



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.

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Mark Your Calendar

Vespers for All Saints
featuring **Gabriel Fauré's Requiem**

Sunday, November 6 at 5:00 p.m.

*Offering will be taken for St. John's music programs.
More information can be found at www.stjohnsnh.org*

ADVENT WREATH MAKING
Wednesday, November 30th
5:30 – 7:00 PM



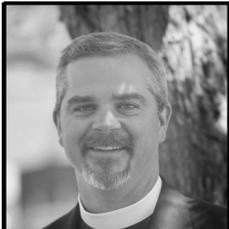
**Come celebrate the light for a joyous
Advent activity & potluck.**



*A Service of
Lessons and Carols*

Sunday, December 11th at 5pm

november 2016



Rob's Ruminations

Electiontide

The Reverend Robert E. Stevens, Jr., Rector

While the season of Pentecost is almost done and Advent is just around the corner according to the Church calendar, in our culture we are neck deep in "electiontide." There is an old cliché that states that, "A preacher should eschew the topics of politics and money." While that may be safe and comfortable, it also risks rendering said preacher irrelevant. Archbishop Desmond Tutu is credited with the words, "Those who say I mustn't preach on money or politics are not reading the same Bible as I am...it is the vast majority of what Jesus talked about!" I could not agree more.

If you made it this far into the article I do wish you to know that I will not presume to tell you whom to vote for. That is "partisan" politics and I agree it has no place in the pulpit. However, as we wrestle with the tension of the two seasons running concurrently (the Church and the culture) I think it offers us all an opportunity to reflect upon what is truly important to us. Yes, we will each decide for ourselves who is "our" candidate and will cast our vote. It is our right and privilege in this democracy. I contend that there may be even more at stake.

In our baptismal covenant (on page 304 in the Book of Common Prayer) we make some promises that, with the help of God, we intend to keep. The two that keep coming up in my prayers and reflections are the last two on page 305. They read,

"Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being?"

The response from us for both of these questions is, "I will with God's help."

In this our community of faith where we celebrate the manifestation of God in Christ for the world... The **entire** world, it is poignant to note what the other season of electiontide espouses. One of the roots of politics is the Greek πολιτικός (*politikos*), one meaning of which is, "civil". The term "civil" as a descriptor of politics would be laughable if so much were not at stake. Electiontide is a win at all costs affair it seems, with little regard for the dignity of others. I suggest that these competing "worlds" offer those who follow a God who loves ALL (and asks us to do the same) an incredible opportunity to put our faith in practice.

I believe that the love of God for us and in us is deeper than agreement or disagreement on issues. If we can each pause long enough to remember that our enemies (political and otherwise) are also children of God we have the opportunity to literally transform the world around us and perhaps, more importantly, the world within us. The vision of God as we pray each Sunday is to not that we wait passively for the Kingdom of God to come in the "next life." Instead we pray, "thy kingdom **come**, thy will be done, **on earth** as it is in heaven." We are invited day by day to be participants with God in ushering in God's kingdom on earth.

I ask you to pray daily for our country. I ask you to pray also for the entire world. I pray that this community of St. John's reminds you that you are loved by God beyond your wildest dreams and may the season of electiontide encourage you to wield that love without fear. It is true that November 8th is Election Day. The true work as Christians will begin on November 9th.

Your Rector,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rob".



Associate Rector's Reflections

A Season of Prayer for an Election

The Reverend Anne C. Williamson, Associate Rector

Forward Movement, a ministry of the Episcopal Church, has offered A Season of Prayer for an Election – copies of the weekly prayers are in church, this week's prayers are on the prayer board in Thaxter Hall. All can be found on the Forward Movement website: www.forwardmovement.org Whatever our political persuasion, we have the opportunity to lift to God in prayer the work of our government - federal, state and local; in all three branches of government - executive, legislative and judicial. Here is a litany for sound government offered by Forward Movement:

O Lord our Governor, bless the leaders of our land, that we may be a people at peace among ourselves and a blessing to other nations of the earth.

Lord, keep this nation under your care.

To the President and members of the Cabinet, to Governors of States, Mayors of Cities, and to all in administrative authority, grant wisdom and grace in the exercise of their duties.

Give grace to your servants, O Lord.

To Senators and Representatives, and those who make our laws in States, Cities, and Towns, give courage, wisdom, and foresight to provide for the needs of all our people, and to fulfill our obligations in the community of nations.

Give grace to your servants, O Lord.

To the Judges and officers of our Courts give understanding and integrity, that human rights may be safeguarded and justice served.

Give grace to your servants, O Lord.

And finally, teach our people to rely on your strength and to accept their responsibilities to their fellow citizens, that they may elect trustworthy leaders and make wise decisions for the well-being of our society; that we may serve you faithfully in our generation and honor your holy Name.

For yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Amen.

Whatever the outcome of the election, there will be good, sweet work for the people of God to do as ministers of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18), to embody reconciliation and to speak peace and healing into the fractures in our country and our world.

Join us on Wednesday, November 9 in church at 6pm to pray for peace, healing and reconciliation.
Blessings, Anne



Developing Disciples

Kid's Church ~ Updates for Parents

Ashley Wade, Director of Children's Music and Ministries

Kids' Church Leadership

Each Kids' Church "class" is led by volunteer adults who have completed Safe Church training and filed a background check. These are parents and community members who believe children should be known in a church home that cares for them unconditionally. A thriving church community goes hand-in-hand with a thriving children's program.

Leadership Opportunity

The goal for leaders is to give time and love to kids while also modeling a balanced life. This means taking breaks for family and for self-care. We operate on a flexible schedule that allows volunteers to commit and also take space. We do not expect leaders to be Biblical scholars or experienced teachers. We do expect leaders to encourage children to wonder about God while nurturing the Light within them. Current leaders are enlightened and inspired by their time with the children. Some leaders are surprised to report they have been volunteering for 17 years; others describe the shock and awe of their friends and family when they share they have taken the plunge to lead Sunday school! We all bring different gifts and strengths to the table, which weave a beautiful web to hold and sustain our children's spiritual development and growth.

Our Current Need

Tots & PreK: We need two volunteers to round out this team. Linda & Susan are heading up this age, and they are happy to chat about what it's like to volunteer!

Kindergarten & 1st Grade: We need two volunteers to complete this dream team! Elaine and Pat have been working with these kiddos, and they look forward to welcoming some new members to their team.

2nd and 3rd Grade: We need one volunteer to bring this group to peak performance. Lori, Stacey and Michelle are the key players in this line up.

4th and 5th Grade: Brad, Tom, Kari, and Joe are leading this group. We don't have additional need for this age group at the moment, but that brings us to....

Substitute Leaders: There's always a need for extra bodies when we do special projects or have unexpected absences. If this is an interesting option to you, please let us know!

Children's Offering

We are coordinating our Children's Offering to support 68-Hours of Hunger. October's requested item of the month is jelly (16-20 oz. plastic, squeeze bottles). Children have the opportunity to present their offering each week after our Children's Call to Worship at 9:30AM.

Weekly Feast

Each class celebrates their coming together with a "feast." Parents are encouraged to bring something to share for feast. Cheese & crackers, yogurt, and fruit are wonderful options. We provide water to drink. The word 'feast' is often connected to 'abundance.' While we are not eating a huge meal each week (a simple snack is all we plan), we hope to foster *abundance* in our togetherness... abundance of spirit, love, light, and community.

Children's Call to Worship 9:30AM in Thaxter Hall

Children, please join us by the stage for...

Musical Call to Worship with Victor Tracy

Children's Offering

Lord's Prayer

~ Leaders greet children & parents upstairs in Thaxter Hall at 9:30 on Sunday morning.

~ Parents please sign your children in and get updates from our leadership team.

~ Around 9:45 leaders escort children downstairs to their respective classrooms for the Feast and the planned lesson and/or activity.

~ Children join their families in church at the time of the Peace.

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP (Rite 13, grades 6-8) meet in Philbrick Room at 9:30, beneath Thaxter Hall.

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP (J2A, grades 9-12) meet in Thaxter at 9:30 before heading out to Café Vonsolln.

We respectfully ask that no children or parents enter classrooms early or alone without the leaders present. Thank you for your cooperation.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

ADVENT WREATH MAKING EVENT

Wednesday, November 30th

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Come celebrate the light for a joyous Advent activity & potluck.

November

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	
		1 10:30a - 2:30p ES Baking 2:30p - Choir School 5p - YOC Meeting 6pm - Youth AA 7pm - Vestry	
6 8a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir 8:30a Nursery 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II with Baptism 11:00a Coffee Hour 5:00pm Vespers for All Saints	7 7p - FA	8 7:30a - Morning Prayer 10:30a - 2:30p ES Baking 12:15p - Noonday Prayer 2:30p - Choir School 5:30p - Evening Prayer 6pm - Youth AA 8:30p - Compline	
13 8a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir 8:30a Nursery 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II 11:00a Coffee Hour	14 7p - FA	15 10:30a - 2:30p ES Baking 10:30a - Bible WB 2:30p - Choir School 6pm - Youth AA	
20 8a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir 8:30a Nursery 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II 11:00a Coffee Hour 5:30p Celtic Evening Service	21 7p - FA	22 10:30a - 2:30p ES Baking 10:30a - Bible WB 2:30p - Choir School 6pm - Youth AA 6:30p - Choir School Board	
27 8a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir 8:30a Nursery 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II 11:00a Coffee Hour	28 7p - FA	29 10:30a - 2:30p ES Baking 2:30p - Choir School 6pm - Youth AA	

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
	2 7a- Men's Bk Grp 9a - Econ Shop 10:30a - BibleWorkBench 12:00p - Staff Meeting 2p - Cooking for CRH 3:30p - Cherub Choir 4:30p - Junior Choir 6p - Choir Snacks 7p - St. John's Night	3 9:30am - Healing Service 10:30a - Econ Shop 12pm - Common Table 2:30p - Choir School	4 10:30a - Women's Book Group	5 7pm - AA
	9 9a - Econ Shop 10:30a - BibleWorkBench 12:00p - Staff Meeting 1p - Knitting 3:30p - Cherub Choir 4:30p - Junior Choir 6p - Service for Reconciliation 7p - St. John's Night 7p - Choir Rehearsal	10 9:30am - Healing Service 10:30a - Centering Prayer 10:30a - Econ Shop 12pm - Common Table 2:30p - Choir School 6:30p - Women's Book Gr 7pm - NA	11 10:30a - Women's Book Group 3:30p - Salvation Army cooking	12 7pm - AA
	16 7a- Men's Bk Grp 9a - Econ Shop 10:30a - BibleWorkBench 12:00p - Staff Meeting 3:30p - Cherub Choir 4:30p - Junior Choir 7p - St. John's Night	17 9:30am - Healing Service 10:30a - Centering Prayer 10:30a - Econ Shop 12pm - Common Table 2:30p - Choir School 7pm - NA	18 10:30a - Women's Book Group	19 7pm - AA
	23 9a - Econ Shop 10:30a - BibleWorkBench 12:00p - Staff Meeting 1p - Knitting 3:30p - Cherub Choir 4:30p - Junior Choir 7p - St. John's Night	24 9:30am - Healing Service 10:30a - Centering Prayer 10:30a - Econ Shop 12pm - Common Table 2:30p - Choir School 6:30p - Women's Book Gr 7pm - NA	25 10:30a - Women's Book Group	26 7pm - AA
	30 9a - Econ Shop 10:30a - BibleWorkBench 12:00p - Staff Meeting 3:30p - Cherub Choir 4:30p - Junior Choir 5:30P - Wreath Making Event 7p - St. John's Night			

2017 ANNUAL PLEDGE DRIVE

Worship

Learn

Sing

Care

Give

St. John's is flourishing!

Flourish: to grow or develop in a healthy or vigorous way, especially as the result of a particularly favorable environment.

That is St. John's!

*The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree.
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
Those who are planted in the house of the LORD
shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

Psalm 92:12-13

Annual Pledge Drive for 2017

2017 Annual Pledge Drive

As of 10/24/16,
101 parishioners have donated
for a total of \$229,573.00.

Thank you!!

This year's goal is \$510,000.00.

Why I Pledge...

In the midst of our 2017 Stewardship efforts I want to offer a long overdue thank you to those who make unrestricted pledges. I can't address each of you by name - there are no plaques in your honor or special rooms named for you. All I know about you is that you are the ones that keep things going and it is because of you - "good stuff" happens. This is how you made a difference in my life.

Early one dark morning I took my husband, David, to Portsmouth Hospital for heart surgery. I was all alone, having no family near and not wanting to impose on friends. I was a fairly new member of St. John's and it did not occur to me to mention this to anyone at church. There at the entrance waiting for us was Rob Stevens. I was overwhelmed and will never forget that gift you made possible. Rob stayed with me all that day. Rob will be able to do this for others because of unrestricted pledges which pay his salary. I made a promise that I will make this kind of pledge to St. John's every year. Those are the ones that keep the lights on. Of course, this does not restrict me from doing something special on the side!

Jean Lincoln, Vestry

LEGACY GIVING



Legacy Giving

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

Parishioners who have remembered St. John's in their Will.

George and Karen Pierce
 Gerry Simpkins and Kathi Hardy
 Gillian Aguilar
 Christina Lusky
 Duncan and Suzi Raeside

Kathryn Mulhearn
 Brad Lown and Chris Sieve
 John and Joan Rice
 4 Anonymous

Remembering St. John's in your will ensures that the mission you have so faithfully supported will continue into the future.

Listed at the bottom of 2017 Pledge Card is a check box indicating "I have remembered St. John's in my will." Currently four parishioners, not listed above, have checked this box.

These parishioners have played a significant role in making our church a wonderful community and leaving this legacy will help carry on this tradition for generations to come. Thank you!

If you have remembered St. John's in your will and would like to be recognized in our Legacy Society, please let us know.

PARISH LIFE



Eat, Pray, Learn

In the Episcopal Church we believe in an idea described as "the priesthood of all believers". It is a belief that all people who believe in Jesus Christ are called to minister, not only to each other, but to all the people we meet and live with. And by ministering we don't mean preaching but caring for and nurturing others, showing God's love not just through words, but also through actions. The Episcopal Church also believes in education. About thirty years ago, people at the Episcopal Seminary at the University of the South in Sewanee Tennessee decided to develop a curriculum which would provide a basic theological education to lay Christians, thus *Education for Ministry* was born. It is a distance learning course in which the members of a group meet once a week. While it is a four-year program, you only need to commit to one year at a time. The goals of EfM sessions are to:

1. Learn different methods of Theological Reflection so we can become familiar with how our faith has shaped our world, and how our world has shaped our faith;
2. Discuss weekly readings which provide a basic education in the history of Christianity and contemporary theological issues. The first year is devoted to reading and understanding the Old Testament. Second, the New Testament, Third: the history of the Christian Church, fourth, contemporary theological issues.
3. Participate in Common Lessons and Readings which helps us to when taking our faith journeys with others

The discussions are led by mentors who act more as moderators who keep the discussions on topic rather than as teachers. Each group makes decisions about how their sessions will run (within a broad set of guidelines). We also have a member-led worship at each meeting. Our next group will start in early January, 2017 on Monday nights. The cost of the program is \$350 per year (sometimes scholarships are available).

Maybe you can't join us this year, or you would like more information, or want to see more of the curriculum, or would like to attend a public session later, or are just plain curious - please feel free to e-mail Kathi Hardy via SeacoastEfM@hotmail.com or call her at (207) 439-7097.

PARISH NEWS

If it's Wednesday ... It's time for Adult Formation!

Join us for one (or more!) of these offerings happening in the Philbrick Room:

7:00 – 8:30 am (every 2-3 weeks) Men's Group

A group of men come together to share stories, support one another, and engage a spiritually-themed book. Contact Peter Tarlton: aptarlton@comcast.net

Current offerings: *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson
 The Breath of the Soul: Reflections on Prayer by Joan Chittister

10:30 – 12 noon (weekly) Bible WorkBench

This group believes in stories as a way of making sense of our own experience and learning about the experiences of others. We look at a Bible story for the coming Sunday and seek to connect with the world around us and the world within us. We conclude with Noonday Prayer.

7:00 – 8:30 pm (weekly) St John's Night: Poetry and Prayer

Wednesday evenings take a different shape from previous years. This year, in keeping with our *Year of Prayer*, our offering is more contemplative and does not include dinner. We'll look at Sunday's gospel and selections of spiritual poetry. Participants will offer to the group what speaks to them from each selection, and quietly support one another. We conclude with Night Prayer.

In a current session we reflected on Luke 18:14:

"I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

and Mary Oliver's *The Gardener*:

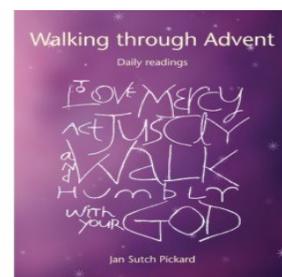
Have I lived enough?
Have I loved enough?
Have I considered Right Action enough, have I come to any conclusion?
Have I experienced happiness with sufficient gratitude?
Have I endured loneliness with grace?

I say this, or perhaps I'm just thinking it.
Actually I probably think too much.
Then I step out into the garden,
where the gardener, who is said to be a simple man,
is tending his children, the roses.

Beginning in Advent on Wednesday evenings:

Walking through Advent by Jan Sutch Pickard

'Walk humbly with God ...' Advent is a time of wonder and waiting – but that's not a passive thing. We need to walk into Advent with our eyes open. Join us on a cheerful, thoughtful, justice-seeking journey towards Bethlehem, a journey day by day through Advent. Jan Sutch Pickard is a former Warden of Iona Abbey.



For more information about any of our formation offerings contact Charlie Nichols (ack4me@comcast.net) or Anne Williamson.

PARISH LIFE



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Announcing ChIPS for 2016

Christmas comes to **Children of Incarcerated Parents** every year with *your* help: you and sponsors like you who donate gifts and funds to make it happen! Both the families and the incarcerated parents themselves are deeply grateful for the opportunity that the ChIPs program affords them. The prisons count the number of gifts needed for each age and gender group. Volunteers collect your gift donations, and use your monetary donations to supplement the gifts provided. Once the presents are sorted, they're brought to the prisons, and the inmates get the chance to choose one gift for each child on their list.

Children of prison inmates can live lonely lives. It's easy to believe that a parent you never see just doesn't care. Inmates also find themselves feeling isolated and abandoned, unable to provide for or to be a part of their families. Being able to offer their children a gift at the Christmas visit gives the inmates an opportunity for connection, for a sliver of normalcy in their family relations.

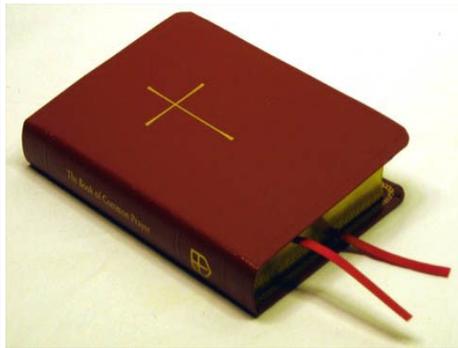
Gift Guidelines

- We group gifts according the following ages: birth to 1; ages 2-4; 5-7; 8-11; and 12-15.
- Gifts should not exceed \$20 (**original retail value**).
- One \$20 gift is preferable to four \$5 gifts as it is difficult to group items together.
- If you don't want to purchase a \$20 gift, any monetary donation will be gladly accepted. (*check to St John's Church memoed ChIPS*)
- **Books** are a separate category and our goal is to provide each child with a gift **and** a book. Both hardcover and paperback books are appropriate.
- If you purchase a gift that requires batteries, **please** purchase those and attach them.
- Consider buying a gift appropriate for both boys and girls such as balls or board games.
- Don't forget the older children. There is always a shortage of gifts for older children.
- **No used items, homemade items, or gift cards can be accepted.**
- **The following items are NOT acceptable:** jewelry, balloons, crayons, play dough, glue, bubbles, make up, long sticks, knitting needles, crochet hooks, or paint brushes, glass items, clothing, sharp tools or toy weapons of any kind.

Gifts can be left in the rear of the church at the historic font.

***For more information, please contact Charlie Nichols at
ack4me@comcast.net or 603.531.0715 Thank you!***

PARISH LIFE



Making our way through Election Day in Prayer

*Loving God, creator of this world who is the source of our wisdom and understanding, watch over this nation during this time of election. Help us to see how our faith informs our principles and actions. God our Creator, **Guide us in Truth and Love.***

Everyone agrees this election season is one like no other, and regardless of the outcome, a time for reconciliation will be required. To help in this process, St. John's will gather in prayer using the Daily Office from the Book of Common Prayer throughout the day on November 8, Election Day. Join us for as much as you can!

Election Day Schedule

7:30 am	Morning Prayer
12:15 pm	Noonday Prayer
5:30 pm	Evening Prayer
8:30 pm	Compline



*We pray for this nation that is deeply divided. May we come together for the common good and do as you have called us to do – to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you through creation. God our Creator, **Guide us in Truth and Love.***

PRAYER CHAIN

To add a name to the daily Prayer Chain list,
contact susanmennel@gmail.com or call 603-430-2830.



PARISH NEWS

Calling all Christmas Cookie Bakers

I was thinking it would be a lot of fun to have a **Christmas Cookie Sale** as a fundraiser for the church.

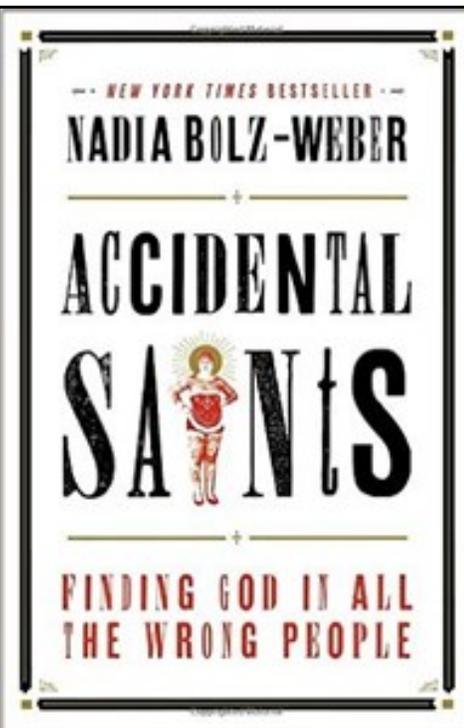
A tasty way to kick off the holiday season.

We need many cookies to make this work.

This is where you come in. I know the Christmas season puts many demands on everyone. I certainly do not want to add to this. I am sending a request for donations of 2 dozen **Christmas Cookies**. Put on your bakers hat, call your love ones, and make some cookies. Have fun and do good. I need to get an idea of how many cookies we will get to see if this is going to work. Therefore, if you think you can make cookies Go to my email and just write, yes cookies. Or call me. The exact date of the **Christmas Cookie Sale** has not yet been determined. It will be on a weekend day in December. The holidays are coming fast and furious. Remember to make sure you take the time to enjoy the magic of it all.

Mona Ramsdell, Event Coordinator St John's Church
rental@stjohnsnh.org, 207-451-0354

WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP



The Thursday night women's book group will be reading Nadia Bolz-Weber's *ACCIDENTAL SAINTS* for their final book of the fall. "This former standup comic turned pastor stubbornly, sometimes hilariously, resists the God she feels called to serve. But God keeps showing up in the least likely of people—a church-loving agnostic, a drag queen, a felonious Bishop and a gun-toting member of the NRA."

The group will start an advent book after the first Sunday in advent. We welcome all people who enjoy reading books which enrich their spiritual life. Please join us on Thursday Nov. 10th for *ACCIDENTAL SAINTS* or every other Thursday after for our advent book. For more information, call Conni White at 603-498-7605.



A Service of **Lessons
& Carols**

Festive Music and Readings
to Celebrate the Season of Advent

5:00 P.M.
Sunday, 11 December 2016

St. John's Episcopal Church
100 Chapel Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Free and open to the public.
An offering will be taken to benefit the music programs at St. John's Church.



Christmas Eve Services in 2016

4:00 pm

6:00 pm

8:00 pm Musical Prelude

8:30 pm

See next newsletter for details.



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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

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The Rev. Gail Avery

St. John's Vestry Members

John Tabor, *Sr. Warden*
Kelly Boston, *Treasurer*
Gerry Simpkins, *Jr. Warden*
Marian Ellis, *Clerk*

Lacey Bangs
Lee Baxter
Marian Ellis
Doug Greene
Carol Gruen
Jean Lincoln
Meg Moran
Suzi Raeside
Chris Sieve

Contact the Vestry at
vestry@stjohnsnh.org