



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.

Sunday Services:

8:00am	Rite I
8:30am	Parish Choir
9:30am	Nursery
9:30am	Kids Church
	Youth Groups
10:00am	Rite II
11:00am	Coffee Hour

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Lent at St John's

Sundays in Lent
8am Holy Eucharist Rite I
10am Holy Eucharist Rite II
5pm The Way of Love
7pm Compline

Tuesdays in Lent
9am Morning Prayer with Intercessory Prayer



Join us as we explore these seven practices to help us walk the Way of Love and strive to follow Jesus Christ.

Schedule:

5:00 – Presentation and Conversation in Thaxter Hall
6:15 – Dinner
7:00 – Compline in Sanctuary (sung by the men's compline choir)

Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 14:
8am Rite I & 10am Rite II service
5pm Way of Love – Rest
7pm Compline

Mon/Wed/Fri, April 15-17:
Noon & 6pm Eucharist

Maundy Thursday, April 18:
9:30am Healing Service & 6pm Eucharist

Good Friday, April 19:
Noon (Ecumenical) & 6pm Eucharist

Saturday, April 20:
10am Holy Saturday Liturgy
8pm Great Vigil (with Baptisms)

Easter Sunday, April 21:
7:45am Rite I Holy Eucharist
9:15am Rite II Holy Eucharist with Choirs
10:15am Easter Egg Hunt
11:00am Rite II Holy Eucharist with Choirs

March 10 - Turn - Rev. Robert E. Stevens Jr.

March 17 - Pray - Lorae Boisvert, Spiritual Director, and prayer guide for the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises

March 24 - Worship - Rt. Rev. A. Robert Hirschfield, Bishop of New Hampshire

March 31 - Learn - Dr. Laura Carlson Hasler, Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Bates College

April 7 - Bless & Go - Rev. Jason Wells, Executive Director, New Hampshire Council of Churches

April 14 - Rest - Revs. Anne Williamson and Nathan Bourne, St. John's Episcopal Church

April 2019



Rob's Ruminations

Fast and Feast

The Reverend Robert E. Stevens, Jr., Rector

One of the realities that I have noticed about our current society is that life is supposed to be “one big feast.” If you’re not “fat and happy” something is wrong with you. Well...guess what? You are not going to be happy all the time and thinking that the feast can last forever is delusional. This is one reason why the church calendar is so instructive and helpful to me. There are natural cycles to our life. There are times for feasting AND times for fasting. There are times of great joy and times of sorrow. This is the true reality of life.

We are in the midst of Lent. It is our most penitential season. It is a season that invites us to re-examine our lives and relationships and to slow down and truly assess ourselves. Someone asked me why I choose to fast during Lent. She asked me what was the purpose. I responded that when I fast from food or something else for a time it creates space in me. It creates hunger. And in that space and hunger I get to contemplate what it is I am truly hungry for. My deepest hunger is not for a BigMac, but I am reminded again and again that my deepest hunger is for Love, Connection and Belonging. Fasting is a gift that reminds me what I am truly craving and gently nudges me back on track.

This time of going without or at least curbing our excesses is truly counter-cultural. We live in a time when more is not enough and going hungry is looked upon as weak. Consider your opinion of hunger. Is it only negative? But, think about it. What’s wrong with being hungry? Not starving literally, but hungry. Yes, it might cause some discomfort and unsettledness, but no real harm will come from that. I also suggest that some real growth and goodness may come from it. It is when we are hungry whether physically, intellectually, or spiritually that we are most aware. The hunger pangs heighten our awareness and consciousness and are a gift that can lead us toward our true desires.

I also wish to remind you (and me) that the season of Lent is 46 days (including Sundays) and the season of Easter is 50 days. Easter is the feast that follows the fast. Now, that does not mean 50 days of gluttony, but it is a season of celebration and gratitude for the Resurrection of Jesus and the promise of new life for us all. How do you celebrate and tend joy during the feast? If you are extroverted maybe you host gatherings and share meals with those you love and maybe even attempt some new connections. If you are more introverted maybe it is being intentional about your solitude and making time for coffee with dear friends. The practices that support both our fasts and our feasts are crucial for a balanced life that supports us when life is difficult and keeps us grounded when life is full of joy.

I invite you to share with me your practices both of your fasting and your feasting. I am still learning much about what it means to move through this world with grace and seeking after a life that satisfies my true hungers. I am grateful that I have the privilege of seeking this way of life in our community of faith we call St. John’s. May God bless and encourage us all as we seek to live our best lives in a posture of Love, Connection and Belonging.

Faithfully, your Rector,

A handwritten signature in cursive ink that reads "Rob".



Associate Rector's Reflections

Let us pray...

The Reverend Anne C. Williamson, Associate Rector

On Sunday evening, the second part of our Lenten Series on the practices of The Way of Love was offered by former parishioner Lorae Boivert. **Pray** was this week's practice and Lorae spoke of her own prayer practices as well as offering practices she has encountered as an experience spiritual director and prayer guide for the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises (more on the Exercises in the near future!). Lorae began our time together with the Penitent's Blessing:

*May the God who knows you better than you know yourself
Grant you the gift of courage to face the known and unknown.*

*May the God who loves you better than you love yourself
Grant you the gift of understanding and acceptance.*

*May the God who forgives you more fully than you can forgive yourself,
more freely than you think you deserve
Grant you the gift of release from guilt.*

*So that you may let go of the past and look to future unafraid,
With a brave face, a strong heart and a quiet spirit. AMEN*

To acknowledge that we are known by God, loved by God, forgiven by God is life-giving. These are the building blocks of our relationship with God; as Lorae said last night, believing in God and having a relationship with God are not the same thing!

Relationships require time spent together, and prayer is time spent with God. Whatever your prayer practice is, or is not, the season of Lent provides an intentional opportunity to work on that relationship by taking time to pray each day. Perhaps there is a prayer that resonates with you, like the Penitent's Blessing above.

Another prayer practice is the Ignatian practice of the Examen, a daily reflection of Thanksgiving, Intention, Examination, Contrition and Hope. Nick Schiro, S.J. offers prayers for these practices in 'Through All the Days of Life':

*Thanksgiving – Lord, I realize that all, even myself, is a gift from you. Today, for what am I most grateful?
Intention – Lord, open my eyes and ears to be more honest with myself. Today, what do I really want for myself?*

Examination – Lord, show me what has been happening to me and in me this day. Today, in what ways have I experienced your love?

Contrition – Lord, I am still learning to grow in your love. Today, what choices have been inadequate responses to your love?

Hope – Lord, let me look with longing toward the future. Today, how will I let you lead me to a brighter tomorrow?

There is no one 'right' way to pray...aloud or silently, alone or in community, indoors or at the beach or on a hike, with words or images such as icons...we will each have a different way of practicing the practice! I invite you to take this season of Lent to explore practicing the practice, and tending your relationship with God.

Lenten Blessings,

Anne



Curate's Courtyard

The Space between: Holy Week and sacred silence

The Reverend Nathaniel F. Bourne, Curate

I've been experimenting with silence. Every Lent I try to take on a new practice—to balance giving something up with taking something on. I always have these grand plans of daily reading, meditating, writing, etc. Rarely—well, never—do things turn out the way I plan. Life gets in the way, I get distracted and busy, I come up with one excuse one day and another the next and before I know it Lent is almost over and I'm left feeling like I've failed. I've tried to scale back my expectations this year, and to just appreciate the gift of silence when it comes. Most mornings I sit down at my desk, set the timer on my phone (yes, there's an app for that), and try to quiet my mind.

At one of our Lent programs on the Way of Love, Lorae Boisvert talked about the practice of silence. She named the challenges of stilling a racing mind and finding true silence where we can encounter God. I haven't found many true silences—each morning my mind wanders across a landscape of things I need to do, things I didn't do, and things I could do. I wish I could report transcendent encounters with God, beatific visions, and intimate conversations with Christ. But I can't.

In addition to a practice of silence, I've been reading the collected poems of R.S. Thomas, a Welsh poet and priest. There are threads that run through his work—silence and the absence of God are two that show up regularly.

Via Negativa

By R.S. Thomas

Why no! I never thought other than
That God is that great absence
In our lives, the empty silence
Within, the place where we go
Seeking, not in hope to
Arrive or find. He keeps the interstices
In our knowledge, the darkness
Between stars. His are the echoes
We follow, the footprints he has just
Left. We put our hands in
His side hoping to find
It warm. We look at people
And places as though he had looked
At them, too; but miss the reflection.

Thomas writes about the elusive nature of God and a relationship with God defined by questions rather than answers, the search rather than the discovery. There is no resolution at the end of the poem. The poet's search goes on.

On Palm Sunday, we enter into Holy Week. More than any other part of the church year, this week is about the elusiveness of God, and the absence of tidy resolution. Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem quickly becomes a story of betrayal, the failure of justice, and wrongful execution. It's a week of overturned assumptions and unmet expectation. Jesus' disciples struggle to understand, to make sense of their journey with Jesus and where to go next. Even the resurrection and Jesus' subsequent appearances are elliptical, disjointed, full of ambiguity.

Whatever Holy Week looks like for you, I invite you to experiment with silence. What do you encounter in the silence? Is it the presence of God? Or is it an absence? If it's absence you find—a lack of noise and a lack of anything more—could God be at work in the midst of it?

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nathaniel F. Bourne". The signature is fluid and personal, with varying line thicknesses.

2019 St. John's Youth | Year-at-a-Glance

Middle Schoolers will meet on Sunday mornings at 9:30am in the Philbrick Room. High Schoolers will gather in Thaxter Hall then go to coffee together with the youth group leaders. They'll come back to the church for communion.

SPRING 2019

Day	Time	Event
Wednesday	4/10 3:00 – 6:00pm	Cooking for Cross Roads
Sunday	4/14 9:30 – 11:00am	Service Sunday
Sunday	4/21 Easter Sunday	
Wednesday	5/8 3:00 – 6:00pm	Cooking for Cross Roads
Sunday	5/12 10:00am	Rite 13
Sunday	5/26 NO YOUTH PROGRAMMING – Begin summer schedule	
Wednesday	6/14 3:00 – 5:00pm	Cooking for Cross Roads
Saturday	6/22-29	Youth Mission Trip to Eastern N.C.

Summer 2019
June 22nd – 29th

St. John's Youth Mission Trip 2019



Who: Rising 7th – 12th graders

Where: Dunn, NC—a rural, agricultural community in Eastern North Carolina

What: Five days working with the Episcopal Farmworkers Ministry, and a day at the Trinity Center on the Outer Banks. We'll assist in farm work and projects supporting the farmworker community. It's an opportunity to hear the stories of migrant workers and to expand our worldviews.

Cost: \$750 maximum. Part of the trip will be fundraising beforehand that will reduce the cost.

As always, money shouldn't be a barrier to participation. Assistance is available.

To register your child for the trip, e-mail Nathan (curate@stjohnsnh.org) and send in a \$75 deposit. Email with any questions.





Music Notes

When all that's left of me is love

Jennifer McPherson, Director of Music

When I die,
If you need to weep,
Cry for someone walking in the streets beside you.
And when you need me,
Put your arms around others,
And give them
What you need to give me.

You can love me most by letting
Hands touch hands and souls touch souls.
You can love me most by
Sharing your joys,
And multiplying your generosity to others.
You can love me most by letting me live in your eyes,
And not just in your mind.

Love doesn't die, people do.
So when all that's left of me is love,
Give me away.

This beautiful text, adapted from the poem *Epitaph* by Merritt Malloy, was set to music by Kevin Siegfried, and is one of our anthems during this Lent season. While this is not a sacred text, it beautifully ties in to the themes of this season. In just a few short weeks, we will celebrate death and darkness giving way to life and light. As Rob faithfully reminds us, we are encouraged to live in this light and love not just in the upcoming joyful Easter season, but also during the seasons of our lives when it's hard to move past the darkness. May we always walk in God's love.





Developing Disciples

Children's Ministries Updates

Ashley Wade, Director of Children's Music and Ministries

Overview for April 2019:

Nursery & Sunday School will run normally all Sundays EXCEPT Easter

- Sunday morning children's programs begin at 9:30

Easter Sunday, April 21

- Nursery is open for first service 8:45AM - 10:45AM
- No Sunday School
- Easter Egg Hunt immediately following first service (approx. 10:15)

Youth choirs sing at BOTH 9:15 & 11:00 Easter services!!

Don't miss the Choir School students singing on Palm Sunday, April 14!

You can always see what's coming at sjcfamily.blog/year-at-a-glance

As a mother and the director of our children's program at St. John's, I am a seeker of wisdom and truth regarding the spiritual lives of children. I have made mistakes, and I have looked inward to discover my spiritual breaking points, where old wounds never healed properly. I recall as a child feeling so sensitive to a critical word. Early on I began the process of internalizing struggles that I felt would be judged or worse, made fun of. I was horrified of displeasing the adults in my life. Over many years, I created versions of myself that would work well in different scenarios. As an adolescent, it was such a lonely, heart-aching time... and I had loving parents who gave me the world. I had special gifts and talents that were celebrated. I had a church community. And yet... something within my spiritual self was tamped down, ashamed, scared. I wasn't free. I wasn't connected to God in a way that was truly life-giving.

I ponder this reality... the combination of circumstances that made it impossible to talk to my parents about what my heart was SCREAMING about. I just let my heart scream, determined to shush it. Determined to figure it out on my own.

I did not figure it out on my own. Shocking, I know. I continue to learn and grow in my spirituality, and I am so grateful that God brought me to St. John's. Finding in my work an outlet for spiritual, professional, and personal growth is an unbelievable blessing. That child who ached for affirmation and shushed the messages from her heart is still here, but now I'm looking at my own children and the children of this community, and I know we can do better.

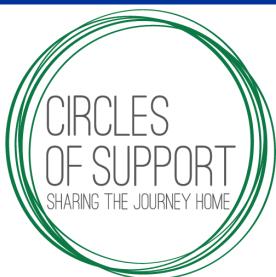
April

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
31 LENT 8:00a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir Rehearsal 9:30a Nursery 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II 11:00a Coffee Hour 11:00a Cherub Singers 5:00p The Way of Love: Learn 7:00p Compline 6:30p AA	1 9:30a Gather Cooking 6p-8p Easter Brass Rehearsal 7:00p FA	2 10:00a - 2:00p Easter Seals Baking 10:00a Staff Meeting 2:30p Choir School 6:00p Youth AA 7:00p Vestry Meeting
7 LENT 8:00a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir Rehearsal 9:30a Nursery 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II 11:00a Coffee Hour 11:00a Cherub Singers 5:00p The Way of Love: Bless & Go 7:00p Compline 6:30p AA	8 9:30a Gather Cooking 7:00p FA	9 10:00a - 2:00p Easter Seals Baking 10:00a Staff Meeting 2:30p Choir School 6:00p Youth AA
14 PALM SUNDAY 8:00a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir Rehearsal 9:30a Nursery 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II 11:00a Coffee Hour 11:00a Cherub Singers 5:00p The Way of Love: Rest 7:00p Compline 6:30p AA	15 9:30a Gather Cooking 12:00p Eucharist 6:00p Eucharist 7:00p FA	16 10:00a - 2:00p Easter Seals Baking 10:00a Staff Meeting 12:00p Eucharist 6:00p Eucharist 6:00p Youth AA
21 EASTER SUNDAY 7:45a Rite I Holy Eucharist 9:00a Nursery 9:15a Rite II Holy Eucharist with Choirs 10:15a Easter Egg Hunt 11:00a Rite II Holy Eucharist with Choirs 6:30p AA	22 PARISH OFFICE CLOSED	23 10:00a - 2:00p Easter Seals Baking 10:00a Staff Meeting 6:00p Youth AA
28 8:00a Rite I 8:30a Parish Choir Rehearsal 9:30a Nursery 9:30a Kids Church/Youth Grps 10:00a Rite II 11:00a Coffee Hour 6:30p AA	29 9:30a Gather Cooking 7:00p FA	30 10:00a - 2:00p Easter Seals Baking 10:00a Staff Meeting 6:00p Youth AA

2019

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 6:45a Men's Book Group 10:30a Reading Between the Lines 4-5:30p Junior Music & Theater 7-8:30p Parish Choir Rehearsal	4 9:30a Healing Service 10:30a Centering Prayer 12:00p Common Table 2:30p Choir School 7:00p NA	5	6 12:00p PYSO Rehearsal 5:30p Outside The Box 6:30p AA
10 10:30a Reading Between the Lines 12pm Ladies' Luncheon 1:00p Knitting 4-5:30p Junior Music & Theater 3-6:00p Serve & Celebrate Cooking for Cross Roads	11 9:30a Healing Service 10:30a Centering Prayer 12:00p Common Table 2:30p Choir School 6:30p Women's Book Group 7:00p NA	12 4p-6:30p St. John's Volunteers at Portsmouth Salvation Army Soup Kitchen (2nd Friday every month)	13 12:00p PYSO Rehearsal 6:30p AA
17 6:45a Men's Book Group 10:30a Reading Between the Lines 12:00p Eucharist 4-5:30p Junior Music & Theater 6:00p Eucharist	18 MAUNDY THURSDAY 9:30a Healing Service 12:00p Common Table 6:00p Eucharist 7:00p NA	19 GOOD FRIDAY 12:00p Eucumenical Service 6:00p Eucharist	20 HOLY SATURDAY 10:00a Holy Saturday Liturgy 12:00p PYSO Rehearsal 8:00p Great Vigil (with Baptisms)
24 10:30a Reading Between the Lines 5:30p Gather Dinner	25 9:30a Healing Service 12:00p Common Table 6:30p Women's Book Group 7:00p NA	26	27 12:00p PYSO Rehearsal 6:30p AA

PARISH LIFE



“Outside the Box” on April 6

You are cordially invited to meet three graduates of a leadership course in Harlem, "Raising My Voice".

Join us in the Philbrick Room of St. John's on Saturday, April 6 from 5:30 to 7:30.

A simple supper will be served.

Formerly incarcerated individuals, Thomas Little, Barbara Barron and Thomas Edwards will share their stories and the challenges of returning home. The three have graduated from a program sponsored by Circles Of Support, a partnership of Manhattan Episcopal Churches and grassroots non-profit organizations supporting successful re-entry and re-connection with families. The organization believes that those effected by incarceration are in the best position to find solutions to recidivism. Please join us to listen and learn "Outside the Box".

<http://www.circlesofsupport.org/raising-my-voice>

RSVP: Carol Gruen 603 828 3165, Sooky Lassen 631 241 2034, Sandie Dika 603 426 9282

Annual Stewardship Pledge

As of March 20th, 216 people pledged \$457,107.98!

We are 85% toward our goal of \$540,000! Could you please let us know your intended giving amount, even if you are already giving each week in our collection plate?

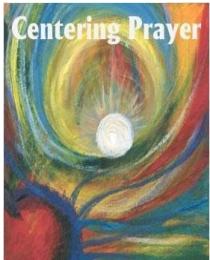
Thank you for supporting the programs and mission of St. John's!

Connected in Christ Capital Campaign 2019-2021

Thank you to the 156 individuals and families have pledged for a total of \$1,371,156 toward our Campaign Goal of \$1,600,000 (Challenge Goal \$2,091,000). **That is 85%!**

We want to be truly accessible and welcoming to all. After more than a decade of discernment, the vestry, staff and parishioners have developed a plan to protect the sanctuary with a new roof, electrical and plumbing, and provide access to both the Sanctuary and Parish Hall by connecting them. We will also renovate our Parish Hall that serves nearly 1,000 people per week. We are asking that you take a moment and get your *intended annual amount* to us with a pledge card or pledge online!

Ladies' Luncheon will be held at noon on Wednesday, April 10th. Location is the Blue Mermaid in Kittery . Please call Linda McVay (603-988-9755) or Mary Walker (603-436-2034) if you plan to attend and to arrange carpooling if necessary. These gatherings will occur on the second Wednesday of every month; location will vary. Please join us! All are welcome!



The Centering Prayer Group meets in the Philbrook room of Thaxter Hall from 10:30 to 11:30am every Thursday morning. Centering Prayer focuses on Contemplative Prayer, the opening of mind and heart to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words and emotions. The one hour time period includes twenty minutes of silence, an open discussion of matters of common interest in our spiritual journeys and concludes with intercessory prayer. For further information, please contact The Rev. Dick Siener or Joan Christy through the Church Office. *All are welcome – join us as your schedule permits.*

PARISH LIFE



The United Thank Offering (UTO) is a ministry of The Episcopal Church for the mission of the whole church. Through UTO, individuals are invited to embrace and deepen a personal daily spiritual discipline of gratitude. UTO encourages people to notice the good things that happen each day, give thanks to God for those blessings and make an offering for each blessing using a UTO Blue Box. UTO is entrusted to receive the offerings, and to distribute the 100% of what is collected to support innovative mission and ministry throughout The Episcopal Church and Provinces of the Anglican Communion.

The awards are often for needs that a church cannot squeeze into the local church budget but do fall into the UTO gift guidelines. It could happen that St. John's will request a UTO grant in the near future.

Blue UTO boxes that hold coins, UTO brochures, and, UTO envelopes for checks are available in the narthex and at coffee hour. Mary Atwater will be serving at coffee hour following the April 28 service if you have questions. The ingathering of our UTO offering will be May 12.

*Notice the good things that happen each day.
Give thanks to God for your blessings.*

Easter Memorial Altar Flowers Chart is posted on the notice board in the church narthex. Place the people's name "In Memory or In Honor Of" on the chart and person placing the name in "Donated By" column, so if Ginny has any questions, she knows who to contact. If you want to enter "In Honor Of" on the Chart please write "In Honor Of" along with the name. There is also the form below you can fill out and mail to Ginny Edwards. Or you can call or email Ginny Edwards and she will see to it the names are put on the list. Please make donation check out to St. John's Altar Guild and mail it to Ginny Edwards, 173 Moses Gerrish Farmer Road, Eliot, ME. 03903. Call Ginny Edwards at 207-439-2119 or email edwardsga@msn.com. The Chart will be taken down Palm Sunday April 14th and if you mail the names I need to have it by Saturday, April 13th so I have time to compile the list for the Easter Service Programs.

Thank you, Ginny

Easter Memorial Altar Flowers

In Memory Of:

In Honor Of:

Donated By:





100 Chapel Street | Portsmouth NH 03801 | 603-436-8283
Church Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9:00 am until 3:00 pm
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Kelly Boston, Treasurer
Gerry Simpkins, Jr. Warden
Marian Ellis, Clerk

John Bolduc
Elizabeth Bristow
Jeff Croteau
Allison Dudas
Carol Gruen
Barry Heckler
Meg Moran
Bob Nalewajk
Ellie Sanderson
Maggie Skafidas
Joe Weir

Contact the Vestry at
vestry@stjohnhsnh.org