

# St. John's Episcopal Church

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



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### Rector's Essay

My advisor for my Master's Thesis, Christopher Morse, gave me clear guidelines before I started writing. Chris said, "You need to present every side of the argument fairly and completely in a way that proponents of that position would support." He even gave me a format to follow that required me to argue all sides in full before moving on to my conclusion.

Fairly stating or describing a position we may disagree with seems to be a lost art. In part, we rarely take the time required to have a fulsome conversation about differences. I also wonder if we have lost faith in the idea that people can understand one another across significant disagreements. We are well trained in talking points and sound-bites. We are not very well trained in civil discourse.

A few essays ago, I described the GIVE skill; Generous/Gentle, Inquisitive, Validating and Easy Going/Encouraging. The GIVE skill is an easily remembered guideline for conversations that develop trusting relationships.

**Scroll down to continue reading this essay.**

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### 2026 Stewardship update

Thank you to everyone who has generously made a pledge in our 2026 campaign. We are off to a great start. 58 households handed in cards totaling \$200,789 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.

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### Introducing our Guest Preacher Sunday - Alison Boden

Our Guest Preacher on Sunday will be Alison Boden, a minister in the United Church of Christ. She retired last year after 33 years of service in university chaplaincy and teaching at Bucknell, the University of Chicago, and Princeton. She is the author of *Women's Rights and Religious Practice* (Palgrave) and numerous articles and chapters on religion and social justice.

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### 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\*\*:** We have collected about \$1,965 in donations so far. We need \$2,400 for all 16 families. If you would like to contribute, please specify that your donation will go to the Christmas Basket Project. We will deliver the gifts to Penquis Cap today and the food next Wednesday. For more information, please contact the office.



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### **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.

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### **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. There is an accessible bathroom in the Choir Vesting Room, located between the elevator and the staircase. When you enter the Vesting Room, go to the right and the bathroom will be on the left. Please note that we expect the elevator to be out of order for *at least* the rest of December. We apologize for any inconvenience this creates.



### **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.

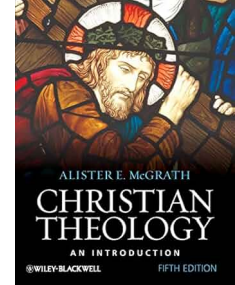
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### **Christian Theology Class**

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!

### **Something in the service is different in Advent**

Liturgical Note for Advent: Where did the A-Word go? You may have noticed that the word "alleluia" was removed from our worship for Advent and you may wonder why? Advent is a season of preparation wherein we ready our souls to hear the good news of the birth of Jesus yet again. Historically Advent was treated as a petite Lenten season, the color was purple and the tone was penitential. At the end of the 20th Century a new practice arose that changed the color to blue and the tone to expectation. As a typical middle of the road Episcopalian, I like to split the difference and combine expectation with preparation. Taking out the alleluia is meant as an act of delayed gratification, in essence, we are storing up our joyful outburst for the big day much like athletes observe a training regimen before the big game. Of course, as always, I could be wrong about this so please let me know. - Jarrett



### **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

Wear Your "Ugly Christmas Sweater" to Church Day - December 28th at 10:00am

Contemplative Worship Service in the style of Taizé - December 31st at 5:00pm

The Epiphany Pageant - January 4th at 10:00am

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### **Considering Baptism?**

The next opportunity for Baptism will be Sunday, January 11 which is "Baptism of Our Lord Sunday." Please reach out to Rev. Kerbel if you are interested in Baptism on that day or on another day in January or the first week of February. We take a break from Baptism during Lent and resume on the Sunday after Easter.

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### **Rector's Essay - Continued**

Today, as promised, I will share with you the FAST skill; Fair, Apologize (less), Stand on Your Values and tell the Truth as you see it. The goal of the FAST skill is to guide disagreements in such a way that we feel respect for ourselves and the other person when we are done talking. Our Baptismal Vows call us to "Respect the dignity of every human being" and the mission of the church is to "reconcile all people to God through Christ and to each other." How we relate to each other matters immensely.

"Fair" is how I started this essay. We need to have a real interest in fully understanding the person we are talking to. As we take turns sharing our positions, it is important to give a person time to fully spell out their thoughts. As a rule, I like to repeat back to a person their position after they are done and ask if I heard them correctly. They may say yes or they may want to clarify some points. Only when I feel like I have a fair grasp of my interlocutor will I go on to my point of view.

