

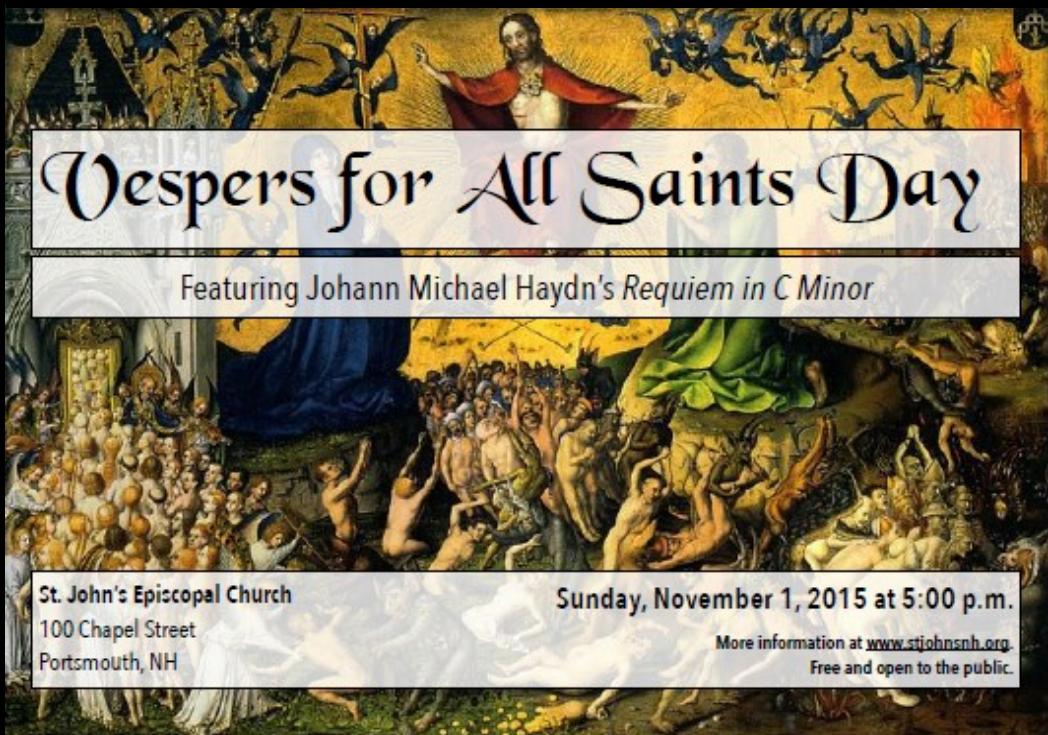


St. John's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

common life NEWS

No matter where you are on your journey of faith, you are always welcome at St. John's Church, and most importantly at God's table.

Rector Ruminations	Pg 2
Associate Rector's Reflections	Pg 3
Music Notes	Pg 4
Caring Connection	Pg 5
Calendar	Pgs 6 & 7
Pledge Drive	Pg 8
Parish Life	Pgs 9 & 11
Staff & Vestry	Pg 12



november 2015



Rob's Ruminations

"What about me?"

The Reverend Robert E. Stevens, Jr., Rector

I've just come from a funeral of a dear friend and parishioner, and my thoughts are filled with gratitude although tinged with sadness. This dear man understood something that I (and I think we) need to understand more fully. He understood that we are ALL God's children and that indeed there is enough love to go around. He giggled and poked fun at the church and at me when we got "too pious" and took ourselves too seriously. He saw that no one was outside of God's love...and he reminded me of that often!

As Rector of St. John's, one of the aspects that I see perhaps more clearly than others is that we suffer from a bit of a competitive spirit. It sounds odd and perhaps even absurd, but the different ministries, programs, and individuals at times vie for attention and space both figuratively and literally. This is not to say that we are in a knock down drag out battle, but it is a part of the limitations of being human to wonder if "I" will be left out or "I" will have enough. The phrase that captures what is at work at a soul level is something akin to "what about me?" If we are honest, we have all wondered this at some point in our lives. Instead of this being a divisive reality, how might we look at it differently and find the connective tissue?

