



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Mar 16, 2021)

St. Dunstan's, Maine

134 State Street, Ellsworth, ME 04605, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time)

mambler@episcopalmaine.org

| | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) | Number of Weekend Worship Services | Number of Weekday Worship Services | Number of Other per Month Worship Services |
| 37 | 2 | 1 | |
| Current Annual Compensation | Cash Stipend | Housing / Rectory Detail | Utilities |
| | | | |
| SECA reimbursement | Compensation Available for New Position | Housing Available for | Pension Plan |
| | \$30400 | | We're in compliance with CPF requirements. |
| Healthcare Options | Dental | Housing Equity Allowance in budget | Annual Equity Amount |
| Full family | Yes | | |
| Vacation Weeks | Vacation Weeks Details | Continuing Education Weeks | Continuing Education Weeks Details |
| 4 | | 2 (standard) | |
| Continuing Education Funding in budget | Sabbatical Provision | Travel/Auto Account | Other Professional Account |
| | Yes | Yes | Yes |

\$30,400=diocesan std. for stipend/housing/SECA for 1/2 time in Hancock County. Health ins. prorated.

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

Jerry Whitney says he had been to "a mess of" churches in his life, but never felt drawn to an ongoing commitment until he came to St. Dunstan's for the baptism of one of his grandkids. He knew he wanted to come back. Before long, he stood up and raised his hand to say he wanted to be baptized. His preparation included study directed by the priest (she gave him his first Bible) and the congregation holding him in prayer. On the day of the baptism, the congregation lay hands on him. "It was a whole changing of the spirit," he says. More recently, the whole church is still buzzing about the success of our 2020 Christmas Fair. At St. Dunstan's this annual fair supports community needs, not the church budget. Undaunted by the pandemic's challenges, the committee rallied and organized and raised \$6,500 for a local heating fuel assistance fund. It wasn't just the organizers who reworked the parish website to create an online marketplace, the spotlight on our skilled crafters and bakers, or the public relations success with statewide media exposure. It was that the fair gathered an infectious energy and pride that was so welcome and so positive in the middle of an anxious time.

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

The first few weeks of the coronavirus pandemic were difficult for everyone. But with nearly a year under our belts of holding interactive services over Zoom, some of which are broadcast from the sanctuary, we see several silver linings. We used to struggle to Skype in one remote vestry member; now, members who are normally only with us when they're in Maine in the summer are able to join worship, meetings and study groups from Virginia, South Carolina, and New York City. Some older parishioners who are nearby are better able to participate, too. A vestry member worked with a local computer company to design our streaming setup and a diocesan grant helped offset the cost. Using Zoom rather than recorded or streamed-only services permits and encourages worship to be interactive and for us all to check in with each other after the service. Diocesan staff and supply clergy have been impressed with our blend of in-person and online participation, though of course we're eager to shake hands or hug again someday. Our strong web of in-reach and outreach, our capable lay ministry team, and our inclusion of youth in ministry and leadership are key to our resilience.

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

spiritual depth, community engagement, Accepting and Open, Teacher and Student

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

We have a simple sanctuary where we come together to pray, sing and participate in the sacraments. It is bright and clean and doesn't have ornate woodwork or filigrees. A semicircular window above the altar was designed to one day hold stained glass, but the church decided we'd rather appreciate the glory of God in the birds and the trees outside, and left it as it is. We have a sense of seriousness, that what we do here matters, but we can laugh at our mistakes. Our style is reverent without being distant, inaccessible, or overly formal. As in many churches, separate 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Sunday services provide different emphasis. Both use Rite II, but the 8:00 has no music and has longer silent spaces for contemplation. We sometimes mix things up with special music, choral readings of poetry, or other performance at the 10:00. Since the switch to part-time clergy several years ago, the congregation has gotten quite familiar with and fond of the Morning Prayer service on many Sunday mornings. Some even see it as a chance to stretch and exercise our prayer muscles in a different way. We have also experimented with a hybrid "Morning Prayer with Communion" service.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

