



# PARTNERSHIP PRESS

@Partnership Place



**WESTMINSTER**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



**St. John's**  
United Church of Christ

## January 2025

### *JANUARY CALENDAR*

- 1 - HAPPY NEW YEAR! OFFICE CLOSED
- 5 - REV. LAWRENCE RICHARDSON WILL BE OUR GUEST PREACHER
- 6 – BILL GLANCE FUNERAL SERVICE AT WATSON FUNERAL HOME 11 AM
- 7 – HEADSTART PRESCHOOL STORY TIME 2:30 PM NHL
- 8 – PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION WORKSHOP 1 PM
- 8 – PARTNERSHIP UNICAMERAL MEETING WITH SJUCC COUNCIL AND  
WPC SESSION MEETINGS 5:30 PM
- 11 – PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION WORKSHOP 10 AM
- 12 – SJUCC SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED 10 AM
- 12 - JEAN ALLEN MEMORIAL SERVICE 1 PM WITH LUNCH TO FOLLOW
- 16 – PERSONAL CARE PANTRY 4:30 PM
- 17 – BABY SPRINKLES AND FOOD PANTRY 10 AM TO 12 PM
- 19 - MLK SUNDAY
- 21 – COMMUNITY DINNER 6 PM
- 22 – INTERFAITH DINNER CHURCH 5 PM
- 23 - PASTOR JUDY VACATION THROUGH JAN 30
- 25 – COMMUNITY DANCE 7 PM

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a just  
world  
for all  
[ucc.org](http://ucc.org)



## Mission Updates

Our **December Food Pantry** served 124 persons representing 312 family members. 5000 pounds of food were distributed. Thirty-two persons were served at our Community Dinner on December 24.

- Contributed by Carl Robinson

At the December **Baby Sprinkle**, we served 29 families and 49 children. We continue to welcome donations of size 4, 5, and 6 diapers, wipes, and children's clothing size 2 through 6.

Thank you!

- Contributed by Donna Benedict

The **Samaritan Fund** provided assistance for 2 utility payments in December. 12 individuals received emergency food, and 19 unhoused people used our church showers. We still need someone to serve as administrator of this important mission. If you'd like to learn more, please contact Evelyn Park in the office.

- Contributed by Michele Wilson

The **Jackson Personal Care Ministry** served 171 guests during the month of December. If you would like to help with this worthwhile ministry, please let us know at [jfense@icloud.com](mailto:jfense@icloud.com).

- Contributed by Margo and John Fenstermaker

## HeadStart Students receive gifts

This year the SJ/WPC Mission Committee's Christmas project was to provide Holiday gifts for the 17 HeadStart Students at Partnership Place. Thanks to your generous gifts, we provided magnetic letters and numbers, kinetic sand, and trays to work on to each child. These gifts represent God's gift of love for all of His children. And we are blessed, in this opportunity, to be His hands and voice!

- Contributed by Pat Baumgartner



Chief gift-wrappers are Miriam Bown Dorsey, Kathy Johns, Lynn Kenworthy, Cat and Andy Rieman, Margo Fenstermaker, Sandy Clar, Caroline Zangwill, Donna Benedict, Cindy Osborne and Diane.

## Contact Information

To receive the Zoom link for Sunday services, please visit [stjohnsjx.com](http://stjohnsjx.com) and click "Get Emails" to subscribe. You will receive the Partnership Place Weekly Digest with the Zoom link and more.



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Rev. Judy Goodrow  
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[kjgoodrow3kids@gmail.com](mailto:kjgoodrow3kids@gmail.com)

# From the Pastor's Screen

## SLOW CHURCH

Each new year I set an intention, choosing a word, a phrase, or an idea to guide us. This year, as I prayed for guidance, the word that came was "Slow." We know what that means when we're driving a car, but what does it mean to go slowly – as a church? Why should we go slow when there's so much work to do?

When a church gets too busy, we forget why we're here. Why do churches exist? Why do we meet every Sunday?

### Churches hold space for awe.

Faith communities worldwide exist to worship, provide connection, establish ritual, preserve tradition, support members, work for justice, celebrate the arts, and do charitable work. In all this, churches hold space for awe. Historically, churches have been containers for the sacred.

