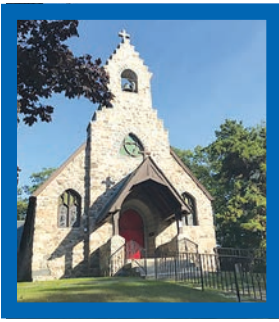


St. Peter's Bald Head

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 the season with 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. Eucharist services starting MAY 10, 2026

From the President of the Board of Trustees



Dear Friends,

I am writing to you on Maundy Thursday, when we celebrate Our Lord's institution of the Eucharist as the central sacrament of the Church and remember his dramatic act of humility,

love, and service when he washed his disciples' feet, even the feet of Judas, the disciple he knew would betray him.

There is something especially moving about officiating at this service as the headmaster of a boarding school because the symbolism is so dramatically obvious. As head of school, I kneel and wash the feet of the teachers and students who choose to come forward to be served by me.

I suspect that many who come forward do so generously to show their support for me and for the chaplain, honoring and acknowledging our ministries as priests in our community, but they are also showing their willingness to be different, more vulnerable if you will, and therefore open to the love of God made real for us in Jesus Christ. They will do the same later in the service when they come forward to receive communion.

They will be bravely and openly Christians.

Similarly, there is a wonderful sense of community, humility and courage that we experience every Sunday when we gather at St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal, all of us feeling supported in our common worship by the example of the others and they by ours, willing to be different and open to the deeper experience of God in prayer and praise and sacrament, listening to the teaching of Jesus Christ and responding to his example of self-giving love on the Cross as the way of life for all of us to follow.

In this way, we choose to be his disciples, however unworthy, his body in the world, his light in the darkness, his hope for the hopeless, and his servants for peace.

Happy Easter to you all.

Yours faithfully,

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

Church Addition Updates

The rumors are true—St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal has indoor plumbing!

Over the winter months, while our beloved church has been quiet, meaningful progress has been taking place. Under the stewardship of John Seager, representing the church board, and Glenn Farrell of YFI Custom Homes, our construction management team has worked faithfully to bring this long-awaited addition to life. We are delighted to share that the project is now complete—and the results have truly exceeded our expectations.

This beautiful new space includes a flower room, two accessible bathrooms, and a prayer and meeting room, along with year-round plumbing, heating, and air conditioning. An accessible entrance to the nave now makes it easier for all to enter and gather in worship. In addition, several handicapped parking spaces have been thoughtfully added nearby, offering greater ease and comfort for those who need it.

Great care was taken to preserve the charm and character of St. Peter's. The exterior blends so naturally with the existing church that many have said, "it looks like it has always been here." We are also grateful to share that, through thoughtful planning and coordination, the entire project was completed under budget—a true blessing.

As spring arrives, a few finishing touches remain, including driveway paving, walkway railings, and landscaping. Karl Sanford will be guiding the landscape design, helping to create a welcoming and peaceful setting around our new addition.

We also took this opportunity to brighten our worship space by upgrading the lighting with energy-efficient LED bulbs.

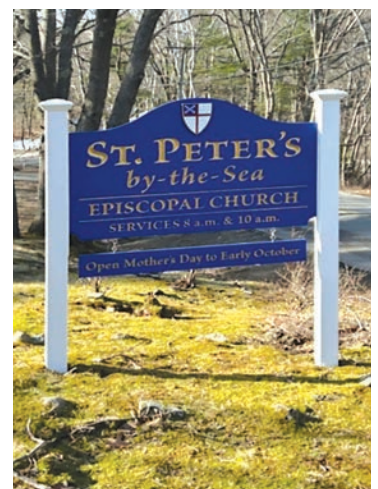
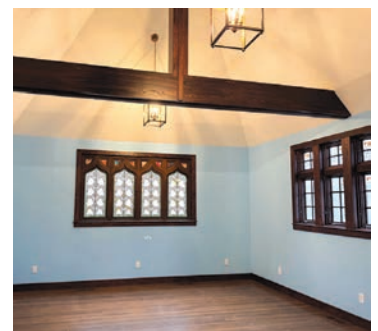
We give thanks for all who contributed their time, talent, and care to this project. It is with joyful hearts that we look forward to welcoming you into this new space very soon.