The processional banner we made last year says "We are St. Dunstan's." It reflects the reality that every parishioner shoulders some responsibility for the goings on of the church. Our last priest worked to expand that sense of involvement, especially with our young people. Years ago, a relatively small group served as lectors or at the altar; now we have many more voices serving, reading, and leading prayers. Our lay homilists bring a wide range of life experience and reflection to our worship; hearing their stories has been another thread drawing us closer to one another. Sometimes outreach and service work is incorporated into Sunday morning. A local police detective was a guest speaker at an annual meeting, describing a project at her department to get those struggling with substance use into treatment and rehabilitation programs. One parishioner had everyone enthralled with a homily that included stories and photos from his Rotary club's project to provide wheelchairs to communities in Panama. The chairs not only provide mobility, directly impacting family members and caretakers, they also get the recipients up off the ground to eye level where others see and acknowledge them.

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

We are good at celebrating (birthdays, baptisms, anniversaries, retirements) and supporting one another when times are rough. When the late Bill Clark was in the last few months of his life, he was quite isolated at home. The church family asked what they could do to help him and his wife, Barbara. "Within 24 hours, five members of the parish, all men, volunteered to spend an afternoon with him once a week," Barbara said. "I think it was a blessing to them, it was a blessing to him, and it was a blessing to me." When the Hancocks were relatively new members they were in a bad car accident. Meal deliveries were organized and the Hancocks remember feeling "really loved by everybody at the church at a really horrible time." When the Chattins had a horrible winter with one thing after another going wrong, the church was there with support, comfort, and Christmas gifts for the kids. A few years later, three generations of Chattins worked together to rebuild a walkway and steps that another parishioner needed to access her own house. These connections may begin with physical needs, but the emotional and spiritual fabric they weave is evident to everyone, including visitors and newcomers.

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

St. Dunstan's has a history of being an incubator and connector for service programs in the local community. Individuals identify a need, share it with other members of the community, and things happen. We are good at collaborating. In 2009, several people from St. Dunstan's got together as part of a bigger group concerned about hunger in the community. They held two meetings of about 30 people in Ellsworth and surrounding area. Within weeks a free community meal program began, hosted by St. Dunstan's, and they called it Everybody Eats. Some of the people who were there at the beginning are still involved and about 170 meals/week are served, using food gleaned from the supermarkets. Another program, now an independent nonprofit called Friends in Action, began in 2003 as Faith in Action with a need to get a parishioner who was confined to a wheelchair to church. Hancock County is the oldest county in the oldest state (age of our population) in the country. So helping older adults with transportation and other services is a huge need. In the first six months of 2019, Friends in Action provided 3,233 rides.

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

Janice O'Brien, who represents St. Dunstan's on the board of the local food pantry, sings the praises of church volunteer Caiden, who at 11 was already in his second year of service waiting on clients and helping them shop for their groceries in the pantry. He would also help clean up at the end of the evening, and one Friday night, she remembers how proud she felt watching him happily take the bags of trash out to the dumpsters out in the dark, in the pouring rain, with a bandage on one hand from a cut thumb. As the county seat of rural Hancock County, Ellsworth is a service center and has one of the only homeless shelters in the region. Despite the strangeness of having to do church mostly remotely for most of 2020, we were motivated to continue and even grow our local outreach. Along with the Christmas fair, we were proud of being able to provide gifts for area children through a program the shelter organizes. In normal times there'd be a Christmas tree set up in the parish hall with ornaments for each of the children we "adopt" listing clothing sizes, etc. This year, the "elves" for the project did all the shopping, most of it remotely, and we had a record response.

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

During Lent, we take turns fasting for a day (full or modified fast) and contributing the money we would have spent on food to a local or international group with a food-related mission. Diana Gazis created the idea and spearheads the project, reminding everyone (our sexton and administrator join in, too, though of course it's voluntary) to sign up for a day. She circulates instructions and materials for the "fast chain." Each person makes contact, in person or by phone, with the next day's faster to pass it on—these conversations are people's favorite part. Diana also makes sure fast participants are honored on Easter. We also decided a couple of years ago that it was time to revamp the church garden. The project ended as in a partnership with the Ellsworth Garden Club and the local Cooperative Extension as a native plant and pollinator garden. It was professionally designed by a volunteer and anything invasive was taken out. It's intended to be educational to the community or visitors, including a beautiful interpretive sign. In the summer, it has butterflies and bees. The new memorial bench to our late beloved deacon Joan is a beautiful place to sit and enjoy it all.

