



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

Merry Christmas

From the President of the Board of Trustees

Dear Friends,

I am happy to report that our longer season last year was a great success with strong attendance from the beginning to the end, so we will keep this calendar going forward. Fr. Gahan will return and get us started on Mother's Day and serve through June. Fr. FitzGerald will serve through July, and Bishop Lillibridge will serve through August and September until the second Sunday in October.



My thanks, as always, to Joe Leonhard and Karl Sanford for their expert care of the church, rectory, and grounds, and to Linda Seager, Carol Kane, Michael Smyser, and Tammy Mallen for all their work "behind the scenes," and to all the members of the Guild, the Board, and our many generous and skilled volunteers who make the miracle of St. Peter's revive and thrive every year. Obviously, you are all invaluable, and your gifts of time, talent, and treasure are essential to our growth and health as a church and congregation.

This year, I particularly want to thank John Seager for his expert and generous direction of our building project and Glen Farrell for his generous and careful construction. I know that everybody is impressed by the perfection of their vision and the quality of their work.

I would also like to thank my siblings and cousins for generously supporting this project through the Baldwin Foundation and those others who have also come forward to give and pledge their support. We anticipate that the new annex will cost about \$1.2 million, and we have raised about \$600,000 so far to pay for this much needed addition to St. Peter's. Any remaining cost will have to come from our endowment, which will of course reduce our annual income going forward.

My hope is that we will be able to raise another \$200,000 to keep our endowment at a sufficient level to support our expenses. And here, I note again that our expenses would be much higher if we did not have so many devoted, skilled, and generous volunteers. We are blessed that so many are willing to give as they can give.

So, here is my request. If any of you reading this letter can give a financial gift to help us reach this goal, this would be a great help to us. It would be particularly helpful if you could give a gift of \$25,000 or more, which could be given over several years or by provision in your will. Obviously, every gift helps, but we do need some larger gifts to cover the remaining gap.

So, if this is a gift that you can give, I would ask you please to contact our Treasurer David Mallen to tell him of your intention. His email is dmallen@wilderco.com.

My best wishes for a blessed Advent and a joyous Christmas to you all!

Yours faithfully,

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

Mother's Day Opening for 2026

Last year's 'early opening' proved to be such a success that we decided to do it again! The beginning of regular Sunday services will commence on May 10 (Mother's Day) along with the post-service fellowship hour at 11 a.m. Both the 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. services will occur. Conventional wisdom had it that a mid-May 2025 beginning of the St. Peter's Episcopal "season" would bring lower attendance but, in fact, attendance records were broken and clearly, the desire to be back together again was very strong. The momentum continues for 2026!

Building Project Report



As this year finds its way to a beautiful close, we are filled with gratitude and excitement as the long-awaited addition to our beloved chapel nears completion.

This new space will finally provide handicap access directly into the nave, along with several handicap parking spots right next to the new entrance. Inside, there will be restrooms (no more porta-potty!), running water, and a cozy parlor space. The parlor will be perfect for small gatherings—weddings, trustee meetings, and perhaps even events for some of the local organizations connected with St. Peter's.

We're also thankful for the practical touches—an added storage room and a separate heating and cooling system just for the new addition—making this a comfortable and functional space for all seasons.

It has truly been a joy working with our Construction Management firm, YFI Custom Homes (Glenn Farrell), whose partnership and care helped bring this meaningful project to life for St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal.

John Seager, Trustee & Project Manager/Coordinator

More photos on next page.

Fall Property Report

After a lively and extended 2025 worship season at St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal, fall is upon us and time to close and button down for the winter. At the church the construction for our lovely new addition is proceeding very well. A group of us met the Monday after the last service and performed the usual tasks of storing all the materials and covering the pews to control the dust accumulation over the winter. With the planned removal of a portion of the north masonry wall to accommodate the new entrance we covered all the pews with plastic sheeting. The construction crew will also create a tent within the church with negative air flow to direct the dust to the outside.

