

St. John's Episcopal Church

"Our mission is to know and to share the love of Jesus Christ"



Rector's Essay

It's the End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine)

On a dark winter night in 1983, I twisted and turned the tuning knob on the car radio in my Reliant K searching out music that fit my mood. The bright dial hit 103.3 FM, the college station of Princeton University, and my car filled with "Radio Free Europe" from the album Murmur by the indie band REM. An avid fan from the moment I heard the song, I belong to a class of early REM fans called "murmurers."

Much later, REM released a song called "The End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine)," which has become my touchstone whenever scripture turns to final things. With faith in the Risen Jesus, we disciples face all endings as new beginnings! We face all endings as birth pangs of new life. We are eager to shed the world-as-it-is, or at least the yet unredeemed parts of the world-as-it-is, in order to be ushered into the Kingdom of God. For the disciple, the end of the world as we know it is cause for hope, and anticipation.

Scroll down to continue reading this essay.

2026 Stewardship update

Thank you to everyone who has generously made a pledge in our 2026 campaign. We are off to a great start. 54 households handed in cards totaling \$192,729 for our 2026 budget. WOW! Thank you so much. If you have not yet made a pledge and would like to, pledge cards can be found in the pews and at the back of the church. You may place them in the collection plate or mail them to the office at 225 French St. Bangor ME 04401. Thank you so much for your continued support of St. John's.

Christmas Basket Project

The Christmas Basket Project aims to provide 16 families from Penquis CAP with enough food for a Christmas turkey dinner and additional supplies for their cupboards. We also purchase a gift for each child in these families.

****You can support this project by donating funds for food****: It costs approximately \$150 to feed each family, totaling \$2,400 for all 16 families. We have collected about \$1,200 so far. If you would like to contribute, please specify that your donation will go to the Christmas Basket Project.

If you purchased a gift for a child from the giving tree, please wrap the gift and return it to the church

on December 14th.



Vestry Nominations

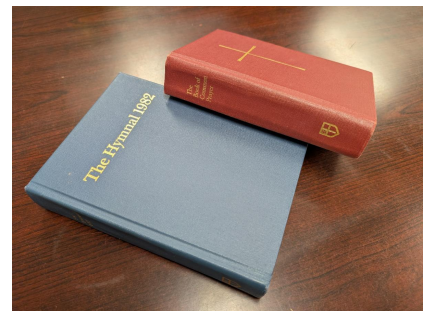
Seeking Leaders for the Vestry: The St. John's Vestry is accepting nominations to serve on the Vestry for a three year term beginning in February 2026. A member in good standing (someone who attends worship regularly, is active in at least one ministry, and is giver of record through a pledge or other identifiable financial gift) may nominate themselves or someone else in the congregation for Vestry. In the latter case we recommend that you consult with the person you wish to nominate. The names of nominees may be submitted to the Wardens Robert Ford and Jeff Perry or the Rector, Jarrett Kerbel. A nominating committee will create a slate of candidates who will be elected at the Annual Meeting in January 2026. The elections are not competitive, ie we nominate only enough people for the leadership positions available.

St. John's Elevator

You may have noticed that our elevator has been out of order recently. We are working hard to get the issue taken care of as quickly as possible. Please note that we expect the elevator to be out of order for *at least* a few more weeks. We apologize for any inconvenience this creates.

Episcopal 101

After Church on December 7th The Rev. Kerbel will host his Episcopal 101 class after the 10 am service in the Undercroft and invites everyone to attend. Of course, we will all enjoy coffee, food and fellowship to start. This is essential and just what Jesus did! Then, he will offer his short, conversational class on the Episcopal Church. You may ask why is he offering this to everyone at church, even folks who have been Episcopalians their whole lives? Strategically speaking, he wants you all to have a taste of this offering so you can direct newcomers and neighbors to Episcopal 101 when he offers it again. In his first year here he will be inviting the whole congregation to participate in a few teaching opportunities so the whole church is on board with what we are doing to advance our mission through education.



Advent Lessons and Carols

Save the date! Please join us on the 14th of

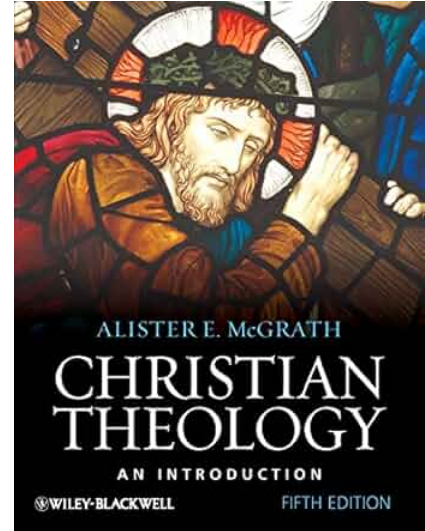


December at 5:00 pm for our annual service of Lessons and Carols. This much beloved service invites you to enter into a contemplative space and into the embrace of holy scripture and sacred song. Before Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, there is Advent, the time of anticipation and longing for the fulfillment of ancient prophecies. Join us for this sacred celebration of hope. The service is followed by our festive Advent Tea.

Christian Theology Class

Our next class will be held on Tuesday, December 16th, on **Zoom** at 6:30pm, covering Chapter Thirteen "The Trinity" from the book *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Please review the following video prior to the class - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWTzWmadVoo>.

If you have any questions or would like more information about joining the class, please contact [Pat S.](#)



The Greening of the Church

We'd love for you to join us in our annual Greening of the Church, on Sunday December 21st following the 10:00am service. Please come and help to make our Church beautiful with wreaths and poinsettias following the service.

Christmas Memorial Flowers

In honor of loved ones passed, please consider sponsoring the greens to decorate the church for Christmas. Contributions of any amount are gratefully accepted and are pooled to purchase the poinsettias and wreaths. They may be mailed or placed in the collection plate. Please make checks payable to "St John's Episcopal Church" and mark the memo "Christmas Memorials". The deadline for submitting names is December 21st.



Christmas Caroling

Share the yule-tide joy with our neighbors at a fireside caroling event on the church lawn December 21st at 3:00pm. We will gather around a firepit to sing beloved Christmas Carols while sipping hot cider and hot chocolate. Bring your kids, bring your neighbors to this fun event!

Searching for Thespians

At the early service (4:00pm) on Christmas Eve, it is the Rector's custom



to write and perform a Nativity skit for children. We will need at least four participants to pull it off, a narrator and three actors. Please let The Rev. Kerbel know if this would be fun for you!

Upcoming Advent / Christmas / Epiphany Events

Advent Lessons and Carols - December 14th at 5:00pm
The Greening of the Church - December 21st immediately following the service
Christmas Caroling - December 21st at 3:00pm
Christmas Eve Festive Eucharist - December 24th at 4:00pm and 9:00pm
Christmas Day Eucharist - December 25th at 9:00am
Contemplative Worship Service in the style of Taizé - December 31st at 5:00pm
The Epiphany Pageant - January 4th at 10:00am

Rector's Essay

It's the End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine) - continued

During elementary school, I kept a Bible on my bedside table both as reading material and as a totem to help me feel safe. The very 1970s Living Bible had an avocado green spine and an impressionistic depiction of Jesus the Good Shepherd in earth tones on the cover. From time to time, I would dare myself to read from the Revelation to St. John before bedtime because it is full of fearsome imagery and cataclysmic events, the apocalyptic return of Jesus.

My immature brain did not yet know that Apocalypse simply means 'unveiling' and that all of these scary images were actually a sophisticated way for St. John the Divine to write to the seven churches in a language that the Roman authorities would not understand. Essentially, the oppressed community of Jesus was using coded language to encourage endurance, resistance and hope during a time of persecution by the dominating powers of the time.

Indeed, on a careful reading we will find comfort and cause for hope. The lamb on the throne of the new heaven and earth is the lamb that was slain. Not a figure of dominating might and capricious authority, the lamb is gentle, self-sacrificing and the source of our reunion with God. In addition, when the new Jerusalem arrives it comes down to earth from heaven, recreating a new heaven and earth in this world. The end of the world ushers in the restoration of earth with God at the center as God always wanted.

During Advent we prepare for the arrival of God in Jesus once again. The good news is that we already know how God chose to arrive as a naked, helpless child of poor parents in a stable. We know that God ends the world-as-it-is and starts over in the most gentle possible way that affirms the human project by embracing humanity fully. So let our preparation be according to what we know: Let us pray for grace to soften our hearts, decrease our defenses, erase our cynicism, and grow our risky, vulnerable, daring faith and hope.
-Jarrett

Act now to help end homelessness

The shortest day of the year, Dec. 21, is also Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, which honors and remembers people who lost their lives while experiencing homelessness. While we mark this day as a moment of remembrance and reflection, we also call on Congress to address the upward trend in homelessness.

In 2024, almost 800,000 people were unhoused on any single night, marking the second consecutive record-breaking year. In the midst of this, the Trump administration has made several changes that will undermine housing assistance programs and put hundreds of thousands of people at risk of being forced into homelessness.

In The Episcopal Church, we believe that housing is a human right. We know many of you also do what you can to serve those in need. We ask you to include advocacy as one way you can care for the least of these.

The need for increased funding for homelessness assistance and affordable housing programs is greater than ever. Call on Congress and ask that they prioritize those in need and work to end homelessness.

To take action, go to <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/office-government-relations/action-alerts/?vsrc=%2fCampaigns%2f130393%2fRespond>



Phishing scam alert

If you receive an email or text from “Rev. Jarrett Kerbel” asking you for a favor and could you please email him back, please don’t! Rev. Kerbel will never ask you to purchase gift cards for him and will not email or text you with a vague request of needing a favor. If you aren’t sure about a request that you received from St. John’s, please call or email the office at 947-0156 or office@stjohnsbangor.org.

Announcements and Prayer Requests

Please be sure to submit all announcements and prayer requests to [the office](#) by noon on Thursday for them to be included in the weekly announcements and bulletins. Please submit photos / posters as a JPEG. Thank you!

Serving on Sunday December 7th:

Lectors – Richard W., Laura S. and Nancy D.
Acolytes – Dakota M., Cindy L. and Obi O.
Chalice Bearers – Jacquie W. and Dakota M.
Ushers – Andy H. and Patty H.
Counters – Hilary G. and Marsha C.

Serving on Sunday December 14th:

Lectors – Katharine F., Eric G. and Chris M.
Acolytes – Grant P., Isaac P. and Robert F.
Chalice Bearers – Cassy P. and Grant P.
Ushers – Katharine F. and Mary W.
Counters – Paul J. and Roger G.

Thank you to all who volunteer as Lectors, Acolytes, Chalice Bearers and Ushers. If you would like to serve in one of these positions, please let the [office](#) know.

***Sunday's
Readings***

[Isaiah 11:1-10](#)

[Romans 15:4-13](#)

[Matthew 3:1-12](#)

***Sunday
Worship:***
[Worship
Bulletin](#)

[YouTube](#)

***Morning
Prayer***

***Monday -
Friday:***

9:00am
Morning
Prayer

[Zoom](#)
[Facebook](#)

***Tuesday-
Friday:***

in person in
the Bethlehem
Chapel

***Evening
Prayer
Monday -***

What's Happening This Week

Sunday, December 7th, 10:00am: Worship, in-person and [online](#) followed by coffee hour in the Undercroft. Nursery and Sunday School are available during the service.

Sunday, December 7th, 11:30am: Episcopal 101

Sunday, December 7th, 7:00pm: [AA](#) meeting in the Undercroft.

Tuesday, December 9th, 7:00am: Men's Breakfast at the Coach House Restaurant in Brewer. For more information, contact [Jim B.](#)

Wednesday, December 10th, 5:30pm: Wednesday Evening Holy Eucharist.

Thursday, December 11th, 5:30pm: Choir Rehearsal

Saturday, December 13th, 12:00pm: Second Saturday in the Undercroft. Contact [Rex B. and David C.](#) for more information.

Sunday, December 14th, 10:00am: Worship, in-person and [online](#) followed by coffee hour in the Undercroft. Nursery and Sunday School are available during the service.

Sunday, December 14th, 11:30am: Vestry Meeting

Sunday, December 14th, 5:00pm: Advent Lessons and Carols followed by Advent Tea.

Sunday, December 14th, 7:00pm: [AA](#) meeting in the Bethlehem Chapel.

For more information about these and future events, as well as ways to get involved, check out www.stjohnsbangor.org.

Nursery Care and Children's Chapel

Children should arrive between 9:45 and 10:00 am in the Undercroft on Sunday mornings for Nursery care, ages 0-3, and for Children's Chapel, ages 4-10.

In **Children's Chapel**, we celebrate the boundless curiosity and wonder of our young ones as we delve into the stories and lessons of the Bible. We aim to cultivate a nurturing and engaging environment that teaches our youngest members the stories of their faith and promotes spiritual growth and a strong sense of community. For inquiries or to register, please contact Mary-Frances Beesorchard at children@stjohnsbangor.org.

Opportunities to pray together:

Sunday Morning Eucharist, at 10:00am in person and on [YouTube](#)

Friday:
5:15pm
live on [Zoom](#)

Wednesday Evening Eucharist, at 5:30pm
Morning Prayer, Mon-Fri, 9:00am on Facebook and on [Zoom](#)
and in person Tuesday - Friday in the Bethlehem Chapel
Evening Prayer, Mon-Fri, 5:15pm on [Zoom](#)

Volunteering is a wonderful way to give. Looking for the right Ministry Opportunity for you? Just click the link below for more information.

[OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY](#)

Parish Prayer List:

If you would like to add or reinstate a name or concern for our parish prayer list, please contact the church office or prayers@stjohnsbangor.org.

For the Sick, Injured, or Distressed, and for those who have requested prayer: Esther R. and Everett M. **Continued prayers for** – Steve S., Margaret C., Elena B., Jay B., Susan S., Loretta, Kent C., David B., Jane P., Kelly M., Katie B., Ross M., Claude K., Mikenzy M., MarLynne M., Russell M., Kyra H., Rachel M.T., Persis S., Duane P., Donald K., and Jane Z.

For our Homebound Members: Lilly P., Earlene B., and Eileen H.

For the World: for Peace and Goodwill among Nations and for peoples in places of violence or oppression, and for the many places in our world where there is danger and desperation. We pray for the people of Jamaica. We continue to pray for the people in Ukraine and the Holy Land, especially for the people in Gaza in this time of great suffering, and for the innocent people of Sudan caught in a brutal civil war. For an end to war and all forms of violence. For all who suffer for conscience's sake. For our enemies and those who wish us harm. For all suffering effects of climate change and of natural disasters. For refugees, immigrants, and those who are displaced.

For our Nation: For the healing of divisions and the celebration of diversity; for the recognition that no single viewpoint on any issue, no matter how important, is without human error; and for all who struggle to change our world and its systems of oppression and exploitation.

For the Leaders of our Country, State and Community: Donald J. Trump, President; Members of Congress, especially, Susan Collins, Angus King, Chellie Pingree, Jared Golden of Maine; Janet Mills our Governor; and Susan Hawes our Mayor; for those who administer justice in the courts of this land, that they all may serve our nation and the world with wisdom, civility, and compassion.

For our Military Personnel, especially those of this Parish: Sarah M., Dillan L., and Joshua M. and we also give Thanksgiving for all veterans and their willingness to lay down their lives for our country.

With Thanksgiving for the lives of those celebrating birthdays during the coming week including: Shirley G., Christopher O. and Lee S.

For the Departed:



St. John's Episcopal Church

225 French Street, Bangor, Maine 04401
207-947-0156

<http://www.stjohnsbangor.org>



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