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

In a stewardship sermon in 2018, the now-Junior Warden said, “Truthfully, I find my affection for St. Dunstan’s rather inexplicable.” He said he hadn’t felt that way about other churches, even ones where he had spent decades. “While I can’t explain it, I know that I feel it. It’s a bit like the distinction between ownership and renting.” One couple assumed they would switch to a different church after they moved several towns away, but their ties are so strong that they never have. That sense of ownership was on full display in the recent fundraising campaign for a new digital organ. The then-new music director and a dedicated committee researched, strategized, and made it happen: nearly \$40,000 raised from parishioners and friends. In early 2020, Bishop Brown noted at his first visitation that not once, in an extensive conversation with the vestry, did anyone express concerns about our building or campus. Everything is in good shape, thanks to outstanding junior wardens leading an army of gardeners, painters, the “precision mowing team” and the snow shoveling crew. Congregants have always put their money (and elbow grease) where their mouth is as far as committing to the church.

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

We had a lesson a few summers ago in how important it is to communicate more, not less, when the going gets rough. One Sunday the priest at the time found she had a hard time focusing on her sermon when the two babies in the congregation, playing together, began to “talk” a bit in their play. The priest made a gesture she intended to mean, “It would help if someone took them downstairs to play.” But the families felt they were, collectively, being shooed away. One of the fathers sent the priest an email expressing his hurt and asking to talk. The priest felt unfairly blamed, wanted more time to cool off and didn’t reply for several days. The hard feelings got harder. Some felt the kids had been too loud; others said the silence the following Sundays with no kids at all was eerie and sad. A mom who hadn’t been there on the day the conflict began said she was scared to come back to church. It took longer than we would have liked, but we slowly began the conversations about how to move forward. With God’s grace, we can admit to and learn from our mistakes. By grace, we are still family.

What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

In beginning our discernment process, we’ve talked through some older history. Some families left and joined a breakaway Anglican church following the ordination of Bishop Robinson in New Hampshire in 2003. Tensions around different ways of doing church, and church music, came to the surface around the same time. We stopped being able to afford a full-time priest in 2010 and that was hard for everyone to swallow. But we all learned from it—the cracks, as one vestry member likes to say, are where the light comes through. Our last interim between priests, beginning in 2013, was quite long, about 18 months. We got even better at working together to keep the ship going in the right direction. When we did call our last priest (Johanna), she was this church’s first female clergy leader. That created another round of uncertainty from some corners, but through thoughtful efforts on both sides the discomfort subsided. Mother Johanna was intentional about helping the church prepare for an uncertain future: growing involvement in liturgy, clarifying who does what in our governance, standing up for ourselves. We’re full of hope for what God’s spirit working in us can grow in coming seasons.

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Prior Incumbents

| Name | Position Title | Date Begun | Date Ended |
|-------------------------------|---|------------|------------|
| The Rev. Christopher Chornyak | Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time) | 1995-01 | 2012-06 |

| Name | Position Title | Date Begun | Date Ended |
|----------------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| The Rev. Joan Preble | Deacon | 2005-01 | 2018-01 |

| Name | Position Title | Date Begun | Date Ended |
|----------------------------------|---|------------|------------|
| The Rev. Johanna-Karen Johansson | Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time) | 2013-11 | 2020-11 |

| Church School | Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School | Number of Students for Children School |
|---------------|--|--|
|---------------|--|--|

| Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School | Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School | Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School | Number of Students for Adults School |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| | | | 10 |

| Day School | Number of Students for Day School | Number of Teachers for Day School | Number of Total Staff for Day School |
|------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|



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Worshipping Community Web site:

Media Links:

Online References:

Languages Significantly Represented:

Provide Worship or Classes in:

References

Bishop:

Diocesan Transition Minister

Current Warden/Board Chair

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader