



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Aug 1, 2017)

St. James, Maine

132 Center Street, Old Town, ME 04468, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time)

mambler@episcopalmaine.org

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)	Number of Weekend Worship Services	Number of Weekday Worship Services	Number of Other per Month Worship Services
22	1	1	0
Current Annual Compensation	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position	Housing Available for	Pension Plan
	\$32625		
Healthcare Options	Dental	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
Full family	Yes		
Vacation Weeks	Vacation Weeks Details	Continuing Education Weeks	Continuing Education Weeks Details
4		2 (standard)	
Continuing Education Funding in budget	Sabbatical Provision	Travel/Auto Account	Other Professional Account
\$501-\$1000/year	Yes	Yes	Yes

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Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

When the parish realized that our priest needed to retire early due to serious, ultimately fatal health issues, we were stunned. After the news settled, we quickly rallied and all supported him and each other, with honesty and openness. We tried to surround him with a reflection of the love and understanding he always demonstrated to us. We understood that one of the changes ahead was that lay-led Morning Prayer would become an even more common and important part of our worshipping together. We have become better and better with our morning prayer services and they are now looked upon favorably by most. Visitors to St. James are often struck by how enthusiastically we pass the peace during the service. Often every person present will greet each and every other person. This is an important moment for us each Sunday and a reflection of genuine caring, love, and understanding among our congregation, in which we happily include visitors and newcomers.

How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

While many of us appreciate the traditional practices of the Church, in order to prepare ourselves for the church of the future we recognize and appreciate changes now and those to come by sharing information, being open to nontraditional priest-church relationships, and adapting our building as needed. Because a lot of communication happens online, we have a monthly emailed newsletter (with a few copies sent by postal mail, too) and we try to keep our website and Facebook page informative by posting interesting and current information. Realizing that there are fewer priests being ordained we are open to alternatives to the traditional one church / one priest model. In the recent past a priest who also led a church in a nearby community led us as well. We have continuously supported lay people as they have led Morning Prayer, and we have some excellent morning prayer services now. Looking to the future, we continue, and add to, our outreach programs. We also look to the future by being good stewards of our building, which is on the Historic Registry. We try to maintain it as a beautiful place for worship and service; we want our service and building to be accessible to all.

Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

thought-provoking, community minded, approachable and personable, support lay leadership

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Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community.

St. James practices traditional worship tending toward the more contemporary forms of service. We typically use Rite 2 for Eucharist, favoring prayer B, then A and C, with D sometimes in Lent. Rite 1 is rarely used, generally at a celebrant's request, and, although we accept it on occasion, we tend to mess up the responses. We use the traditional form of the Lord's Prayer. In the absence of a full-time priest, we have a Eucharist service twice per month with lay-led Morning Prayer on other Sundays. On these occasions, a homily is generally offered by the lay leader, and parishioners may add their reflections when invited. Wednesday evening services are lay led, using Compline and sometimes Evening Prayer. We are exceptionally enthusiastic passers of The Peace. Although our form of worship is traditionally grounded, with much up and down, standing and sitting, and a good deal of music, we are flexible and open to creativity. If anything goes awry in the service, we generally just chuckle and continue on. We are welcoming to newcomers and visitors, but are concerned that our order of service can be opaque, in Episcopal fashion, with switching among books.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

St. James is a small, open, and affirming family congregation. As such, incorporating everyone in our ministry is important. We gently and thoughtfully encourage parishioners to participate in the many ministries of St. James. Our ministries include licensed lay ministers, acolytes, vestry, alter guild, outreach, Compline and book study led by lay members, and building and ground maintenance. Our parishioners are more than willing to take on ministries as they are able to do so. We embrace individuals from other faith traditions or who have little experience of a faith tradition and endeavor to help them find a spiritual home with us. All are welcome to receive communion with us. Newcomers are invited to help with our ministries and the efforts needed to sustain them. This is one way in which newcomers are quickly incorporated into our community. The congregation, always small, is currently in a valley in our long-term cycles between growth, stagnation, and attrition. We hope to expand our numbers over the next few years through dynamic ministries and being a vital presence in the community.

As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

Good communication is key to caring for one another in our faith community. We view St. James as a family, and we seek to welcome and care for everyone. One important aspect of parish communication is our monthly newsletter, in which members are invited to contribute articles and news items. Services and other activities are listed. Our parish directory is frequently updated and made available to all parishioners, making it easy for us to stay in touch with each other. We use email also to inform members quickly when someone is sick or needs help and prayers. We expect our priest to provide pastoral care. In the absence of a priest-in-charge, individuals visit the sick and cards are circulated for signatures at coffee hour after Sunday services. Often a parishioner is the first to recognize through verbal or nonverbal communication that a member needs pastoral care, and will let the priest and/or Senior Warden know of the concern. Music is important in the life of St. James. We invested in a beautiful Johannus digital organ, and hope to continue to have a small choir as well as an organist.