Awe is an emotional experience that happens when we notice the presence of something profound and transcendent – like the Divine. We might feel awe when we see a beautiful sunset, hold an infant, listen to music, or pray. If we don't hold space for awe, we're no longer a church -- we're just a group. Experiencing the Divine is what makes us different. It's another great reason to attend church. Church helps us slow down enough to encounter and celebrate the spiritual.

As our church consolidates and grows, we get busier and busier. We become more business and less church, more budget and less bounty, more World and less Mystery. We miss the feeling of awe. We miss the Divine.

This year let's go slow so we can focus on the spiritual. Canadian poet Oriah Mountain Dreamer wrote, "I think there are only two instructions we need to follow to develop and deepen our spiritual life: slow down and let go." There will always be work to do, and we will do it. Along the way, let's intentionally slow down enough to feel awe. Every time we are overwhelmed or rushed, let's remember why we're here. We gather to share in the Mystery of God -- to be the presence of Christ in this world. To sing and pray and work together, always watching for those profound moments that take our breath away.

It's our best gift to a manic world. It's the gift Christ gives to us. Take a deep breath ... notice ... and feel awe.

S-l-o-w-l-y now,

-Pastor Judy



A soul without  
knowledge is not good  
and whoever makes  
haste with their feet  
misses the way.

Proverbs 19:2



BE THE BLESSING

SOMETHING FOR  
EVERYONE!

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO  
TO BE A BLESSING:

INVITE FRIENDS TO CHURCH

OFFER YOUR MUSICAL GIFTS

SIGN UP TO BE A GREETER

SUPPORT OUR MISSIONS

PRAY

NOTICE WHO'S MISSING,  
AND REACH OUT WITH LOVE!





# *Important Documents*

For anyone in our community who holds a green card, work pass, or other status documents, make sure they are all up to date and you know where they are. Following January 20, 2025, conditions may change. Scrutiny may be more prevalent. Peace of mind may improve if we are all prepared. Do it now, so we won't worry later.

- Contributed by Sandra Harkness

# *Property Tax Exemption Workshop*

If you are struggling to pay your property taxes, there may be help available. If you are a disabled veteran, or an unremarried surviving spouse of a disabled veteran, you may qualify for the **Disabled Veterans Exemption**. If you cannot afford to pay your property taxes, you may qualify for the **Poverty Exemption**.

Find out if you qualify for either of these exemptions by attending a short free seminar on Wednesday, January 8 at 1 PM or Saturday, January 11 at 10 AM. This seminar is open to the public, sponsored by the United Center for Caring, and best of all, it's free! Spread the word in your neighborhood and contact John Fenstermaker at [jfense@icloud.com](mailto:jfense@icloud.com) for more information.

- Contributed by John Fenstermaker

# *Welcome Evie Meeks*

My name is Evelyn Meeks, but, so I'm not mixed up with Evelyn Park, you can all call me Evie! For the last 11 years I've been waitressing all over Jackson, so I'm very excited to be here and start this new adventure as your Office Administrator Assistant.

Here's a little bit about me; I have two amazing children, and if I'm being honest, making sure that they have fun experiences and playing with them is my biggest hobby, my world just revolves around them! I also am teaching myself how to crochet and enjoy doing sudoku puzzles and word searches.

I'd love to get to know all of you, so please feel free to stop by anytime I'm in the office, which is Monday through Thursday, from 9am to 2pm! I look forward to working with and getting to know all of you!

-Contributed by Evie Meeks



*Simone Siciliano provided special music during Advent. Other performers included Diamond Shannon, the Calvary Brass, Michele Wilson, Jeannine Havens, Harry Wilson, and Gary Willcock.*

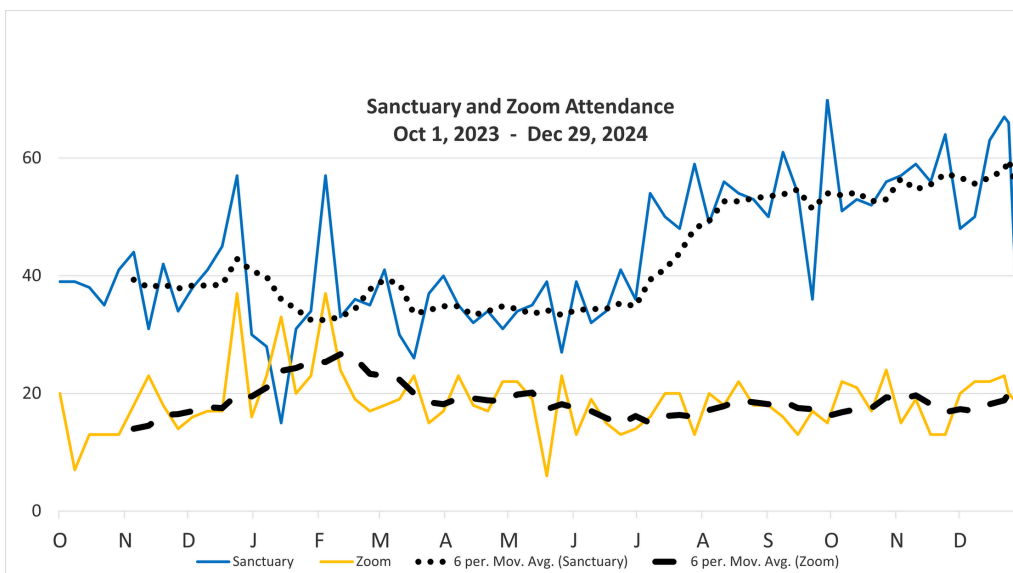
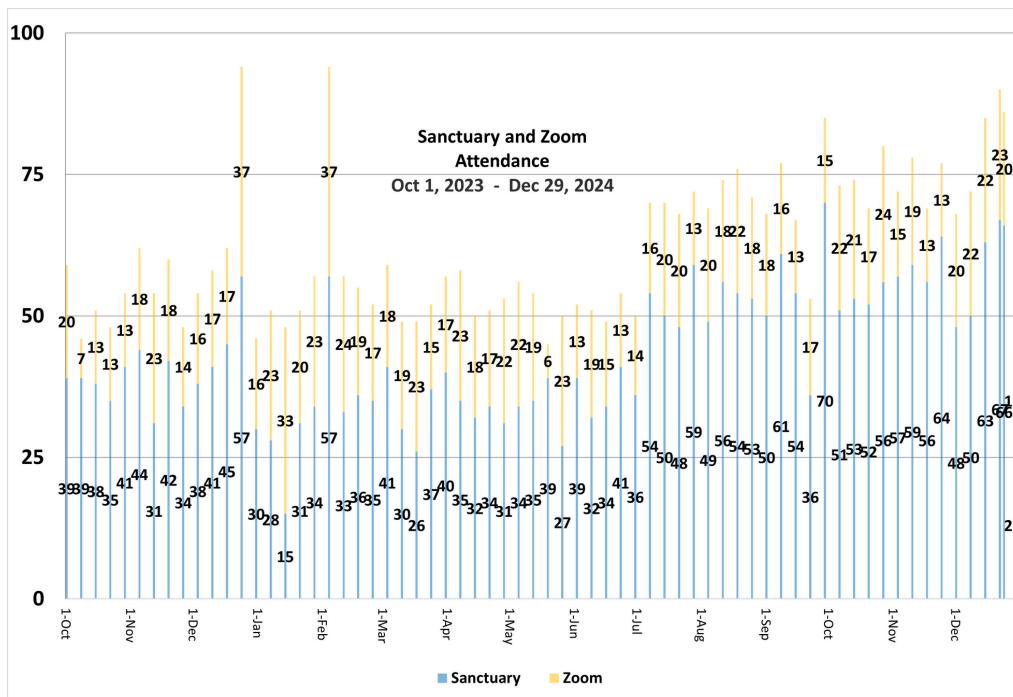
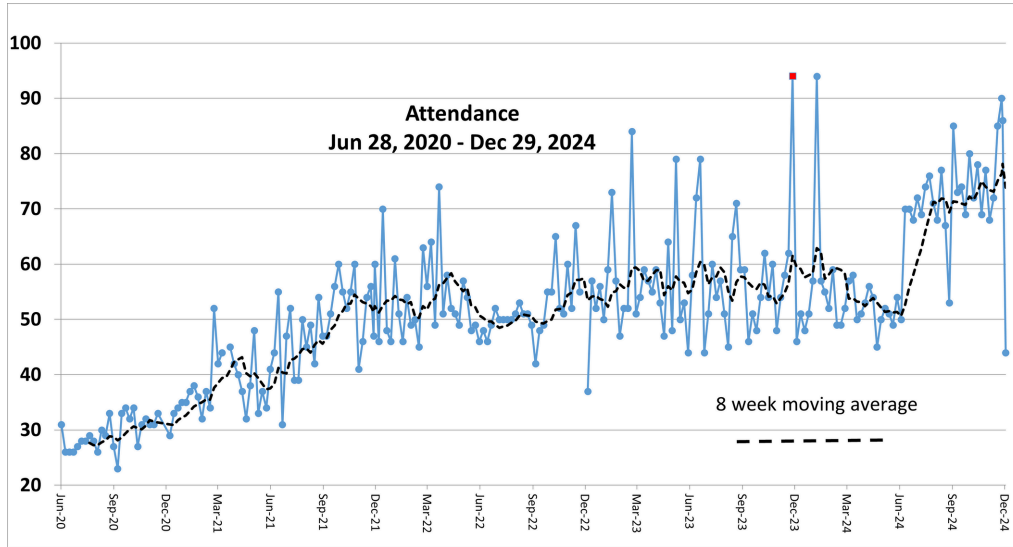


# *Winter Warmth Ministry*

We continue to collect warm hats, scarves, mittens, and socks for our outdoor clothesline. Each week these necessary items are clipped to the clothesline, so those in need can help themselves. We appreciate and depend upon your donations. Please bring warm items to the church office



# Attendance Charts



Contributed by Bert Steck, SJ Financial Secretary

# Giving Envelopes

Hello Friends,

The 2025 giving envelopes have been mailed to those of us who use them. Some were (or will be) distributed during our service on January 5.

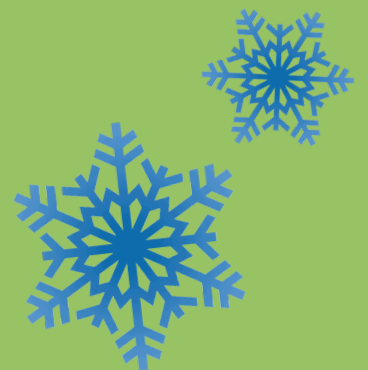
Additionally, the 2024 giving statements were mailed on January 3.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your continued support of St. John's UCC!

Bert Steck

albertsteck8@gmail.com  
734-476-6664



I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

John 15:11

# WPC Treasurer's Update

October income: \$5,106.71  
 October expenses: \$ 10,630.87

November income: \$ 3,953.60  
 November expenses: \$ 6,561.20

The WPC finance team will need to set a meeting with the St. John's financial team to review the shared expenses (day-to-day operating expenses, not including pastor salaries July through October) for July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024. This review will let us know if we owe more to St. John's for the shared expenses during that time, or if they owe us some money back. We will also look ahead at the anticipated shared expenses for 2025 and determine a monthly shared-expense payment for WPC to make to SJ to cover our half of those costs.

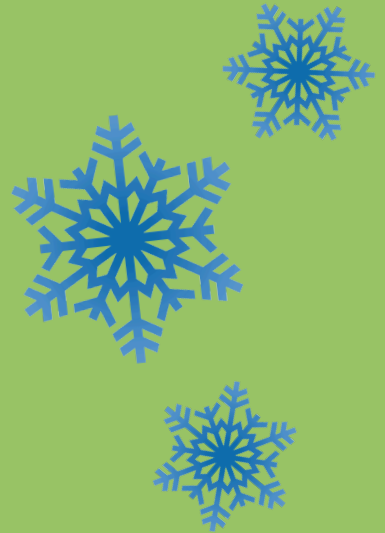
## WPC Stewardship campaign:

Our financial secretary (Andy Rieman) has received pledges from 14 households. Based on those pledges received, and an estimate based on last year's gifts from the members from whom he has not yet had a response, Andy estimates our 2025 income to be approximately \$114,620.

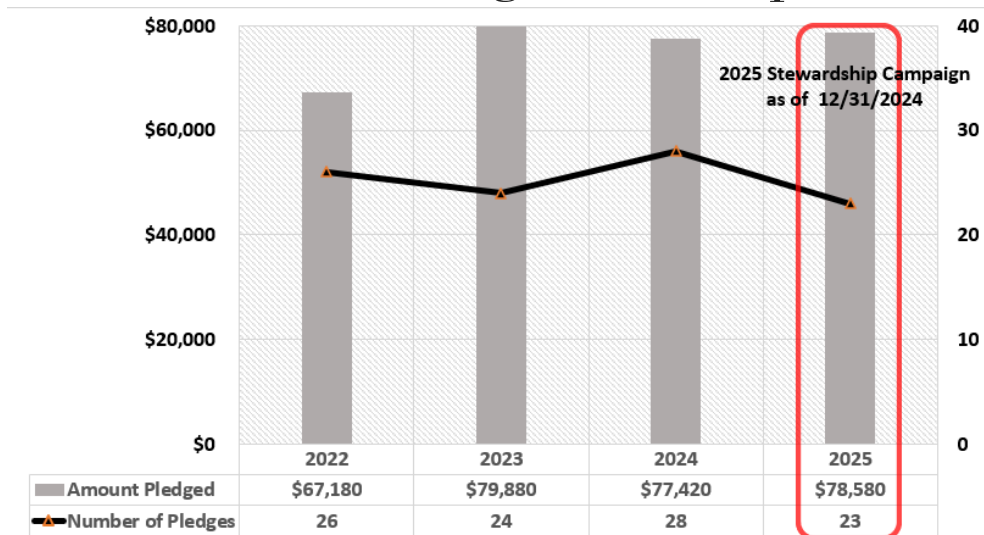
	2024	2025
Pledging units:	28	21
Amount pledged:	\$130,774	\$114,620

If you have not yet made a pledge to Westminster and would like to do so, please contact Andy by mail, text, or email. His info is: 3964 Kibby Road, Jackson, 49201 cell: (517) 416-4150 or email: andyrieman5287@gmail.com. Thank you for your continued generous support of the work of Westminster Presbyterian Church!

- Contributed by Bette Watkins, WPC Treasurer



# SJUCC 2025 Pledge Drive Update





# Partnership Place FAQ's (frequently asked questions)

## RESPONSES TO YOUR QUESTIONS

### **1) Why are we meeting at 10 AM when our Constitution said we vote on the time, and we had already voted to go back to 10:30 AM on Sundays beginning with Labor Day weekend?**

On November 20, Partnership Place held its first Unicameral Meeting (i.e. a joint meeting of St. John's Council and Westminster's Session.) Many things were discussed, among them, the timing for worship services. Because of the increase in attendance at 10 AM time indicating it was a better time for many, numerous requests that it does not change so newcomers know when/how to access and attend worship, Pastor Judy's schedule, and to avoid internal confusion: for all these reasons and more, the joint meeting of the Council and the Session determined keeping worship at 10 AM year-round would better meet the mission of Partnership Place.

### **2) Why can't we use the same Lord's Prayer that we always used to use? We need to choose one Lord's Prayer and stick with it. (Judy has been using the WPC prayer, the UCC Prayer, and some others lately).**

As part of our commitment to diversity and inclusion (including the diversity within Partnership Place), we will continue to use a variety of worship resources to make God's presence and Word known and felt in ways that help us grow as an ever-expanding people of faith. The Worship committee and Pastor Judy are committed to making our services accessible to both current and future members of Partnership Place.

### **3) Why can't we have coffee hour in the fellowship room like we used to?**

The Nurture Committee, to bring more people together in a comfortable space (for growing numbers) in ways that facilitate conversation and community-building, decided to move the coffee hour to the gym for more seating and proximity to the kitchen.



## Got Questions?

Do you have questions regarding the partnering of St. John's UCC and Westminster Presbyterian Church? You may direct your questions to this email:

jointwitnessproject@gmail.com

or contact any of our Thought Partners who are meeting monthly with our consultants, Claire Bamberg and Trace Haythorn of Potentials Coaching and Consulting. Our Thought Partners are:

Kathy Johns  
Gary Reasoner  
Allen Schroeder  
Bob Spiess  
Bette Watkins  
Michele Wilson  
Judy Goodrow



Check out the progress on our new website! Evelyn Park has the new site in development. It can currently be reached by using the stjohnsjx.com address.

A new web address for Partnership Place will soon be added, and any searches for wpcjackson.org will also be redirected to the Partnership site.

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Affix Address  
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world  
for all  
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Love God ♥ Love People ♥ Serve Both



# Partnership Place

[stjohnsjx.com](http://stjohnsjx.com)

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