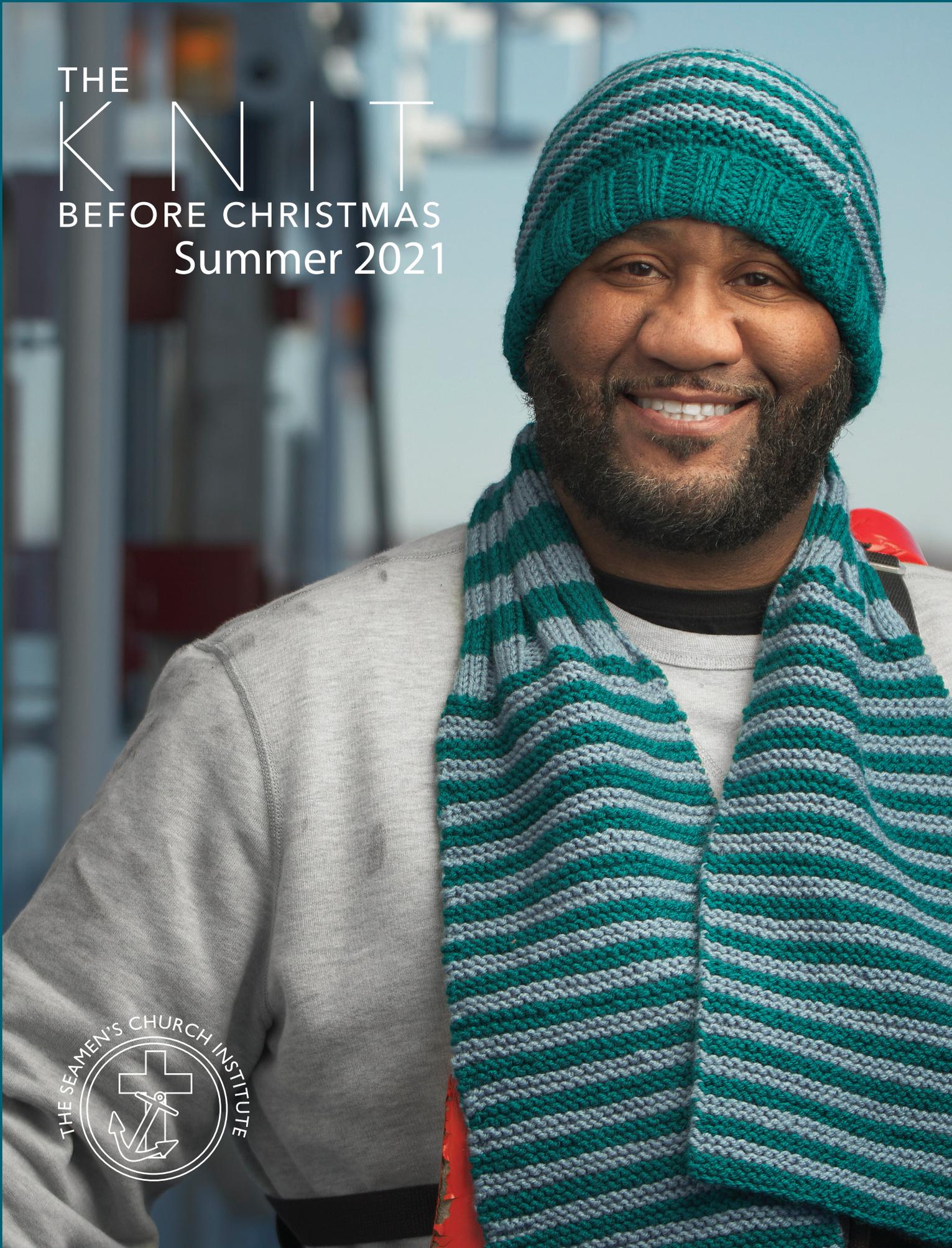
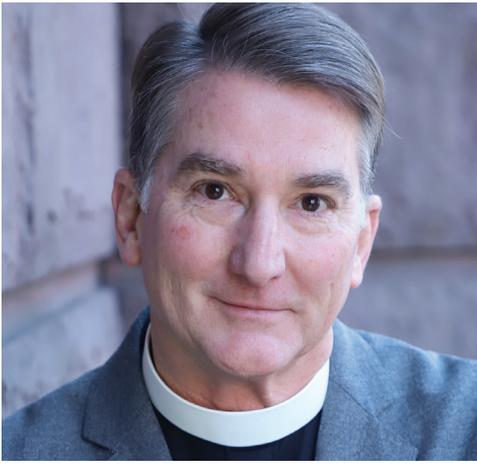


THE
KNIT
BEFORE CHRISTMAS
Summer 2021





FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I confess that I associate the Christmas holiday with snow. Not that I experienced much snow at Christmas during my childhood in Georgia. But I knew from movies, books, hymns, and carols, that in a perfect, idealized world, Christmases were meant to be snowy and cold. It wasn't until my teenage years, while visiting a friend in Massachusetts, that I experienced a white Christmas. And it was about a decade later that I experienced the opposite of a white Christmas when I spent Christmas working in South Africa. Located near the bottom of the Southern Hemisphere, South Africans often choose to spend Christmas Day at the beach enjoying sand and surf and an end-of-day barbeque. I think of this diversity of climates and Christmas weather as we mail out the summer issue of *The Knit Before Christmas*.

For many of us in the United States, summer is a time for beach trips, swimming pools, outdoor activities, and family vacations before the children return to school. As such, in late August, I do not find myself thinking about my Christmas card list or the list of presents to be purchased for family and friends. No, my thoughts are much more immediate. And yet, I know that in the world of Christmas at Sea (CAS), Christmas is just around the corner.

Last year was a record year for CAS in the number of handmade knits and crocheted gifts that were lovingly produced by our amazing team of knitters and crocheters—almost 23,000 hats, scarves, and other items. Obviously, this number of pieces cannot be produced during the few months leading up to Christmas. No, CAS is a year-round mission and ministry requiring strong leadership, coordination, and a dedicated team of volunteers from all 50 states throughout the U.S. and beyond, who knit, crochet, and sew.

By mid-July, CAS had received 6,000 knits, 1,500 ditty bags, and recruited another 79 new volunteers. Some of these hats and scarves have been shipped to SCI's team of river chaplains as we prepare to gift over 1,000 CAS packages to the mariners crewing vessels on the U.S. inland river system and intracoastal waterways. A similar number of items are reserved for international seafarers who sail the oceans of the world and may find warmth and comfort in the hat, scarf, or booties—well beyond Christmas—as they transit the southern tips of South America and Africa during July or August.

In my travels and encounters with mariners, I often hear stories of their first CAS bag and what it meant to them and how they still have it years later. These gifts and memories would not be possible without the dedication of our volunteer knitters, crocheters and sewers. It takes a community of thousands of volunteers to produce over 20,000 gifts and memories that brighten the Christmas holiday and remind seafarers and mariners that they are valued and remembered.

On behalf of my SCI colleagues and board, I wish to thank those of you who lovingly produce these gifts, those who volunteer for the packing days, and those who support CAS financially in this year-round mission. Since 1898, the success of CAS has depended on you.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "MARK". The letters are stylized and connected.

The Reverend Mark S. Nestlehatt
President & Executive Director

KNIT NOTES

Dear CAS volunteers and supporters,

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. The cubbies lining the back wall of the CAS work room are filled with colorful knits and crochets. Over 2,000 handmade garments were shipped to Baton Rouge for packing and distribution. Two 16-bushel bins containing 500 paired hat and scarf/cowl sets patiently wait for fall packing groups. Donations arrive daily as we prepare for another joyful season of gift giving.



I have been eagerly anticipating this issue of *The Knit Before Christmas*. There is much to report; I hardly know where to begin. I am particularly pleased to herald the launch of *Untangled*, SCI's new Facebook page for CAS volunteers. *Untangled* is an interactive and comprehensive resource for knitters, crocheters, and ditty bag makers. We can already boast over 200 members, sharing tips, posting and answering challenging questions, and offering encouragement. It is a warm and welcoming online community and I invite you to join.

Another project I hope you are as excited about as I am, is our new CAS Handbook. This ambitious undertaking began over a year ago. I was about to reorder our pattern book, when it occurred to me to review the patterns to make sure they were as clear and concise as possible. Realizing I needed help to accomplish this, I enlisted the assistance of a seasoned knit tech editor, a master crocheter, and our team of CAS Angels. The result is a newly-imagined "how to" manual featuring our most popular patterns for knitters and crocheters at every skill level. The CAS Handbook is available to everyone in a digital format on our website.

Also available on our website, are contemporary and traditional gift tags in PDF format. It is not a requirement to affix gift tags to your donations. We will happily do that for you in Port Newark; however, it is a great time saver and very much appreciated when gifts arrive already tagged. You can request gift tags by phone and email, or you can create your own unique gift tags.

This summer edition of *The Knit Before Christmas* is brimming with interesting stories and interviews. Be sure to stay connected between issues by subscribing to our monthly digital e-newsletter, *The Masthead*, and by following SCI on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

With gratitude for all you do in support of mariners: thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne".

Joanne Bartosik
Senior Manager of Development and Christmas at Sea

THE KNIT BEFORE CHRISTMAS is published biannually by the Communications Office of The Seamen's Church Institute (SCI).

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MANY WAYS OF GIVING



When Mary Ellen Ferderber agreed to accompany her good friend, Darolene, on a trip to visit her grandson in Brooklyn, they decided to make a stop at Christmas at Sea headquarters in Port Newark as well. Mary Ellen and Darolene enjoyed visiting with Joanne and meeting some of the chaplains during their stay. Born in New Jersey, Mary Ellen's family moved to Florida when she was in high school. She started knitting for CAS a few years ago when she was gifted with 30 skeins of yarn.

"I really love to knit, but you only need so many shawls in Florida. I was looking for a faith-based organization to use the yarn, in addition to the chemo knits that I create. Christmas at Sea seemed like the perfect outlet," says Mary Ellen. "I like to make the 1898 Hat with a Seafarer's Vest for a set."

She has several tips for fellow knitters: To use up small quantities, she stripes with yarn in complimentary colors. Mary Ellen also likes to start with a solid color for the crown and a variegated yarn for the ear flaps of the hat to add visual interest and to vary the work.

A member of the Roper Legacy Society, SCI's planned giving program, Mary Ellen "believes in paying things forward." Her husband is a U.S. Air Force Vietnam veteran and her father served in WWII. Her husband's father was a colonel in the Air Force. Because of her family's experience in the military, she recognizes how hard it is for mariners to be away from their families. "But without their service we would not be able to live the lives that we do," says Mary Ellen.



The Roper Legacy Society acknowledges the thoughtful generosity of individuals who have included the Seamen's Church Institute in their estate plans as an important philanthropic commitment to furthering the Institute's mission. Through their planned gifts, Roper Legacy Society members create a tradition that sustains and enables SCI to continue to meet the immediate needs of mariners through pastoral care, continuing education and training, and advocacy.

For information about becoming a Roper Legacy Society member, please email Joanne Bartosik at jbartosik@seamenschurch.org or phone 973.589.5828.



Technical Expertise and
an Affinity for the Mariner Life:
NANCY HARRINGTON

Christmas at Sea's (CAS) latest collaboration seems to have been written in the stars. When Senior Manager of Development and Christmas at Sea, Joanne Bartosik, researched candidates for tech editor of the new CAS Handbook, she consulted a list of experts on The Knitting Guild Association website. Joanne initially approached Nancy Harrington because of her proximity to CAS headquarters.

"Joanne didn't know anything about me or my background, and perhaps, may have been surprised when I expressed immediate interest," says Nancy. "This project hit on so many of the things that are defining elements of my life, including knitting, especially charity knitting, technical editing of knit patterns, and mariners."

Joanne had no way of knowing that Nancy had grown up in a maritime family, and had personally experienced the challenges of isolation from loved ones during the holidays that CAS addresses. Nancy's father was a Captain in the Merchant Marines on cargo ships traveling from San Francisco to the Far East up to his retirement in the 1960s. He would generally travel for six weeks and be home for two. Because he chose to take a 10-week vacation in the summer, Nancy's father was always away on the ocean at Christmas. Nancy still owns a cherished Hope Chest from Hong Kong and hand-carved wooden flower baskets from the Philippines—keepsakes delivered by her father on his return from Christmastime trips.

Nancy's introduction to SCI occurred years ago when her brother, a Chief Engineer who worked on cargo ships around the world, received a CAS package. "On his first job after graduating from the

California Maritime Academy, he was working on APL SS. *President Hayes* in December 1964, and was mid-Atlantic headed from Livorno, Italy, via Great Circle North Atlantic to New York. He remembers receiving a gift bag from SCI with a blue hand-knit Seafarer's Vest. As the seas and weather were terrible, as is usual both summer and winter in the North Atlantic, the warmth of the vest was greatly appreciated. He was totally surprised when gifts from SCI were distributed to all the mariners, even when he was out on the sea, far away from home and family. That memory stays with him even today, a half century later."

Thanks to Nancy and other experts and supporters, we are introducing the unique handbook this month on our website. The guide features new and updated patterns as well as an introduction to the program.

"I am most pleased to be part of this new CAS handbook. I am amazed by the generosity of time, talent and energy that goes into the thousands of hand-crafted gifts given to mariners at Christmastime. I add my wishes for a blessed trip for each mariner, doing such an important job."



New Pattern! Crochet Cowl • Designer: Beth Hall

Special Stitch: Double Slip Stitch (Dbl-slst)—Insert hook in same space as last stitch worked, yo and pull up a loop, insert hook under both loops of next st, yo, and pull this loop through both loops on hook. (1 stitch completed.)

Note: The chain 2 at the beginning of a row counts as an hdc.

Chain 26 loosely.

Row 1 (right side): Sc in back bump of 2nd chain from hook and each across. Ch 1, turn. (25 sc)

Row 2: Sl st under both loops of 1st st. Dbl-slst, starting in same st and next st, and across for 20 stitches. At the last

stitch, pull up a loop under the same stitch, then pull up a loop in the chain-2 space of the previous row—3 loops on hook—this yarn over 1 more time and pull through all 3 loops. Ch 2, turn. (25 st) (The piece should measure between 6.5 and 7"; if not, adjust number of starting chains accordingly and start over.)

Row 3: Hdc in BLO in 2nd stitch and each stitch across. Ch 1, turn. (25 hdc)

Repeat Rows 2 & 3 until piece measures 20", ending with Row 2.

Closing Row: With right sides facing out (wrong sides together), sl st FLO of the last row worked and the BLO of Row 1 across. Cut yarn and finish ends.

Skill Level 1:



Finished Measurements:
Approximately 10" by 6.5/7"

Materials: Approximately 150 yards worsted (Category 4) yarn. Sample worked in Caron One Pound.

US I hook or size needed for correct gauge

Finishing needle

Gauge: 7 hdc = 2"

Abbreviations:

ch - chain
BLO - back loop only
Dbl-slst - Double Slip Stitch (see special stitches)
dc - double crochet
FLO - front loop only
hdc - half double crochet
sc - single crochet
sl st - slip stitch
st - stitch(es)
yo - yarn over



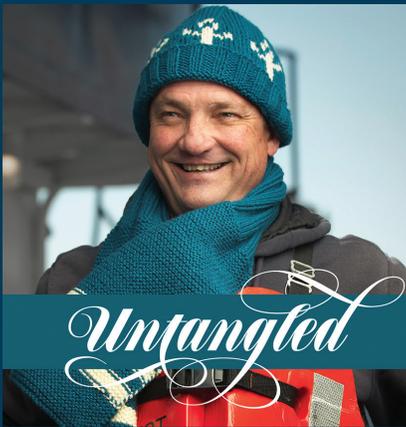
In addition to this newly-imagined crochet version of our popular cowl, we are pleased to offer crocheters a version of our 1898 Hat (pictured above with the cowl).

The Crochet 1898 Hat pattern, along with all our patterns, is now available on our patterns and publication page on our website: seamenschurch.org/programs-services/christmas-at-sea/patterns-publications/



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UNTANGLED, A NEW SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERIENCE FOR CHRISTMAS AT SEA VOLUNTEERS



April 30th was the official launch of *Untangled*, SCI's new Facebook page for Christmas at Sea volunteers. *Untangled* is envisioned as the primary resource for all things Christmas at Sea. Members of *Untangled* experience a warm and

interactive community of volunteers who post and respond to questions about patterns, fibers, and color palettes. It is a place to meet and mingle with other volunteers; an encouraging and nurturing forum to share projects and spark creativity while incorporating fun and camaraderie—all for a good cause.

Untangled is not intended to be a replacement for SCI's main Facebook page. Stay connected and up to date with

SCI news and stories by following SCI at facebook.com/seamenschurch. The SCI Facebook page will continue to feature photographs of handmade knits/crochets/ditty bags donated by volunteers for mariners.

Untangled is growing in popularity. To date there are over 200 members. Many of the posts are from crafters looking for answers to pressing questions. Often the posts are light and whimsical, as in the case of a ditty bag maker who posted a photograph of a stack of fabric for ditty bags and invited fellow members to guess how many were ready to be sewn. Pictures of attractive and original yarn bowls became quite fashionable, and it is not unusual to see coming attractions of projects in various stages.

"It's been a lot of fun seeing how the site has organically grown and taken off with a momentum of its own," observed Christmas at Sea manager, Joanne Bartosik. "I was on the fence with starting a new Facebook group. I was afraid we might lose followers in the transition, but that is proving not to be the case. I think because it is a private group, members feel more comfortable participating."

You can request to join *Untangled* by logging on to facebook.com/groups/untangled.sci.