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How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

St. James Parish has a long history of reaching out to our community. We offer a free community supper every 4th Friday of the month. St. James takes the 4th Friday of the month because that is when the need seems to be the greatest. We also are involved with the University of Maine through the multi-faith Wilson Center in Orono. Other outreach activities include providing school supplies at the beginning of the academic year, baby supplies on Mother's Day, heating funds in the winter, and weekly food collections shared with area shelters. Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous hold meetings in our building. We recognize that we have fewer people coming through our door on Sunday. It is through our knowing and listening to our community that we hope to continue providing outreach services and sharing the good news.

Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

St. James seeks to engage with others who are seeking to serve God and our neighbors through numerous activities. We send two delegates to diocesan convention each year and participate from time to time in services and activities of other Episcopal congregations and invite them to our Blessing of the Animals and Fourth Friday community suppers. St. James participates in United Thank Offering. We also engage with our neighbors, the Penobscot Indian Nation, through donating food, school supplies, and baby items. We have long been involved with the Episcopal Diocese of Maine's Committee on Indian Relations, which is currently chaired by a parishioner. St. James launched the effort to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, and this initiative was embraced by our diocese, the whole Episcopal church, and, subsequently, other denominations. Individual members of the congregation serve on community, regional, and state boards, as have several of our priests.

Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

About three years ago, Father Dick Johnson added a midweek service of Compline to our schedule. This was attended by people who really appreciated this mid-week spiritual experience. He then added an occasional book study lasting three to five weeks. This study preceded the Compline service and involved most, but not all, of the Compline group. When Father Dick's health began to decline, lay members of the group took over the Compline service and the book study group. Both efforts have continued to thrive. Since October the book group has read books by John Phillip Newell (2), Richard Rohr, and Kate Braestrup. There have been restaurant outings of the combined groups and a Pot Luck event (in which St. John's, Bangor, Book Group was included) with author Kate Braestrup. Another vital quality of this combined ministry is that it is portable--accommodating a member at home or in a rehabilitation center. The membership usually includes about eight people and has become increasingly significant in their lives.

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What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

St. James practices a year round stewardship program. We have the traditional pledge campaign in the fall and have volunteers from the congregation share what stewardship means to them. This is done on multiple Sundays. But we are a small parish and look to the congregation to provide the many needs for time, talent and treasure as we maintain our historic church and provide the many ministries required in its weekly operation and in the ongoing support for our community. We distribute a three month schedule of lay ministries which includes service leaders (Morning Prayer), Chalice Bearer, Acolyte, Greeter, Reader of 1st Lesson and Psalm, Reader of Second Lesson, Prayers of the People, and coffee hour host. We also have signup sheets for food contributions for 4th Friday supper, lawn mowing, snow shoveling, etc. These many needs for the life of our worshipping community draw in virtually every member of the congregation.

What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

We are fortunate that we are in sync on important issues and our core values are commonly held. Yet, our conflicts are real. While we always try to treat each other with respect, are supportive, and communicate honestly, sometimes some of us get to the point where we just avoid further discussion; we pretend the conflict doesn't exist but the conflict may simmer. Some of us are frustrated that decisions are a long time in the making while others believe that a slow approach gives everyone a chance to be heard and to adjust to change.

What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

Parishioners have different views about how we have handled change. We have many strong opinions, people who have been life-long Episcopalians, and/or lifetime St. Jamesians, and members who are newer to the denomination and the parish. We may have different levels of investment in maintaining the old and familiar versus adapting to newer needs. In general, we are open minded and willing to change. Yet when we are impatient for change to happen quickly, we may be inconsiderate about diverse ideas and people's feelings. We hope that we have learned that we need to do sufficient group analysis and reflection to form a shared understanding of what needs to happen and how to make it happen, though the length of this process can be frustrating. As an example, when we first began using Morning Prayer on some Sundays, many were unfamiliar with the service and we were, frankly, pretty lousy at it, leading to dissatisfaction. After practice and sticking with it, we got better and most people are now accepting of it, some enjoying it and others perhaps simply tolerating it, with all recognizing the need to have a form of worship we can use in the absence of ordained clergy.

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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Richard Johnson	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time)	2014-01	2016-01

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Ann Kidder	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time)	2012-01	2014-01

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
George Lambert	Interim	2009-01	2011-01

St. James' offers a weekly, lay-led Compline service. Weekly book study has about seven participants. Years of service for past clergy are accurate but precise starting and ending months are not available, thus all are listed as "January".

Church School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
	1	1

Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School	Number of Students for Adults School
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Day School	Number of Students for Day School	Number of Teachers for Day School	Number of Total Staff for Day School
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Contact:
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Worshipping Community Web site: <http://stjamesoldtown.org>

Media Links:

Online References:

Languages Significantly Represented:

Provide Worship or Classes in:

References

Bishop:

207.772.1953 ext 125; slane@episcopalmaine.org

**The Rt. Rev. Stephen T
Lane**

Diocesan Transition Minister

207.772.1953 ext 123; mambler@episcopalmaine.org

**The Rev. Canon Michael
Ambler**

Current Warden/Board Chair

Please contact Canon Ambler

Faith Dionne, Sr. Warden

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

Please contact Canon Ambler

Faith Dionne

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader