

St. John's Episcopal Church

A place to discover connections with God and one another in Christ

www.sjparish.net



The Second Sunday after Christmas

HOLY EUCHARIST RITE II

January 4, 2026

10:30 a.m.

HYMN OF PRAISE

1. Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and
 peace to his peo - ple on earth. 2. Lord God, heaven - ly
 King, al - mighty God and Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we
 give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry. 3. Lord Je - sus
 Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, 4. you
 take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy
 on us; 5. you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re -
 ceive our prayer. 6. For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One,
 you a - lone are the Lord, 7. you a - lone are the Most
 High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the
 glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

Title: *Canticle 20, Glory to God: Gloria in excelsis*

Music: Robert Powell (b. 1932), rev. Copyright © Church Publishing, Inc

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray. O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE WORD OF GOD

THE FIRST LESSON

*Jeremiah 31:7–14**All sit.*

Thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel." See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock." For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the Lord.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

THE PSALTER

Psalm 84:1–8

*The people are invited to chant the verses in **bold**.*

Robert Knox Kennedy
(b. 1945)



- 1 How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts! *
My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
- 2 The sparrow has found her a house
and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; *
by the side of your altars, O Lord of hosts,
my King and my God.
- 3 **Happy are they who dwell in your house!** *
they will always be praising you.
- 4 **Happy are the people whose strength is in you!** *
whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.
- 5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs, *
for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.

- 6 They will climb from height to height, *
and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.
- 7 **Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; ***
hearken, O God of Jacob.
- 8 **Behold our defender, O God; ***
and look upon the face of your Anointed.

THE SECOND LESSON

Ephesians 1:3–6, 15–19a

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

THE SEQUENCE HYMN 115 What child is this

GREENSLEEVES

All stand and sing.

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 2:1–12

Minister The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew.

All **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Minister The Gospel of the Lord.
All **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

THE SERMON

All sit.

Margie Baker

THE NICENE CREED

All stand.

**We believe in one God,
 the Father, the Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth,
 of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
 the only Son of God,
 eternally begotten of the Father,
 God from God, Light from Light,
 true God from true God,
 begotten, not made,
 of one Being with the Father.
 Through him all things were made.
 For us and for our salvation
 he came down from heaven:
 by the power of the Holy Spirit
 he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
 and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
 he suffered death and was buried.
 On the third day he rose again
 in accordance with the Scriptures;
 he ascended into heaven
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
 and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
 With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
 He has spoken through the Prophets.
 We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
 We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
 We look for the resurrection of the dead,
 and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The people say the words in bold.

Let us worship the Savior with joy and make our prayers to God.

The magi came from the east to worship your Son: Grant to Christians everywhere the spirit of worship and a readiness to seek and follow you always. Lord of glory, **hear our prayer.**

The infant Christ received gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh: Accept the offering of our hearts and minds as we strive to faithfully follow Jesus in the year ahead. Lord of glory, **hear our prayer.**

The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ: Inspire our leaders to work for an abundance of peace, justice, and compassion, and strengthen all peacemakers, especially in places overwhelmed by violence and conflict. Lord of glory, **hear our prayer.**

The Holy Family lived in exile and in the shadow of death: Look in mercy on all who are poor and powerless, all immigrants and refugees, and those without a safe place to call home. Lord of glory, **hear our prayer.**

Your Son shared the life of his home and family in Nazareth: Protect in your love our families and neighbors, and comfort all who are struggling, especially those on our parish prayer list. Lord of glory, **hear our prayer.**

Jesus reigns with you in eternal life: Welcome those who have died into your realm of everlasting love and peace. Lord of glory, **hear our prayer.**

Celebrant God, we rejoice in our fellowship with the shepherds, the angels, the magi, Mary and Joseph, and all the faithful departed. In your unfailing love for us and for all people, hear and answer our prayers through your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
All **And also with you.**

THE WELCOME

All sit.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM I wonder as I wander

Appalachian folksong
arr. John Jacob Niles (1892–1980)

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Saviour did come for to die
For poor on'ry people like you and like I
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cow's stall,
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
But high from the heavens a star's light did fall,
And promise of ages it then did recall.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
A star in the sky, or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's angels in heaven for to sing,
He surely could have it, 'cause he was the King.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time, you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing. You made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love.