Respectively John Seager and Glenn Farrell

A Sign of the Times

Beginning in 1989, Bill and Janet Upson were attendees and strong supporters of St. Peter's by the Sea with Bill opening and closing the church on Sundays and for weddings – often fluffing out the bride's train as she began her entrance. But his dedication didn't stop there. He would polish the brass, pick up the altar flowers from the florist each week and then ushered at the 10am service. Bill was instrumental in having a second railing added to assist the arduous climb from the circular driveway up to the church steps. For her part, Janet took care of the altar linens, was active in the Guild and even needle-pointed some of the prayer kneelers that are still in use today. In short, the Upsons were the kind of quiet workers whose dedication made St. Peter's what it is today.

After Bill and Janet's passing, their daughter, Ann Upson Femia (pictured on page 2), donated a roadside sign for St. Peter's in their honor. The green-background, carved wood sign lasted for approximately 30 years until it finally degraded beyond repair or reclamation. Ann has again stepped up to the plate and donated a new



Continue on page 2...

Dedication Events for the New Addition!

July 12: Opening

with coffee hour and tours by Glenn F. and John S.

September 13: Official Dedication

with liturgy and clergy

Continued from front page...



sign of the same dimensions. With improvements in signage materials over the last 30 years, the new sign is constructed of a more durable PVC material but with the same V-groove gold-leaf lettering as the original. Upon reflection, it was decided that the background color should change to blue to set it apart from the leafy green foliage that surrounds it.

St. Peter's is grateful for the past dedication of the Upson family and for Ann's ongoing and generous donation. Given the new addition to the church, it is fitting that a new sign be dedicated to honor Bill and Janet Upson and their contribution to the life of St. Peter's by the Sea.

St. Peter's Support Pays Dividends

Since 2021, the Community Sharing Outreach program of St. Peter's by the Sea has provided financial support to Seeds of Hope Neighborhood Center in Biddeford. Due to the generosity and caring of St. Peter's attendees, we have continued and increased our support over the last five years. The vision of Rev. Shirley Bowen and her assistant, Vassie Fowler, has blossomed into a more robust program and is set to take over a financially stressed program for unhoused families.

Seeds of Hope, now led by Vassie Fowler and located in a former Episcopal church, has steadily grown in capacity over the past five years so that it can accommodate up to 50 individuals per night during the cold weather season. This past, brutal winter saw a huge uptick in the number of people seeking overnight shelter. With the help of other community and civic organizations they have renovated their kitchen to commercial grade and added full bathrooms and laundry facilities for the unhoused of York County. Now, the former York County Family Shelter, which was due to close for lack of funding, will be assimilated by Seeds of Hope with no disruptions to service at the 16-bed facility in Sanford. The program will continue its focus on assisting unhoused families so that the families can remain together while alternative living arrangements can be secured. The program name will change to "Seeds of Hope Family Center". The Community Sharing Outreach program of St. Peter's is delighted to be the instrument of your generosity for this much-needed and well-managed endeavor! Your past kindness, expressed through the Sunday offertory, has paid dividends and now helps families as well as individuals experiencing the stress of being unhoused.

By Karl Sanford

Come Play Mahjong with SPAM!



Is it time to get off the screens and try something new? The internationally popular game of Mahjong is booming, and St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal has its very own group. Mahjong is a challenging, rewarding game offering a few hours of fun and friendship... and a mental workout for good brain health!

St. Peter's Amateur Mahjong group (teasingly nicknamed "SPAM") plays weekly on Thursday afternoons, 1-4 p.m. We are now entering our third year with more than a dozen regular and seasonal members. We meet in members' homes, the Cape Neddick Country Club, and the Beachmere Inn. Whether you're new to Mahjong or already hooked, we'd love to have you!

For details, text Karen at 203.300.4259 or email KarenWeaver.CT@gmail.com.

Photo above: Elizabeth Weaver winning with the 2026 Mahjong Card.

Property Report

From a maintenance standpoint, this off-season was pretty easy. Shortly after the closing last fall and the routine stowing of the summer gear, winter set in. From the first of November it got cold (really cold!) and stayed that way without a break right through March. It even snowed in April as I write this; a good, old-fashioned Maine winter. Except for a few minor indoor repairs at the rectory, the St. Peter's by the Sea church and rectory came through just fine. We lost a large limb off a big pine tree, but it fell harmlessly to the lawn creating a bit of a divot; easy fix. We did get a fair amount of snow and are now faced with the spring ritual of transplanting snow-plowed gravel from lawn into its rightful spots in the driveway and parking lot. That's about it, thankfully.