"Apologize (less)" may seem very strange as a conversational guideline. For me, as a shame-based human, I need this guideline to restrain my tendency to use "sorry" as a way to avoid facing the facts of what is happening. Many of us have learned to deploy "sorry" as a preemptive admission of responsibility to stave off blame. In general, too much "sorry" points to an unsafe emotional atmosphere that needs to be addressed.

"Stand on your values." What you care most deeply about is crucial for a robust and constructive conversation. I much prefer a substantial conversation where values are expressed outright then one where we rush to compromise too soon. I want chunky conversations! Much more nutritious.

"Tell the Truth as you see it." We need to hear from all perspectives and we should not be shy about the notion of truth. On one level, we are just talking about honesty. On another, we are claiming that our perceptions matter on the pathway to agreement. "The truth as I know it is" both humble and bold. Humble in that we name the limits of our perception, bold in that we hold on to the idea that our accurate and tested perceptions carry authority. As much as we like to relativize truth for the sake of getting along - which is not a bad goal by any means - we all actually operate daily orienting our lives toward what we hold as true. Let's just be straightforward about it!

-Jarrett

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### **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>

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Divisa  
CONTEMPORARY | CHORAL | MUSIC  
PRESENTS:  
A WINTER CONCERT  
...ON A SNOWY EVENING  
DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> @ 6PM  
ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
225 FRENCH ST.  
\$10 SUGGESTED DONATION  
WARMHEARTILY ACCEPTED @ THE DOOR



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### **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](mailto:office@stjohnsbangor.org).

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## **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.

\*\*\*The office will be closed from December 24th-January 4th. All announcements for the December 28th and January 4th bulletin/announcements need to be submitted prior to noon on December 22nd. Thank you!\*\*\*

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### **Serving on Sunday December 14th:**

**Lectors** – Katharine F., Colin 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.

### **Serving on Sunday December 21st:**

**Lectors** – Ann H., Joe F. and Mary-Frances B.

**Acolytes** – Grant P., Isaac P. and Scott B.

**Chalice Bearers** – Nancy D. and David C.

**Ushers** – Sheila S. and Joe F.

**Counters** – Jim B and Delores L.

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.

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### ***Sunday's Readings***

[Isaiah 35:1-10](#)

[James 5:7-10](#)

[Matthew  
11:2-11](#)

### ***Sunday Worship:***

[Worship  
Bulletin](#)

[YouTube](#)

[Advent  
Lessons and  
Carols](#)

### ***Morning Prayer***

***Monday -  
Friday:***

9:00am  
Morning  
Prayer

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

## **What's Happening This Week**

**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.

**Monday, December 15th:** The Parish Office will be closed.

**Monday, December 15th, 6:00pm:** Divisi winter concert

**Tuesday, December 16th, 6:30pm:** Christian theology class on [Zoom](#)

**Wednesday, December 17th, 5:30pm:** Wednesday Evening Holy Eucharist.

**Thursday, December 18th, 5:30pm:** Choir Rehearsal

**Sunday, December 21st, 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 21st, immediately following the service:** The Greening of the Church

**Sunday, December 21st, 3:00pm:** Christmas Caroling

**Sunday, December 21st, 7:00pm:** [AA](#) meeting in the Undercroft.

**For more information about these and future events, as well as ways to get involved, check out [www.stjohnsbangor.org](http://www.stjohnsbangor.org).**

**Tuesday-  
Friday:**  
in person in  
the Bethlehem  
Chapel

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**Evening  
Prayer  
Monday -  
Friday:**  
5:15pm  
live on [Zoom](#)

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### **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](mailto:children@stjohnsbangor.org).

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### **Opportunities to pray together:**

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

**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](#)

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**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](#)**

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### **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](mailto:prayers@stjohnsbangor.org).*

**For the Sick, Injured, or Distressed, and for those who have requested prayer:** Judy S., Frank S., Esther R. and Everett M. **Continued prayers for** – Persis S., Duane P., Donald K., Jane Z., 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., and Kyra H.

**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 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: Julian W.

**For the Departed:** Dean Neal



**St. John's Episcopal Church**

225 French Street, Bangor, Maine 04401

207-947-0156

<http://www.stjohnsbangor.org>



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