And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices as we sing:

THE SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and
might, hea - ven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Setting: Robert Powell (b. 1932)

All remain standing or kneel.

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God. Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw the world to himself yet we were heedless for his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice.

Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.

In the fullness of time bring us, with all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Celebrant And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

THE FRACTION ANTHEM

Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sins of the world: have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sins of the world: have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Setting: Robert Powell (b. 1932)

THE INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Celebrant Take this bread, share this wine. In these Christ comes to us with love from God. The gifts of God for the people of God.

Everyone is invited to receive Holy Communion at St. John's. To receive, please kneel or stand at the altar rail. You may choose to receive bread only, intinct (dip) your wafer in the wine, or drink from the cup.

If you would like a blessing instead of receiving Communion, cross your arms over your chest.

If you have mobility limitations and would like a priest to bring Communion to you in your seat, please let an usher know.

If you would like to pray with our healing prayer volunteer, go to the baptismal font at the back of the church after receiving Communion.

THE COMMUNION ANTHEM The first Nowell Traditional English, arr. Stephen Paulus (1949–2014)

The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,

Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east, beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light
And so it continued both day and night. *Nowell...*

Then entered in those Wisemen three,
Full reverently on bended knee:
And offered there in His presence,
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense. *Nowell...*

THE COMMUNION HYMN 117 Brightest and best of the stars of the morning MORNING STAR

All remain seated and sing.

THE POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER

All stand or kneel.

Celebrant Let us pray.

People **Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

THE BLESSING

The Celebrant gives the blessing and the people respond, Amen.

THE HYMN IN PROCESSION 119 As with gladness men of old DIX

All stand and sing.

THE DISMISSAL

The Minister dismisses the people, and the people respond. Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

THE VOLUNTARY Variations on the Noël *Joseph est bien marie* Claude Louis Balabastre (1729–1798)

The Bible texts of the Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel lessons are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Church of Christ in the USA, and used by permission.

Hymns used by permission of OneLicense, No. A-724992. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE LITURGY

Celebrant: The Reverend Todd FitzGerald

Preacher: The Reverend Margie Baker

Lector & Chalice Bearer: Matteo Donnelly

Intercessor & Chalice Bearer: Lauren Mascola

Acolytes: Danielle Branco, Selma Waddington, Eden Baker

The St. John's Adult Choir

Choirmaster: Patrick Reardon

Organist: Douglas Johnson

Ushers: Eleanor Barnes, Annabel Clapp, Molly Cooper, Austin Longendyke,

Dan Minster, Mark Sarkisian, Susie Sarkisian

Livestream Operator: Ray Giolitto

Altar Guild: Buffy Ineson, Bill Lockery

Healing Prayer Minister: Enid Oberholtzer

Sunday School Teachers: Margie Baker, Jeff Verney

Nursery Staff: Sheryl Simoni, Lilah Lorenzo, Livvy Lorenzo

Join us in Hubbard Hall after the service for coffee hour.

This week, coffee hour food is provided by those with last names starting A through F.

Next week, food will be provided by those with last names starting G through L.

Weekly Offering Envelopes

If you currently use numbered weekly offering envelopes to pay your annual pledge, or if you requested envelopes on your 2026 pledge card, please pick them up in Hubbard Hall TODAY. They are labeled, so please make sure to only take the ones with your name on them. Envelopes not picked up by today will be mailed. Numbered envelopes are only provided on request. If you did not request envelopes but would like some, please email Ellen in the parish office at ellen@sjparish.net. Please do not use old offering envelopes from prior years, as this complicates our accounting processes!

PIPES ALIVE!



Philip Tummescheit

January 4, 12:30pm

St. John's Episcopal Church, West Hartford

Events are available
livestreamed at
www.reddoormusic.org



**MUSIC AT THE
RED DOOR**

In your prayers this week, please pray for:

Peace in our world, those serving our country in the armed services, and all victims of war and violence.

Residents of the Caleb Hitchcock Center at Duncaster, and the George Beach Apartments, Allen Place, Hartford.

All those whose hurts, burdens, and fears are unspoken or unknown.

Those in need of healing, help, and comfort:

Kim Green	Susan	Joyce Flynn	Wendy
Virginia Skeele	Sue	Rachel Boccio	Bob Norton
Grant Loevenbruck	Tessa Trussell Wolf	Joan Ackley	Joseph
John & Barbara Spannaus	Harry Barber	Jon Nelson	Sarah Carroll
Jennifer Blean	Doug Larson	Ned	Greg Highland
Hale Walkoff	Miranda	Roger	Rachel
Rod Farrell	Allison and Family	Daniel Zoltan	Lucas
Hillary Lord	Linda	Jim & Kathlyn Schofield	Amy Bittinger
Helen Rosen	Tom Tata	John Scott	Mike
Nick Willke	Timothy Foga	Eric Zoltan	Rick
Tracie O'Brien	Shoemaker Family	Elizabeth Myers	Richard Myers
Naya	Elsa	Rob Roy	Carol
Amy	Heidi	Meghan	Paul Thaxton
Cora	Alondra	Bonnie Evans	Frank Higginbotham
Beth	Andrew Worrell	Barbara	Stephanie
Katie	Sam Wiley	Dennis	Ann
Anne	Gracie	John Murray	Chris
Martha Babbitt	Jackie Harding	Spencer Rothman	Alberto Guzman
Linda	Cynthia Wannace	Rosow Family	Kathy & Pete Beynor
Jamie Blean	Lisa Sheehan	Stacy Wagner	Sara Enright
Emily Brielle Clark	Ken Potter	Meg	Bob Norton
Brendan	Will S.		

Those serving in the military:

Alex Thaxton

Those celebrating birthdays this week:

Abigail Thaxton	Julian Hartt
Caroline Thaxton	Linda Schatz
Olivia Thaxton	Lucy Adams
Violet Rich	Lad Pfeifer

Those celebrating anniversaries this week:

Jenifer & Julian Hartt

In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:

Pray for Trinity, Brooklyn; St. Peter's, Cheshire; Holy Advent, Clinton; and for soup kitchens, food pantries, the Food Ministry Network, and all ministries that feed those who are food insecure.

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer:

Pray for the Anglican Church of Canada.

Midweek contemplative Eucharist, every Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. in the chancel. All are welcome to attend this brief weekly service including scripture readings, prayer, silence, and communion.

Upcoming Events

More information in each week's Thursday e-news and in the graphics in this bulletin.

- **Pipes Alive! organ recital** — TODAY at 12:30 p.m.
- **Twelfth Night celebration** — TODAY at 5:30 p.m.
- **New Bible study series begins** — Monday, January 5 at 7 p.m. in Zoom
- **Memorial service for Nancy Pedersen** — Thursday, January 8 at 11 a.m.
- **"Perpetual Happiness Tour" event** — Friday, January 23 at 5:30 p.m.
- **St. John's Annual Meeting** — Sunday, January 25 from 9 to 10:15 a.m.

New Monday night Bible study series begins on January 5 at 7 p.m. (in Zoom). Margie Baker is back from sabbatical and ready to return to leading Monday night online Bible study! A new series on the letter of James will begin on January 5 at 7 p.m. No preparation, no homework, and you may attend one, several, or all sessions. Contact Margie at margie@sjarish.net with questions or to be added to the Bible study email list.



TWELFTH NIGHT
Tree Burning
January 4 at 5:30 p.m.

Join us for this annual tradition of closing out the Christmas season with the outdoor burning of Christmas trees (with fire safety measures in place!). The youth group will have hot chocolate and snacks for sale as a fundraiser for Dignity Crows, a local nonprofit that provides hygiene products for people in need.

As you clean up from Christmas, donate your unwanted items to the next Christmas Festival!

Now is a great time to get rid of any Christmas items you no longer want or need that we can use for the 2026 Christmas Festival. We welcome donations of gently used or new holiday décor and items for our annual wreath decorating (ornaments, ribbon, etc.). Did you receive a gift that isn't quite right for you but could be perfect for someone else? Donate it for next year's mystery gift pull or one of our themed raffle baskets! Items may be brought to the parish office or given to Matteo Donnelly, festival chair.

**Save the date:
The 2026 Christmas
Festival will be
November 20 to 22.**



PLEASE JOIN US FOR
JEFF VERNEY'S
Perpetual Happiness Tour

**JANUARY 23
5:30PM
HUBBARD HALL**

The Parish Life Committee and parishioner Jeff Verney (aka the "Troubadour of Happiness") will present the Perpetual Happiness Tour Experience, on Friday, January 23rd, at 5:30pm. This event includes original songs, stories, and discussion on how to enhance happiness in our lives! The event will last approximately one hour. Light refreshments and beverages will be provided.

Vestry Nominees 2026

Below is the slate of nominees to be presented for election at the Annual Meeting on January 25, 2026, at 9 a.m. Bios and photos are provided for first-time nominees for a particular position. If you would like more information about any of the nominees up for re-election whose bios are not included here, please contact Ellen in the parish office.

Nominated as co-wardens (one-year term; may serve up to three consecutive terms)



Susan Fay (nominated for her first one-year term) - When Susan and her family first moved from Toronto to West Hartford in 2001, she sought out the Episcopal church with “the best youth group” and was pointed in the direction of St. John’s. The EYC helped ease the transition for her three teens, and Susan enjoyed participating in the book club, choreographing the Christmas pageant, and serving as a layreader. When life took her to Chicago, she continued her career in dance and theatre while becoming involved in Grace Episcopal Church in the Loop. There Susan served on the vestry for several years, was a layreader, and participated in the women’s group and the food ministry. She also served two terms on her condo board of directors. But the pull of the granddaughters proved too strong to resist, so Susan is once again in West Hartford and finds St. John’s even more vibrant and welcoming! She is honored to be nominated and looks forward to serving.

Tom Oberholtzer (nominated for his first one-year term) - Upon graduation from Hamilton College, Tom enrolled at Officer Candidate School at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, and was commissioned Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. He taught gunnery for a year, and then completed a tour in Vietnam, serving with the 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery, 1st Infantry Division. Released from active duty, he joined the Ametek Corporation as district manager for distributor operations in the midwest. He then moved to Connecticut to join the Meriden Cooper Corporation, a distributor of process instrumentation, became a principal, and served as president for 43 years. Through his avocational love of music, he has served as post organist at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, and organist and choir director at the Marlborough Congregational Church; sung with the choir of men and boys at Christ Church Cathedral and the choir of Trinity Episcopal Church; served as president of The Hartford Chorale; and participated in yearly summer programs through the Royal School of Church Music in America. In support of the Episcopal Church he has served on the Cathedral Chapter, the vestry of Trinity Church, and as warden at Trinity. He and his wife, Enid, joined St. John’s in 2021. Since then, has completed a three-year term on the vestry, serving as liaison to the finance and house committees, both of which he continues to serve. In his spare time he volunteers at the Veterans Hospital in Newington, and enjoys cooking. He looks forward to continuing to serve St. John’s in whatever capacity he may be called.



Nominated as co-treasurers (one-year term; may serve up to three consecutive terms)



Jeff Kinney (nominated for his first one-year term) - Jeff joined St. John’s two years ago with his wife Rebecca Bourret. He is a lifelong Lutheran and has lived in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago, New Britain, Glastonbury and Boston before moving to West Hartford four years ago. He currently serves on the community service and finance committees. In prior parishes, Jeff served as stewardship chair, was on property committees, and sang in choirs. Jeff spent the majority of his career in corporate banking, most recently with Wells Fargo in Boston. In the last five years of his career, he transitioned to a nonprofit role as chief of strategic development with Ascentria Care Alliance, a large human services agency based in Worcester. Jeff has served on numerous nonprofit boards; recently, he has been active with the Third Age Initiative of Leadership Greater Hartford and is currently board chair of Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services – IRIS. He also recently established a charitable fund at the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, along with his brother, to honor their mother’s volunteer and philanthropic legacy. Jeff enjoys traveling, reading, biking, kayaking, and just being outdoors. Jeff and Rebecca have three married children, one living in Simsbury and the other two in southern California.

John Wilcox (nominated for his second one-year term)

Nominated for a three-year term on the vestry

Betsy Chicares - Betsy grew up in West Hartford, where she was very active in the girls' choir, youth group, teaching Sunday School, and playing her flute at St James's Church, just up the street. After returning to the area after completing her studies at University of Rochester, Betsy found Grace Episcopal Church fit her well for more than 30 years with its Anglo-Catholic mass, parish choir, and food pantry. In addition, she served more than 25 years on the vestry at Grace Church in a variety of roles and also as a layreader. About three years ago, after attending St John's for a year and despite living "on the other side of the river," Betsy was inspired by the welcoming spirit at St. John's to join in worship, outreach, and fellowship.



Matthew Ciscel - Matthew Ciscel was raised at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Memphis and joined St. John's in 2010, when his children, Elsa June and Dorian, were baptized here. He has enjoyed watching them grow through St. John's and participating in the Choir School, as acolytes, and in EYC. Matt has served as a youth leader in the Christian formation and EYC programs for many years, currently leads an usher team, and also serves on the stewardship committee, which he co-chaired for a few years. In his professional life, he is a professor of linguistics and chair of the English department at Central Connecticut State University. His wife, Alina Ciscel, is also an English professor and comes from an Orthodox background. He enjoys cycling, reading, and traveling in his free time.

Young Hee Derby - Young Hee and her husband, David, have been faithfully attending St. John's since 2023. Their spiritual journey in the Episcopal Church began in 1982. Young Hee is a regular volunteer at Loaves and Fishes ministry and recently undertook the flower ministry, delivering altar flowers to an assisted living facility residents where she volunteers. Young Hee recently spoke at the Faith@Work series where she discussed how faith manifested in her work life as a clinical nutrition manager. Prior to joining St. John's, Young Hee and David attended St. John's, East Windsor, where they served in various leadership capacities. Young Hee is recently retired but still serves as a board member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She is honored to be nominated to serve on the vestry.



Don Polk - Don considers life an adventure. He was born and raised in Indiana, where he attended a non-denominational church during his childhood. His family included members who were Baptists, Nazarenes, and Pentecostals. He spent two years at Indiana University after finishing high school, then began working in the printing industry, retiring in November 2024 after more than 40 years. He lived in Illinois and New Orleans before moving to Connecticut in 2005. Hurricane Katrina was the catalyst for his move to Connecticut, as his New Orleans place of employment was closed by the company and there was a job opportunity in Connecticut. Don met his husband John in 2015, and they were married in October 2016. They started attending St. John's in 2016, mainly because of John's interest in the choir program. Don was persuaded that he had found his church home by the warmth and hospitality of the St. John's congregation, leading him to become an Episcopalian in April 2017. Since joining the church, Don has taken part in and completed the Education for Ministry program. He currently serves as an usher, becoming co-chair a couple of years ago, and is also the keeper of the hymn boards in the nave. This past summer, he helped with the upkeep of the Cloister Garden. Don enjoys reading, traveling, collecting stamps and antiques, and gardening. He is a big fan of the St. John's choir and considers himself a "choir groupie." Don is humbled and honored to be asked to serve on the vestry.

St. John's Episcopal Church

A place to discover connections with God and one another in Christ

www.sjparish.net

679 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford, Connecticut 06119

860 523 5201 office@sjparish.net



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sundays at 8 a.m.: Spoken Holy Eucharist

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.: Choral Holy Eucharist

Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.: Spoken Holy Eucharist

STAFF

The Rev. Todd FitzGerald (todd@sjparish.net)	.....	Rector
The Rev. Margie Baker (margie@sjparish.net)	.....	Associate Rector
Katherine Leary	.....	Seminarian Intern*
Ellen Painter Dollar (ellen@sjparish.net)	.....	Director of Operations & Communications
Dwight Latif (dwight@sjparish.net)	.....	Sexton
Nick Capozzoli (nick@sjparish.net)	.....	Director of Music
Peggy O'Toole (peggy@sjparish.net)	.....	Financial Administrator
Elijah Morris	.....	Organ Scholar
Christa Rakich	.....	Organ Artist-in-Residence*
Ralph Valentine	.....	Organist and Choirmaster Emeritus*
The Rev. Rebecca Bourret	.....	Priest Associate*
The Rev. Mary Lynn Dell	.....	Priest Associate*
The Rev. Joseph Pace	.....	Priest Associate*
The Rev. Nancy Wright	.....	Priest Associate*

*These positions are non-stipendiary.

VESTRY

Eleanor Barnes	.....	Warden
Stewart Murchie	.....	Warden
Tim Goetz and John Wilcox	.....	Treasurers

2023–25: Angela Allen-Peck, John Nowacki, Tom Oberholtzer

2024–26: Lauren Mascola, Stacey Samuel Bannon, Brenda Zanta

2025–27: Kim Byrd, Matteo Donnelly, Susan Fay, Jeff Verney