

The Parish Church of St. John in the Wilderness



2024 Annual Report

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Award for Outstanding Service Insert

Annual Parish Meeting 2025 Agenda

Prayer and Call to Order

Logistics/Voter Qualifications

Election of Secretary for the Annual Meeting

Review & Acceptance of 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes

Business

- Questions and Answers regarding Rector's Address to the Parish
- Recognition of Outgoing Leadership
- Elections and Appointments
 - 2025 Elections
 - Warden (1: 2 year term)
 - Vestry (3: 3 year terms)
 - ECMN Convention Delegates (3 - 1 yr term) Alternate (1-1yr term)
 - Explanation of Nomination and Voting Processes
 - Call for Nominations from the floor
 - Closing of Nominations
 - Appointment of Election Judges (if necessary)
 - Voting (in person only)
 - Announcement of Elections
- Financial Business
 - Review & Acceptance of 2024 Financial Report
 - Review of 2025 Financial Plan as approved by the Vestry

Presentation of the Outstanding Service Award

Presentation of the 2025 Chili Contest Winner

Prayer and Adjournment

St. John in the Wilderness Annual Parish Meeting Minutes

In-Person & Virtual (Google Meet)

January 14, 2024

I. Prayer and Call to Order

Art Hancock called the meeting to order, and Father Art Hancock opened the Annual Parish Meeting in prayer at 11:50 am.

II. Logistics/Voter Qualifications Explained regarding the Annual Parish Meeting: In-Person & Virtual (Google Meet).

Review voter qualifications and explanation of the nomination process.

Canons for Episcopal Church of MN

Article 2 of St. John in the Wilderness Bylaws

Organization of Annual Parish Meeting booklet

III. Election of Secretary for the Annual Parish Meeting

Kathy Smith nominated Jeanne Thoemke to serve as Secretary for this Annual Meeting.

Motion Seconded by Art Hancock

Discussion: None

Motion Carried (vote held)

IV. Review and Acceptance of 2023 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Angie Gordon to approve the January 15, 2023; Annual Parish Meeting Minutes as written.

Motion Seconded by John Kobinski

Discussion: None

Motion Carried (vote held)

V. Business

- **Treasurer's Report**

- Review of 2023 Financial Report, pages 6 & 7 (Barry Kostyk)

- Acceptance of 2023 Finance Report

Motion made by Judy Caldwell to accept the 2023 Financial Report as presented (included in Annual Meeting Booklet)

Motion Seconded by Shelly Page

Discussion: None

Motion Carried (vote held)

- Presentation of 2024 Financial Plan (Harvey Caldwell)

- Questions Regarding Treasurer's Report (Harvey Caldwell)

- **Rector Address:** (Rector's Address presented during Sunday's service and in 2024 Annual Report. Art Hancock also invited parishioners to the Visioning Process which will be held over the next 3 weeks.

- **Presentation of Outgoing Leadership:**

Art Hancock presented Outgoing Leadership Members: Harvey Caldwell, Will McBride, Janet Waller, and Jeanne Thoemke.

- **Elections (Harvey Caldwell, Art Hancock)**

- 2024 Elections

- Warden (1, 2-year term)

- Vestry (3, 3-year terms)

- Vestry (1, 1-year term)
 - ECMN Convention Delegates (1 alternate, 2-year terms)
 - o Explanation of Nomination and Voting Processes
 - o Call for Nominations from the floor
 - o Announcement of Elections
 - o Voting (in person only)
- Motion Made by Tom Hove to accept the nomination of Jim DeMay as Warden for a two-year term.
Art H asked for additional nominations for Warden, there were none.
Motion Seconded by Al Bradley
Discussion: None
Motion Passed (vote held)
 - Motion made by Angie Gordon to accept the slate of incoming vestry members: Tom Hove, Nick Pearson and Jennifer Miller (each for a three-year term)
Art H asked for additional nominations for Vestry, there were none.
Motion Seconded by Pat Pickering.
Discussion: None
Motion Passed (vote held)
 - Motion made by Sherry to accept the slate of incoming vestry members: Barbara Maloney and Al Bradley to each complete one year remaining of three-year terms.
Art H asked for additional nominations for Vestry, there were none.
Motion Seconded by Stephanie Sulentic.
Discussion: None
Motion Passed (vote held)
 - Motion made by Angie Gordon to accept the nomination of Tracy Angelo as an alternate to ECMN Convention for a two-year term.
 - Art H asked for additional nominations for ECMN Convention alternate, there were none.
Motion Seconded by Shelly Page
Discussion: None
Motion Passed.

VI. Presentation of the Outstanding Service Award

Art Hancock presented Shelly Page with the Outstanding Service Award.

VII. Presentation of the 2024 Chili Contest Winner

Nicole Korth was the winner of the 2024 Chili Contest!

VIII. Art H. Closed Meeting in Prayer

Motion Made by Stephanie Sulentic to adjourn the meeting

Motion Seconded by Derrill Pankow

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeanne Thoemke
Secretary

Rector's Annual Address to the Parish of St. John in the Wilderness January 19, 2025

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Dear Siblings in Christ,

This morning we come together to reflect on our common life as the people of St. John in the Wilderness in White Bear Lake, Minnesota. We do so, being among those who have worshipped in this building for ninety-nine years. As those first communicants at St. John's gave their lives for the sake of God's kingdom and who sought to be faithful witnesses of God's love in the times in which they lived, so do we. Each era has its own challenges and each has its own faithful expression.

The Collect for today calls upon God to light up God's people that we may "shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth." Note that while Christ's glory shines in us, it is God who is actually doing the work. The prayer makes the bold claim that this "shining," this "radiating," happens when God's people are "illumined by [God's] Word and Sacraments." In other words, when we as God's people focus our lives around Word and sacrament, we are lit up. And when we are lit up, the whole world is changed for the better.

That's some powerful stuff. That is an audacious, exciting way to understand what our lives in this parish are all about. God, working through Word and Sacrament, making us beacons of love and life. We are both recipients and ambassadors of God's love. As I have been saying for years, we do this through our praying, through our growing, and through our serving.

It has been a tumultuous year in the world and in our nation. In the months leading up to this past November's presidential election, many of us became mesmerized by the nation's politics, and most of us had and continue to have strong opinions regarding the candidates. The election is now over, of course, and the American people have a decisive winner and new president. Challenging issues, however, remain, and as both citizens of this country and as Christians, we are called upon to remain truthful with our words and loving in our actions.

Quite frankly, the election put a great strain on our fellowship here at St. John's. To be faithful to what one believes to be true while also being respectful of all God's children is hard work. I am so pleased to report, however, that we have held fast and have continued to proclaim the good news of Christ Jesus in our words and actions, even in the midst of these unprecedented times. Despite strong differences of opinion in many matters, we have chosen to remain connected with each other. That alone is strong evidence of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit among us. Our bonds of affection will continue to face pressure in this new year, but I am confident that we will persist in choosing understanding and connection.

Central to our common life is our Sunday worship. Many people work hard to make sure that our Sunday offering is both pleasing to God and edifying to God's people. Much happens behind the scenes. We have a Liturgical Planning Team that meets many months ahead to think through an entire liturgical season and recommend elements that may be included in worship. These recommendations are reviewed and tweaked by the clergy. A Liturgy and Worship Committee, comprising of vergers, altar guild members, clergy, and others, meets to consider how best to execute our plans. And then, of course, our worship to God is offered. Again, many individuals are required to pull off our worship on Sunday mornings. Altar Guild members and lectors and acolytes and vergers and musicians and singers and livestream technicians, and greeters and eucharistic ministers and ushers and others all play their role. It is truly like a small musical performance each Sunday, and I continue to be so grateful for the seriousness and dedication that all of you grant to the effort. It is through Word and Sacrament, offered and received on Sunday morning, that we are fueled for our Christian work the remainder of the week.



I would like to highlight three areas of our shared parish life that have been nothing short than exceptional this year. They are: the Rising Generations Ministry, the Music Ministry, and the Connect Groups.

Maggie Howe and her community of young parents and their children have done some truly remarkable work this year. Each week they gather for Sunday School, and on most Wednesdays, programming is offered to children and young people as part of the Wilderness Wednesday evening. Our young families have engaged in service projects at least one Saturday a month, have participated in leading worship, and have been a vibrant part of most of the intergenerational parish events. We have been blessed this year by the sights and sounds of happy (most of the time) children who are learning to love others as they themselves are being loved.

Under the leadership of David Lim (now, Dr. David Lim) our music ministry has been rejuvenated and is excelling. Our Chancel Choir, while small in number, has been faithful in both their times of rehearsal and in worship. There have been beautiful pieces that have been well prepared and presented. I am just amazed at the quality of singing from such a small group. Our Heartbeat worship band, led by Carrie Thomas under the supervision of David, has grown greatly in number of participants and continues to inspire us with new pieces of music. Music has always been important to the people of St. John's, and we are on fine footing for the year ahead.

Connect Groups are part of our Adult Formation program. Basically, Connect Groups are simply small groups, organized around a common interest or theme. Our Associate Priest, Kate Maxwell, has been a resource to these groups, but really the leadership has rested with volunteer lay people. From my perspective as Rector, the most important part of our Connect Groups is that we are actually getting to know each other in much deeper ways. Participation in Connect Groups has also grown this year, and our parish is benefitting.

There is also, of course, much more that is happening in our parish life. Many of you are involved in ministry groups that meet regularly both in person and online. Faith formation classes and retreats are regularly offered. Pastoral care, both from the clergy and from our Community of Hope lay volunteers happens on a daily basis. The building and grounds continue to be maintained by both staff and lay volunteers with our Property Committee leading the way. Our facilities have been offered to numerous groups including the Red Cross and the Gathering. Our little Food Shelf located in the entryway is accessed by numerous people on a daily basis.

Financially, St. John's remains in a strong position. Your faithful pledges and free will offerings are critical to funding our common life and ministry. We currently have the financial wherewithal to employ a full time rector and a few part-time staff people. Currently, we believe that we are appropriately and efficiently staffed. Our endowment is substantial and interest from the endowment continues to help us fund a significant portion of our operating expenses. The Vestry has been attentive to their fiduciary responsibilities this year, and as you will see when the Financial Plan is presented at our Annual Meeting, a responsible financial path forward is being proposed.

I am immensely proud of the work that has been done. I believe that we are truly living into a healthy lay-led, clergy supported, staff resourced model of ministry envisioned by our bishop and fleshed out by many of you. We are gaining new members in this parish while also, of course, losing some due to death or relocation. We certainly have challenges before us, but we remain in a strong position to meet them.

I am deeply grateful for the hard work of:

our Wardens: Kathy Smith and Jim Demay

our Treasurer: Barry Kostyk

our Clerk: Tracy Angelo

our Vestry members: Tom Hove, Jen Miller, Nick Pearson, George Gorbatenko, Sara Harker-Olson, Stephanie Sulentic, Emily Brunner, Al Bradley, and Barb Maloney

our Staff members: Maureen Vruno, Carrie Thomas, Maggie Howe, David Lim, Jake Malark, Lorna Cessna, and Magda Styczen

our volunteer Assistant Sexton: Nick Pearson,

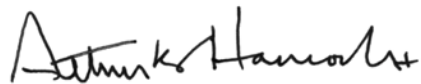
our committee chairs and all those serving in a myriad of capacities in the parish

John Brunner, Nick Howe, and Emily Brunner, who just show up and take care of stuff

and, of course, my clergy colleagues, Kate Maxwell and Margaret Thor

In the coming year, we will be celebrating 100 years of being in this building. As part of our Centennial Celebration, we will be offering a number of programs that tell the story of St. John's. I encourage you to participate in these programs that center on our past. But more importantly, I implore you to become part of the team that is looking to the future. We are inspired by the faithful folk of St. John's past who took seriously the call to be witnesses of God's love and beacons of God's light. May we, like them, *"shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth!"*

Submitted, respectfully and with all my love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arthur Hancock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

The Reverend Arthur Hancock
Rector



2024 Vestry Members

(terms expire at Annual Meeting on year indicated)

Kathy Smith, Warden 2025

George Gorbatenko 2026

Jim DeMay, Warden 2026

Stephanie Sulentic 2026

Barry Kostyk, Treasurer

Sarah Harker-Olsen 2026

Tracy Angelo, Clerk of Vestry

Tom Hove 2027

Barb Maloney 2025

Nick Pearson 2027

Al Bradley 2025

Jen Miller 2027

Emily Brunner 2025

Elections and Appointments

Nominations Committee

The Vestry shall consist of the Rector, two (2) Wardens and nine (9) elected Vestry members. In addition to these persons, the Vestry is assisted in its work by the Treasurer, the Clerk, and St. John's staff. Each member of the Vestry shall be an Adult Communicant in Good Standing. It is preferred that nominations be received at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting so that all nominations may be printed in the Annual Report. Nominations from the floor of the Annual Meeting, including self-nominations, are allowed.

Nominee for Warden

- Mike Carpenter (two year term)

Nominees to the Vestry

- Joanna Torgerson (three year term)
- Gretchen Brunner (three year term)
- (three year term)

Nominees to ECMN Convention

- Anne White (1 year term)
- Tracy Angelo (1 year term)
- Tony Angelo (1 year term)
- *Alternate* (1 year term)

Appointments

- Treasurer
- Clerk
- Committee Chairs

Reports

Senior Warden Report

2024 has been a year of repair, reconsideration, and reflection for your vestry at St. John's, as we worked to support the ministries, property, and work of St. John's on behalf of our Lord!



Our first call to action was to address the Bell Tower roof. Because of the warmer winter, we were able to address the issue with the Property Committee to get the repairs completed before any damage occurred. This was a necessary expenditure.

We knew that our phone system was becoming more and more unreliable, with the Church phones often going down seemingly because of weather conditions. Since the original telecom company renounced responsibility for repairing the incoming lines, the decision was made to upgrade the phone system, which was money well-spent, as is evidenced by the fact that the phones have not gone down since.

Our Stewardship campaign was successful. We asked the members of St. John's to increase pledges, and the congregation responded well. The congregation also responded well to the Christmas and Advent appeal so that we could take appropriate action to address the needs of the kitchen. That will be addressed by the vestry going forward in 2025.

In 2024 your vestry worked to create a responsible budget of income and expenses for 2025.

We also worked to support the Centennial Committee in their preparations for the 2025 centennial of the building of our church building. We hope that you will all participate and attend all the centennial events! Invite your friends, family, and neighbors to the centennial activities!!!

At this time, I would like to extend special thanks to Barb Maloney, Al Bradley, and Emily Brunner for their service on the Vestry. Their insights and questions have been invaluable! It has been a pleasure working with Father Art and Jim DeMay! I'll miss our weekly meetings. And also special thanks to all the vestry members remaining, and the new members joining the Vestry.

God Bless you all!
Senior Warden
Kathy Smith

Music Ministry Report

Music Ministry at St. John's relies on a dedicated group of parishioners who help lead worship at the 10am Eucharist as part of the Chancel Choir and Heartbeat band. Instrumental music is also offered at the 8am Eucharist; no hymns are sung.

Psalm 95 invites us: "Come, let us sing to the Lord." Such is the case each Sunday at St. John where we maintain a schedule with the Chancel Choir and Heartbeat alternating Sunday music responsibilities. Each ensemble generally leads worship twice monthly. The Chancel Choir rehearses weekly on Wednesday evenings. Several other singers augmented the choir for Easter and Advent Lessons & Carols. An *ad hoc* Summer Choir sang three times during the summer months. Heartbeat consists of several guitarists, bassist, violists, drummer, and singers. Heartbeat led worship for the Easter Vigil, outdoor worship over the summer, and collaborated with the musicians at Ascension Episcopal in Stillwater on All Saints Day. The parish's children have participated in music during their Christmas Pageant, singing several Christmas carols.

Hymns and service music are primarily sung from *Hymnal 1982*, augmented by music from *Wonder, Love, and Praise* (WLP), *My Heart Sings Out* (MHSO), and *Voices Found* (VF). Psalmody is sung/chanted on Sundays using a variety of resources: Anglican chant tones, *The Ionian Psalter*, *The Portland Psalter*, *The Emergent Psalter*, amongst others.

As Music Minister, I oversee all aspects of St. John's music ministry - service playing; hymn and anthem planning; ensemble rehearsals and recruiting; leadership/committee meetings and communication; instrument maintenance. I have sought to program meaningful, substantive music during Eucharist and other services. In cooperation with myself, Carrie Thomas leads and plans for Heartbeat.

The parish boasts several instruments: a Cassavant organ and Steinway piano reside in the church; a Stegler piano in the choir room; a Bechstein piano in the parish hall. An electronic keyboard and various percussion instruments are used sparingly. Minnesota's changing seasons, ripe with temperature and humidity fluctuations, require that the organ and pianos be tuned twice a year. Patrick Fisher tunes our organ; Tomas Hardy maintains our pianos. The organ was re-tempered into Fisk II (a slightly unequal tuning system) and continually develops new mechanical issues (misbehaving console electronics and wind leaks) which require attention in the near future. The Steinway piano is in stable, good repair. The Bechstein piano sits idle and requires significant attention to bring it to suitable playable condition.

Both worship and music making are inherently collaborative acts, requiring participation of all. May our song communicate our prayers.

Pax vobiscum,
David Lim, DMA
Music Minister



Rising Generations Report

Greetings, Friends in Christ!

In 2024, our objective in programming was to Grow in Beloved Community. Of course it's important for us to be a strong and loving community here at St. John's, but the real point of all of this church stuff is to prepare us all (little kids included) to go out into this world and do our best to live like Jesus did: speaking hard truths, going to rough places and being there for the people who society rejected, and loving ALL of our neighbors fiercely, no matter how different they might seem. That's some tough stuff to do, but we're chipping away at it over in the Rising Generations Department.



In the last year, our Sunday morning programming has shifted in design to better prepare our young people to be agents of love and change. We've created a One Room Sunday School House where our youth meet with a team of clergy and adult leaders to process big topics and prepare lessons to lead for our younger group during a later week. Through carefully considering what is most important to convey, and then having an opportunity to deliver that message in whatever way they see fit, this youth-led model offers a chance for youth and children, alike, to better understand the teachings of Christ. We've also started incorporating





restorative circles into our meetings, which encourage us to share from our hearts and listen with our hearts, ultimately preparing us to work through conflict and make big decisions in our lives outside of church. By preparing our young people to be leaders, listeners, peace makers and truth tellers, we are getting them ready to live a life like Jesus did.

In the last year, we've also been growing partnerships within the broader community. We served on first Saturdays of the month at Casa Maria, Good Courage Farm, and First Nations Kitchen, all of which are partners within the wider Episcopal community. Through serving, young people learn what grass roots ministry looks like and how it's done, as well as develop meaningful connections for future service opportunities. We're also growing our relationships with other faith communities. We had youth attend diocesan retreats and youth camp. We partnered with St. Christopher's to put on a Vacation Bible

School. We stayed at St. Andrews by the Lake in Duluth while we served and adventured along the North Shore last summer. In the coming year, we are joining a collective of churches in St. Paul to offer programming and events that teach kids what it looks like to pursue justice through the lens of faith.

In this centennial year, we will continue to look at who we want to be as a Beloved Community, and we will continue to grow in that direction.

With Love,
Maggie Howe



Altar Guild Report

Altar Guild Members: Tracy Angelo, Al Bradley (retired), Judy Caldwell (retired), Pris Campbell, Jackie Danda, Kelly Desmet, Cyndi Domin, Pam Hove (retired), Anne Johnson (retired), Virginia Johnston (retired), Shelley Page, Derrell Pankow (retired), Pat Pickering, Katheryn Schneider, and Emily Waymire, engage weekly with St. John's community and ministry.

We are proud of the work done by our Sacristans: Steve Johnson, John Johnson, Mark Hosfield, Tony Angelo, and Harvey Caldwell (retired), and. The Sacristans step up whenever they are needed and regularly set up the aisle-labras/hurricane lamps, hang seasonal garland and banners, carry heavy items from storage, as necessary. Sacristans are always there when needed.

Altar Guild members remain amazing! Weekly our Altar Guild team sets up, clears, and cleans our altar and credence tables, washes, dries, polishes, repairs, and stores vessels, launders, and irons linens. Altar Guild coordinates St. John's service needs for Sundays, Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals. We maintain all items in our care and display our parament colors, hangings, ornaments, as needed.

We are using our Altar Guild Google files for meeting agendas, minutes, and service schedules with some success, along with a new Altar Guild Service Guide. Altar Guild notifications are emailed and Texted.

We see God in each other and as we prepare St. John's altar area and sanctuary for its ministry.

We have retired six dedicated Altar Guild team members and a Sacristan in 2024. Recruiting new Altar Guild team members appears difficult. We are learning Altar Guild volunteer work is more demanding than difficult, and more hands make lighter work.

We are excited about recruiting new Altar Guild members and gaining their perspectives while continuing our Altar Guild fellowship and supporting each other in the continued mission and beautiful traditions at St. John in the Wilderness. We have experienced and talented Altar Guild team members who know their way around our sacristy and consistently do good work. When you watch our Altar Guild team prepare for services you see an engaged all-hands-on-deck effort to accomplish St. John's ministry every day.

Respectfully submitted,
Emily Waymire



Liturgy

Sunday liturgy is the place where the most people in the congregation are touched weekly. Because the liturgy is such a ubiquitous presence, it takes a lot of intention, thought, and planning. It also requires the ongoing, faithful effort of many people:

Altar Guild, planning teams, musicians, vergers, lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, ushers, greeters, schedulers, administrators, and clergy. Gone are the days (if they ever really existed) when priest and organist ‘took care of’ all the liturgical work of a congregation.

In 2024:

The Liturgy and Worship Committee met monthly to review upcoming plans for liturgy, oversee implementation of the many details of worship and gather on what is going well or could be improved. This group is composed of representatives of the Vergers, Altar Guild, and Vestry as well as members of the clergy team.

The Liturgical Planning Team met monthly to plan seasonal liturgy. A couple of months before each season, the team meets to reflect on the gospels of the season, consider what else is going on in that time, and determine what the congregation might need. Suggestions are made for environment, themes, and tone for the season. Members take on tasks to do the planning of the seasonal liturgy, and the proposed liturgy is given to the rector for approval. We also spend some time each season in study, so that we are all growing in our knowledge and practice of liturgy. The 2024 team consisted of many voices, and includes staff members Maggie Howe, David Lim, Kate Maxwell, and Margaret Thor as well as parishioners Tony Angelo, Jackie Danda, Katheryn Schneider, Mark Sears, Stephanie Sulentic, and Melissa Thayer.

Yours in Faith,
Tony Angelo, Parishoner
The Rev. Kate Maxwell, OSB



Pastoral Care

For the last several years, our bishop has asked the leaders of all ECMN communities of faith to consider ways of transforming into lay-led, clergy-supported centers for ministry. Toward this end, there is much innovation that is occurring. Here at St. John's we are doing our own intentional work in this regard, and our pastoral care ministry is a great example.

Pastoral care is appropriately something that clergy do, and naturally, the clergy at St. John's will continue to visit people in the hospital, in their homes, and in various other places to administer the sacraments and bring God's good news to people who often need to receive it desperately. Most suitably, our clergy do this in emergency situations.

Bringing God's good news through pastoral care, however, is also something that lay folks may do. Through the Community of Hope program, Kate Maxwell has trained and is currently supporting the ministries of several laywomen who have accepted the call as Lay Pastoral Ministers. They regularly visit homebound people, praying and offering a supportive, listening ear.

In addition to our Community of Hope ministers, we have reinitiated our Eucharistic Visitor program that was on hold due to covid. Eucharistic Visitors bring the sacrament directly from our Sunday worship to homebound people, usually on Sunday afternoons or early in the week. Once again, this is done in concert with the clergy of the parish. We fully expect the pastoral care at St. John's to continue to be a shared ministry: lay-led, clergy-supported, and staff resourced.

Arthur Hancock (reporting for Kate Maxwell who is on leave)



Adult Formation

The SJW Adult Formation Team had an enriching year of programming, staying true to our mission of fostering holistic faith formation through relationships, life experiences, and Christian discipleship. This year, we connected adults at all stages of their faith journeys through various opportunities such as CONNECT groups, book studies, workshops, and retreats. Highlights included the Wilderness Wednesday “Our Neighbors’ Faith” series, which explored different religions, and meaningful book studies on God’s Politics and Radical Hospitality. The UEC session on second Sundays and the Braver Angels work group further deepened engagement and dialogue. CONNECT groups like the Bible book club and dinner group strengthened community ties, while the discerning our gifts group helped individuals explore their spiritual callings. Through these experiences, participants grew in their understanding of Scripture, faith practices, and ministry, embodying the spirit of discipleship in community. Looking ahead, we are excited to continue expanding our CONNECT groups and formation opportunities, with a focus on empowering more laypeople to take on leadership roles as we grow together in faith.

Emily Brunner
The Rev. Kate Maxwell, OSB



Finance Committee Report

The 2024 Financial Committee Included: Deacon Margaret Thor, Father Art Hancock, Finance Coordinator Maureen Vruno, Treasurer Barry Kostyk, Senior Warden Kathy Smith, Junior Warden Jim DeMay and John Allen – Chair.

At St. John in the Wilderness, we are blessed with a vibrant and growing faith community. We cherish music, liturgy, strong preaching, and invigorating Christian education for all ages. We generously share our many gifts and talents with others; we give each other strength and comfort in times of difficulty, and we rejoice together in times of good fortune and grace.

St. John in the Wilderness has a great history of community support and outreach. This past year Deacon Margaret provided us with numerous opportunities to support the White Bear Lake Food Shelf, our SJW Emergency Food shelf and several local schools, Habitat for Humanity, and the Annual Pride Celebration just to name a few.

The Finance Committee also renewed their support of the various groups that utilize our gathering space. This past year The AR-DALE Dancer, The Gathering, The Red Cross of Minnesota and our annual rummage sale folks enjoyed our wonderful gathering space. Unfortunately, the AR-DALE Dancers are disbanding and will no longer utilize our gathering space and in gratitude they made a significant donation to SJW.

The 2024 Vestry Approved Financial Plan reflected a potential shortfall of -\$57,368.21 based on income of \$470,250.00 and expenses of \$527,618.21. As we wrap up 2024, we anticipate a shortfall of -\$21,000.00. With income estimated at **\$484,369** and expenses of **\$504.925**. Thankfully we did not experience any unexpected significant financial events that had a negative impact on the 2024 plan. John Brunner and Nick Howe, with their talent and skill were able to address a few mechanical and structural issues, and we are all thankful for their many talents. We are grateful for all your support and generosity, with financial gifts that exceeded expectations by over \$12,000. We also extend our thanks for the stewardship displayed by all the Departments and Committees; they managed their budgets responsibly and helped us to reduce the anticipated expenses by \$15,000.

In 2024 we ran a successful fund-raising campaign to support a major improvement to the Parlor. The project is in the final design stages and work should begin shortly. As we look forward to 2025, we will have another opportunity to support a partial kitchen renovation. The Kitchen stove and refrigerator no longer function and need replacement. Please consider your gifts in supporting this great and necessary improvement.

St John in the Wilderness continues to be debt free. The Dedicated Account (SJW Balance Sheet) grew in 2024. The beginning balance was \$1,818,073.96 and ending balance was \$1,860,719.92, a growth of \$42,645.96 after distribution of roughly \$65,852 to the Operating Budget.

The Finance Committee, Wardens, and SJW Departments worked very hard on the 2025 Financial Plan. The Plan projects total income of \$457,000 and expenses of \$503,289 representing a potential shortfall of -\$46,289. We have factored in a reduction in pledge income and facility usage, and expenses have been reduced by \$25,000 **from the 2024 Financial Plan**, however inflation headwinds have impacted payroll

and operating expenses. We have no intent of negatively impacting any program offerings or outreach. The Vestry, Treasurer and Finance Committee are determined to reduce this shortfall without impacting our mission. The Committee will work closely with the Vestry to review our progress monthly and have faith that we can continue to meet our goals and missions of St John in the Wilderness.

I would like to extend my thanks to all of you for allowing me to serve as the Financial Chair. The Committee looks forward to serving this important function at St. John in the Wilderness. If any of you would be interested in joining the Finance Committee, please reach out to the Chair or Father Art.

John Allen, Finance Committee Chair



2024 Financial Report & 2025 Financial Plan

		2023	2024	2024	2024	2023	2023
		Plan	Actual	Budget	Plan	12/31/2023	Plan
		as of 11/30/2024	as of 11/30/2024	as of 11/30/2024	Vestry Approved	YTD	
Income							
Offerings							
400 Pledges		\$335,000.00	\$312,741.46	\$325,000.00	\$350,000.00	\$324,397.05	360,000
402 Plate Cash		\$7,000.00	\$7,284.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,500.00	\$6,297.63	5,000
403 Non-Pledge Offerings		\$40,000.00	\$46,372.78	\$35,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$32,480.91	35,000
404 Seasonal Offering/Holy Days		\$3,500.00	\$3,508.00	\$1,200.00	\$3,500.00	\$6,573.51	2,500
405 Prior Year pledges		\$0.00	\$3,703.88	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,207.28	
		\$385,500.00	\$372,610.10	\$386,200.00	\$389,000.00	\$405,268.88	392,500
Special Income							
406 Unrestricted Gifts to Church		\$0.00	\$11,203.96	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$804.70	
407 Church Use		\$5,000.00	\$8,136.75	\$5,500.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,361.18	5,000
Special Income Totals		\$5,000.00	\$19,440.71	\$5,500.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,365.88	5,000
Other Income							
408 Endowment Earnings		\$64,000.00	\$62,604.41	\$62,000.00	\$62,000.00	\$61,664.67	60,000
409 Investment Income		\$9,000.00	\$8,473.95	\$9,350.00	\$9,600.00	\$8,421.83	6,000
413 Child/Youth Endowment Earnings		\$9,500.00	\$8,773.23	\$8,800.00	\$8,350.00	\$8,363.92	6,300
Other Income Totals		\$82,500.00	\$80,851.59	\$80,150.00	\$82,950.00	\$86,680.42	82,300
Total Income		\$457,000.00	\$457,902.40	\$457,440.00	\$467,250.00	\$478,872.68	459,800
Expenses							
Payroll and Related							
531 Rector Compensation							
531 Rector Salary, Hqs		\$83,244.00	\$80,960.00	\$81,122.40	\$82,400.00	\$81,519.92	82,400
531 Rector SE, Auto		\$9,396.00	\$9,098.01	\$9,700.00	\$9,305.69	\$9,191.98	9,304
540 Rector's Benefits		\$98,488.00	\$93,068.01	\$97,800.00	\$96,817.00	\$94,919.98	40,993
Rector Compensation Totals		\$141,038.00	\$134,018.01	\$128,322.40	\$140,520.60	\$140,439.90	132,896
Staff Compensation							
532 Staff Salaries, Wages		\$109,236.00	\$146,310.73	\$148,219.44	\$167,662.38	\$143,025.83	163,287
546 FICA- Employer's Share		\$12,817.76	\$11,116.47	\$11,338.78	\$12,817.76	\$10,867.20	12,491
537 Staff Benefits		\$12,614.00	\$10,173.02	\$11,057.47	\$12,488.47	\$10,169.03	9,485
Staff Compensation Totals		\$134,657.76	\$168,600.22	\$170,615.69	\$192,968.61	\$164,062.11	185,263
Staff Miscellaneous Expenses (non-stipendary compensation)							
514 Education		\$3,354.00			\$3,000.00	\$2,179.02	4,000
516 Auto Reimbursement Staff		\$2,500.00	\$2,489.80	\$2,750.00	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	1,000
Staff Miscellaneous Expenses Total		\$3,854.00	\$1,880.29	\$3,668.67	\$4,000.00	\$2,179.02	5,000
Payroll Service Fee							
504 Payroll service fee		\$2,300.00	\$1,879.00	\$2,042.08	\$2,200.00	\$2,123.13	2,000
Episcopal Church in Minnesota							
545 Mission & Ministry Support		\$62,266.00	\$60,568.00	\$60,887.00	\$66,096.00	\$66,028.00	66,028
521 Convention Expense		\$600.00	\$664.10	\$375.00	\$600.00	\$770.00	2,000
500 Safe Church Training		\$600.00	\$289.05	\$468.33	\$600.00	\$767.35	2,000
Episcopal Church in Minnesota Totals		\$63,266.00	\$61,441.15	\$61,420.33	\$67,055.00	\$67,565.35	60,028
Church & Grounds Maintenance							
549 Building Maintenance		\$10,000.00	\$15,721.89	\$18,300.00	\$20,000.00	\$13,880.62	20,000
Utilities							
553 Natural Gas		\$9,000.00	\$8,579.02	\$12,300.00	\$13,500.00	\$10,798.61	15,000
554 Electricity		\$7,000.00	\$6,804.64	\$6,900.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,234.06	7,000
555 Water & Sewer		\$1,200.00	\$718.26	\$700.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,100.12	1,000
556 Sanitation/Disposal Services		\$4,700.00	\$4,329.99	\$3,066.67	\$4,000.00	\$4,199.75	4,000
Utilities Total		\$21,900.00	\$17,321.91	\$23,366.67	\$26,100.00	\$23,882.54	27,000

Utilities									
553 Natural Gas	\$9,000.00	\$8,579.02	\$12,300.00	\$13,600.00	\$13,600.00	\$10,798.61	16,000		
554 Electricity	\$7,000.00	\$6,894.64	\$6,200.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,734.06	7,000		
555 Water & Sewer	\$1,200.00	\$718.26	\$200.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,100.12	1,000		
556 Sanitation/Disposal Services	\$4,700.00	\$4,329.99	\$3,000.67	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,199.75	4,000		
Utilities Total	\$21,900.00	\$17,821.91	\$23,566.67	\$26,100.00	\$26,100.00	\$23,882.54	27,000		
Insurance									
558 Insurance	\$20,013.00	\$24,206.50	\$19,204.00	\$19,204.00	\$19,204.00	\$20,677.00	21,000		
Office									
522 Office Supplies	\$1,900.00	\$1,816.66	\$1,833.33	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,889.33	1,500		
523 Telephone & Internet	\$6,900.00	\$6,672.57	\$4,786.67	\$6,200.00	\$6,200.00	\$6,472.02	6,000		
524 Postage	\$900.00	\$867.72	\$916.67	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$980.00	800		
525 Legal and Accounting	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$229.17	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$0.00	250		
526 Office Equipment & Computers	\$2,460.00	\$3,691.84	\$2,383.33	\$2,600.00	\$2,600.00	\$4,586.17	2,600		
520 IT	\$7,100.00	\$6,947.61	\$7,068.33	\$7,700.00	\$7,700.00	\$10,180.89	2,000		
527 Bank Fees	\$1,500.00	\$1,281.06	\$1,833.33	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,460.00	2,000		
Office Total	\$21,000.00	\$21,277.45	\$19,020.83	\$20,750.00	\$20,750.00	\$23,447.41	12,150		
Communications									
528 Digital & Print Media	\$2,700.00	\$2,754.30	\$4,583.33	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,727.73	10,000		

	2023	2024	2024	2024	2023	2023
	Plan	Actual	Budget	Plan	12/31/2023	Plan
Music						
501 Music/Choir Supplies	\$900.00	\$1,319.66	\$826.00	\$900.00	\$941.38	1,800
505 Organ/Piano Maintenance	\$1,000.00	\$820.77	\$907.50	\$990.00	\$1,700.00	1,700
513 Supply Music/Special Music	\$3,000.00	\$1,435.00	\$6,200.00	\$6,000.00	\$7,825.00	10,000
Music Totals	\$4,900.00	\$3,575.42	\$17,282.50	\$17,890.00	\$10,466.38	13,500
Worship						
502 Alter Guild	\$1,000.00	\$879.61	\$723.33	\$900.00	\$827.89	1,000
506 Worship Supplies - Repair of ch	\$500.00	\$306.31	\$687.50	\$750.00	\$106.13	500
507 Supply Clergy	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	500
Worship Total	\$1,500.00	\$1,185.92	\$1,410.83	\$1,650.00	\$1,034.02	2,000
Stewardship						
529 Campaign, Fundraising, ACH, C/C Fee/Mo	\$2,000.00	\$1,385.39	\$1,833.33	\$2,000.00	\$1,665.30	1,000
530 Heritage Society	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$468.33	\$600.00	\$0.00	500
581 Creation Care	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Stewardship Totals	\$2,250.00	\$1,385.39	\$2,291.66	\$2,500.00	\$1,665.30	1,500
Rising Generations						
508 Children's Ministry	\$900.00	\$468.28	\$916.67	\$1,000.00	\$1,043.80	
503 Youth Ministry/Programs	\$900.00	\$604.34	\$916.67	\$1,000.00	\$1,307.83	
511 Young Adults	\$900.00	\$266.00	\$916.67	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	
575 Child Care Supplies	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$204.17	\$650.00	\$33.06	
Rising Generations Totals	\$3,000.00	\$1,267.62	\$3,264.18	\$3,550.00	\$2,384.69	3,500

St. John's 2024 Ministry Team

Vestry:	Tom Hove, Jen Miller, Nick Pearson, George Gorbatenko, Sara Harker-Olson, Stephanie Sulentic, Emily Brunner, Al Bradley, Barb Maloney
Clerk:	Tracy Angelo
Treasurer:	Barry Kostyk
Junior Warden:	Jim DeMay
Senior Warden:	Kathy Smith
Nursery:	Lorna Cessna, Magda Styczen,
Sexton:	Jake Malark
Assistant Sexton:	Nick Pearson
Financial Coordinator:	Maureen Vruno <i>maureen@stjohnwilderness.org</i>
Rising Generations Coordinator:	Maggie DeSmet <i>maggie@stjohnwilderness.org</i>
Music Minister	David Lim <i>david@stjohnwilderness.org</i>
Parish Coordinator:	Carrie Thomas <i>carrie@stjohnwilderness.org</i>
Deacon:	The Rev. Margaret Thor <i>margaret@stjohnwilderness.org</i>
Associate Priest:	The Rev. Kate Maxwell, OSB <i>kate@stjohnwilderness.org</i>
Rector:	The Rev. Arthur Hancock <i>art@stjohnwilderness.org</i>