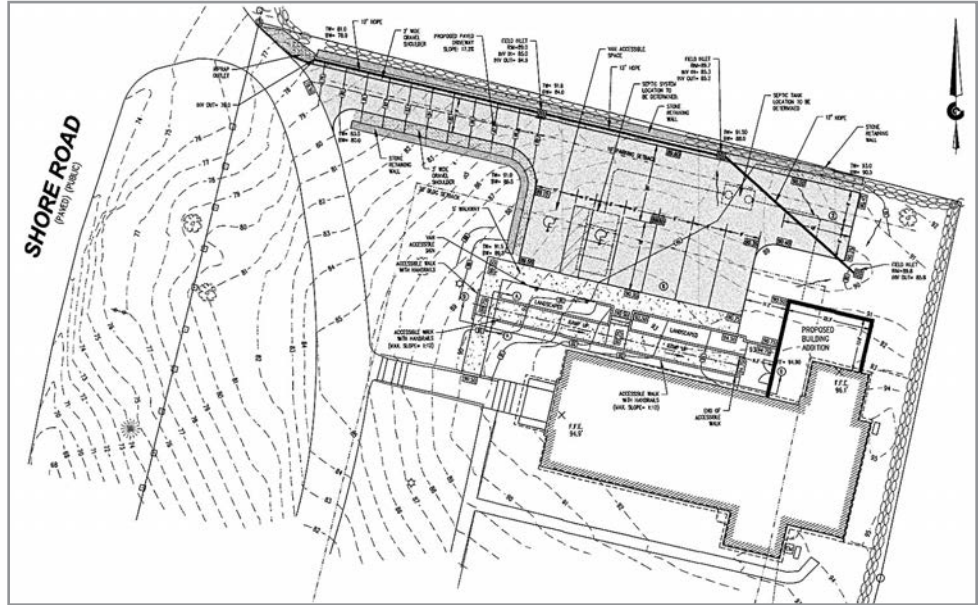
But what gathers us is our faithful sense of a greater "home" to come – our heavenly home with Christ and his saints, which St. Peter's so gently and powerfully makes real for us every Sunday, because this is the eternal home which awaits us when all our work and all our traveling is done.

I wish you all a blessed Lent and a glorious Easter.

Yours faithfully,

The Rev. Dr. D. Stuart Dunnan
President of the Board of Trustees

St. Peter's Addition Provides Improved Access



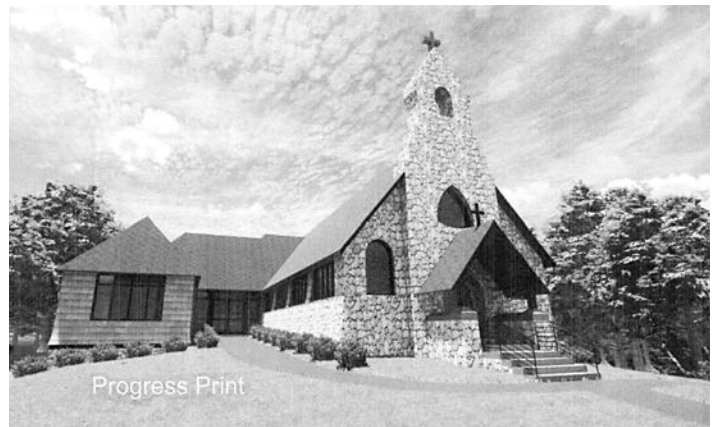
For 126 years summer congregants have climbed "Christian Hill" to access Sunday worship, weddings and funerals. Even with a circular driveway, the uneven stone pathway and very high steps provided a significant barrier to those with mobility issues. The lack of easily accessible bathroom facilities just added to the challenges endured by the faithful. As long-term St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal Board member Louesa Gillespie has remarked, "My goal is to have easier access to the church for everyone – in my lifetime!"

By action of the Board of Trustees in February 2025, St. Peter's inked a contract with a local builder to construct a small addition – or extension – of the Sacristy on the north facade of the church. The addition will include two bathrooms, a "parlor" area where wedding groups and bereaved families can congregate, and a small work space for the St. Peter's Guild. Perhaps more importantly, the area will also provide 5-6 handicapped parking spaces, a drop-off area for those unable to withstand the rigors of climbing "The Hill," and barrier-free access to the church.

The firm of Mangel DeStefano Architects was engaged to provide various iterations of the plans and to develop the necessary infrastructure to support the expansion. After working through the plans and developing some cost-saving economies, the finalized plans were approved on a design-build basis with YFI Custom Homes.

Clearing of the property to the north of the church toward the Cliff House will begin as soon as the snow recedes and construction can proceed during the summer season. However, the breakthrough of the church wall for barrier-free access will need to wait until the church closes for the season in mid-October.

By Karl Sanford



Our Clergy Schedule for Summer 2025



Fr. Patrick Gahan

The Rev. Dr. Patrick Gahan and Kay will be in residence in May and June.

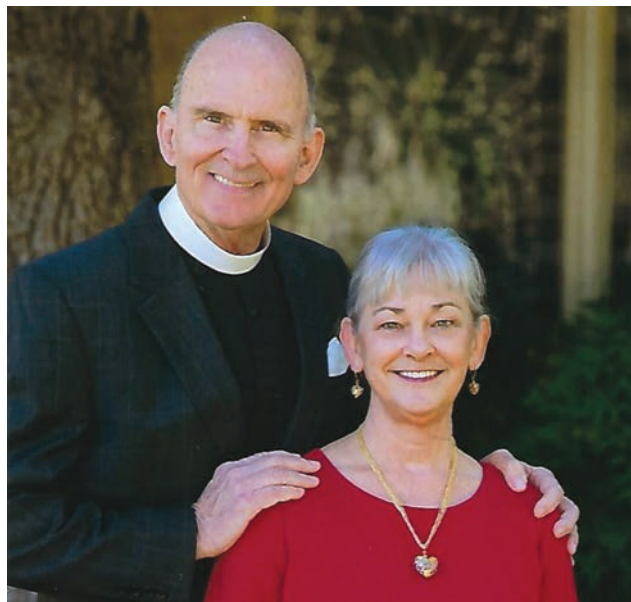
I am the new Vicar of Comfort, which I know sounds like a new age therapist or a very bad BBC television series. Actually, I am the interim vicar of St. Boniface Episcopal Church in Comfort, TX, a historic German hill country community forty-seven miles north of San Antonio. After a year of luxuriating in retirement, Kay and I decided it was time to get more deeply involved in Texas congregational life again. Besides, it's only a two-day a

week commitment and they are happy for us to spend the two months of May and June with our St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal community.

For our part, Kay and I are very happy to be returning to our "happy place." We have known most of you for sixteen years, the longest we have ever served any church. This go-round we get to spend not one, but two months with you. We'll arrive in time to celebrate Mother's Day at St. Peter's – a first for the congregation. It should be a landmark occasion, as the church is filled with great moms!

Kay and I have enjoyed a fun year. After leaving Maine, we headed to Colorado to do some hiking in the higher altitudes and raft down the Taylor River. In September, we headed to Trinity Church in Natchez, MS, where Kay and I were engaged fifty years ago this July. We led worship at Trinity for two Sundays, and several families remembered me as their youth pastor those many years ago. Later in September, I traveled to North Georgia to hike the first legs of the Appalachian Trail, a longtime dream of mine. Three days into my excursion, Hurricane Helene chased me out of the mountains, with giant hardwood trees falling in every direction.

At Christmas, we drove to Louisville, KY, to be with our three grandchildren, Will, Grant, and Annie. You will see that rambunctious trio in June! Finally, just last month Kay and I flew to Flagstaff, AZ, to hike around Sedona and to visit the Grand Canyon for the first time. The vistas in that part of Arizona are breathtaking. We plan to return.



Fr. Todd FitzGerald

The Rev. Todd FitzGerald and Amy will be in residence in July.

The FitzGeralds are looking forward to spending their 16th season with the wonderful people of St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal! Todd had a great year at St. John's in West Hartford, celebrating his installation as the 15th rector in September. Amy's job at Trinity College continues to be fulfilling and she learns new things all the time working in an academic setting. Stella began her first year of graduate school at Cincinnati-College

Conservatory of Music (CCM) where she sang a role in the spring opera, Dark Sisters, and was one of six winners in the Corbett Prize vocal competition, which awards full tuition along with a cash prize. This summer she will spend two months at Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, CA, where she will sing the lead in a one-act comic opera, Lucrezia, and in the chorus of Don Giovanni. Florie is finishing up her sophomore year at Saint James School in Maryland, where she plays on the lacrosse team, serves as an acolyte and reader in church, a tour guide, an athletic trainer, and company stage manager for theater productions. She will spend time in Texas this summer as a camp counselor at Camp Allen but also looks forward to hanging out at Marmion House and practicing her driving skills with her newly acquired learner's permit. Look out, here she comes!



Bishop Gary Lillibridge

Bishop Gary Lillibridge and Catherine will be in residence from August to October.

Bishop Gary Lillibridge will once again be our clergy-in-residence from August to October, 2025. He served as the 9th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas, based in San Antonio, from 2004 until his retirement in 2017. In addition to his work in West Texas, he has served on several boards and commissions of The Episcopal Church. His undergraduate degree is in education (1978), which has resulted in a lifelong devotion

to education and formation. He is a popular speaker and teacher, and assists with the teaching ministry of St. Benedict's Workshop as one of his many interests in retirement. He and his wife, Catherine, live in San Antonio, and look forward to returning to St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal for their 15th season.



St. Peter's Community Sharing Makes It Happen



Above, left to right: David Hall, Diane Sanford, Dr. Patrick Taylor, Bobbi Beavers, Karl Sanford.

Since 2020, in the height of the COVID epidemic, St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal has made it a practice to donate the church plate collection to well-vetted organizations whose work will benefit the wider York County Community. The York Hospital, Seeds of Hope (Biddeford), and the Hope Fund of York County Community Action Council have been yearly recipients of the yearly grants.

Last year, St. Peter's made a \$25,000 commitment over a five-year term to support the updating of the cardiac catheterization lab of York Hospital. That ambitious undertaking was made a reality with the opening of the new lab facility in February 2025. Funds from the plate offering were put toward Recovery Room #2 and, although the facility is already in use, the grand opening will occur in August of this year.

The generosity of the St. Peter's community didn't stop there. Seeds of Hope, a shelter for the unhoused in Biddeford, has made enormous progress in renovating the former Episcopal church to accommodate the increasing number of 'neighbors' who would otherwise weather the cruel winter in tents or other temporary shelter. St. Peter's has regularly donated toward the renovation efforts, and this past year saw the completion of the new commercial-style kitchen which will obviate the need for use of disposable dishware and decrease the use of prepared foods in favor of kitchen-produced foods.

The cost savings will be substantial and provide a more sustainable environment in the years ahead. Seeds of Hope re-purposed their upstairs storage area (formerly the narthex, nave, and sanctuary) to accommodate up to 55 zero-gravity chairs for overnight sleeping. Also added were two full bathrooms, an inclinator for the disabled, and ramp access to the former church. St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal is pleased to continue its support of this worthy venture to help care for our unhoused neighbors.

By Karl Sanford



Property Report Winter 2025

Winter on the Maine Seacoast can be a challenge to ocean front structures as evidenced by a tree that toppled over onto the rectory garage in early January. Luckily, no significant damage occurred and those hired to remove it got some free firewood.

Other projects went along smoothly.

Rather than maintaining the only remaining chimney, no longer used and deteriorating, we had the upper section removed and the resulting hole roofed over. Many thanks to Glenn Farrell's crew who worked in twenty-degree weather over three very windy January days to accomplish the task.

We also improved storage in the downstairs rectory by modifying the cabinets in the butler's pantry and adding cabinets in the kitchen.

The church came through the winter very well.

