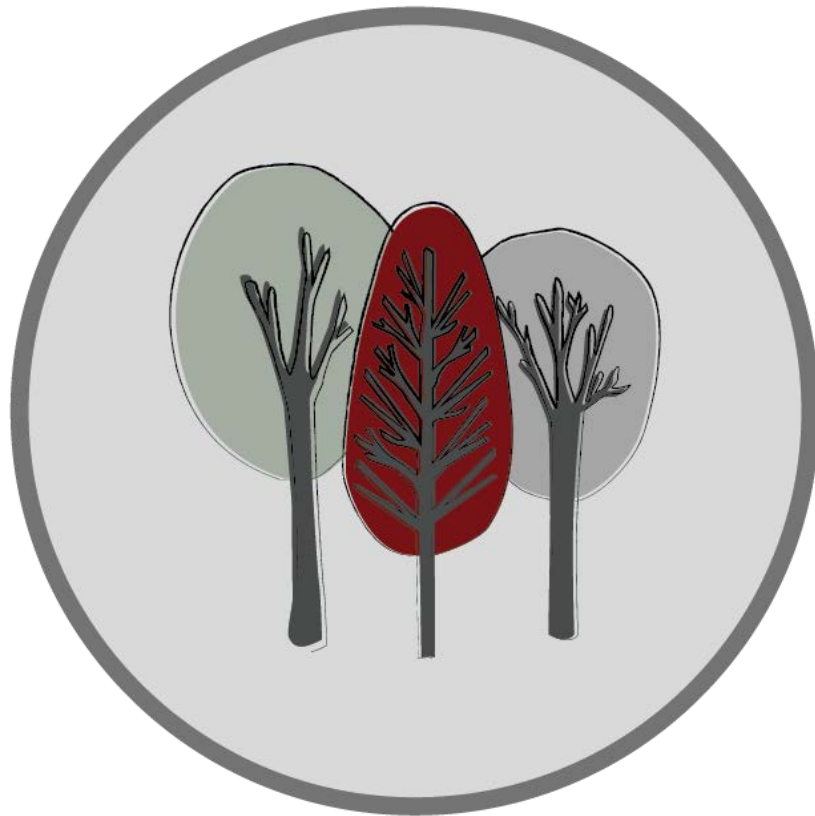


The Parish Church of St. John in the Wilderness



2023 Annual Report

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Annual Parish Meeting 2024 Agenda

Prayer and Call to Order (Harvey Caldwell & Art Hancock)

Logistics/Voter Qualifications (Art Hancock)

Election of Secretary for the Annual Meeting (Harvey Caldwell)

Review & acceptance of 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes (Harvey Caldwell)

Treasurer's Report

- Review of 2023 Financial Report (Barry Kostyk)
 - Acceptance of 2023 Finance Report
- Presentation of 2024 Financial Plan (Harvey Caldwell)
- Questions regarding Treasurer's Report (Harvey Caldwell)

Business

- An Invitation to the Visioning Process (Art Hancock)
- Recognition of Outgoing Leadership (Art Hancock & Harvey Caldwell)
- Elections (Harvey Caldwell, Art Hancock)
 - 2024 Elections
 - Warden (1: 2 year term)
 - Vestry (3: 3 year terms)
 - Vestry (2: 1 year term)
 - ECMN Convention Delegates (1 alternate: 2 year term)
 - Explanation of Nomination and Voting Processes (P.
 - Call for Nominations from the floor
 - Closing of Nominations
 - Appointment of Election Judges (if necessary)
 - Voting (in person only)
 - Announcement of Elections

Presentation of the Outstanding Service Award (Art Hancock)

Presentation of the 2024 Chili Contest Winner (Harvey Caldwell)

Prayer and Adjournment (Art Hancock)

Minutes

Annual Meeting 2023

Annual Meeting Minutes: In-Person & Virtual January 15, 2023

I. Prayer and Call to Order

Father Art Hancock opened the meeting in prayer and called the Annual Parish Meeting to order at 11:45 am.

I. **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

St. John in the Wilderness Bylaws

II. **Election of Secretary for the Annual Parish Meeting**

Harvey Caldwell nominated Jeanne Thoemke to serve as Secretary for this Annual Meeting.

Motion Seconded by Jim DeMay

Discussion – None

Motion Carried (vote held)

III. **Review and Acceptance of 2023 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes**

Motion made by Jim Barry to approve the February 6, 2022; Annual Parish Meeting Minutes as written.

Motion Seconded by Barry Kostyk

Discussion – None

Motion Carried (vote held)

IV. **Business**

- Treasurer's Report
 - Review of 2022 Financial Report (Andrew McClaren, Angie Gordon)
 - Acceptance of 2022 Finance Report

Motion made by Dick Halbert to accept the 2022 Financial Report as presented (included in Annual Meeting Booklet)

Motion Seconded by Jim Barry

Discussion – None

Motion Carried (vote held)

- o Presentation of 2023 Financial Plan (Angie Gordon, Ton Sturm)
- o Questions Regarding Treasurer's Report
- Changes to Bylaws (Harvey Caldwell)

Kathy Smith made the motion to make suggested changes in St. John in the Wilderness Church Bylaws: Article XIII Church Finances (as presented on large screen during meeting)

Motion Seconded by Barry Kostyk

Discussion – Bylaws will be updated on the church's website.

Motion Carried (vote held)

- Elections (Harvey Caldwell, Art Hancock)
 - o 2023 Elections
 - Warden (1, 2-year term)
 - Vestry (3, 3-year terms)
 - Vestry (1, 1-year term)
 - ECMN Convention Delegates (5, 3-year terms)
 - o Explanation of Nomination and Voting Processes
 - o Announcement of Elections

Art H asked for additional nominations for Vestry, there were none.

Art H. presented the slate of incoming vestry members (Included in 2022 Annual Report): Kathy Smith, Warden (for a two-year term), and Sara Harker Olson, George Gorbatenko, and Stephanie Sulentic (each for a three-year term) and Jim DeMay (to serve the one-year remainder of a three-year term). Art H. also presented the slate of Nominees to ECMN Convention: Kathy Smith, Angie Gordon, Jim DeMay, Melissa Sturges, and Debra Sturm (each for a three-year term).

Motion Made by Janet Waller to accept the slate of Warden, Vestry, and ECMN Convention.

Motion Seconded by Emily Brunner.

Discussion: None

Motion Carried (vote held)

Art H announced the Election Results of Incoming Vestry Members: Kathy Smith, Warden and Sara Harker Olson, George Gorbatenko, and Stephanie Sulentic (each for a three-year term) and Jim DeMay (to serve the one year remainder of a three-year term).

Art H. also presented the Nominees to ECMN Convention: Kathy Smith, Angie Gordon, Jim DeMay, Melissa Sturges, and Debra Sturm (each for a three-year term).

V. **Rectors Presentation**

- Rector’s Report and Address (included in 2022 Annual Report)
- Discussion: Maggie D. is doing a great job, Christmas Pageant, and other multi-generational opportunities. Thanked Winston (organist) for his service.

VI. **Presentation of the Outstanding Service Award**

Art presented Angie Gordon the Outstanding Service Award.

VII. **Presentation of Outgoing Leadership**

Art presented Outgoing Leadership Members: John Allen, Angie Gordon, Jim Petersen, Liz Dobson, Barry Kostyk, and Andrew McClaren.

VIII. **Art H. Closed Meeting in Prayer**

Meeting Adjourned at 12:47 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeanne Thoemke
Secretary



Finance Committee Report

2023 Financial Committee Included: Angie Gordon, Tom Sturm – Treasurer(emeritus), Fr. Art Hancock, Jim Peterson, Kathy Smith, Harvey Caldwell, Margaret Thor, Maureen Vruno, Barry Kostyk – Treasurer, and John Allen – Chair.

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

The Finance Committee strongly supported many outreach opportunities in 2023. We provided financial support to: The White Bear Lake Emergency Food Shelf; Earth Nations Kitchens; Good Courage Farm; La Mision de San Jose Obrero; The Roseville Church of Christ, Solas Orphanage; Solid Ground; St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Annual Pride Celebration; St. Nicholas Episcopal Church, Casa Maria Giving Gardens; Habitat for Humanity; WBLAS ISD624 Many Faces Wacipi pow wow; St. John in the Wilderness Giving Garden; and St. John in the Wilderness Little Free Food Shelf. We are also very grateful for the many generous gifts from our parishioners in supporting various drives for school supplies, blankets and our local food shelf.

The Finance Committee also renewed their support of the groups that utilize our gathering space. This past year The Ar Dale Dancers, The Gathering, The Red Cross of Minnesota and our annual rummage sale folks enjoyed our wonderful gathering space.

Our 2023 approved Financial Plan included a potential shortfall of -\$42,129. based on income of \$459,800 and expenses of \$501,929. As we wrap up 2023, we are anticipating a shortfall of -\$6,485. This is based on income of \$478,872 and expenses of \$485,358. We extend our thanks to all of you for supporting St. John in the Wilderness with your wonderful generosity, as your gifts exceeded expectations by over \$12,000. We thank our departments and committees for managing their budgets responsibly and helping us to reduce our anticipated expenses by \$15,000.

In 2023 we were able to address several capital projects, thanks to the generosity of our parishioners. This past year we replaced two malfunctioning hot water heaters, we removed asbestos in the mechanical room, we significantly updated our building security system, we completely overhauled our fire safety systems, exit signage, and installed a casement door at the library entrance.

The Finance Committee developed several policies on financial reporting, budget management and overall fiscal responsibility. The Committee meets regularly to review the monthly financial report and will make recommendations to the Vestry if adjustments are needed. Ultimately all Policy and Plan recommendations are discussed in detail and sent to the Vestry for further discussion and approval.

The 2024 Financial Plan approved by the Vestry represents income of \$470,250, expenses of \$527,618 with a potential shortfall of -\$57,368. Inflation has had a significant impact on our Plan. All costs are up between 7 – 15 %, and the Committee is determined to do what we can to reduce this shortfall without impacting our mission. The Committee will work closely with the Vestry to review our progress monthly and put our trust in God that we can continue to meet our goals and the mission of St John in the Wilderness.

I would like to extend my thanks to Tom Sturm, who served as our Treasurer, and Angie Gordon, thank you for all your wonderful contributions. If any of you would be interested in joining the Finance Committee, please reach out to the Chair or Father Art.

The Committee looks forward to serving this important function at St. John in the Wilderness. With your support and with God’s help we can achieve our missions at St. John in the Wilderness!

Respectfully Submitted,
John Allen

Final End of Year Numbers

Dec-23	Month Actual	YTD Actual	YTD Plan	YTD Difference
Income	\$ 49,959.63	\$ 478,873.68	\$ 458,800.00	\$ 19,072.68
Expenses	\$ 45,097.82	\$ 485,358.35	\$ 501,929.00	\$ 16,570.65
Difference	\$ 4,861.81	\$ (6,485.67)	\$ (42,129.00)	\$ 35,643.33