At the rectory all the customary work was performed. Appliances emptied and cleaned, laundry accumulated, washed and stored, screens taken down and secured, and porch furniture was covered and stored.

Thanks to the very good turnout of volunteers, we accomplished this annual ritual in record time. ~ *Joe Leonhard*

More Photos of New Addition Construction!



Community Sharing Ministry

As many of our readers know, St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal makes it a practice to donate the proceeds of the Sunday plate collection to specific York County-based organizations to support community needs. York Hospital, the Seeds of Hope cold weather shelter in Biddeford, and the HOPE Fund of the York County Community Action Corp. have been the primary recipients of this yearly endeavor.

This year, with the government shutdown and its negative impact on SNAP and WICK benefits, the demand on food pantries across the nation has risen exponentially. In years past, the Community Sharing Committee decided not to donate to local food pantries after it was learned that many of them were actually overstocked and shipping their excess to other areas of the state for distribution. It is time to revisit that decision and thus the Committee will be meeting to reassess the demand and need for support to the various organizations that fight food insecurity.

The Committee is happy to report that York Hospital's new, state-of-the-art cardiac catheterization unit has been up and operating since last March. The recovery room donated by St. Peter's is in frequent use and has even been used by a member of the St. Peter's congregation! ~ *Karl Sanford*



Weddings at St. Peter's

Fr. Patrick Gahan performed two beautiful wedding ceremonies this May at St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal.

Above: Kelly Lange and Gabriel Siwady were married on May 30, 2025.

Below: Rebekah Tozer and Michael Vale were married on May 22, 2025.

If you would like to have your wedding ceremony at our church, contact our Wedding Coordinator Tammy Franz-Mallen at dtmallen@comcast.net.



Christmas Greetings from Your Clergy Families

Catherine and I send our prayers and best wishes to you for a holy and a meaningful Christmas. In the Magnificat (Song of Mary, Luke 1.46), Mary begins with the statement, "My soul magnifies the Lord." I like to think that this is the ultimate thankful response to Christ's birth. What better way to say thank-you for the gift of Christ



than to magnify the Lord? Catherine and I will be alert this season for ways that we might magnify the Lord in our own lives and in the lives of others. We pray that you will be alert to these same possibilities in your life as well. We look forward to seeing you in 2026. Merry Christmas!

Rt. Rev. Gary and Catherine Lillibridge



Holiday Greetings from the FitzGeralds! Todd and Amy will be glad to have their nest full again for both Thanksgiving and Christmas this year. Florie is busy beginning her search for colleges and Stella is finishing up her graduate degree in Cincinnati. Blessings to our extended St. Peter's family for a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year. We look forward to being with you again in July!

Fr. Todd and Amy Fitzgerald



A Note of Heartfelt Thanks from Fr. Patrick and Kay Gahan:

You covered us up with letters, cards, and phone calls after the death of our 43-year-old daughter Catherine Grace on July 9. Thank you for loving us so well during a time when we really needed your love. Although our daughter had become increasingly ill over the last 23 years, necessitating five or six hospitalizations per year, her death was unexpected. The two of us grapple daily with spells of deep sadness... but your demonstrated concern lifts our spirits. Again, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



Fr. Patrick and Kay Gahan

Jazz at St. Peter's Celebrates 15 Years of Swinging Success

The Jazz Committee extends their heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported this year's 15th Annual Jazz at St. Peter's concert. Each contribution—large or small—plays a vital role in keeping this cherished community tradition alive. We are blessed to have the ongoing support, enthusiasm, and devotion of friends like you. Together, we continue to bring the joy of live jazz music to our community year after year. Thank you once again for helping make the 2025 jazz concert another resounding success!

Mark your 2026 calendars: Jazz at St. Peter's returns next year on Sunday, August 23, 2026, 4-6 p.m. Enjoy big band swing music by the New Legacy Swing Band on the rectory lawn. Come tap your feet, sway to the rhythm, and celebrate the timeless spirit of jazz with us!

Jazz Committee: Linda Seager, Louesa Gillespie, Hannah Leavitt Krill, Rt. Rev. Gary Lillibridge, Charles Smith, Jeanine Storrs



Blessing of the Animals

The 7th annual Blessing of the Animals was held October 5, 2025 for the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Rt. Rev. Gary Lillibridge officiated. More than 110 pets were blessed at the 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. services!

The Episcopal Church within Anglicanism has long believed that animals are gifts from God and that people are responsible for being good stewards of the earth and all its inhabitants. Because St. Francis of Assisi was well known for his strong and sincere love for animals and all nature, services are commonly held on or near his feast day on October 4 to remember and emulate Francis' example of love for our pets and deep appreciation of both God's love and creation.

"It is truly an experience witnessing in the Church our beloved pet friends that we feel strongly that God, their Creator, loves them too. After all, He created them before He made us! With the sprinkling of holy water, the pet's name aloud, and a prayer in Jesus' name prayed over each one indicates the power of God's Love for all," said Michael Smyser, chairperson.

For more information, contact Chairman Michael Smyser at 561-329-4300.



St. Peter's Guild

Our Guild is made up of volunteers who prepare the altar for Sunday Eucharist, provide altar flowers, 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 also, new Guild members and ideas are most welcome!

Our annual membership dues, along with the annual 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.

If you'd like to join or renew your membership, please mail your \$25 check, made payable to St. Peter's Guild, to Treasurer Jean Demetracopoulos at 42 Old Fields Road, South Berwick, ME 03908.

For more information about the Guild, 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



Photos of Coffee Hours and July 13, 2025 Annual Guild Picnic



St. Peter's Pickleball

St. Peter's Pickleball had a wide range of ages represented on the court this season. We play for fun with beginners and curious spectators welcome. During the "off season" there are many places to play in just about any town, so we plan to come back together next season with a few more skills learned and ready to welcome in more players. ~ *Catherine Lillibridge*

Pictured above: Leon Weaver, Rt. Rev. Gary Lillibridge, Howard Possick, Clyde Stover III, Clyde Stover IV, and Ann Brzys.

Mahjong Club

Linda Taylor wrote, "Carol, a big Thank You for getting me involved with all you lovely ladies. I so enjoyed playing Mahjong and meeting each of you. I look forward to seeing everyone next June. We love St. Peter's!"

Pictured below are Mahjong Club Founder Catherine Lillibridge and Ning Sullivan, just two of the members who enjoy the game. ~ *Carol Kane*



Helping with Coats

St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal recently helped St. Elizabeth's Episcopal in their annual coat drive with many donated coats for this winter season.

The volunteers and clients of St. Elizabeth's Essentials Pantry are very thankful for the outpouring of donations from St. Peter's.

Harold and Elizabeth Stover



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Have A Very Holy & *Merry Christmas*

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The "Lost" is "Found"

In June 2025, an unnamed woman sought out Fr. Gahan at the rectory to deliver a large receiving basin that she had found in a relative's backyard. The heavily corroded basin had been used, obviously for many years, as a bumblebee watering station, but the inscription on the reverse was still quite legible: "In Loving Memory of George Mecum Conerroe – August 25, 1896". Clearly, the woman who returned the basin understood the import of the Conerroe name as the original benefactor of St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal. It was obvious that the basin was both original to the church and part of the donation from Nannie Conerroe in 1898.

Aside from corrosion and a few dents, the receiving basin was in remarkably good shape. The metals division of C.M.Almy in Pittsfield, with whom we have done many projects, undertook the restoration and returned the basin to us in August. Following rededication, the receiving basin has now been returned to its home and intended use. Most unfortunate for the bees. ~ *Karl Sanford*



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