



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Jun 20, 2025)

St. John's Episcopal Church, Maine

225 French Street, Bangor, ME 04401, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 08/25/25.

sroberts@episcopalmaine.net

Weekly Average Sunday
Attendance (ASA)

93

Number of Weekend
Worship Services

1

Number of Weekday
Worship Services

11

Number of Other per Month
Worship Services

Current Annual
Compensation

Cash Stipend

Housing / Rectory Detail

Utilities

SECA reimbursement

Compensation Available for
New Position
\$85000

Housing Available for

Pension Plan

**We're in compliance with
CPF requirements.**

Healthcare Options
Full family

Dental
Yes

Housing Equity Allowance in
budget

Annual Equity Amount

Vacation Weeks
One month, including 5
Sundays (standard)

Vacation Weeks Details

Continuing Education Weeks
2 (standard)

Continuing Education Weeks
Details

Continuing Education
Funding in budget
\$501-\$1000/year

Sabbatical Provision
Yes

Travel/Auto Account
Yes

Other Professional Account
Yes

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

In 2023, diagnostic tests for a parishioner with severe pain were a cascade of bad news: a mass, growing larger, likely malignant, and possibly fatal. The parishioner prepared for surgery and came to church. As she stood in the aisle, Fr. Nutter presented a blanket specially made for her and asked who might like to lay hands on our sister as we prayed for her health. Our history is of mutual support. We prepare meals for those in adversity, visit them in confinement, and offer intercessions by name for those in need of them. We bring forward those who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries and sing to them. But never before had we offered a direct, sustained, tactile prayer for a person's health. This Sunday was different: first several, then many, then dozens crowded the aisle to touch the parishioner or to touch those ahead of them—another cascade, this one a chain of unbroken touch, of love, and of prayer. The parishioner was not alone in her tears. Many signed the blanket. The parishioner kept it with her through surgery, through the anxious wait for the pathology report, and in the joy of a final, benign diagnosis. She kept the blanket; we keep our memories of the event.

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

We maintain a worshipping community with a distinctive and attractive Episcopal character. We welcome everyone into our midst, emphasizing the expansiveness of Christ's love, knowing that many have no background in church life or have come to us after hurtful or empty experiences in other churches. We serve all our members, from the newborn to the aged, inside the church building and outside, and we find useful contributions for those who are able to make them. In all of this, we strengthen internal bonds and enhance cohesion. In the community, we are positioning ourselves as a resource. Our nave provides a beautifully resonant concert space for guest performers ranging from the internationally renowned Stile Antico to the Air Force Heritage Winds, local choirs, and a regular series of Candlelight Concerts by a string quartet. We also provide forums for challenging topics (war, racial reconciliation, interfaith relations) that are not addressed with equivalent love and charity in secular society. By maintaining rich internal connections, by making our boundaries porous, and by an active and visible public presence, we are equipping ourselves to serve and to be seen.

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

Deep faith, Flexibly Traditional, Powerful Speaker, Approachable/Compassionate

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

Worship might be described as medium-high: chanting, bells, and (very occasional) incense. We take Communion at the altar rail, almost everyone kneeling. Clergy vestments and ecclesiastical furnishings are elegant and ornate. Choristers and acolytes are always vested. Ushers sometimes wear white gloves and boutonnieres. Candles abound. While we rarely deviate from the BCP, we do customize the Prayers of the People. Our Rite I service was set aside during Covid but there are some in our community who would welcome its return. Worship is supported by an excellent pipe organ, a grand piano, and a harpsichord, played by two fine musicians. Our choir's repertoire ranges from traditional Anglican music—featured in our recently-revived Evensongs and Lessons and Carols—to contemporary anthems and African-American spirituals. We conduct lay-led Morning and Evening Prayer online every weekday (a concession to the pandemic that has allowed us to pray with parishioners who have moved away). Within our traditional and relatively formal worship, we project a friendly welcome to those who are new to the Episcopal Church.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

First, the church leadership supports congregation members who want to start a ministry by giving them time during Sunday service announcements to discuss the new ministry and seek participants. Similarly, the organizers of a new ministry can explain its purpose and engage others by preparing messages for the weekly bulletin. The rector will encourage other ministries to work with the new ministry when appropriate. For example, the new Creation Care ministry worked with the St. Andrew hospitality ministry, which sponsors coffee hours and receptions, to reduce use of disposable paper and plastic products. Second, existing ministries can highlight ongoing work and recruit new members during the Sunday announcements and in the weekly bulletin. Finally, the rector and greeters encourage new people who have attended Sunday or Wednesday evening services for several weeks to consider joining ministries where there would be a good fit. Where special training, such as Safe Church, is required, the Church office facilitates access for new ministry members. All this said, we have an ongoing challenge to staff some ministries as fully as we would like.

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

We have a rich liturgical life. In addition to beautiful Sunday services, we have daily Morning and Evening Prayer, occasional Evensongs, Advent Lessons and Carols, a moving series of Holy Week services, deeply consoling funerals for deceased parishioners, and eucharistic visitation for shut-ins. With our young and energetic new music director and revived choir, we may be able to resume the other special services we offered before the pandemic, particularly our annual All Souls Day Eucharist. Members of the parish enjoy both spiritual growth and fellowship in Education for Ministry, Great Wednesdays (evening eucharist, meal, and Bible study), a number of other study groups, a monthly Men's Breakfast, and a long-running Women's Book Group. We are good with food: our coffee hours are well-attended, as are the receptions following Evensongs, Lessons and Carols, and special events. We have a newly re-formed arts and crafts group, and a desire to gather for other recreational activities. As one example, an ill-prepared group hiked Mount Katahdin last summer with no casualties (thanks be to God). Our Creation Care group uses the spiritual gifts of gardening to keep our grounds beautiful.

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

Our ministry leaders encourage church members to participate in existing outreach projects or initiate new ones. St. John's congregants make lunch monthly for people at the Bangor Salvation Army. This lunch normally serves 60-100 people. For 25 years, St. John's has prepared free lunches in the undercroft on the second Saturday of every month. 25-30 guests attend not only for food, but also for fellowship. We collect food for the Bangor Homeless Shelter delivered at least twice a month. Vestry, with strong rector support, invited the Fresh Start director to speak to the congregation in 2023. As a result, St. John's holds regular donation drives for the Fresh Start organization that promotes recovery from substance abuse, collecting linens and clothing. In collaboration with a local social service agency, we prepare food boxes at Thanksgiving and Christmas for those in need. Joining with our two sister Episcopal parishes, we participate in the annual Gay Pride parade in downtown Bangor. As our congregation continues to grow, we will encourage more support for Bangor's many unmet needs.

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

Members of St. John's serve on diocesan committees and we maintain close relations with two nearby Episcopal parishes. The Sunday School children proudly gathered food for those in need as their contribution to the stewardship campaign. Our members founded a Martin Luther King celebration that, before Covid, attracted participants from half a dozen local churches. For Black History Month this year, we presented Gospel and Opera singer Roosevelt Credit, who coached and then lauded the "St. John's Ebenezer Church Choir." We have offered complex programs of poetry, history, music, personal narrative, and theological reflection with themes related to WW I, WW II, and the Harlem Renaissance. In March, we marked the liberation of Nazi concentration camps with "Prisms of Faith," a program on relating across faith boundaries with integrity and purpose. Episcopal priest Masud Ibn Syedullah presented the primary address, to which replies were offered by a local rabbi, our priest, and a very lively audience.

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

St. John's Sunday school shut down in 2020 due to the pandemic. In 2024 Mary Frances Beesorchard, a congregant experienced with young children, and our priest agreed to start a Children's Chapel ministry in response to requests from new congregants. Mary Frances and her adult aide teach 4-10 children in a newly created space in the undercroft during the weekly Sunday service. It is essentially a one-room schoolhouse. They use children's bibles, including one edited by Desmond Tutu, for Old and New Testament readings with the children; she occasionally also uses the Book of Common Prayer. Their goal is for the older children to join the regular Sunday service comfortably when they are ready. The Children's Chapel also invites an adult with severe autism and another adult with severe learning challenges to participate. The Children's Chapel also does occasional community projects, such as a monthly canned food drive that contributes to the St. John's ongoing food donations to the Bangor Homeless Shelter. Going forward we want to use Story Makers (storymakersnyc.com) in the Chapel. If there is a need, we will establish a nursery during the Sunday service upstairs.

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

Stewardship at St. John's is a living expression of Christ's love. In the past two years, we have experienced an outpouring of Christ's love that binds newer and longtime members together. That love has sparked the generous sharing of time and talents, and has renewed the life of our community. A small group once carried many ministries, but today's giving is abundant and joyful. Time is shared gladly—tending gardens, painting the undercroft, serving in our mission field—where the fellowship and love formed often overshadow the tasks themselves. Talents, too, are joyfully offered, with gifts of hospitality, music, education, lay reading, streaming, technology, and discernment strengthening our many ministries. While there is abundance, some ministries have yet to realize their potential. Giving of treasure is deeply personal, with heartfelt stories shared during our annual pledge campaign and supported by sermons. Our attendance has been growing, but our pledging has held steady - likely many are waiting for what's next in leadership. A May pledge drive will provide the means for a full time rector. In all ways, stewardship at St. John's reflects love in action and growth in faith.

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

In 2021, disagreements over church budgeting and reporting led to sharp complaints from a few congregants, sparking deep resentment among staff and others. An outside audit found no fraud but questioned whether restricted endowment earnings were properly used. In 2023, our interim rector called for an end to the wrangling. When it came time to elect new vestry members and a treasurer, he encouraged a vocal critic to step into the treasurer role and work directly with him and the vestry. At the same time, he reminded us all that love, respect, and trust are essential to the health of St. John's. In the months that followed, many who had been angry came together to repaint the undercroft, taking a first step toward rebuilding trust. We have a new treasurer this year, mentored by her predecessor, who had implemented needed reforms. By insisting on respect, love, and trust, we've moved past this conflict—and created space for every voice to be heard.

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?

For St. John's to flourish, we must make the church known, visible, and attractive. We have drawn people in with parish-sponsored events that are publicized in the community and by making the church available to outside groups. At the end of pandemic dormancy, we sponsored a picnic and church tours for our neighborhood. This literally made the parish visible—people had no idea what beauty lies behind our doors. At our recent program, "Prisms of Faith," we gathered members of two synagogues, two rabbis, a cellist and pianist, our parish, and the community at large for an intensive encounter with the Holocaust, led by The Rev. Masud Ibn Syedullah, TSSF. The afternoon fulfilled an unmet need in Bangor. More problematically, one of our outside performance groups had trouble with logistics and personnel. As a result, our first concert was oversold; later, an attempt was made to move our baptismal font and our organ suffered minor damage. We are now more aware of our responsibility for education and oversight when inviting guests. Learning as we go, we continue to offer holiness in many forms to our neighbors and the city.



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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Rev. William Winston	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	1988-01	1994-01

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Rev. Kevin Holsapple	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	1998-01	2005-01

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Rev. Marguerite A. H. Steadman	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2007-10	2020-10

Church School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
	2	5

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
		3	45

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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Worshipping Community Web site: <https://stjohnsbangor.org/>

Media Links:

> <https://youtu.be/RmoRMdg6KOI>

Online References:

> <https://www.youtube.com/@stjohnsbangor/streams>

> https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsEpiscopalBangor/?ref=embed_page

Languages Significantly Represented:

Provide Worship or Classes in:

References

Bishop:

The Right Rev. Thomas J.
Brown

Diocesan Transition Minister

Rev. Suzanne G. Roberts

(207)749-4166 sroberts@episcopalmaine.net

Current Warden/Board Chair

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader