

**ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH, INC.**  
**A UNITED METHODIST/PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) COMMUNITY**  
**United in Love – United for Service**

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024**  
*(Prepared January 2025)*

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## **COUNCIL AND STAFF 2024**

(as of December 31, 2024)

### **Council**

Rev. Steve Nofel

'25 Patsy Nwagbaraocha	'26 Lisa Cooper Green	'27 Pamila Brown (SPRC Chair)
'25 Meredith Phillips	'26 Jennifer McClurg	'27 Caroline Evans
'25 Eric Schoch	'26 Deborah Parker	'27 Pamela Love
'25 Alvin Thompson	'26 Noella Sama	'27 Trena Perez
'25 Guy Moody – non-voting (N&P Chair)		

### **WLIFC Board Members**

Gregory Phillips (Board President)

### **Denominational Representatives**

Susan Moody, Presbytery Rep  
Alvin Thompson, UM Conference Rep

### **SJU direct phone line: 410-730-9137**

10431 Twin Rivers Road, Columbia MD 21044

Email: [SJUColumbia@gmail.com](mailto:SJUColumbia@gmail.com)

Website: [www.sjuned.org](http://www.sjuned.org)

### **STAFF**

Rev. Steve Nofel, Interim Pastor  
snofel@baltimorepresbytery.org

Yvonne Barner, Administrator

Ingrid Sampson, Music Director

Patricia Hammer, Accompanist

Wilde Lake Interfaith Center:  
Mike Shaw, Building Manager  
Alicia Veliz, Administrative Assistant  
410-730-7920

## LETTER FROM PASTOR STEVE NOFEL

*A minister of Christ Jesus by the will of God*

To the saints who “have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Holy Spirit who are loyal to Christ Jesus. May grace and peace be yours in abundance.”

I intentionally began by quoting the Apostle Peter’s first epistle. I am looking for Peter to be my guide as we begin 2025.

I give thanks to God for each of you. As a group we are loving, kind, committed, and bring the joy of Jesus Christ to life. We are a progressive church, by which I mean, we keep moving forward in Jesus Christ and we are making progress in our faith during this time of transition and grace.

In this report you will read about our many accomplishments in 2024 including the faithfulness, wisdom, and leadership of our SJU Council, Pastor Nominating Committee, Committees, Teams, Ministries, and Ministers. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God, I personally thank each and every one of you, and again, give thanks.

As the People of God, we move forward!

We are moving from a great 10 years of pastoral leadership by Pastor Mary Ka, for which we give great thanks, to a pastor we have never met before. We are moving into a time of financial insecurity for our congregation. We are moving into a time of renewal and refreshment of our worship and spiritual life.

God is Good. God is Good All the Time!

As the People of God, as the People of St. John United, we are up for the all the challenges. We thrive and will continue to thrive.

As Transitional Pastor, I hope you will soon “see the back of me.” In the meantime, I have three goals:

- Focus on the Spiritual Lives and development of our leadership and church family.
- Continue to invigorate our life together through terrific worship.
- Explore what it means for us to truly proclaim that we are an Anti-Racist Church.

I end this letter where I began, quoting Apostle Peter’s first epistle. “Give holy hugs all around.”

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

*Rev. Steve Nofel*

## REPORT OF SJU ACCOMPLISHMENTS – 2024

*This Report of 2024 SJU Accomplishments is a compendium of information provided by the ministry teams of the church.*

2024 began with a January farewell to our pastor of 10 years, Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan, who was re-appointed to another church by the Bishop of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church (BWCUMC). Thus began the work to find and call a new pastor in accordance with the Presbyterian call process as required by the SJU Plan of Organization, which specifies that ministerial selection for SJU, as a United Methodist / Presbyterian Church (USA) union church, shall be on a rotating basis. In the meantime, we were blessed with a bridge pastor, Rev. Renee Mackey, who served through Lent and Easter until interim pastor Rev. Steve Nofel arrived in April. Rev. Nofel has also been a blessing as he shepherds us through this time of transition and the call process so we are ready to welcome a new pastor in 2025.

In February, the audio/visual system in our worship space was transitioned to an upgraded, more capable system. The new system provides additional, more precise controls for audio components and improved resources for the A/V Team to observe and adjust to changes during services. Members of the A/V Team coordinated and cooperated with the SJERC A/V Team, WLIFC building manager, and the vendor to make sure the system met current and future needs and that all members of the A/V Team were trained on the new system.

We also transitioned to a new livestream platform later in the year. This change offers more user-friendly operation, additional resources to monitor the livestream to confirm that remote viewers have a quality experience, and lower monthly cost.

In June, we celebrated and enjoyed good food, music, and games at our annual picnic.

During July, we prepared for the temporary closure of our worship space while the ceiling and lighting were replaced only to have the project put on hold until the beginning of 2025 – a welcome, but short relief!

And in November we celebrated the life of our former pastor, Rev. Whitty Bass, who passed away in August.

During the year we lived into a new partnership with Kittamaquindi Community Church to serve monthly meals at nearby homeless resource center Leola Dorsey Community Center.

The work of the church in 2024 was focused on four goals established by Church Council to address our pastor's departure and the findings from the 2023 congregation assessment.

### **MAKE NECESSARY CHANGES TO ATTRACT AND INVOLVE YOUNG ADULTS AND FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN/YOUTH**

Our music ministry incorporated a variety of types of music in worship, including a new, upbeat Christmas cantata that was well-received by the congregation.

The Young Adult Group participated in a vision board party to set intentional goals for personal and spiritual growth. Several of the young adults attended a mental health workshop conducted by the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

Unfortunately, Vacation Bible School was suspended this year due to scheduling difficulties. It is hoped that 2025 will see the return of regular Christian education for youth and Vacation Bible School.

## **INCREASE CONNECTION, ENGAGEMENT, AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF CONGREGANTS**

We continue to see growth in the number of congregants involved in worship leadership:

- 35 different congregants of all ages served as liturgists during the year, including 5 first-time liturgists.
- Included in our liturgists this year were 4 youth and 3 young adults who served as liturgists for a total of 9 services.
- Over 30 congregants regularly enhance our worship through preparation of worship materials, set-up/take-down of our worship space, greeting, worship assistance, music, and audio/visual production and livestreaming.

Nametags were reintroduced this year to help us get to know names as well as faces.

The Audio/Visual (A/V) Team continued to coordinate and rehearse regularly with the pastor, liturgists, music director, and other event organizers to support in-person and livestream worship and worship-related services. The Team also prepared for and supported other services, including the Celebration of Ministry for outgoing Pastor Mary Ka Kanahan and the Celebration of Life for former Pastor Whitty Bass, both including collection and compilation of photos and videos, editing, and presentation of completed videos. The Team edited and re-posted services on all platforms including Facebook and YouTube as needed to address technical difficulties encountered during livestreaming.

The Young Adult Group gathered, learned, and got to know each other better in several ways:

- Informal get togethers over brunch & dinner.
- Tour of the National Museum of African American History.
- Participation in the Black History worship service through song and poetry reading.

The Congregational Care Team continued to care for congregants in a variety of ways, including phone calls, care and birthday cards, transportation to and from medical visits, occasional meals and errands, home and hospital visits, funeral and repast set up and assistance, mailing of Christmas cards to over 50 people, and delivery of Christmas bags of poinsettias, cards, and cookies to 15 congregants.

Sundays at Seven fellowship continued throughout the year with about 8 participants, providing a fellowship opportunity for several folks unable to attend worship in person.

The Men's Group met monthly by Zoom throughout the year for general fellowship, including 3 members who reside out of the area.

The Christian Applications class, with participants from both SJU and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia, continued to study the foundations of Christianity and how they have played out in contemporary society, with the most recent focus on race relations. This year they studied and discussed 3 books:

- The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story, edited by Nikole Hannah-Jones
- As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock, written by Dina Gilio-Whitaker
- The Color of Law, written by Richard Rothstein.

In September Pastor Steve began conducting lunch-time Bible Study which discussed the Bible passages for the upcoming Sunday worship service.

## **PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS BY WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE COMMUNITY**

The BWES Partnership Team coordinated SJU volunteers and donations throughout the year in support of SJU's partnership with Bryant Woods Elementary School to help address the needs of teachers, staff, administration, and students in a variety of ways:

- The Team purchased a yearbook ad and ordered 2 yearbooks (one for SJU and one to be donated to a needy student via the school).
- SJU donated 30 boxes of tissues, 10 packs of dry erase markers/pencils and 30 composition books to supplement the school's supplies in mid-winter.
- 4 SJU volunteers read to students at BWES on Reading Day in March.
- In May:
  - 4 SJU volunteers talked about their careers with BWES students at Career Day.
  - Coffee and donuts were provided for the teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week.
  - SJU congregants contributed to the PTA fundraiser with Shake Shack. The restaurant donated 25% of the receipts from food purchased to BWES.
- August was a busy month with preparations for the new school year:
  - SJU's annual BWES school supply collection in August was another big success. The giveaway provided supplies for over 100 students.
  - The BWES Partnership Team provided breakfast "sides" for the BWES Staff Breakfast.
  - The Team also planted flowers and cleaned flower beds in front of the school.
  - 8 SJU volunteers participated in the annual "Clap In" to welcome students on the first day of school
- In December:
  - SJU's annual hat and mitten tree collection provided these outdoor necessities for BWES students.
  - The SJU Partnership Team provided Christmas gifts for 5 BWES families, including 6 children.
  - 100 \$5 gift cards were collected and provided to BWES teachers in appreciation for their work.

SJU partnered with Kittamaqundi Community Church to provide the afternoon meal on the first Wednesday of each month to the Leola Dorsey Community Resource Center in Jessup which provides services for the homeless. Along with volunteers from KCC, 13 SJU volunteers provided hot and cold food and beverages to serve 80 to 120 clients at each monthly meal.

The Anti-Racism / Social Justice Ministry Team organized several events to support voter education and registration in preparation for the November general election:

- A multi-generational group of 27 SJU volunteers, including elementary, middle, and high school students, and adults of all ages, turned out to write postcards which were mailed to 400 underserved residents in North Carolina to provide information on how and where to vote.
- Several SJU volunteers provided voter education and registration assistance at Wilde Lake Interfaith Center between worship services on a Sunday shortly before the election.

In addition to a special offering to support the Aurora Foundation orphanage in Liberia, SJU supported Kikanae Punyua's ongoing mission to improve the health care and life of the women in his village in Kenya by donating over \$3,000 to help purchase a truck to transport women to the hospital to give birth. Without the truck, women in labor had to travel up to 30 miles away via motorbike on rough roads to get to the nearest hospital. Kikanae was an international transfer student from Kenya when we met him through our former pastor, Whitty Bass. The Osiligi Foundation Medical Center at the village is a project he began in his senior year of high school at Glenelg Country School in 2011 as an idea. Thirteen years later it is a hospital that receives over 1,000 patients and delivers 10 to 20 newborns every month.

SJU supported a memorial service for community member Sasha Balaga and two ecumenical services with our WLIFC partner St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church (SJERC).

As a member of PATH (People Acting Together in Howard), SJU participated in the Statewide Action for a Just Democracy event of over 500 people at the Wilde Lake Interfaith Center to meet with our state elected officials and lay out a vision for a more just Maryland. The event was coordinated and sponsored by the Maryland Just Power Alliance which is made up of PATH, ACT (Anne Arundel Connecting Together), and AIM (Action in Montgomery). SJU Pastor Steve Nofel and SJERC Fr. Mel Portula opened and closed the event with prayer. The Maryland Comptroller, the Maryland Department of Housing, and 12 state senators and delegates agreed to support the Alliance’s priorities for diverse and attainable housing options, tenant rights, clean energy for healthy communities, and pre-kindergarten for every child.

To aid the congregation in understanding more about SJU’s commitment to being a Matthew 25 Church, we conducted a Matthew 25 Service in February. To help the Presbytery live into being a Matthew 25 Presbytery, 3 people from SJU participated in the planning and leading of the Matthew 25 Mid-Atlantic Summit. 2 SJU members also attended the Summit in October.

2 members of SJU participated in the Presbytery’s Antiracist Practices for Faithful Leadership Cohort and have shared some of their learning with the Council.

The Anti-Racism/Social Justice Ministry Team published news of museums, marches, documentaries, shows, and other offerings throughout the year to encourage and support awareness of the causes, effects, and various aspects of racism and social injustice.

**INSTALL A NEW PASTOR**

*See the “2024 Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) Report” in this 2024 Annual Report.*

**OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- SJU began 2024 with a budgeted deficit of \$28,724.80. We moved forward in faith that God would provide what we needed for our ministry. The Finance Committee began in February tracking end-of-year income and expense projections based on actual expenses and income. Thanks to generous giving for the “Count Me All In” special appeal, end-of-the-year giving, and expenses not needed, we ended the year with a surplus which will be carried forward into 2025.
- The Finance Committee began providing quarterly reports to the ministry teams for their specific budget lines and escrow accounts to assist them in managing their budgets.
- To increase income, the Finance Committee made short term investments of a portion of advance pledge payments. They also took advantage of favorable interest rates and invested escrow funds in the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program which makes loans to PC(USA) churches.

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 We are the church: serving God, serving others, and serving each other -  
**United in Love – United for Service**

*<sup>14</sup>Most of all, let love guide your life, for then the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony.  
<sup>15</sup>Let the peace of heart which comes from Christ be always present in your hearts and lives, for this is your responsibility and privilege as members of his body. And always be thankful.*

~ Colossians 3:14-15  
 (The Living Bible – paraphrased)

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the SJU Ministry Teams by:

Debbie Parker, Chair of Council

## PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

### Members:

Juliette Dixon  
Andrew Love  
Patsy Nwagbaraocha  
Meredith Phillips

Tony Powell (Team Lead)  
Success Shu  
Carole Thompson  
Bruce Worley

The Pastor Nominating Committee team was established via motions from the SJU Nominations and Personnel Committee for approval by the congregation. Our initial organizational meeting was July 22. Pastor Steve Nofel provided required training for the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) process for calling a pastor. We also reviewed training videos and registered on the PCUSA Church Leadership Connection (CLC) website. In September, using results from the Holy Cow congregation assessment conducted in 2023, our church website and knowledge from the team via individual and collaborative effort, we wrote the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP), our church resume that is reviewed by prospective call pastor candidates. Our MDP was approved by our Council, clerk Eric Schoch, and the Presbytery Commission on Ministry in mid-October and we began receiving computer-matched candidates and self-applicants (32 total by year-end). We developed 1<sup>st</sup> interview questions and ranked applicants, ultimately selecting 5 to interview. As of December 31, 3 of the 1<sup>st</sup> interviews were completed. The PNC has met or done interviews for 16 hours with many additional hours for training, development, and reviews.

We look forward to completing the process and presenting a called pastor candidate to our congregation in 2025.

## CLERK OF SESSION REPORT

SJU has fulfilled its covenant for connectional giving at 100% to both the Baltimore Presbytery and the Baltimore/Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church.

### **Membership Report - 2024**

#### **Additions to Active Membership – 5**

<u>Transfer</u>	<u>Reaffirmation</u>	<u>Profession of Faith</u>
Sharon Guyton	John Long Karen Long	Emmanuel Ngwa Shu Nyamboli Bridget Afanwi

#### **Deletions from Active Membership – 1**

<u>Transferred or Deleted by Request</u>	1
Debra Snow	
Deaths	0

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## Membership Statistical Report - 2024

### Church Membership

<b>Total Active Membership Reported on December 31, 2023</b>		<b>135</b>
Additions During 2024		
Professions of Faith, Reaffirmations	4	
Transfers	<u>1</u>	
<b>Total Addition to Active Rolls</b>	<b>5</b>	
Deletions During 2024		
Removed from Active Rolls	1	
Deaths	<u>0</u>	
<b>Total Deletions from Active Rolls</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Total Active Membership Reported on December 31, 2024</b>		<b>139</b>

### Church School Membership

Total Children and Youth Registered	0
Total Teachers and Officers	0
Adult Education	
Bible Study	5
Christian Applications	7
Vacation Bible School	<u>0</u>
<b>Church School Total</b>	<b>12</b>
Baptisms	
<u>Infants and Children</u>	
Kasyn Creed Sampson Robinson	1
Adults	<u>0</u>
<b>Total Baptisms</b>	<b>1</b>

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The Annual Congregational Meeting of  
St. John United Church  
In-Person and Via Zoom  
**Sunday, January 21, 2024**

#### **01 Opening and Agenda Approval**

Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan opened the meeting with a prayer at 11:58 am, following the Worship Service. Susan Moody, President of St. John United Church, Inc., called the meeting to order and introduced Roy Ferguson, Treasurer, and Pamela Love, Secretary, of SJUC, Inc. A quorum was present. Susan Moody turned the gavel over to Rev. Kanahan to conduct the meeting. She presented the proposed Agenda which was approved by a show of hands.