This past Sunday I encountered a small child who was very frustrated because her environment was heavily slanted toward the adults. She complained to me and to her mother that there was "nothing here for me!" While this was not completely accurate as her mother pointed out by showing her a box of hula-hoops in the parish hall, it was "her" reality. Not 30 minutes later I experienced a man who is retired and recently entered his 70's expressing his "concern" that this church is only about the kids and

there is "nothing here for me." While his expression of concern was much more mature and sophisticated than that of the young girl...the sentiment was EXACTLY the same..."what about me?" Both of these children of God were worried that they were left out of the party.

The problem when we are in the posture of "what about me?", care for others becomes very difficult. This is when we start drawing lines and distinctions that are VERY unhelpful like, "This church only cares about kids?" or "This church only cares about the adults?" Or the even more damaging, "Why are we doing that...they aren't "our" kids?" This idea of "our kids" strikes at the heart of the Gospel for me. Guess what? We are ALL God's kids...ALL of us! There is NO they. Think about that for a moment. Yes, there are plenty of people that will never step foot into our church. They are still "our kids." Remember when Jesus was asked about who our "neighbors" are? If not, look it up (Luke 10:29 Good Samaritan).

This is the struggle of this grand experiment we are conducting called "Community." I invite you to wonder and ponder how you have felt left out in your life. Yes, it even happens at church where we are intentionally trying daily to include everyone. The Gospel message that there is enough for ALL God's kids gets drowned out by the cacophony of voices screaming "what about me?" Perhaps our work is to listen with compassion, then raise our collective voice to remind each other that we are ALL God's kids, and that there is enough love for each and everyone one of us. We need to say this often as it is my experience that it is very difficult to believe.

One of God's kids, your rector,



Associate Rector's Reflections

"Pilgrims on the journey"

The Reverend Anne C. Williamson, Associate Rector

Over the last few weeks, I have been driving up to Kennebunk with four other folks from the Seacoast every Wednesday morning to participate in a retreat in daily life. We are undertaking the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, a way prayer, meditation and contemplation of passages from Scripture designed to deepen one's relationship with God.

St. Ignatius lived in Spain in the 16th century and yet the insights of his Spiritual Exercises are as topical today as they ever were. We are being invited to consider the purpose of our life. Who is God to us? How do we move through the world? What is the focus of our attention? How do we steward the good gifts we are given?

The language of the Exercises is the language of the 16th Century and originally in Spanish. There are numerous translations of the Exercises and on our retreat we are using 'Draw Me Into Your Friendship' by David L. Fleming, SJ. The first part of the Exercises is the Principle and Foundation (P&F) which lay the foundation for the retreat. Following is the first part of the P&F, paraphrased by David Fleming :

The Goal of our life is to live with God forever.

God, who loves us, gave us life.

*Our own response of love allows God's life
to flow into us without limit.*

*All the things in this world are gifts from God,
Presented to us so that we can know God more easily
and make a return of love more readily.*

*As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God
Insofar as they help us to develop as loving persons.
But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives,
They displace God
And so hinder our growth toward our goal.*

As we move through this month of November toward Thanksgiving and the beginning of Advent, it is a good time to call to mind and reflect on all the good gifts God has given us, to practice an attitude of gratitude, and to ponder anew how we might best use these good gifts, not only for ourselves, or St. John's but for the world, for all the children of God.

Blessings to you,
Anne



Music Notes

Margaret Harper, Director of Music

"As Jesus came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!' Then Jesus asked him, 'Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.'

When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?' Then Jesus began to say to them, 'Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birthpangs.'

— Mark 13:1-8

My Soul, there is a country
Afar beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry
All skillful in the wars;
There, above noise and danger
Sweet Peace sits, crown'd with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious friend
And (O my Soul awake!)
Did in pure love descend,
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flow'r of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress, and thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure,
But One, who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.
— Henry Vaughan (1621-1695)

Both of these texts speak of the coming of the new heavens and new earth. The passage in Mark, spoken by Jesus, warns of the tumult that will precede the serene setting depicted in Henry Vaughan's poem.

Further, they both focus on the identity of Jesus and his role in bringing about the beatification of the world. "Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he! and they will lead many astray.'" Jesus' words here remind his disciples that only He is worthy to be followed, and only He can lift humanity out of its sin and desolation.

Vaughan's poem concludes with the lines "For none can thee secure, / But One, who never changes, / Thy God, thy life, thy cure." This "One" is also mentioned earlier in the poem - "And One born in a manger / Commands the beauteous files." As in Mark, Jesus is the central figure who lifts humanity out of its "foolish ranges."

In 1918, Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry set this poem as the first in his *6 Songs of Farewell*, his last publication. In it, he dwells on the phrase "But one, who never changes," repeating it 11 times. In the context of a work where the rest of the text is sung only once, this is significant. It is Christ's unchanging nature that affects change upon us - that cures us.

I find Parry's setting of Henry Vaughan's poem to be particularly compelling. Its poignant focus on Jesus as the source of the new heavens and new earth provides us with a lens through which to read Mark's gospel.

On Sunday, November 15, this Gospel passage and Parry's anthem will be heard in the 10:00 a.m. service at St. John's.



Caring Connection

Kid's Programs

Lizzie Bristow, Director of Youth Ministry

We have had a great start to the year with 17 kids attending the weekend at Merrowvista — it was cold, but beautiful and sunny. Thank you to all who participated and to all the drivers. Ann Schwartzwalder, Rick and Neely Barnhardt, and Rob served as chaperones — a big thank you to them for their time!

Here are some updates:

— **Cooking for Crossroads** - we are doing this the first Wednesday of every month. Conn White is leading us with menu and cooking instructions. We had a great time a few weeks ago making sloppy joe's with coleslaw and learning how to use the new industrial dishwasher in the kitchen at Thaxter! Please come and join us when you can — walk from school or bring your kids and join us — I start cooking at about 2:30 to have the food to Crossroads by 5:00.

— Lew Roberts is joining the Youth Group to sand and oil the beautiful **Comfort Crosses** he makes. We will be doing this over two Sundays: October 25th and November 1st. Many of these crosses are given to people on Hospice, and Anne Williamson is joining us to talk about some of her work as a hospice chaplain. Please have your kids join us if they can — Lew is one of St. John's gifts.

— **Halloween**....on Saturday, October 31 there will be a 5:00 service in the graveyard with a potluck following prior to the Portsmouth Halloween parade at 7:00 — please join us for this fun night!

— We are looking for High Schoolers who might be interested in volunteering with the **St. John's Choir School**. The Choir School meets Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, and has opportunities for volunteers at 2:30-3:45 on Mondays and Thursdays, and at 2:30-5:15 on Tuesdays. Volunteer opportunities include: helping with snack and overseeing group games, art projects and homework for grades 3-7. Please be in touch with either myself or Meg Harper at music@stjohnsnh.org if this interests you.

And finally, a BIG **thank you to Rick and Neely Barnhardt, Doug Greene, and Denise Croteau** for serving as Youth Group leaders. The program cannot happen without volunteers — if you would be interested in joining the team please be in touch. The time commitment is 1-2 times a month depending on your availability, the kids are great and it is another way to learn and have a discussion around faith and spirituality in the Episcopal Church.

Peace,
Lizzie

November

SUNDAY ADULT FORUM

11/8 9:00a, Philbrick Room

A discussion around the Gospel reading for the following Sunday

11/15 9:00a, Philbrick Room

A discussion around the Gospel reading for the following Sunday

11/22 9:00a, Philbrick Room

A discussion around the Gospel reading for the following Sunday

11/29 9:00a, Philbrick Room

A discussion around the Gospel reading for the following Sunday

SUNDAY	MONDAY
1 8a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir 9:00a Nursery 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II 11:00a Coffee Hour 11:30a Youth Choir rehearsal 5:00p Vespers	2 2:30p - Choir School 7p - FA
8 8a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir 9:00a Nursery 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II with Baptism 11:00a Coffee Hour 11:30a Youth Choir rehearsal	9 2:30p - Choir School 7p - FA
15 8a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir 9:00a Nursery 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II 11:00a Coffee Hour 11:30a Youth Choir rehearsal	16 2:30p - Choir School 7p - FA
22 8a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir 9:00a Nursery 9:00a Gospel Chat 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II 11:00a Coffee Hour 11:30a Youth Choir rehearsal 12:30p Book Group	23 2:30p - Choir School 7p - FA
29 8a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir 9:00a Nursery 9:00a Gospel Chat 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II 11:00a Coffee Hour 11:30a Youth Choir rehearsal 12:30p Book Group	30 2:30p - Choir School 7p - FA