Soon we will be setting things up for the May opening and look forward to moving into the lovely new addition to the chapel. We look forward to seeing everyone on the opening day!

By Joe Leonhard

Memorial Garden Since 2007

The consecrated Memorial Garden at St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal is the only one of its kind in coastal southern Maine, containing remains of 19 saints and 13 Certificates of Internment Rights. This sacred ground remains a viable and attractive alternative to proprietary cemeteries in the area. It is not just for those who attend St. Peter's or who are Episcopalian. Interments are \$2,500 per individual, are direct (no containers), and includes inscription of the name, birth, and death, on the common stone. Interments may occur May-October, and all areas are currently open.

For more information, email Memorial Garden Coordinator Karl Sanford at Kar1S41247@gmail.com.



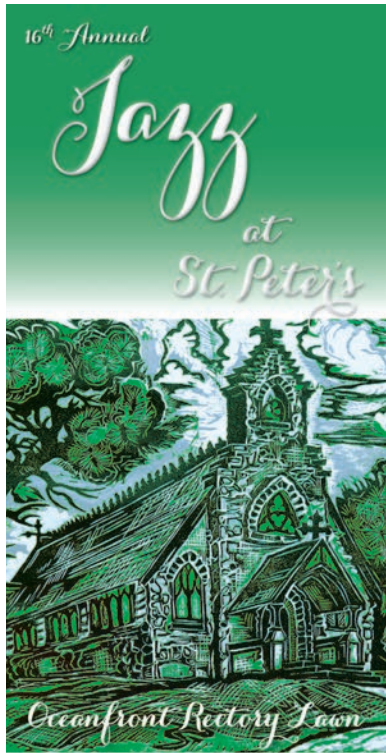
St. Peter's Pickleball

We begin our 6th season of St. Peter's Pickleball this summer! This is a low-key way to absorb the basics of the game that is being played in many communities. We meet at the Ogunquit courts, warm up, dink the ball back and forth, and practice the rules. Others come to watch and visit on the sidelines. It is a fellowship of laughter, learning, and community. Reach out to Ann Bryzs or Catherine Lillibridge if you would like to join us!

Photo below, back to front: Mark Andrew, Daria Valentini, Mark Lewis, Frank Cossette, Rachel Perks, Catherine Lillibridge.



Our Annual Jazz Concert is on Sunday, August 23, 2026, at 4 p.m.



16th Annual Jazz at St. Peter's

We hope to see you again at the 2026 Jazz at St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal on Sunday, August 23, 4-6 p.m. on the rectory lawn. The New Legacy Swing Band will once again entertain us with wonderful music and our favorite 'toe tapping' tunes! The Beachmere Inn will also provide us with a reception of their delicious wine and cheese again. Tickets are \$40 per person. Your donations to this wonderful annual jazz concert continue to support the Preservation Fund for our historic church.

Look for the 2026 Jazz at St. Peter's bookmarks and announcements coming later this spring!

Jazz Committee:

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



Music for the 2026 Season



Great music is again on tap for 2026, as Organist and Director of Music Harold Stover (pictured at left) returns for his seventh season leading quartets made up of southern Maine's finest singers, with choral services in May for the first time.

The choral roster will include Jennifer Bates, Joanne deKay, and Rachel Keller, sopranos; Andrea Graichen, Jenna Guiggey, and Dawn Anderson, altos; Martin Lescault and Avery Levesque-Schott, tenors; and John Adams, Lawrence Jackson, and Bruce Canturbury, basses, returning from last year. New to the roster this year is bass Robert Stoddard (pictured at right). Robert is active at St. Alban's Church in Cape Elizabeth and has sung in Maine with the ChoralArt Ensembles, St. Mary's Schola, Dirigo Ensemble, and Zenith Ensemble, and will be a soloist with the Portland Symphony Orchestra in September. He is a Senior Fellow with the Conservation Law Foundation and the Board President of The Friends of the Kotzschmar Organ.



Choral music will include works from composers of the Anglican communion, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Charles Villiers Stanford, Thomas Tallis, Henry Purcell, Healey Willan, Sarah MacDonald, and others, augmented by great works from European masters, Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Felix Mendelssohn. Harold Stover's newest publication, *The Spirit of the Lord*, will be heard on Pentecost Sunday.

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 4, 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.



Our Annual Blessing of the Animals is on October 4, 2026, at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

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!

Interested in joining? 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 Road, South Berwick, ME 03908.



You can also help by sponsoring our altar flowers! Altar Flower sponsorships are coordinated by Guild Treasurer Jean Demetracopoulos. Jean may be reached at 207.384.5030 or via email at foxhillf@aol.com for details. The weekly sponsorship amount is \$60 (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.

The Hope Fund (York County Community Action) representatives gratefully accepted a \$1,500 donation from St. Peter's Guild Chair Carol Kane Leonhard (center in top photo). Vice Chair Joe Tesson (at right in photo to) also presented a \$1,500 gift from the Guild in support of Seeds of Hope, Biddeford. Thank you to everyone who supported our Guild Benefit events in 2025, making these much-appreciated donations possible!

Our annual membership dues along with the benefit fundraising events—form the basis for our community outreach contributions, helping families in our area who face hardships!

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

May 10 – Bienvenue

July (TBA) – Annual Brunch

December 10 – Christmas Luncheon

at Lady Mary Inn at Hurd Manor, North Berwick

2026 Guild Officers: Carol Kane Leonhard, Chair; Joe Tesson, Vice Chair; Diane Sanford, Secretary; Jean Demetracopoulos, Treasurer

Welcome to Joe Tesson as the Guild's new Vice Chair! Joe grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, the youngest of five children. He is a CPA with an MBA in finance, and spent 30 years as a CFO at AT&T before recently retiring. After living all over the country, Joe moved to York, Maine in April 2025. (He heads down to Ft. Lauderdale for part of the winter—we forgive him for leaving us behind—but we're glad to have him with us for the rest of the year! We've already learned that Joe is not only accomplished professionally but also enjoys Pickleball and running marathons — something that Catherine was thrilled to discover! Welcome, Joe, and thank you for your willingness to serve. (Photo at right: Joe Tesson on right with Fr. Craig Burlington on left).

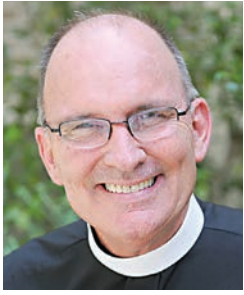
For more information about the Guild and how to join, please contact Carol Kane Leonhard, Guild Chair at 978.837.2657 or kane.carolann@gmail.com.



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.

Our Clergy Schedule for Summer 2026



Fr. Patrick Gahan

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

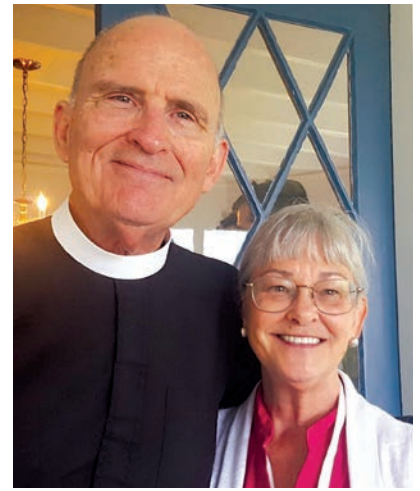
With each passing day, the two of us are growing ever more excited about spending May and June with you. Over the years, you have become our Down East family; so we eagerly await our annual “family reunion.” With our May 10 reunion in mind, we will bring you up to speed on our recent escapades.

Paris 2.0: Kay and I are spending Easter in Paris this year as part of the ongoing celebration of our 50th wedding anniversary. I report that with some trepidation because we celebrated our 40th anniversary in the City of Lights when the infamous ISIS attacks ensued. On the night of November 13, 2015, when we were enjoying a fancy dinner at a restaurant we could not afford, Kay and I began to receive repeated text messages from our three children asking, “Are you okay?” Finally, we appealed to our garçon if something was awry. Completely unruffled, he responded, “There had been a few attacks across the city.” By the time we reached out hotel, weaving through a gauntlet of French SWAT teams, we learned that the “few attacks” actually numbered six, leaving 130 persons dead and 350 others wounded. We eventually settled into our room at the stroke of midnight. Our heads had not hit the pillows before a threat was made against our hotel, which sent a young mother cradling an infant running through our hallway screaming, “Take my baby. Take my baby.” All that’s to say that our first romantic venture in Paris was a bust — so much so that I promised Kay that I would eliminate the element of surprise and whisk her off to South Sudan for our 50th. That plan was scuttled by the management, and so we are traveling to France for a second attempt. On Easter Day, our plan is to join other Episcopalians abroad and worship at the American Cathedral in Paris.

Underwater: In the fall, friends invited us to accompany them to the Virgin Islands to enjoy some snorkeling. The ocean was crystal clear and the thickly wooded mountainous vistas were arresting. Snorkeling for five days left us a little soggy; however, every time we came up for air, we were face-to-face with Jeffrey Epstein’s former island retreat... which moved us to quickly stick our faces back into the drink.

A Bit of Comfort: Kay and I completed our year of serving St. Boniface Episcopal Church in Comfort, TX, some fifty miles north of us in the Hill Country. This is the region that was caught in the July 4th floods, which left 137 dead. Thirty-five of the dead were children, some of which were enjoying summer camp. Nevertheless, in typical Texas fashion, the people of St. Boniface put their shoulder to the wheel to help those in greatest need. In much the same way, the congregation selflessly extended themselves to us after the sudden death of our daughter, Catherine Grace. Their love held us close and, in no small part, began to heal us. St. Boniface is 120 years-old, which is pretty darn old around here, as Texas did not even become a state until 1845 — twenty-five years after Maine. Before Kay and I said our teary farewells to the congregation, they decided, for the first time, to call a full-time rector. Like I said, this is a “can-do” bunch.

All that’s to say, that Hill Country congregation’s generosity and warmth reminded Kay and me of all of you at St. Peter’s by the Sea Episcopal. We are ready to arrive in Cape Neddick and celebrate Mother’s Day amongst people we have come to dearly love.



Fr. Todd FitzGerald

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

After a doozy of a New England winter, the FitzGerald are very much looking forward to some blue-sky summer days with the good people of St. Peter’s by the Sea. We are grateful to be in residence again for the 17th summer!

Florie was toddling around that first summer we arrived and now she’s touring colleges and preparing for her last year of high school at Saint James in Maryland. She had

a great junior year as the company stage manager for theater productions, head tour guide, a sacristan in the chapel, a sports medicine intern during football season, and the varsity lacrosse goalie. She’s looking forward to a summer filled with lots of activities including being a camp counselor in Texas and attending nursing camp at Auburn University.

After finishing her master’s degree at Cincinnati Conservatory, Stella will spend her summer in San Francisco as a resident artist at Merola, San Francisco Opera’s summer program. She was delighted to have been an Indiana District winner of The Metropolitan Opera’s Laffont competition, as well as the winner of the scholarship division of the National Opera Association’s voice competition at their annual meeting.

Todd has had a busy year at St. John’s West Hartford, most notably having conducted a very successful capital campaign. He has also undertaken a new program of study at Loyola University in Chicago, working toward a degree in Counseling for Ministry.

Amy’s work at the Trinity College Archives keeps her busy and engaged, and she enjoys taking part in the diverse array of campus activities on offer at Trinity. This year especially, Amy has functioned as family travel agent, planning college visits for Florie and audition trips for Stella. Sometimes she even gets to tag along!



Bishop Gary Lillibridge

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

As the 2026 season approaches, Catherine and I have been reflecting on the many blessings we have received from our years of serving St. Peter’s by the Sea Episcopal, and we look forward to another great year with you all. It is an exciting time to be part of the St. Peter’s community, and we hope to see you often when we are in residence from August to October. In the meantime, may you feel the Lord’s blessings in your own life and take time to give thanks. See you this summer!





**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



Left: Avalon O'Shaunessy and Sebastian Higuita were married by Reverend Patrick Gahan on June 21, 2025. Our Organist and Music Director Harold Stover donned his "Ancient Morrison Tartan" to follow Bagpiper John Daggett in the formal procession. Photo by Emily Delamater.



Right: Bishop Gary Lillibridge performed the wedding ceremony of Hannah Albert and Alec Moloznik on September 13, 2025, assisted by Reverend Abi Moon of Trinity Church of Boston. Photo by Rachel Bell.

Interested in having your wedding in our beautiful historic church of St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal? Contact Wedding Coordinator Tammy Franz-Mallen at 617.962.0246 or dtmallen@comcast.net.

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