By Joe Leonhard



Above, left to right: Before restoration and after.

Historic Brasses Restored

After 97 years of use, the brass lectern from which the Word of God is read each Sunday, has been restored to its original luster. Years of salt air corrosion and liquid brass polish applications left the 1928 vintage lectern in a sorry state. For years, springtime volunteers have attempted to brighten the brass items including the lectern, crosses, altar desk, and collection plates. However, the white encrustation of Brasso in the grooves of the ornamental pieces and corrosion marks took their toll.

Last year, several smaller brass pieces were taken to C.M. Almy in Pittsfield, ME, for restoration. The results were so remarkable that it was decided to take the larger pieces for similar treatment. The decorative faces of the winged cherubs on the lectern are now clearly evident and the years of corrosion have been erase, then polished and lacquered, thus protecting them from the salt air and obviating the need for the use of Brasso.



Our Annual Jazz Concert is on Sunday, August 24, 2025, at 4 p.m.

Jazz at St. Peter's by the Sea

We hope to see you again at the 2025 Jazz at St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal on Sunday, August 24, 4-6 p.m. on the rectory lawn. This year we will be celebrating our 15th Annual Jazz Concert – just amazing! The New Legacy Swing Band will once again entertain us with wonderful music and our favorite 'toe tapping' tunes! We are grateful to The Beachmere Inn who will provide us with a reception of their delicious wine and cheese. Your donations to this wonderful annual jazz concert continue to support the Preservation Fund for our historic church.

Look for the 2025 Jazz at St. Peter's announcements coming later this spring, and we hope to see you at the end of August for another fabulous summer afternoon event.

Jazz Committee: *Charlotte Constantian, Linda Seager, Louesa Gillespie, Hannah Leavitt Krill, Bishop Gary Lillibridge, Richard Morgan, Charles Smith, Jeanine Storrs*



Music for the 2025 Season

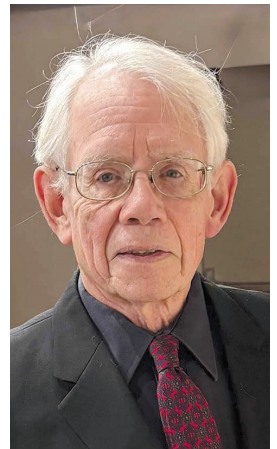
Greetings to all St. Peter's friends!

As you are reading this, I'll be putting the finishing touches on plans for music in the 2025 services. This year's choral repertoire will include great music from 400 years of the Anglican tradition – from William Byrd and Thomas Tallis in Shakespeare's era to 21st-Century composers, Eleanor Daley and James Davy.

Each Sunday's choir will once again be drawn from a roster of some of southern Maine's finest singers. Joining the roster this year will be bass Lawrence Jackson of Portland. Larry recently finished a long and successful tenure as conductor of the Maine Gay Men's Chorus. He also taught music in the Falmouth school system, and I enjoyed working with him when he sang in Renaissance Voices. We'll miss Stella Fitzgerald, though, as she will divide her summer between the Music Academy of the West in California and the Cincinnati Conservatory as she continues her musical studies.

I'm looking forward to this new season and to bringing more great music to you in our services at St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal.

By Harold Stover, Organist and Director of Music



St. Francis Blessing of the Animals

St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal will host the annual Blessing of the Animals in observance of St. Francis Day with its usual fanfare, well recognized in the southern coastal Maine community. Over 150 attend each year with their pets: cats, dogs, chickens, rabbits, birds, fish, frogs. Each pet, by name, is blessed with holy water and prayer as creatures of our Living God.

This year's festive and joyful celebration will be held on Sunday, October 5, at both the 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. services with Eucharist, officiated by retired Bishop, the Right Rev. Gary Lillibridge (San Antonio).

These outdoor services have become one of the most well-attended Sundays of our season, and everyone is invited to bring your pets for their annual blessing. St. Francis Feast Day is celebrated by the Anglican Church in its parishes worldwide to include the blessing from God upon our pets.