2015

TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
3 10:30a - 2:30p ES Baking 10:30a - Bible WB 2:30p - Choir School 6pm - Youth AA	4 7a-Men's Bk Group 9a - Econ Shop 12:30p - Staff Meeting 1p - Cooking for CRH 3:30p - Cherub Choir 4:30p - Junior Choir 6p - St. John's Night	5 9:30am - Healing Service 10:30a - Centering Prayer 10:30a - Econ Shop 12pm - Common Table 2:30p - Choir School 6:30p - Women's Book	6 10:30a - Women's Book Group	7 7pm - AA
10 10:30a - 2:30p ES Baking 10:30a - Bible WB 2:30p - Choir School 6pm - Youth AA 4p - YOC Meeting	11 9a - Econ Shop 12:30p - Staff Meeting 1p - Knitting 3:30p - Cherub Choir 4:30p - Junior Choir 6p - St. John's Night	12 9:30am - Healing Service 10:30a - Centering Prayer 10:30a - Econ Shop 12pm - Common Table 2:30p - Choir School 6:30p - Women's Book 7pm - NA	13 10:30a - Women's Book Group 3:30p - Salvation Army cooking	14 7pm - AA
17 10:30a - 2:30p ES Baking 10:30a - Bible WB 2:30p - Choir School 6pm - Youth AA	18 7a- Men's Bk Grp 9a - Econ Shop 12:30p - Staff Meeting 3:30p - Cherub Choir 4:30p - Junior Choir 6p - St. John's Night	19 9:30am - Healing Service 10:30a - Centering Prayer 10:30a - Econ Shop 12pm - Common Table 2:30p - Choir School 6:30p - Women's Book 7pm - NA	20 10:30a - Women's Book Group	21 7:30am - Pancake breakfast 7pm - AA
24 10:30a - 2:30p ES Baking 10:30a - Bible WB 2:30p - Choir School 6pm - Youth AA 6:30p - Choir School Board meeting	25 9a - Econ Shop 12:30p - Staff Meeting 1p - Knitting 3:30p - Cherub Choir 4:30p - Junior Choir 6p - St. John's Night	26 OFFICE CLOSED THANKSGIVING NO COMMON TABLE	27 10:30a - Women's Book Group 7pm - AA	28

Parish Life

2016 Annual Pledge Drive

“Please accept my gift that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.”

Genesis 33:11

Each year, the church asks for your stewardship with a fall pledge drive. ***Once again, we sincerely hope you will pledge an amount before November 21th that you believe is comfortable for your household to give as part of our Stewardship drive. These pledges sustain the entire life of St. John's!***

- You don't have to give the full amount this fall...it is a pledge to be fulfilled throughout 2016, weekly, monthly or annually. You can also tell us you'll pledge to give "as you can."
- Participation is just as important as a gift amount. If you pledge for the first time, it is a wonderful event which we will celebrate! Please join the 285 members of the church who do pledge.
- We suggest between 2-5% of your income as you see fit within your family budget. But all pledges of any size are welcome.
- We hope you will consider increasing your pledge: our church is growing, and so are our needs.
- You can pledge by returning this card in the mail, or by pledging online at www.stjohnsnh.org.
- If you give in the plate, please consider formalizing your commitment in an annual pledge reflecting that amount so the church can build a sound budget with you as a Steward.

Last year, with the help of many volunteers, our annual pledge drive exceeded goal. Based on the church;s needs, we have set our goal at the same level of \$510,000. Please give generously to St. John's – for the worship that nourishes and refreshes us, for the spiritual exploration in men's and women's groups, for the 170+ children learning moral and spiritual values in our youth programs, for the choir school, Common Table, and other outreach programs...for your friends, for the blessing of giving back as a Steward of this community.

Connect with any Vestry Member with questions about Pledging.

CHOIR SCHOOL Male Volunteers Wanted

This is not discrimination!!

It would be great for the kids to have more strong male role models in their lives.
Please connect with Meg Harper at music@stjohnsnh.org or call the office.

PARISH LIFE



Legacy Giving

Ensuring the continuation of the St. John's mission through a planned, future gift.

Have you considered leaving a St. John's a legacy gift? Such planning now can create a powerful continuation of your work for the church for generations to come.

If you have already included St. John's in your will, thank you! We would love to recognize your gift now by including you in our Legacy Society, honoring those who have made a planned gift to St. John's. But we also want to respect privacy. Connect with Joanne or Rob to indicate you have a St. John's planned gift and whether you would like to remain anonymous or if we can add you to the St. John's Legacy Society list as a way to further inspire other people to remember St. John's in their Estate Planning and Will.

If you are interested in remembering St. John's in your will, you can discuss a gift with your lawyer, financial advisor or life insurance company.

SAVE THE DATE – THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5

Flannery O'Connor Book Discussion
with Dr. Eden Wales Freedman

6:30pm Refreshments

7:00pm Presentation and Book Discussion

Contact Anne Williamson anne@stjohnsnh.org or 436-8283

The three stories we will be discussing are: "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," "Good Country People," and "Parker's Back." If you don't have copies of the stories, they're available online:

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/goodman.html>

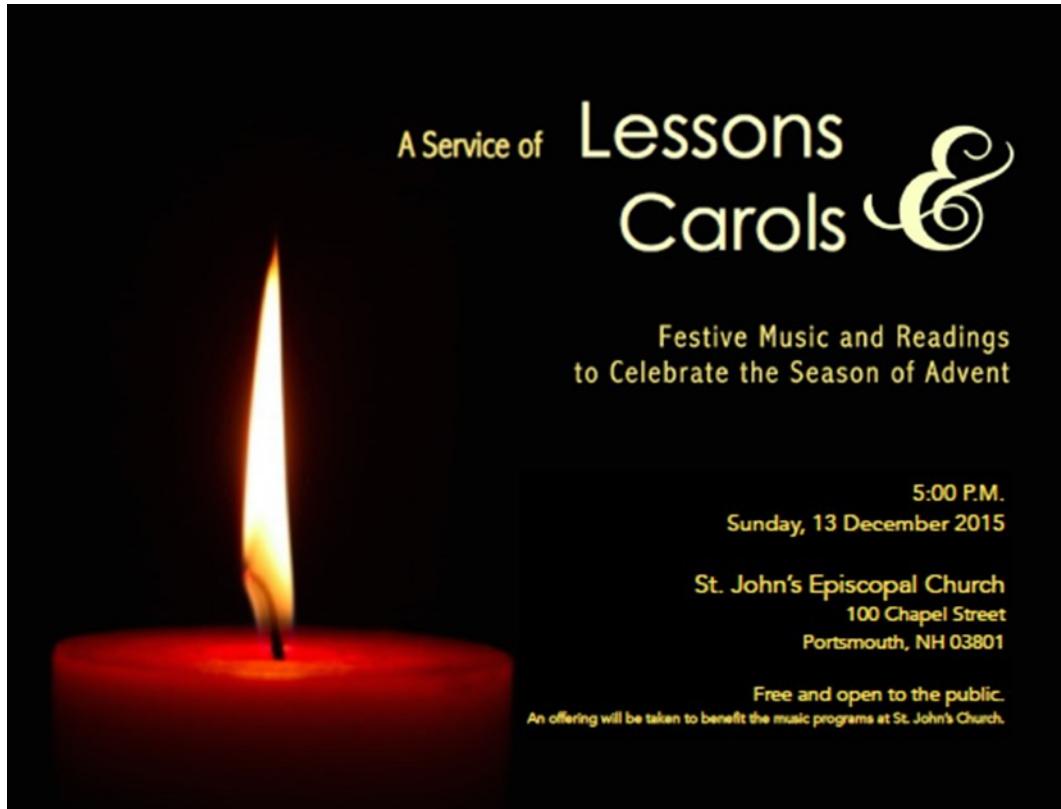
<http://faculty.weber.edu/Jyoung/English%206710/Good%20Country%20People.pdf>

<http://faculty.cbhs.org/jbrummer/Parker's%20Back.pdf>

PARISH LIFE

The Economy Shop needs donations of survival gear for folks without homes who will be sleeping outside. Items needed:
sleeping bags, gloves, hats, men's jeans and camping gear.

Thank you for your support.



Musical offerings!

Sunday, 1 November	5:00 p.m.	Vespers for All Saints, featuring Michael Haydn's Requiem in C Minor
Sunday, 13 December	5:00 p.m.	A Service of Lessons & Carols
Sunday, 20 December	10:00 a.m.	Christmas Pageant
February 5 and 7		Musical
May 22	4:00 p.m.	Kick-off of Concerts on the Hill 2016, featuring a world premiere for choir and organ.

PARISH LIFE

Gift collection for ChIPs ending soon!

The Episcopal Church of New Hampshire is again helping provide gifts for **Children of Incarcerated Parents (ChIPs)** and we still need your help.

This year's goal is to distribute as many as 700 gifts and an equal number of new books to the children – aged from newborns to age 18. Gifts and books must be new, unwrapped, and should have a retail value of \$20. Cash donations are also welcome with a check payable to St. John's, memoed "Chips". **We have less than two weeks left as gifts or donations need to be at St. John's by Friday, November 6**, for delivery to Diocesan Convention. Please place your gifts at the base of the historic font in the rear corner of the church.

For more information see p. 12 in the October newsletter or contact Charlie Nichols at ack4me@comcast.net or 603.531.0715. Thank you !!



Needed: Bakers for Welcoming Bread

Our custom on Sunday is to welcome guests to St. John's with a personal sized loaf of freshly baked bread, but we need bakers to make this happen. Can you help by baking bread once a month?



Help purchase Bibles for Seafarers Ditty Bags 11 in hand ... 89 remain

Here on the NH Seacoast, we are reminded of the world that comes to us by sea. Since 1856, *The Mission to Seafarers* has cared for seafarers in desperate need around the world. *The Mission to Seafarers* cares for all seafarers, regardless of rank, gender, nationality or faith.

Each Episcopal community on the Seacoast is collecting items for a joint outreach project, creating 100 Ditty Bags. A Ditty Bag is a small care package of items that may be needed and useful during a voyage at sea. St. John's contribution to this initiative is a personal sized Bible. We will purchase 100 Bibles at a cost of \$5 each and ask for your gift to purchase one or more Bibles by November 15.

Please hand your donation to Charlie Nichols or Anne Williamson and speak to Charlie or Anne for more information. Thank you!



100 Chapel Street | Portsmouth NH 03801 | 603-436-8283
Church Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9:00 am until 3:00 pm
Website: www.stjohnsnh.org

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 23
PORTSMOUTH, NH

Address Service Requested

STAFF

The Rev. Robert E. Stevens, Jr. <i>Rector</i> , ext. 111 rector@stjohnsnh.org	Lory Pratt <i>Bookkeeper</i> ext. 153 finance@stjohnsnh.org
The Rev. Anne C. Williamson <i>Associate Rector</i> , ext 125 anne@stjohnsnh.org	Joanne Ferguson <i>Office Administrator</i> administrator@stjohnsnh.org
Margaret Harper <i>Director of Music</i> , ext 114 music@stjohnsnh.org	Andy Ritzo <i>Sexton</i> sexton@stjohnsnh.org
Ashley Wade <i>Director of Children's Music and Ministries</i> , ext 116 youthmusic@stjohnsnh.org	Priest Associates: The Rev. G. Richard Siener The Rev. Gail Avery
Lizzie Bristow <i>Director of Youth Ministries</i> lizzie@stjohnsnh.org	

St. John's Vestry Members

Anna Kay Vorsteg, *Sr. Warden*
Kathryn Saunders, *Co-Treasurer*
Kelly Boston, *Co-Treasurer*
Gerry Simpkins, *Jr. Warden*
Marian Ellis, *Clerk*

Pat Baker
Lacey Bangs
Lee Baxter
Randy Carey
Marian Ellis
Jean Lincoln
Suzi Raeside
Ann Schwartzwalder
Chris Sieve
John Tabor

Contact the Vestry at
vestry@stjohnsnh.org