

# PARTNERSHIP PRESS

@Partnership Place




**WESTMINSTER**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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

## MAY CALENDAR

- 4 - BOOK STUDY HOW WE LEARN TO BE BRAVE 11:15 AM
- 6 - CENTERING PRAYER WITH YOGA 5:30 PM
- 7, 14, 21, 28 - YARNS & CRAFTS 10 AM-12 PM PRAYER ROOM
- 7 - KIDS ACTIVITIES AT JACKSON INTERFAITH SHELTER 5:15 PM
- 12-15 - PASTOR'S RETREAT AT TOWER HILL (NO OFFICE HOURS)
- 14 - PARTNERSHIP BOARD 5:30 PM WITH SJ COUNCIL MEETING AND WPC SESSION MEETING TO FOLLOW
- 15 - PERSONAL CARE PANTRY AT FIRST BAPTIST 5:30 PM
- 16 - FOOD PANTRY AND BABY SPRINKLES 10 AM-12 PM
- 19 - NURTURE COMMITTEE 10 AM
- 20 - COMMUNITY DINNER 6 PM
- 21 - KIDS ACTIVITIES AT JACKSON INTERFAITH SHELTER AT 5:15 PM
- 26 - MEMORIAL DAY OFFICE CLOSED 
- 31 - COMMUNITY DANCE 7-9 PM (PICTURE BELOW)

SPRING CLEANUP DAY TO BE ANNOUNCED



## May 2025

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

# Mission Updates

Our **April Food Pantry** served 130 people, representing 286 family members. 4200 pounds of food were distributed. The Community Dinner served 52 people on April 22. Donations of plastic shopping bags are appreciated.

- Contributed by Carl Robinson

The **April Baby Sprinkle** served 39 families and 76 children. It was our first month to use the State of Michigan TANF sponsored diapers. Sixteen families were eligible for TANF and they will get extra diapers for four months. Those who were not eligible received diapers from the Baby Sprinkle and we will continue to work on eligibility for all who attend. Donations of Pull Ups are also greatly appreciated. Thank you!

- Contributed by Donna Benedict

The **Samaritan Fund** provided assistance for five utility payments and one rent payment in April. Five individuals received emergency food, and 24 unhoused people used our church showers.

- Contributed by Michele Wilson

At the **Jackson Interfaith Shelter**, we did crafts and provided snacks for eleven children on April 2 and 16. If you would like to help out, contact Michele Wilson or Cindy Osborne. Volunteers are always welcome.

- Submitted by Cindy Osborne

The **Jackson Personal Care Ministry** served 215 guests in April. 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

The **Community Easter Dance** was attended by 182 persons from our community! Many thanks to Bob Neustifter and Gloria Frederickson who brought the Easter Bunny and Mrs. Bunny to the dance. The next dance will be Saturday, May 31, from 7 - 9 PM. Donations of food and funds are always welcome. Come join the fun! Contact Linda Miller.

Our **Clothesline Ministry** has provided warm clothing items throughout the winter months. Many thanks to Bob Neustifter and Gloria Frederickson for this ministry!

Thank you to all who donated socks to our **Save a Sole** mission project. The socks have been distributed to the Aware Shelter and the John George home.

# Contact Information

To receive the Zoom link for Sunday services, please visit [partnership.place](http://partnership.place) and click "Subscribe". You will receive the Partnership Place Weekly Digest with the Zoom link.



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The Easter Bunnies at the April Dance

Rev. Judy Goodrow  
260-668-9173

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# From the Pastor's Screen

## RESILIENCE

Last fall Keith and I transplanted a hydrangea tree. It was one of my favorite flowers in our yard, and it needed to be moved. Although we dug carefully, it refused to release the soil. We used a truck to pull it out, which was traumatic for both me and the tree. We replanted it, watered it, and watched as every leaf dried up and fell off. It looked like death was imminent. Then the temperature plunged, and the snow fell.

I watched over that tree throughout the winter months. I knew it was hopeless, and yet ... I kept hoping. In March, when I trimmed the tree, I noticed a green ring inside the dead-looking branches. Sure enough, a few weeks later tiny nubs appeared on every branch. The tree was alive!