Don't forget your lawn chairs for this beautiful outdoor worship experience. For more information, call Michael Smyser, chairperson of the animal blessings, at 561.329.4300.

Visitation from the Bishop of Maine

The Right Reverend Thomas Brown, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine, will visit the southern parish of St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal on August 17, to preach and celebrate Eucharist. Bishop Brown, as is his custom, likes to visit the seasonal Episcopal chapels as he comes to the area.

Following the 10 a.m. service, there will be a brunch for all held in the church rectory with plenty of fine, prepared dishes for everyone to enjoy.

Bishop Brown was consecrated as the 10th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine on June 22, 2019.

Join us in welcoming our Bishop and friend this summer on August 17. Tickets info for the Brunch Benefit will be made available at a later date and on our website.



Our Annual Blessing of the Animals is on October 5, 2025, at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Baptism at St. Peter's

Bishop Lillibridge baptized Jack Miles, son of Whitney and Devon Miles, who were married at St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal on September 16, 2022.



VOLUNTEERS needed. **Pay is HEAVENLY.**

We have a full church worship schedule this summer, so if you are able to serve as crucifer, usher, lay reader, or Eucharistic minister (you must be active under the auspices of the Episcopal Church), please contact Michael Smyser, Worship Volunteer Coordinator at 561.329.4300 or mikecalifguy@comcast.net. Our worship schedule is mid-May to mid-October, 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. with Eucharist.

St. Peter's Guild – Join Us!

Our Guild is made up of volunteers who prepare the altar for Sunday Eucharist, provide altar flowers, and host hospitality hours after each 10 a.m. Sunday service, as well as community outreach fundraising benefits. As our church is growing and the needs as well—new Guild members and ideas are most welcome!

Everyone is invited to join us for these Guild Benefits following the 10 a.m. services:

Welcome Fest – June 8

Guild Benefit Picnic – July 13

Benefit Brunch with

NEW DATE: AUGUST 31

Community Outreach: Our annual membership dues, along with the July Benefit Picnic and August Benefit Brunch fundraising events, form the basis for our community outreach contributions which help families in our area who face hardships.

This year, the Guild donated \$1,250 to The Hope Fund (York County Community Action Corp.) which provides transportation, food, emergency fuel, vehicle repair, and more, to local families in need throughout York County. The Seeds of Hope Neighborhood Drop-In Center in Biddeford also received \$1,250 from our Guild. This drop-in center serves as a temporary warming shelter, provides nutritious meals, coats, gloves, and sleeping bags, to those experiencing homelessness.

Altar Flowers: Altar Flower sponsorships will be coordinated by Jean Demetracopoulos. Jean may be reached at 207.384.5030 or foxhillf@aol.com to reserve a week. The weekly sponsorship amount is now \$60 (your check should be made payable to St. Peter's by the Sea). Sponsor dedications will be posted in that week's church bulletin. Contributors may collect one of the arrangements at the conclusion of the 10 a.m. service. The expansion of the church calendar into May creates even more opportunities to recognize a loved one or special occasion.

Membership Dues and How to Join: If you'd like to join or renew your membership, please mail your \$25 check, payable to St. Peter's Guild, to Treasurer Jean Demetracopoulos at 42 Oldfields Rd., South Berwick, ME 03908.

For more information about the Guild and how to join, please contact Carol Kane Leonhard, Guild Chair at 978.837.2657 or kane.carolann@gmail.com.

Guild Officers: Carol Kane Leonhard, Chair; Linda Seager, Vice Chair; Diane Sanford, Secretary; Jean Demetracopoulos, Treasurer





**St. Peter's By The Sea
Episcopal Church**
535 Shore Road
PO Box 693
Cape Neddick, ME 03902
www.st-peters-by-the-sea.org

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Weddings at St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal



Above: Casey Bowler and Igor Sytnyk were married at St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal by Reverend Todd FitzGerald on July 6, 2024.

To inquire about having a wedding at St. Peter's, please email Wedding Coordinator Tammy Franz-Mallen at dtmallen@comcast.net.

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