2024 Financial Plan (next 2 pages)

St John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church

2024 Working Plan & (2023 YTD Actual)

Income	2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
	Plan	12/31/2023	Plan	Actual 31 Dec	Plan	Actual 31 Dec	Plan	Actual 31 Dec	Plan	Actual 31 Dec
Income		YTD								
Offerings										
400 Pledges	350,000	\$324,397.05	350,000	362,175	336,000	339,128	300,000	325,653	300,000	300,000
402 Plate Cash	5,500	\$6,297.63	5,000	5,037	2,500	1,607	5,000	2,057	10,000	10,000
403 Non-Pledge Offerings	40,000	\$62,490.91	35,000	41,815	20,000	24,453	40,000	46,371	35,000	35,000
404 Seasonal Offering/Holy Days	3,500	\$6,573.51	2,500	6,285	2,000	1,895	2,000	2,331	10,000	10,000
405 Prior Year pledges		\$5,507.28		23,230		1,955	-	4,115	-	-
	399,000	\$405,266.38	392,500	438,542	360,500	369,038	347,000	380,527	355,000	355,000
Special Income										
406 Unrestricted Gifts to Church		\$604.70		2,144	-	1,163	-	16,366	-	-
407 Church Use	6,000	\$6,361.18	5,000	5,220	4,200	6,508	3,000	2,135	7,500	7,500
Special Income Totals	6,000	\$6,965.88	5,000	7,364	4,200	7,671	3,000	18,501	7,500	7,500
Other Income										
408 Endowment Earnings	52,000	\$51,854.67	50,000	50,797	50,000	48,306	48,000	48,336	48,000	48,000
409 Investment Income	6,900	\$8,421.83	6,000	5,436	5,220	37	250	232	400	400
413 Child/Youth Endowment Earnings	6,350	\$6,363.92	6,300	6,287	6,000	5,955	5,800	5,882	5,800	5,800
Other Income Totals	65,250	\$66,640.42	62,300	62,520	61,220	54,298	54,050	54,449	54,200	54,200
Total Income	470,250	\$478,872.68	459,800	508,425	425,920	431,007	404,050	453,477	416,700	416,700
Expenses										
Payroll and Related										
Rector Compensation										
531 Rector Salary, Hsg	\$82,400.00	\$91,519.92	82,400	89,120	80,000	89,120	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
531 Rector SE, Auto	\$9,303.60		9,304	9,120	9,120	9,120	9,120	89,120	9,120	9,120
540 Rector's Benefits	\$48,817.00	\$48,919.98	40,993	53,947	48,820	46,370	49,324	45,888	47,776	47,776
Rector Compensation Totals	\$140,520.60	\$140,439.90	132,696	143,067	137,940	135,490	138,444	135,008	136,896	136,896
Staff Compensation										
532 Staff Salaries, Wages	\$167,552.38	\$143,025.83	163,287	116,250	148,965	139,072	135,000	144,558	173,880	173,880
546 FICA - Employer's Share	\$12,817.76	\$10,867.20	12,491	8,335	11,396	10,088	10,500	11,006	13,302	13,302
567 Staff Benefits	\$12,488.47	\$10,159.08	9,485	6,348	4,680	4,969	4,700	5,292	5,217	5,217
Staff Compensation Totals	\$192,858.61	\$164,052.11	185,263	130,933	165,041	154,130	150,200	160,856	192,399	192,399
Staff Miscellaneous Expenses										
514 Education	\$3,000.00	\$2,179.02	4,000	1,452	1,000	-	3,000			
516 Auto Reimbursement Staff	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	1,000		1,000					
Staff Miscellaneous Expenses Total	\$4,000.00	\$2,179.02	5,000	1,452	2,000	0	3,000	0	0	0
Payroll Service Fee										
504 Payroll service fee	\$2,200.00	\$2,123.13	2,000	1,983	2,000	1,888	2,000	1,816	2,000	2,000
Episcopal Church in Minnesota										
545 Mission & Ministry Support	\$66,095.00	\$56,028.00	56,028	58,956	58,956	57,012	57,010	57,672	57,679	57,679
521 Convention Expense	\$500.00	\$770.00	2,000	1326.76	2,000	40	1,000	-	1,000	1,000
500 Safe Church Training	\$500.00	\$767.35	2,000							
Episcopal Church in Minnesota Totals	\$67,095.00	\$57,565.35	60,028	60,283	60,956	57,052	58,010	57,672	58,679	58,679
Church & Grounds Maintenance										
549 Building Maintenance	\$20,000.00	\$13,880.62	20,000	14,142	20,000	13,401	15,000	14,631	15,000	15,000
Utilities										
553 Natural Gas	\$13,600.00	\$10,798.61	15,000	11,268	9,750	4,829	6,500	5,162	8,600	8,600
554 Electricity	\$7,500.00	\$7,734.06	7,000	6,960	5,500	5,136	5,000	4,760	6,500	6,500
555 Water & Sewer	\$1,000.00	\$1,100.12	1,000	1,124	700	849	700	675	600	600
556 Sanitation/Disposal Services	\$4,000.00	\$4,199.75	4,000	2,724	3,000	2,035	3,000	3,284	3,600	3,600
Utilities Total	\$26,100.00	\$23,832.54	27,000	22,076	18,950	12,849	15,200	13,881	19,300	19,300
Insurance										
558 Insurance	\$19,204.00	\$20,677.00	21,000	19,316	20,000	17,986	17,000	16,658	16,000	16,000
Office										
522 Office Supplies	\$2,000.00	\$2,889.33	1,500	897	250	348	250	230	600	600
523 Telephone & Internet	\$5,200.00	\$5,472.02	5,000	5,181	4,800	4,510	6,000	4,350	4,000	4,000
524 Postage	\$1,000.00	\$860.00	800	692	800	431	800	620	700	700
525 Legal and Accounting	\$250.00	\$0.00	250	533	250	-	250	-	500	500
526 Office Equipment & Computers	\$2,600.00	\$4,585.17	2,600	9,462	6,000	9,559	7,000	6,943	7,000	7,000
520 IT	\$7,700.00	\$10,180.89								
527 Bank Fees	\$2,000.00	\$1,460.00	2,000	1,640	2,500	2,167	3,000	2,523	1,500	1,500
Office Total	\$20,750.00	\$25,447.41	12,150	18,406	14,600	17,015	17,300	14,666	14,300	14,300
Communications										
528 Digital & Print Media	\$5,000.00	\$2,727.73	10,000	9,666	11,330	8,341	11,000	7,321	10,000	10,000

	2024	2023	2023	2022	2021	2020			
	Plan	12/31/2023	Plan	Actual 31 Dec	Plan	Actual 31 Dec	Plan	Actual 31 Dec	Plan
Music									
501 Music/Choir Supplies	\$900.00	\$641.38	1,800	249	1,800	1,297	2,500	1,190	2,500
505 Organ/Plano Maintenance	\$990.00	\$1,700.00	1,700	1,148	1,000	520	1,000	20	1,000
513 Supply Music/Special Music	\$6,000.00	\$7,825.00	10,000		1,000		2,000	4,830	16,800
Music Totals	\$7,890.00	\$10,166.38	13,500	1,396	3,800	1,817	5,500	6,040	20,300
Worship									
502 Altar Guild	\$800.00	\$827.89	1,000	1,300	600	736	600	572	1,000
506 Worship Supplies - Repair of ch	\$750.00	\$106.13	500	1,895	600	977	600	1,000	1,440
507 Supply Clergy	\$0.00	\$100.00	500	9,234	500	666	800	199	1,040
Worship Total	\$1,550.00	\$1,034.02	2,000	12,428	1,700	1,713	2,000	1,771	3,480
Stewardship									
529 Campaign, Fundraising, ACH, CC Fees/Mo	\$2,000.00	\$1,665.30	1,000	1,702	1,000	740	1,000	727	1,000
530 Heritage Society	\$500.00	\$0.00	500		500	298	500	-	1,000
581 Creation Care	\$0.00	\$0.00	-	1,142	-	-	-	-	-
Stewardship Totals	\$2,500.00	\$1,665.30	1,500	2,843	1,500	1,038	1,500	727	2,000
Rising Generations									
509 Children's Ministry	\$1,000.00	\$1,043.90		1,347	1,500	1,848	1,000	1,042	2,250
503 Youth Ministry Programs	\$1,000.00	\$1,307.93		1,397	2,000	2,867	2,000	3,030	4,400
511 Young Adults	\$1,000.00	\$0.00							
575 Child Care Supplies	\$550.00	\$33.06		25	50	-	50	-	100
Rising Generations Totals	\$3,550.00	\$2,384.89	3,500	2,770	3,550	4,715	3,050	4,073	6,750
510 Adult Christian Formation	\$2,400.00	\$2,370.41	500	561	400	168	400	98	600
Pastoral Care									
519 Clergy Hospitality	\$1,000.00	\$1,424.96	1,000	56	0				
580 Pastoral Care Supplies/Expenses	\$1,300.00	\$687.55	1,000	1,024	0				
Pastoral Care Totals	\$2,300.00	\$2,112.51	2,000	1,081	0				
Fellowship									
518 Sunday Hospitality & Special Events	\$4,000.00	\$3,450.87	4,000	4,047	1,500	1,549	2,500	2,614	5,000
Evangelism									
517 Welcoming	\$700.00	\$705.50	250	-	250	41	250	1,530	820
Service									
515 Faith in Action (Formerly Outreach)	\$5,000.00	\$8,543.66	10,000	7,177	7,000	750	4,000	6,800	2,200
Service Total	\$5,000.00	\$8,543.66	10,000	7,177					
Total Expenses	\$527,618.21	\$485,358.35	512,388	453,625	472,517	429,942	446,354	446,162	505,724
Updated 12/31/2023 By John Allen									
Total Income	\$470,250.00	\$478,872.68	459,800	508,425	425,920	431,007	404,050	453,477	416,700
Total Expenses	\$527,618.21	\$485,358.35	512,388	453,625	472,517	429,942	446,354	446,162	505,724
Total Income less Total Expenses	-\$57,368.21	-\$6,485.67	-(52,588)	54,800	-(46,597)	1,064	-(42,304)	7,315	-(89,024)



Nominations

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

- Jim DeMay, (two year term)

Nominees to the Vestry

- Tom Hove (three year term)
- Nick Pearson (three year term)
- Jennifer Miller (three year term)
- Barb Maloney (one year remainder of a three year term)
- Al Bradley (one year remainder of a three year term)

Nominees to ECMN Convention

- Tracy Angelo - Alternate (2 year term)

Appointments to be made in 2024

- Treasurer
- Clerk
- Committee Chairs

St. John's 2023 Ministry Team

Vestry:	George Gorbatenko, Sarah Harker-Olsen, Stephanie Sulentic, Jim DeMay, Barb Maloney, Al Bradley, Will McBride, Emily Brunner, Janet Waller
Clerk:	Jeannie Thoemke
Treasurer:	TomSturm/BarryKostyk
Junior Warden:	Kathy Smith
Senior Warden:	Harvey Caldwell
Nursery:	Lorna Cessna, Magda Styczen, Marcella Hoye, Megan Church
Sexton:	Jake Malark
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>

2023 Vestry Members

(terms expire at Annual Meeting on year indicated)

Harvey Caldwell, Senior Warden 2024

Kathy Smith, Junior Warden 2025

Barry Kostyk, Treasurer 2024

Jeanne Thoemke, Clerk of Vestry 2024

Will McBride 2024

Jim Demay 2024 (appointed)

Janet Waller 2024

Barb Maloney 2024 (appointed)

Al Bradley 2024 (appointed)

Emily Brunner 2025

George Gorbatenko 2026

Stephanie Sulentic 2026

Sarah Harker-Olsen 2026



Rector's Address

January 14, 2024

There is a familiar country-folk song released in 1971, officially titled, "Take Me Home, Country Roads." The chorus to that song is:

*Country roads, take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia, mountain mama
Take me home, country roads*

Now, I don't know about the West Virginia part... I mean, no offense to any West Virginia folks here, but I've been to West Virginia. And West Virginia, well, it's no Minnesota, I'll tell you that.

But that sentiment of taking a road to a place where one really belongs. Now, that's beautiful, and that desire is one that rings true in our souls.

In a way, that's what the Christian life is all about. It's about seeking the road that leads to eternal life. It's about following the road that leads to love. It's about finding that place where we truly belong and where we find our truest identity. But you see, the road and the destination are actually the same. And the road and the destination are actually not places at all, or at least not ones that you could plot on a map. Rather the road that takes us home and the place we belong are actually a Person.

As Christians we believe that God was made manifest in Jesus. We believe that the road that takes us home and the place we belong are one and the same, the Person of Jesus. We believe that in following the Way of love that Jesus taught and lived, we are participating in the work of salvation and living in the Kingdom of heaven. We believe that as we follow the Way of Jesus, day by day, our very selves get fused with that of Jesus. It's the work of the Holy Spirit and God's great gift to us.

Now, if you're wondering what we're doing here at St. John's, it's just that. We're doing our best to follow the Way of Jesus so that God's kingdom finds purchase in our hearts and lives. We come to this church and engage in the life of this parish in the hopes that by doing so, we may more closely stick to the Way of Jesus. So, how are we doing?

Well, today, following the 10am service of worship, we will have our Annual Meeting where we will talk further about this very question. For this Rector's Address, I have thought long and hard about the same question. How did we do in 2023? And where might the Way of Jesus take us in 2024?

First, 2023. Wow, what a year! I stated in my Annual Address to the parish last year that our intention would be that our work be suffused by three characteristics: joyful play, lay-led/clergy-supported ministry, and vulnerable connection. I believe that by those metrics, we were wildly successful. Not only has our worship been joyful, but even our behind the scenes work. As people of faith we are commanded to “rejoice in the Lord always,” and while it may be a stretch to say that all of us have always rejoiced in our parish work, I believe that most of us have, most of the time. This side of heaven, I think that’s about the best we may hope.

Regarding our efforts to move into a model of parish ministry that is lay-led and clergy supported, I believe we have made great strides. Administratively, our Senior Warden, Harvey Caldwell did so much work behind the scenes that was immensely helpful. Most of our committees and ministry groups, almost all of which are led by laity, are functioning very well, not only addressing my concerns and desires as Rector, but issues that the groups themselves see as important and vital for a healthy parish. And while the clergy certainly have a role to play in our worship, lay folks take an equal share of responsibility. It truly is a partnership of clergy and lay in this parish, and we will continue to build on what we have already done.

As for doing work that immerses us in vulnerable connection, again, I am so proud of everything we have accomplished. Relationships have always been the heart of our common life here at St. John’s. We are engaged in each other’s lives in authentic, practical ways. I truly sense that we are walking together and daily learning to live the Way of Jesus. In particular, a number of us participated in the new Connect Groups this past fall. This was an intentional effort to gather on a weekly basis for some deeper conversation. Those Connect Groups were so powerful as participants came to know each other at deep levels.

These characteristics overlaid most of the work that we did in 2023. And that work was substantial! Policies and procedures were overhauled, a new access and security system was installed, many liturgical innovations were attempted (some of which actually worked!), programs for children, families, young adults and adults were offered, a new music minister was hired, food for the needy was provided. These are just some of the many, many areas of ministry that bore fruit this year. For a more detailed and exhaustive list, read through the reports of the Annual Report. In short, I am just so very proud of who we are and what we did in 2023 to witness to the good news of Christ Jesus.

So, where might the Way of Jesus take us in 2024? Much of the answer to this question will be addressed in the next three weeks as interested folks gather on Wednesday nights for some time of visioning for the next chapter of our life at St. John in the Wilderness. We will look at who we have been with the aim of taking the best of who we have been forward into our present and future. We will look carefully at who we are now, addressing both our great strengths and our nagging

challenges. And finally, we will set some goals for the next three to five years of our life together. I hope that you will be a part of the process.

As we move forward, I am confident that our work will once again be joyful, led by laity and supported by the clergy, and exhibiting strong connection.

In our gospel today, Philip, having experienced Jesus, finds his friend Nathanael, and when Nathanael asks him, "can anything good come out of Nazareth," Philip responds, "Come and see!" Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Well, only the Way that leads to eternal life, only the Road that leads home, only the Path that leads to the place we belong. In 2024, just come and see. Come and see! Really. God is so good and God's Spirit is moving in powerful ways.

As a final note, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to so many who have made this year special and joyful for me. To my clergy colleagues, Margaret Thor and Kate Maxwell, thank you. These strong, very smart and exceedingly opinionated women join with me in making decisions and serving. They are exceptional human beings who generously give of their lives to our parish generously for no pay. We are blessed. To the other staff of St. John's: Carrie Thomas, David Lim, Maggie Howe, Maureen Vruno, Jake Malark, Lorna Cessna, Magda Styczen, Marcella Hoye... thank you. You demonstrate on a weekly basis what faithful, consistent and strong servanthood looks like. To our Wardens, Harvey Caldwell and Kathy Smith, thank you. They have met with me on a weekly basis and have done so much to ensure that our parish runs smoothly. To the Vestry and to all those serving on various committees and ministry groups, thank you. And finally, to all of you who, week in and week out, come to this special place to give praise and thanks to God, to confess sins and recommit to our common work, to find fellowship and service, thank you. May God smile on our efforts, and may God give us the will to continue to walk in the Way of Christ.

Respectfully and lovingly submitted to all God's children at St. John in the Wilderness Church in White Bear Lake, Minnesota on January 14, the second Sunday after the Epiphany, 2024.

The Reverend Arthur Hancock
Rector

Parish Vital Statistics

Numbers of worship services, types of worship services, and attendance at worship services are still being tabulated at the time of the Annual Meeting. Accurate numbers will be recorded and communicated to the parish as soon as tabulated. A permanent record of these numbers will be recorded in the digital record of the 2023 Annual Report.

- **Sunday Morning Prayer Services:**
- **Attendance at Sunday Morning Prayer Services:**
- **Weekday Daily Office Services:**
- **Attendance at Weekday Daily Office Services:**
- **Sunday Holy Eucharist Services:**
- **Attendance at Weekday Daily Office Services:**
- **Weekday Holy Eucharist and/or Healing Services:**
- **Attendance at Weekday Holy Eucharist and/or Healing Services:**
- **Baptisms:**
- **Celebrations of Holy Matrimony:**
- **Burial of the Dead Services:**



Senior Warden Report

2023 has been a challenging year but a rewarding year as God has led us to continue our work in His name. We have been blessed to have a well functioning Vestry that deeply cares for our church and works together in His name.

We have had several major undertakings this year that have been financially significant. Replacing old worn out water heaters and replacing our fire alarm and building entry system have been expensive but required for our continued operation. We have had a major search for a Minister of Music and have been rewarded with the presence of David Lim. All of this has taken significant staff time that made sure the end product met our needs. We also have had a successful Stewardship campaign that shows the support for our church. We now have a functioning PA system in the Parish Hall. A special thanks to Carrie Thomas and Will McBride for all their time and effort with the alarm system and entry system. Kathy Smith has also earned special mention for her work with recruiting our Music Minister and our successful pledge drive.

The programs for our children and young adults continue to grow and gain success. The children's play area in church has grown as has the number of children that utilize the space. We are most fortunate to have a Clergy team and volunteers that challenge us and make it fun to come to church. Maggie Howe has done an excellent job.

There continue to be issues that we must address. Our phone system is outdated, our parlor needs rehab, and our grounds and building need attention. Our roof needs major repair that awaits the warmer weather.

2024 will be an exciting year as new Vestry members are elected and a new warden is approved. There are new laws that we must comply with in 2024 but all this is obtainable with our time and talent.

A special thanks to Will McBride and Janet Waller for their great work on the Vestry. A special thanks to Jeanne Thoemke for her work and dedication as Clerk of the Vestry.

A very special thank you to Father Art for putting up with the Senior Warden.

Harvey G. Caldwell
Senior Warden

Associate's Report

Recently I had lunch with a friend I haven't seen in a while and she asked me how I liked my work as a priest. Her husband, also sitting with us, didn't even give me a chance to respond before saying: "Why would you want to be a priest, anyway? Isn't it a pain dealing with needy people all the time?" My friend and I exchanged a meaningful glance and a small sigh. Her husband is something of a curmudgeon.

I answered that I love my work as a priest and that, even though it can sometimes be challenging working with people in any profession, I do enjoy my work a lot. It's a great privilege, in fact, to be part of folks' lives as a priest. To share the joys and sorrows that are an inevitable part of life is at the heart of the pastoral calling.

In the last year I have had the opportunity to walk with folks who are dying, getting married, grieving, and having children baptized. I've celebrated the Eucharist with the residents at Cerenity, taught some Godly Play sessions, worked with our incredible Altar Guild, and gotten to know the young parents' community a bit. I get to work with other members of the staff in a myriad of ways and that is a joy. Working with the pastoral ministers in Community of Hope, the team that does the planning of the weekly liturgy, the CONNECT planning team and group leaders, and other members of St John's in various ways is something I treasure.

I'm looking forward to the coming year. In addition to the efforts talked about in the reports on Liturgy, Pastoral Care, and Adult Formation, we'll be offering Table in the Wilderness, a Dinner Church experience. About every six weeks we will gather on a Tuesday evening to have dinner and conversation and to share the Bread and Wine of Eucharist in an informal, comfortable setting. Members of the community from St John's and beyond are invited and most welcome!

The Rev. Kate Maxwell, OSB
Associate

Deacon's Report

At the beginning of September 2023, I began my 4th year with you as your deacon at St John in the Wilderness. As part of my call to the diaconate serving at SJW, I preached regularly this past year reminding all of us of our call to follow the work of Christ in the world. I actively participated in worship by proclaiming the gospel, bidding the prayers of the people, setting the table, and dismissing us to go into the world to serve Christ. I supported and encouraged others to serve their neighbors primarily through food ministry and MICAH. I am the treasurer of the White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf where I witnessed the needs of our neighbors up close. I was delighted at SJW's generous support of our own food shelf that feeds those experiencing hunger around the clock. When the shelf was cleaned out after the rummage sale, you all stepped up to fill it again with food and other items. Thank you!

Last year, I served on our Liturgy Planning Team and continue that work this year. I assisted in the formation of our Rising Generation as a mentor/teacher for our middle school and high school members.

At the diocesan level, I am currently on a team facilitating and walking with others in discerning their call to serve in the Church. I continued as the chair of the Commission on Ministry, a canonically required commission with the purpose to affirm and develop the call to ministry of all baptized persons. I am a deputy for the 81st General Convention which is convening at the end of June 2024 in Louisville, KY.

I continued my work as a board member for the Fund for the Diaconate which supports many deacons financially. I traveled to Baltimore and manned a booth for the Fund during the "It's All About Love" revival.

Faith in Action (Outreach) at St John in the Wilderness

I am including the report regarding Faith in Action under my deacon report. I primarily oversee the budget line allocated for Faith in Action to ensure that the funds are spent appropriately. In addition to occasionally purchasing food for our food shelf, and supporting the Rising Generation program in their outreach activities, the funds were used to support a variety of ministries including: Habitat for Humanity, Good Courage Farm, Casa Maria (part of St Nicholas in Richfield), Solace Orphanage, First Nations Kitchen (a ministry of All Saints in Minneapolis), Solid Ground, and the White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf. Maggie has done a terrific job of energizing our parish in participating in outreach activities. In addition, kudos to Kate for inviting other Episcopal ministries to talk about what they are doing in their communities to serve Christ in an active way. I also want to acknowledge all that you do outside the wall of our church building including actively participating on non-profit boards, organizing community gardens, delivering meals, caring for your neighbor. I love that you live out our call to serve others.

I am grateful to be at St. John in the Wilderness and pray that I embody servant ministry so that you too feel the call to serve Christ in the world.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Margaret Thor, Deacon

Music Ministry Report

It seems slightly silly to write an annual report having arrived at St. John only in October 2023 - nonetheless, here we go! Several committees and individuals were responsible for the music program during a lengthy interim. Likewise must be extended to in-house and visiting supply musicians. Their efforts were substantial and ensured the continuation of the parish's music ministry. Thank you.

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

Psalm 95 invites us: "Come, let us sing to the Lord." Such is the case each Sunday at St. John. We maintain a schedule where the choir and Heartbeat alternate Sunday music responsibilities at Sunday Eucharist. Hymns and service music are primarily sung from Hymnal 1982, augmented by music from Wonder, Love, and Praise and My Heart Sings Out. Psalmody is sung using the Emergent Psalter when Heartbeat leads music. On Sundays with choir and organ, we've begun to chant the psalm as a congregation using a simple tone. Instrumental music is also offered at the 8am Eucharist, although no hymns are sung.

St John's Chancel Choir is a dedicated small group of singers, who sing two Sundays per month and rehearse weekly on Wednesday evenings. The Chancel Choir, augmented by several other singers, was chiefly responsible for an Advent Lessons & Carols service in December 2023. Heartbeat (the parish's band) consists of several guitarists, bassist, drummer, and singers. They sing/play on two Sundays per month. Occasionally, the parish's children have participated in music during Eucharist. Notably, was their Christmas Paegent in December where they sang several Christmas carols.

The parish's instruments (a Cassavant organ, and several pianos) received attention in the fall by local technicians. The changing seasons, ripe with temperature and humidity fluctuations, require these be tuned at least twice a year. Minor repairs were undertaken during fall tunings. The organ continually develops new mechanical issues.

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

Pax vobiscum,
David Lim, MA
Music Minister

Rising Generations Report

Greetings, Parish Family!

As I write this Annual Report, I'm feeling nostalgic thinking back to my own time as a young person at St. John's. This will be my 30th year as a member here, and it feels like things are coming full circle. My own children and my childhood church friends' children are becoming friends. I'm watching the kids I used to babysit graduate from high school and become wonderful young adults. In my role as both a parent and a program leader, I'm thinking hard about what we're doing and why we're doing it that way. As I look both backward and forward, I truly realize the importance of a strong and healthy community, and I can see the power that such a community has to shape us all as followers of Christ.

Thinking back to my own experience as a youth, I realize that young people live in a very different world today than they did even 15 years ago. Sure, kids have always been busy. That hasn't changed. What we are finding, though, is that kids experience spirituality in different ways than we may have previously thought, and that some of the methods that we used to use when teaching about faith and Christianity may not feel so relevant to kids today. Research shows that opportunities to create and play freely, spend time in nature, and serve in the community in meaningful ways are all important in developing a healthy sense of spirituality. Our families and young people echo those areas of interest, so we're trying our best to offer programming that reflects those values here at St. John's. In the past year, we've started some super cool new things, and built on programs that were already working. Right now, it feels like we're moving in a direction that works for us.

During our time together, we get a little messy, but the joy that creation brings certainly makes it worth it. We get a little wild and crazy, but the friendships that our children are forging are the foundation of our future as a church. Between our Godly Play time and Worship Through Expression program, our kids are processing big questions and ideas in ways that make sense to them. In the coming year, we are excited to begin working more with our Music Minister, David, as we enter the early stages of the development of a Rising Generations music program.

We know that our community values time spent in nature, so last summer, we built on our existing Wild John Club, which met on Monday evenings to paddle on White Bear Lake. We had over 50 different people join us throughout the summer. We hosted our Annual Parish Camping Trip in August at William O'Brien, and look forward to continuing that tradition in August 2024. This coming June, we're taking youth on a combined service and adventure trip to the North Shore. We're getting out of the building and into Their Creation, which makes so many of us feel close to God.

Another great initiative that we've started up is our 1st Saturday Service program, where we serve our community in various ways. We had nearly 30 people come out to Feed My Starving Children in October. We started a Feeding Freezer in November where anyone in our community can grab a bag of frozen soup (and some cookie dough) if they or one of their loved ones is feeling physically or mentally worn down. Our littlest kids are learning that as followers of Christ, we can do something to make the world better, even if it's just dropping off soup to your ill neighbor. If anyone comes to us with an idea about how we can help our community, we will try hard to support them in that endeavor.

At St. John's, we are making space for young people and families to connect and grow in faith in all kinds of ways. We've heard from parents that they want to be a part of their children's faith journey, so much of our programming is intergenerational. We began Wilderness Wednesdays this fall, in which we serve dinner followed by an evening of program offerings for people of all ages. In the last year, we held a First Communion class, began our Confirmation Retreat series, and hosted our first Parent Retreat. Folks have brought forth fantastic fellowship ideas, such as the Farm Party, Drive-in Movie Night, and Cathedral Tour and Walker visit, and it's so exciting to see that sense of ownership emerge.

Our Rising Generations' tagline is Engaging young people through service, expression, exploration, and play. In 2023, we did a whole lot of all of that. As a community, it feels like we're hitting a stride that feels comfortable, if not even a little on the quick side, and I don't think that's a bad thing. Our momentum has created a palpable energy. We're getting in shape for the challenges ahead. On our toes, we're dynamic and responsive. Plus it's pretty fun to go fast.

With much love,
Maggie Howe



Altar Guild Report

What from 2023 are you most proud of, what worked and where did you see God?

I am most proud of our Altar Guild Members and all the work they do every week. Tracy Angelo, Al Bradley, Judy Caldwell, Pris Campbell, Jackie Danda, Kelly Desmet, Cyndi Domin, Pam Hove, Anne Johnson, Virginia Johnston, Shelley Page, Derrill Pankow, Pat Pickering, Katheryn Schneider, and Emily Waymire. I am also proud of the work done by the Sacristans: Steve Johnson, Harvey Caldwell and Mark Hosfield. The Sacristans step up whenever they are needed, setting up the aisleabras, hanging garland and banners, carrying heavy items up from basement storage, managing when these and other duties should be carried out. They are always there when needed. Altar Guild members are amazing! Every Saturday they prepare, set up, clean up, wash and iron linens, wash and dry vessels and take care of all the coordination needed for a Sunday service. We are also proud of the way we maintain the furnishings, hangings, ornaments, and all items in our care. This year we updated and digitalized the Altar Guild handbook and the Special Services Book. We also made an Altar Guild File on Google drive with special instructions to the group from Katheryn Schneider. We saw God as we all were given new Altar Guild pins, and we welcomed new member Tracy Angelo into our group. We see God at the Altar area as we prepare and ready the church and in our interactions with each other.

What from 2023 was frustrating or you knew could have gone better?

As I mentioned last year, change is difficult. We are still adjusting to a new scheduling system within Altar Guild, and I hope that goes more smoothly with each schedule. Changes in process are always difficult, but working together, supporting each other helps us produce the best work possible.

What are you most excited about for 2024?

I am excited about the continuing fellowship of Altar Guild Members working with and supporting each other in our mission to continue the beautiful traditions at St John in the Wilderness. We have Altar Guild Members with much experience and history, and we have brand new members. As the saying goes it takes a village and each member brings their unique gifts and experience to our group and makes the group stronger and better. As we move toward a change of leadership within Altar Guild, I am excited to see new leadership starting in June of 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelley Page

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 2023:

The **Liturgy and Worship Committee** met monthly to review upcoming plans for liturgy and oversee implementation of the many details of worship. 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** convened to plan seasonal liturgy. The 2023-2024 team was reconstituted in the summer, and includes staff members Maggie Desmet, David Lim, Kate Maxwell, and Margaret Thor as well as parishioners Tony Angelo, Jackie Danda, Katheryn Schneider, Mark Sears, Stephanie Sulentic, and Emily Waymire.

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 Rev. Kate Maxwell, OSB

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care is an essential part of who we are as the Church. We are present with one another in times of joy and grief, celebration and hardship. This happens in mostly informal ways, in response to one another over time. This is a basic aspect of what it means to be Christian community, and every baptized person is part of this ministry.

There are also some members of the community who are called to this ministry in a particular way, and are available to walk alongside others in a more formal capacity. The clergy are among these, as are lay members of the Church.

Community of Hope

Community of Hope International is an Episcopal non-profit with the mission to prepare lay persons for the work of pastoral ministry. St John's has been a designated COHI Center for the past three years. In 2023, St John's, collaborating with St Mark's Minneapolis and St David's Minnetonka, sponsored a Community of Hope International training for members of those congregations. The training consists of 14 modules with topics that range from Benedictine spirituality and meditation to listening skills and how to initiate and later process a pastoral encounter.

Four members of St John's completed the training in the spring of 2023 and were commissioned in June: Helen Gehrenbeck, Kathy Peterson, Jan Gibson Talbot, and Avis Watkins. Avis, Kathy and Helen are actively serving as Pastoral Ministers here at St. John's. Jan passed away in August.

The ministries of the Pastoral Ministers vary; they visit parishioners at home, make phone calls, write cards, serve as Eucharistic Visitors, and visit residents at Serenity. Anyone interested in more information about the Community of Hope training or any other pastoral ministry opportunities may contact Kate Maxwell.

The Rev. Kate Maxwell, OSB

Adult Formation

In 2022, Adult Formation had offerings similar to what had been planned before the Covid pandemic. Bible study, book groups, Sunday morning Adult Formation forums, a Lenten Sunday morning Gospel study, and a women's retreat were among the usual offerings. The Sunday events were not well attended and we asked why.

The staff saw that we needed to determine what the needs of the community were in regards to Adult Formation after the years of the pandemic. To that end, in February 2023, three Adult Formation Listening Sessions were held to hear from members of the community about their needs and desires. In addition, in April and May we put out a survey that was available in both print and online. About 75 persons participated in these efforts to gather information.

We learned that about 2/3 of the respondents worshiped at 10, that more older parishioners than younger ones took the survey, and that the biggest needs expressed were community and getting to know one another better. The highest topic interests included book groups, theology, and spiritual practices. Fellowship was the highest overall interest.

As a result, in the fall, coffee hour was expanded to after the 10:00 service as well as between the services during Formation time. We offered two book groups, Second Sunday (a monthly Sunday forum), a retreat on the Gospel of Luke, and a parents' retreat in addition to the Transformed by the Word Bible study group on Wednesday evenings. A new small group initiative, CONNECT, began in the fall as well. Three groups led by parishioners were well received.

CONNECT groups will be offered again during the winter/spring of 2024. We will offer a workshop on End of Life topics that include planning your health directive and funeral or memorial service liturgy planning. In addition to the ongoing Bible Study on Wednesday evening, two book studies, both a men's and a women's retreat, and an opportunity to participate in Group Spiritual Direction will be offered in the coming seasons.

If you have a longing for something to be offered in Adult Formation, please feel free to contact Kate Maxwell.

The Rev. Kate Maxwell, OSB

Property Committee

Property Committee meetings were held on Feb 7, June 1, and Nov 28.

Activities/Projects:

- Annual spring cemetery cleanup held first Saturday in May (6th).
- Completion of the project to create an office space for Rev. Kate in the library. Judy Ferrell of the Property Committee designed a door and led the project to get it installed so Kate may have some privacy as she prepares for worship services and provides pastoral care. The project was started in late 2022.
- In the spring, tree stumps from trees removed from the cemetery the previous December were ground into wood chips.
- The church's approximately 35-years-old water heaters were replaced in July.
- To facilitate the water heater installation, some asbestos containing materials (ACMs), in the form of pipe insulation, had to be removed. This was performed by a licensed ACM contractor, sub-contracted to the water heater installer.
- Installation of new building access and fire safety system including: door/window monitoring and access control, full fire detection and alerting system upgrade, and environmental control improvements.
- Planned 2024 projects:
 - 1. Roof repair on the bell tower (\$10,000 to \$15,000 cost range)
 - 2. Landscape improvements on the church's "front lawn" (Clark St. (west) side). These improvements will remove some overgrown shrubs and improve maintainability.
 - 3. Parlor remodel/update project. Carpet is stained and needs to be replaced. Parlor Remodel Task Force to be created to determine the full scope of the project.
- Possible 2024 projects to consider:
 - 1. Re-grading of the north side of the church to improve drainage and protect foundation.
 - 2. Replace air conditioning condensers for the original building.

Property Committee Members: Brent Torgerson, John Brunner, John Kobinski, Jim Peterson, Judy Ferrell, Tom Hove, John Pasch, Tom Napiwoski and Dennis Thoemke-Chair

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Thoemke

Award for Outstanding Service

A healthy parish is composed of people who are regularly nurtured by Word and Sacrament and who, drawing from that nourishment, generously offer their lives for the sake of the community and the world. We do this in any number of ways at St. John in the Wilderness. There is an ebb and flow to our common life, and there seems to be a similar ebb and flow to most of our parish ministries. Our various groups and committees function well or not so well, often depending upon the initiative and guidance of the leader.

One of the groups that consistently, year in and year out, functions at the highest level in our parish is the Altar Guild. The strength of the women and men in the Altar Guild is impressive, and any Rector with a God-given brain would do well to respect this fine group of generous souls. There is much that happens behind the scenes to produce the liturgies that we use each week. The clergy meet weekly to discuss things; there is a Liturgical Planning Team and a Liturgy and Worship Committee. Each of these groups generates splendid or not-so-splendid ideas that we make best efforts to implement in our liturgies. Often, these new ideas result in changes to the way that the Altar Guild accomplishes its work. Altar Guild members have exhibited great patience and a willingness to try many new things. As Rector, I am so appreciative.

For the last two years, Shelley Page has served as the Director of the Altar Guild. She took the reins over from the exceedingly capable hands of Judy Caldwell who had the challenge of leading this group through the Covid shutdown years. Shelley has had to lead in equally challenging days as we have emerged from the shutdown, needing to adjust to the realities of a very different church. Throughout her years of leadership, she has been receptive to the requests of the clergy and attentive to the needs of the Guild. Shelley has not been shy with her own ideas regarding solutions for inevitable problems that arise. She has truly exhibited servant leadership, never asking a member of the Altar Guild to do something that she herself is not willing to do. She has been faithful and gracious and forgiving. But what sets Shelley apart is her joy in doing her work. Her smile is infectious and her generous spirit is inspiring.

This year's Outstanding Service Award could go to the entire Altar Guild for their unwavering commitment to this parish and the superior quality of their work. Much of the excellence of their work is due in no small part to their leader for the past two years. And so, it is my great honor this morning to present the Outstanding Service Award for 2023 to my good friend and sister in Christ, Shelley Page.