We knew it needed energy to unfurl its leaves, so we added root stimulator and fertilizer. The leaves are still tiny, but they are growing. Will the tree survive? Only time will tell, but the Spirit of Life is in her branches, and that same Spirit lives in you and in me.

Life today feels uncertain. Each day brings new trauma as our political, national, and world situation changes. For many of us, our health concerns and fears for loved ones fill our days with anxiety. Yet, when I see my little hydrangea tree, I feel hope.

Her resilience is a living testimony to all that is good in this world. She went through traumatic change and still found the energy to put forth green leaves. She didn't give up, and neither should we.

During the month of May, may our worship be your root stimulator. May our missions fertilize your concern for our world. May our community envelop you in care. May you feel the good earth beneath your feet and feel connected again to the Spirit of Life that dwells in us all.

Pastor Judy



They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."

Jeremiah 17:8

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,  
USHER OR CANDLE LIGHTER

SUPPORT OUR MISSIONS

PULL WEEDS

SIGN BIRTHDAY CARDS

VISIT THE LITTLE BOOKHOUSE

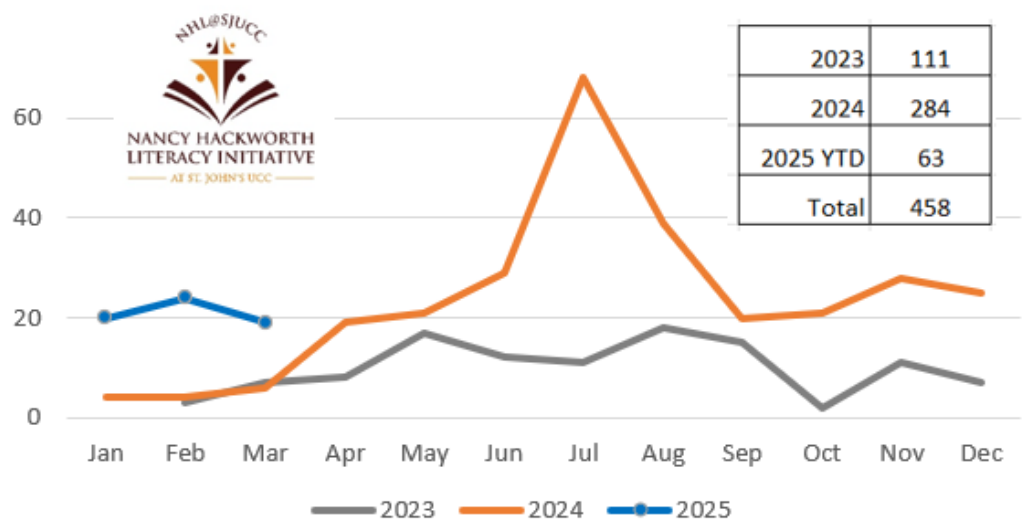
HELP WITH COFFEE HOUR

PRAY

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

# NHL Tutoring Sessions

## Literacy Coaching Sessions Provided Thru Mar 2025



NHL literacy coach Abby King assists Julio with lessons at Lumen Christi



Each Wednesday at 3 PM the Headstart Preschool students and teachers enjoy story time in the NHL children's library. Betsy Lorr is our storyteller.



Preschool Students

## Ridgeway News

Ridgeway update: Ron (real estate agent) is marketing the property state-wide and across the country. He received 2 calls, one of which came to view the building. That's as far as things are at this time.

Status of Westminster's Temporary Pastor contract with Judy: Session has reviewed the Temporary Pastor Contract (for calendar year 2025, retroactive to Jan. 1, 2025), and it has been sent to Presbytery. The COM (Commission on Ministry) will review it at their meeting on April 24th, and should be able to vote on it at that meeting. The contract needs to be approved by Presbytery, session, & Judy. Since each contract is for one year, we will be doing this again each year. We do plan to start working on it much earlier next time :)

If you have any questions, please contact a member of session (Pat Baumgartner, John Fenstermaker, Dennis Johns, Gary Kenworthy, Cindy Spiess, Bette Watkins).

## Lent Book Study

Our study of the book *How We Learn to Be Brave* by Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde will wrap up on May 4 following worship. We have changed our location to the Fellowship Room to include our Zoomers. Everyone is welcome to attend these discussions. We begin at 11:15 AM.



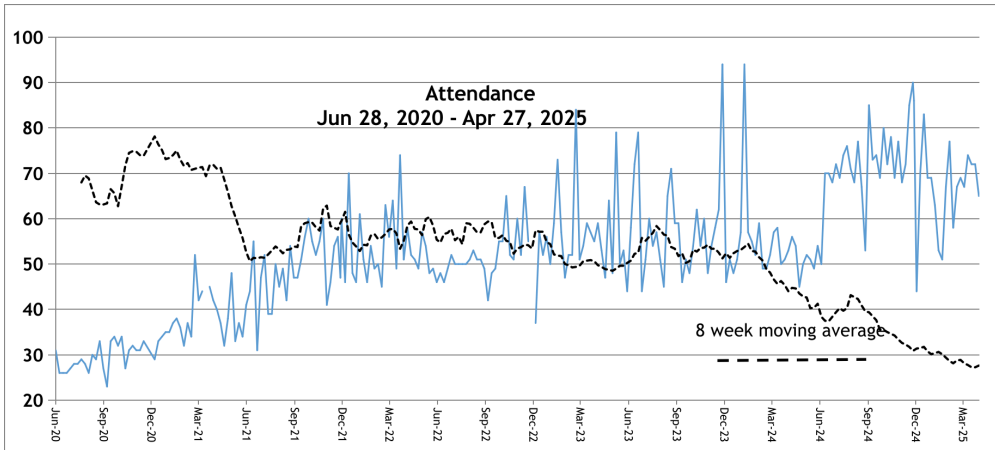
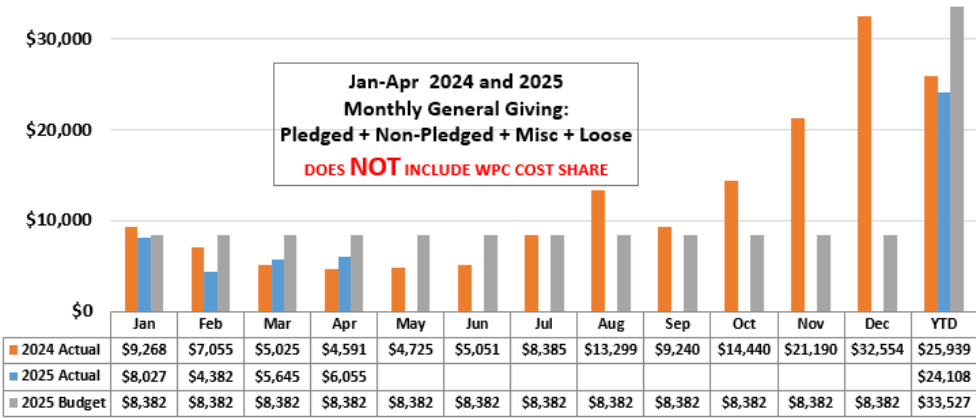


# Partnership FAQ's

How often do the Thought Partners meet?  
Last year, they met almost monthly, leaving time to do work within and between congregations. After a brief break, they are meeting monthly (as needed) until they complete their work this year. This time they are moving forward with research and design on the recommendations the church received from Potentials, keeping in mind the creative wishes and concerns raised in the answers to the questions asked in our all - church meeting. Their function is not to make decisions, but to advise the Partnership Place Board, which meets less often.

What is the role of the Thought Partners?  
The Thought Partners have served as a design team to bring together the Westminster and St. John's communities. Their role has been to help map leadership, fellowship, mission, and identity. Their role is not permanent; they will dissolve in the coming months, and the role will become the responsibility of the Partnership Board.

Is Partnership Place an entity?  
Partnership Place is a way of framing the overall missions of the St. John's/Westminster union. The name captures the spirit of the faith community while also providing a way of communicating with the larger community about this entity and its work.



## Is our church name Partnership Place?

At this stage, the church name has not changed – they are still St. John's UCC & Westminster Presbyterian. In time, the leadership will need to consider how to better represent your joint ventures. For example, when two churches come together in this way, they often take a name such as “St. John's Westminster Union Church” or simply “Community Union Church” That said, the congregations may choose to call themselves “Partnership Place” as a way of capturing the larger identity, using an internal governance structure to maintain denominational affiliations. It would be worth holding a Town Hall to discuss these options.



Charts contributed by Bert Steck

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