

St. John's Episcopal Church

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



Rector's Essay

Do You Know their Names

The great Latin-American theologian Gustavo Gutierrez once said, "You say you care about the poor. Then tell me, what are their names?" Decidedly not an Ivory Tower scholar, Gutierrez listened closely to the campesinos of Latin America and how they read and interpreted scripture. He helped with the 'base community' movement in the Roman Catholic church that empowered small groups of impoverished laborers to gather around prayer and scripture to find direction and solidarity.

"You say you care about the poor. Then tell me, what are their names?" I bring up this challenging observation at Christmas because followers of Jesus already know the name of one poor person. That person is Jesus and, thanks be to God, our knowing starts with him.

Jesus was born a nobody, in a nowhere place, to non-descript parents, attended at first by good for nothing shepherds and cattle. He was born in poverty that most of us could not fathom and his life was immediately threatened by the powers that be. Campesinos in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua related to Jesus on the basis of their lived experience. In Jesus, they saw God-with-us even while their overlords accounted them cursed and less than human.

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. 66 households handed in cards totaling \$224,701 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.

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, i.e. we nominate only enough people for the leadership positions available.

Upcoming Christmas / Epiphany Events

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



**NEW YEAR
NEW HOPE**

★ Contemplative Worship
in the Style of Taizé
New Years Eve, 5pm
225 French Street, Bangor

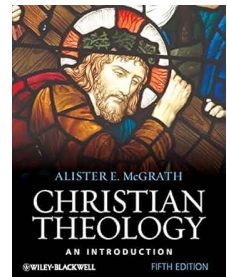


Stjohn'sbangor.org

Christian Theology Class

Our next class will be held on Tuesday, January 6th, on [Zoom](#) at 6:30pm, covering Chapter Fourteen "Human Nature, Sin, and Grace" from the book Christian Theology: An Introduction. Please review the following video prior to the class - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGosdENjpW4&t=40s>.

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



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.

Great Wednesday returns January 14th

5:30pm - Holy Eucharist in the Church

6:00pm - Dinner in the Undercroft

Suggested donation \$5.00.

7:00pm - Bible Study Class in the Bethlehem Chapel

Acts of the Apostles, beginning with the Conversion of St. Paul (also available on **Zoom**)

Those attending from home should have their Bible handy. Those attending in person will have Bibles provided

Rector's Essay

Do You Know their Names Continued

The poverty of Jesus, the naked fragility of his early life, and the threats that stalked him from the beginning tell us, first of all, how much God loves humanity. How much? So much that God enters into our vulnerable, limited, mortality to restore humanity to harmony with the Divine. God faces the risks and temptations of the human condition in Jesus to blaze a trail to restoring every human to the relationship with God that sets us right, brings us peace, and heals our souls.

Second of all, entering human life as an impoverished infant in an obscure locale tells us that God loves everyone, absolutely everyone, no matter who they are or where they are from just as they are. God's love is for everyone and precedes every other consideration of life. After all, what can a baby do to earn God's love! The idea is absurd yet it points to a level of grace and love that is more fundamental than our human ability to respond to God from our own resources.

Third, God is not ashamed of our humanity. God made humans good and very Good according to the creation accounts in Genesis. God has always wanted humanity to be a collaborator and partner with God in stewardship of God's creation. In the birth of Jesus, God is investing everything - holding nothing back - to regenerate the image of God in humanity.

Fourth, and finally, the incarnation of Jesus tells us that God loves the small, the defenseless and meek above all. Throughout scripture God shows a predilection to work with small, obscure people and groups to manifest the Divine will for humanity. As someone famously said, "If you cannot find God, maybe you are not looking low enough." Feeling the absence of God in your life? Who are you with? Whose names do you know? Where are you to be found? At Christmas we are reminded to be found in humble, vulnerable, dependent places where God chooses to dwell. This is why I spend so much time relating to our homelessness neighbors. Jesus in them. Jesus is with them. I want to be where Jesus is and a small part of relieving the stigma that isolates the poor from the relationships we all need.

-Jarrett

Together Place Warming Center Seeking Volunteers

The Together Place Peer-Run Recovery Center (Across from the YMCA) is currently operating a much needed warming center for our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness. Volunteers are needed for two volunteer shifts, 7:00 PM–12:00 AM and 12:00 AM–7:00 AM. In total, there are 56 shifts that need to be covered each week. Volunteers assist with security check-ins, running totes, monitoring bathrooms, and helping maintain a safe and respectful environment. I will be volunteering for a shift so please join me if that will make you more comfortable responding to this opportunity to serve God's beloved. Potential volunteers can reach out directly to Nicole Demont at 207-852-6157. -Jarrett

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.

Serving on Sunday December 28:

Lectors – David F., Nancy D. and Kelsi H.

Acolytes – Eric G., Ruth G. and Edmund H.

Chalice Bearers – Robert F. and Grant P.

Ushers – Ken H. and Jeff P.

Counters – Rex B., Marsha C. and Delores L.

Serving on Sunday January 4th:

Lectors – Robert F., Scott B. and Michele V.

Acolytes – Grant P., Isaac P. and Obi Okafor

Chalice Bearers – Grant P. and Scott B.

Ushers – Andy P. and Patty P.

Counters – Mary W. and Paul J.

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

[Exodus
33:18-23](#)

[1 John 1:1-9](#)

[John 21:19b-
24](#)

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

[YouTube](#)

***Morning
Prayer
Monday -
Friday:
9:00am
Morning
Prayer
[Zoom](#)
[Facebook](#)***

What's Happening This Week

Sunday, December 28th, 10:00am: Wear your "Ugly Christmas Sweater" to worship, in-person and [online](#) followed by coffee hour in the Undercroft. Nursery and Sunday School are available during the service.

Sunday, December 28th, 7:00pm: [AA](#) meeting in the Undercroft.

Monday, December 29th - Friday, January 2nd: The Parish Office will be closed

Wednesday, December 31st, 5:00pm: Contemplative Worship in the Style of Taize

Saturday, January 3rd, 10:00am: Epiphany Pageant rehearsal

Sunday, January 4th, 10:00am: Worship, in-person and [online](#) followed by coffee hour in the Undercroft. Nursery and Sunday School are available during the service.

Sunday, January 4th, 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.

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

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

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

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](#)

New Year's Eve, Wednesday December 31st - 5:00pm

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](#)

****Morning and Evening Prayer are currently on a holiday break and will return on January 2nd.****

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: Donald H., Susan J., Judy S., and Frank S. **Continued prayers for –** Kelly M., Katie B., Ross M., Claude K., Esther R., Everett M., MarLynne M., Russell M., Kyra H., Persis S., Duane P., Donald K., Jane Z., Steve S., Margaret C., Elena B., Jay B., Susan S., Loretta, Kent C., David B., and Jane P.

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: David S., Kristin W., Faith E., Robert F., Harper K. and Nancy M.

For the Departed: Chris Royal



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225 French Street, Bangor, Maine 04401

207-947-0156

<http://www.stjohnsbangor.org>



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