The 2023 Annual Report, including the 2024 Budget, was distributed in person and had been posted on the SJU website prior to the meeting.

## **02 Greetings from the Denominations**

The Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Taylor, General Presbyter, Baltimore Presbytery, expressed appreciation and enjoyment of the worship service, and extended greetings from the Presbytery's congregations in counties across central Maryland. The Rev. Dawn Hand, Central Maryland District Superintendent and Dean of the Cabinet of the Baltimore/Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church brought greetings on behalf of Bishop Easterling, of the BWCUMC and the churches of the Central Maryland District.

## **03 Clerk's Report**

Meredith Phillips reported that SJU has fulfilled its covenant for connectional giving at 100% to both the Baltimore Presbytery and the Baltimore/Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The membership changes during 2023 were presented. SJU began the year with 141 members which is an adjusted number from the 2022 Membership Statistical Report. During the year there was a decrease of 14 members and an addition of 8 members, for a net decrease of 6 and a resulting active member total of 135 as of December 31, 2023.

There were 3 baptisms. 14 adults participated in Adult Education during the year and there were 20 youth enrolled in Vacation Bible School.

## **04 Review of the 2023 Annual Report**

Rev. Kanahan introduced Debbie Parker, Chair of Council. She highlighted the five goals that Council worked on in 2023. Debbie celebrated the success of the newly formed young adult group and the grant that was awarded by Baltimore Presbytery for this program, the active Congregational Care Team, the growing VBS attendance, the newly formed partnership with Kittamaquindi Community Church and the Leora Dorsey Center, the Communications Team's work on the new SJU website and internet recognition, and the continuing partnership with BWES.

## **05 Capital Fund Report**

Investment Trustee Dr. Lisa Cooper Green reported that the 2023 year began with a fund market value of \$1,041,220. There was a transfer from the investment fund to the operating budget of \$5,658 and fees totaled \$5,398. Dividends, interest, and distributions added \$36,753 and deposits totaled \$831. The net market value at the close of 2023 was \$1,162,852 which is a net market change of \$95,104.

## **06 2024 Budget**

Susan Moody reviewed the outcome from the previous year's proposed budget in which expenditures were projected to be \$347,413 and revenues projected to be \$296,449 with an expected shortfall of \$50,964. Due to an increase in pledge amounts along with a substantial decrease in actual expenditures the end of year balance was a surplus of approximately \$29,473. Susan presented the 2024 budget approved by Council, which anticipates expenditures on behalf of ministry activities and other items to be \$348,511 and anticipated revenues of \$319,787 – an expected shortfall of \$28,724. Susan noted that an estimated total amount is budgeted for pastor compensation as details for pulpit supply, bridge, interim, and called pastors are not known at this time. She also shared that the Finance Team will continue to monitor and manage income and expenditures and challenged the congregation and Council to work to help think of new ideas for possible income sources.

## **07 Clergy Compensation / Terms of Call**

Guy Moody, Chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, presented the clergy compensation package. SPRC recommended keeping the package at the same amount as 2023 since Rev. Kanahan is leaving at the end of January. She will receive 1/12 of the salary with a \$1,000 bonus. The congregation affirmed the proposed compensation unanimously by a show of hands.

**08 Nominations and Personnel Report**

Rev. Kanahan presented the Nominations and Personnel Report. She noted that Lon Chesnutt replaced her on the SJU Investment Trustees. The following nominations for Council and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee were previously approved by Council and were presented to the Congregation for affirmation:

**Council:**

Class of 2025

Guy Moody (non-voting member) and Eric Schoch

Class of 2026

Noella Sama

Class of 2027

Pamila Brown - SPRC Chair, Caroline Evans, Pamela Brown, and Trena Perez

**Staff-Parish Relations Committee:**

Class of 2026

Pamila Brown, Chair

Class of 2027

Nigel Green and Mary Lou Shippe

The congregation affirmed the nominees by a show of hands.

The following nominees for Nominations and Personnel were previously affirmed by Council and were presented to the Congregation for approval:

**Nominations and Personnel:**

Class of 2027

Andrea Barnes and Guy Moody

The nominees were approved by the congregation by a show of hands.

Rev. Kanahan made a motion to accept the Nominations and Personnel Report. The motion was seconded and supported unanimously by the congregation by a show of hands.

Rev. Kanahan expressed a special thanks, on behalf of the church, to outgoing Council, Nominations and Personnel, and Staff-Parish Relations Committee members.

**09 Approval of Annual Report**

A motion was proposed by Rev. Kanahan and seconded to approve the Annual Report. The motion was approved by a show of hands.

**10 Goals for 2024 and New Business**

Debbie Parker reported the Council’s goals for SJU for 2024. The goals are in response to the congregational assessment results, our pastor’s departure, and requests and requirements from our parent denominations.

Rev. Hand shared that the BWCUMC is heading into a time of restructuring. She invited the congregation to take part in listening sessions that will be publicized on the BWCUMC website.

**11 Closing**

Rev. Kanahan adjourned the meeting at 12:50 pm. The Rev. Dr. Taylor offered a blessing to close the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Meredith Phillips, Clerk of Council

Special Congregational Meeting of  
St. John United Church  
Wilde Lake Interfaith Center  
**Sunday, July 7, 2024**

**01 Opening**

Rev. Steve Nofel opened the meeting with a prayer at 11:30 am, following the Worship Service. A quorum existed. Rev. Nofel reported that this meeting was called by the Council and announced from the pulpit for two consecutive previous Sundays, as required by the Bylaws.

**02 Agenda**

The purpose of the meeting was to receive the report of the Nominations and Personnel Committee and elect a Pastor Nominating Committee. No other items were on the agenda.

**03 Report of the Nominations and Personnel Committee**

Guy Moody, chair of the Nominations and Personnel (N&P) Committee, acknowledged the work of the committee in recent months to identify a slate of people to serve as a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). He further acknowledged the willingness of those individuals to serve SJU in that way. The N&P committee sought a slate to represent the diversity of the congregation fully.

The Nominations and Personnel Committee proposed the following people for the Pastor Nominating Committee:

- Julliette Dixon
- Nancy Gabie
- Andy Love
- Patsy Nwagbaraocha
- Tony Powell
- Gayelle Sama
- Carole Thompson
- Bruce Worley

**04 Overview of PNC Responsibilities**

Rev. Nofel stated that the responsibilities of the PNC committee include two 90-minute training sessions, preparation of a church resume, and selection and evaluation of candidates.

**05 Nominations from the floor**

Rev. Nofel asked for nominations from the floor. None was received.

**06 Vote for Pastor Nominating Committee**

Rev. Nofel called for a vote. The slate was approved with a unanimous voice vote, with no objections or abstentions.

**11 Closing**

Guy Moody offered a closing prayer. The meeting adjourned at 11:42 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eric Schoch, Clerk of Council

Special Congregational Meeting of  
St. John United Church  
Wilde Lake Interfaith Center  
**Sunday, August 4, 2024**

**01 Opening**

Rev. Steve Nofel opened the meeting with prayer at 11:18 am during the conclusion of the Worship Service. A quorum existed.

**02 Agenda**

The purpose of the meeting was to elect one member to the Pastor Nominating Committee in place of Nancy Gabie who will not be able to serve on the committee due to other obligations and commitments. No other items were on the agenda.

**03 Nomination from the Nominations and Personnel Committee**

Meredith Phillips was placed in nomination by the Nominations and Personnel Committee having graciously volunteered to serve on the committee.

**04 Nominations From the Floor**

Rev. Nofel asked for nominations from the floor. None was received.

**06 Vote for Pastor Nominating Committee**

Rev. Nofel called for a vote. The nominee was approved with a unanimous voice vote, with no objections or abstentions.

**11 Closing**

Rev. Nofel closed the meeting with prayer and the worship service with the benediction. The meeting adjourned at 11:20 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Debbie Parker, Chair of Council

Special Congregational Meeting of  
St. John United Church  
Wilde Lake Interfaith Center  
**Sunday, September 8, 2024**

**01 Opening**

Rev. Steve Nofel opened the meeting with prayer at 11:20 am during the conclusion of the Worship Service. A quorum existed.

**02 Agenda**

The purpose of the meeting was to elect a replacement to one member of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) who had to step back from participating on the committee. No other items were on the agenda.

**03 Nomination from the Nominations and Personnel Committee**

Guy Moody, Chairperson of the Nominations and Personnel Committee, with the approval of the PNC, placed Success Shu in nomination to ensure full representation of every aspect of our diverse congregation on the committee.

**04 Nominations From the Floor**

Rev. Nofel asked for nominations from the floor. None was received.

**06 Vote for Pastor Nominating Committee**

Rev. Nofel called for a vote. The nominee was approved with a unanimous voice vote, with no objections or abstentions.

## 11 Closing

Rev. Nofel closed the meeting and the worship service with the benediction. The meeting adjourned at 11:22 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Debbie Parker, Chair of Council

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## 2024 NOMINATIONS AND PERSONNEL/COMMITTEE ON LAY LEADERSHIP

### **2024 Nominations and Personnel/Committee on Lay Leadership** *(Guy Moody, Chair)*

*NPC/CLL members in 2024 were Andrea Barnes, Lisa Cooper Green, Karen Hopkins, Andrew Love, Guy Moody, and Evann Ridgeway.*

*NPC/CLL in 2024 identified four vacancies on Church Council, three on SPRC, and three on Nominations and Personnel for 2025-2028.*

### **2024 Nominations and Personnel/Committee on Lay Leadership Report**

#### **St. John United Church, Inc. (SJU) Corporate Officers**

President	Susan Moody
Secretary	Pamela Love
Treasurer	Roy Ferguson
Resident Agent	Kirk Halpin, Halpin and Associates

#### **Wilde Lake Interfaith Religious Corp. (WLIRC) Board Representatives (1)**

Gregory Phillips

#### **St. John United Church, Inc. Investment Trustees**

Debbie Parker	Andrew Love
Lon Chesnutt	Lisa Cooper Green

### **Proposed Leadership of SJU, Inc. for Jan. 2025-Jan. 2026**

*(New leadership proposed by N&P for congregational vote or affirmation listed in **BOLD**)*

#### **SJU Church Council** (a body of 12 members + pastor)

Class of 2026: Lisa Cooper Green, Jen McClurg, Debbie Parker, Noella Sama

Class of 2027: Pamela Brown, Caroline Evans, Pamela Love, Trena Perez Powell

**Class of 2028: Juliette Dixon, Sharon Guyton, Karen Hopkins, Guy Moody**

#### **Nominations and Personnel/Committee on Lay Leadership**

Class of 2026: Karen Hopkins, Andrew Love

Class of 2027: **Lisa Cooper Green**, Guy Moody

**Class of 2028: Oretha Solee, vacant**

#### **Staff-Parish Relations Committee**

Class of 2026: Pamela Brown, **Rayna Woodford**

Class of 2027: Nigel Green, Mary Lou Shippe

**Class of 2028: Robin Dietzway, Alvin Thompson**

***The NPC/CLL thanks the following members for their Council service:***

Patsy Nwagbaraocha, Meredith Phillips, Eric Schoch, Alvin Thompson

***The NPC/CLL thanks the following members for their N&PC service:***

Andrea Barnes, Evann Ridgeway

***The NPC/CLL thanks the following members for their SPRC service:***

Dawn Cooper Barnes, Nancy Gabie

***The NPC/CLL thanks the following chairpersons for their leadership during 2024:***

Pamila Brown – Staff-Parish Relations Committee; Guy Moody – Nominations and Personnel; Debbie Parker – Council

## FINANCIALS

### 2024 Stewardship Report for 2025

The SJU theme for generosity this year was “Count Me All In” in 2025.

The goal was to engage everyone in giving. The campaign was not as successful as we hoped. Some of our members have moved and others have encountered serious changes in their lives. The number of pledging units dropped from 47 to 39. We will continue to pursue commitment from members during 2025.

St. John United invites everyone to give time, expertise, participation, and other gifts to the life of the church. We are starting a new chapter in our lives. Support from every member will be necessary to help the congregation move forward.

The results of the “Count Me All In” 2025 campaign are:

Total Pledged for 2025:	\$203,260.00
Advance Pledge Payments:	\$ 40,728.17
Pledges Received:	39

### Building Fund Investments (OSAIC Wealth)

Beginning Market Value 1/1/2024	1, 162,851.98
Deposits	0.00
Dividends, Interest, and Distributions	38,277.61
Fees	(6,064.50)
Withdrawals	0.00
Net Change in Market Value	58,461.30
Ending Market Value 12/31/2024	\$1,253,526.39

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## 2023 Financial Review: St. John United Church

Auditors: Karen Long and Eric Schoch

The financial review or audit was conducted on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, consistent with the UMC Local Church Audit Guide which states that churches with receipts of less than \$500,000 can have the audit done by a qualified member or members and do not need a CPA. May and December were chosen for review. May was chosen randomly and December was chosen to allow comparison to the Church's Annual Report. The review included the Operating Account, Money Market Account and Investment Account. The review included all donations including those in the offering basket, through Givelify and Vanco (the Baltimore Presbytery system). During these reviews all checks issued were reviewed to verify that they were signed by those with check signing authority.

Findings: There were no significant issues uncovered. Some observations are listed below.

- There are some nuances with respect to donations received via Vanco, which processes direct bank withdrawals. In particular:
  - The service charge is withheld before the deposit is made and the bookkeeper notes the charge as a separate line in the reconciliation statement. Hence, correlating those donations with the bank statement.
  - Deposits are credited during the month after the donation goes to Vanco, so January, shows the donations made in December, for example.
- Although the audit instructions call for an audit of church property, we had no list of capital equipment and did not address that.
- The audit instructions call for review of minutes of the Finance Committee, but we did not request those.

The auditors then reviewed the recommendations from the 2023 Annual Report. Most have been completed but several are in progress and require updating.

- Some office equipment has been identified for disposition. Additional items are expected to be disposed after cleaning out the office area in the coming weeks. An inventory of church property should be updated following that project.
- As stated in the previous audit report, the contract for the bookkeeper should describe the duties more specifically, such as hours worked, deliverables, and pay rate.
- There was a recommendation to give another person besides the Financial Secretary access to Church Windows software.
- There was a recommendation that an outside party with finance expertise should review the books occasionally. It was further suggested that it be accomplished by partnering with another church. The church may want to pursue this, but it should be noted that this is not required by the UMC Local Church Audit Guide cited above.
- The church needs to adopt a more permanent and secure record storage solution. Current files are nicely organized but in boxes on the Church Administrator's office floor taking up almost all of the space. This is also not adequately secure. Scanning into a searchable online archive would reduce the physical space requirement. The Presbyterian Historical Society (Philadelphia, PA) provides recommendations for record retention of congregations and will store permanent records of congregations at no charge in an environmentally controlled archival storage area with specialized fire detection and security systems. They will also provide off-site storage of born-digital/electronic records. <https://www.history.pcusa.org/services/records-deposit>



This concludes the audit findings and recommendations.

Finally, the auditors would like to thank Ms. Barner for the well-organized records and her patience in getting us any material needed, responding to our questions and arranging meeting space.

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*(Financials section continues on next page)*

## St. John United Church Operating Fund Statement 2024

	Actuals	Budget	Variance over/(under) Budget
<b>Revenue</b>			
Contributions - Pledgers	198,734.18	197,373.09	1,361.09
Contributions - Non-Pledgers	26,050.20	30,000.00	(3,949.80)
Contributions - Pledges This Year	0.00	10,000.00	(10,000.00)
Contributions - Anonymous	1,498.00	1,500.00	(2.00)
Advance Pledge Payments	41,440.96	41,440.91	0.05
Carryover from Prior Year/Operating Reserve	29,473.08	29,473.08	0.00
Fundraisers/Special Collections/In Memory Of	16,551.36	10,000.00	6,551.36
Interest	171.78	0.00	171.78
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$313,919.56</b>	<b>\$319,787.08</b>	<b>\$(5,867.52)</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Music Director Salary	18,061.93	18,061.93	0.00
Accompanist Salary	11,011.69	11,011.74	(0.05)
Church Administrator Salary	47,870.41	47,870.45	(0.04)
Employer's Share FICA	5,886.23	0.00	5,886.23
<i>Pastor Compensation</i>			
Senior Pastor Compensation Package	8,905.95		
Bridge Pastor	6,032.00		
Interim Pastor	80,171.19		
Pastor Reimbursable Expenses	1,637.81		
<i>Total Pastor Compensation</i>	<b>\$96,746.95</b>	<b>\$123,126.00</b>	<b>\$(26,379.05)</b>
<b>Total Employee Salaries and Expenses</b>	<b>\$179,577.21</b>	<b>\$200,070.12</b>	<b>\$(20,492.91)</b>
WLIFC Operating <sup>1</sup>	44,966.76	47,189.27	(2,222.51)
WLIFC Capital Reserves <sup>1</sup>	16,498.62	16,981.49	(482.87)
WLIFC Reimbursables	1,004.35	2,800.00	(1,795.65)
<b>Total WLIFC</b>	<b>\$62,469.73</b>	<b>\$66,970.76</b>	<b>\$(4,501.03)</b>
Methodist Mission Share	18,718.08	18,718.00	0.08
Presbytery Per Capita	2,796.00	2,800.00	(4.00)
Presbytery Shared Min Pledge	3,420.00	3,420.00	0.00
Denominational Connectional Meetings	727.20	2,200.00	(1,472.80)
Anti-Racism & Denominational Initiatives	0.00	700.00	(700.00)
LGBTQ Support	400.00	400.00	0.00
<b>Total Denominational Support</b>	<b>\$26,061.28</b>	<b>\$28,238.00</b>	<b>\$(2,176.72)</b>
Office Expense	3,113.37	2,800.00	313.37
Church Communications	5,870.28	6,000.00	(129.72)
Workers Comp and Insurance	2,589.91	3,037.00	(447.09)

Bank Fees & Unanticipated	2,331.87	2,200.00	131.87
Computer Expense	0.00	2,500.00	(2,500.00)
Bookkeeping Service	6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00
Legal Fees	0.00	8,000.00	(8,000.00)
<b>Total Administrative Expense</b>	<b>\$19,905.43</b>	<b>\$30,537.00</b>	<b>\$(10,631.57)</b>
Vacation Bible School	0.00	750.00	(750.00)
Adult & Family Programs	118.58	240.00	(121.42)
IFC Library	250.00	250.00	0.00
Leadership Training	0.00	500.00	(500.00)
<b>Total Education Expense</b>	<b>\$368.58</b>	<b>\$1,740.00</b>	<b>\$(1,371.42)</b>
Worship Materials	438.94	900.00	(461.06)
Music Program	588.36	1,206.00	(617.64)
Honoraria	1,500.00	2,500.00	(1,000.00)
Worship Conference	0.00	1,000.00	(1,000.00)
Funerals/Memorial Services	95.78	200.00	(104.22)
Fellowship	1,266.73	5,400.00	(4,133.27)
<b>Total Worship Expense</b>	<b>\$3,889.81</b>	<b>\$11,206.00</b>	<b>\$(7,316.19)</b>
Congregational Care	0.00	500.00	(500.00)
Council Discretionary	0.00	2,000.00	(2,000.00)
Community-Building Events	701.96	750.00	(48.04)
<b>Total Member Services</b>	<b>\$701.96</b>	<b>\$3,250.00</b>	<b>\$(2,548.04)</b>
Discretionary Mission	1,060.00	2,000.00	(940.00)
Pastor's Discretionary	500.00	2,000.00	(1,500.00)
PATH	1,000.00	2,500.00	(1,500.00)
<b>Total Mission Expense</b>	<b>\$2,560.00</b>	<b>\$6,500.00</b>	<b>\$(3,940.00)</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$295,534.00</b>	<b>\$348,511.88</b>	<b>\$(52,977.88)</b>
<b>Net Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$18,385.56</b>	<b>\$(28,724.80)</b>	<b>\$47,110.36</b>

<sup>1</sup> SJU disputed the WLIFC FY25 Operating and Capital Reserves invoiced beginning July 1, 2024. Actuals reported reflect the amount SJU paid the WLIFC in accordance with the rent dispute provision in the lease. Once resolved any changes will be paid/credited and reflected in SJU's 2025 operating statement. Amount in dispute is \$7,385.82 for WLIFC Operating and \$2,035.20 for WLIFC Capital Reserves.

## St. John United Church Statement of Financial Position

	As of December 31, 2024	As of December 31, 2023
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Bank Accounts		
First National Bank Checking - Operating Fund	50,794.73	61,891.81
First National Bank Money Market	23,935.69	36,516.35
CD #1	1,547.96	1,500.00
CD #2	0.00	0.00
CD #3	8,642.52	0.00
Total Bank Accounts	<b>\$84,920.90</b>	<b>\$99,908.16</b>
Other Current Assets		
OSAIC Wealth (Royal Alliance)	1,253,526.39	1,162,851.98
Total Other Current Assets	<b>\$1,253,526.39</b>	<b>\$1,162,851.98</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,338,447.29</b>	<b>\$1,262,760.14</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>		
Liabilities		
Total Accounts Payable	583.59	1,600.54
Other Current Liabilities		
Comptroller of the Treasury	2,802.55	1,059.30
Dept. of Treasury/EFTPS	1,420.45	2,026.52
U.M. Board of Pension	0.00	1,500.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$4,223.00	\$4,585.82
Total Liabilities	<b>\$4,806.59</b>	<b>\$6,186.36</b>
Equity		
Operating Fund Balance Carryover	18,385.56	29,473.08
<i>Fund Balances - Escrow</i>		
Capital Building Campaign Fund Balance	1,253,566.47	1,162,856.06
Advance Pledge Payments (deferred revenue)	40,728.17	41,440.96
Suspense Fund Balance	8,648.52	8,648.52
ASP Fund Balance	700.00	700.00
Legacy/Endowment Fund Balance	1,547.96	1,500.00
Communications Grant Fund	57.01	113.00
<i>Mission Escrow</i>		
Pastor Discretionary Balance	293.34	0.00
VBS Fund Balance	204.78	404.77
Christmas Fund Balance	350.00	580.00
Osiligi/Hope Fund Balance	441.46	2,201.46
One Great Hour Fund Balance	725.00	0.00
Liberia-Aurora Fund Balance	200.00	100.00

Bryant Woods ES Fund Balance	2,220.40	2,662.21
Young Adult Min Presby Grant Fund	3,928.31	5,000.00
SJU Scholarship Fund Bal	893.72	893.72
WSSMG Grant	750.00	0.00
Total Fund Balances - Escrow	<b>\$1,315,255.14</b>	<b>\$1,227,100.70</b>
Total Equity	<b>\$1,333,640.70</b>	<b>\$1,256,573.78</b>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	<b>\$1,338,447.29</b>	<b>\$1,262,760.14</b>

Missional Expenditure from Escrow accounts in 2024 totaled \$9,501.14. Recipients included:

- Bryant Woods Elementary School Partnership
- Osiligi/HOPE Foundation
- Liberia/Aurora Foundation
- PCUSA Peace & Global Witness
- UMC Peace with Justice ministries
- Young Adult Ministry

## St. John United Church 2025 Budget and Comparison to 2024

	<u>2025 Budget</u>	<u>2024 Actuals</u>	<u>2024 Budget</u>
<b>Revenue</b>			
Contributions - Pledgers	182,081.83	198,734.18	197,373.09
Contributions-Non-Pledgers	25,000.00	26,050.20	30,000.00
Contributions - New Pledgers This Year	2,000.00	0.00	10,000.00
Contributions - Anonymous	1,500.00	1,498.00	1,500.00
Advance Pledge Payment	40,728.17	41,440.96	41,440.91
Carryover from Prior Year/Operating Reserve	18,385.56	29,473.08	29,473.08
Fundraisers/Special Offerings/In Memory Of	10,000.00		10,000.00
Special Offerings		8,961.36	
In Memory Of		6,390.00	
Other		1,200.00	
Transfer from Escrow	8,648.52		
Total Fundraisers/Special Offerings/In Memory Of	\$18,648.52	\$16,551.36	\$10,000.00
Interest on Bank Accounts	300.00	171.78	0.00
	<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$288,644.08</b>	<b>\$313,919.56</b>
		<b>\$319,787.08</b>	
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Music Director Salary	18,061.93	18,061.93	18,061.93
Accompanist Salary	11,011.69	11,011.69	11,011.74
Church Administrator Salary	47,870.41	47,870.41	47,870.45
Employer's Share FICA	5,900.00	5,886.23	
Senior Pastor Compensation Package	133,465.50		117,026.00
Bridge Pastor		6,032.00	
Interim Pastor		80,171.19	
Sr. Pastor Base Salary		2,066.66	
Sr. Pastor Housing Allowance		4,488.34	
Sr. Pastor Social Security Adj		324.50	
Sr. Pastor Medical Coverage		915.00	
Sr. Pastor D&D		206.38	
Sr. Pastor Pension Benefits		905.07	
Sr. Pastor Continuing Ed/ARE	5,000.00	1,637.81	6,100.00
Total Senior Pastor	138,465.50	96,746.95	123,126.00
Senior Pastor Recruiting Expense	5,000.00		
	<b>Total Employee Salaries and Expenses</b>	<b>\$226,309.53</b>	<b>\$179,577.21</b>
		<b>\$200,070.12</b>	
WLIFC Operating <sup>2</sup>	48,143.97	44,966.76	47,189.27
WLIFC Capital Reserves <sup>2</sup>	16,218.47	16,498.62	16,981.49
WLIFC Reimbursables	1,300.00	1,004.35	2,800.00
	<b>Total WLIFC</b>	<b>\$65,662.44</b>	<b>\$62,469.73</b>
		<b>\$66,970.76</b>	

Methodist Mission Share	17,778.00	18,718.08	18,718.00
Presbytery Per Capita	2,772.00	2,796.00	2,800.00
Presbytery Shared Min Pledge	1,000.00	3,420.00	3,420.00
Denominational Connectional Meetings	1,700.00	727.20	2,200.00
Anti-Racism & Denominational Initiatives	500.00	0.00	700.00
LGBTQ Support	400.00	400.00	400.00
<b>Denominational Support</b>	<b>\$24,150.00</b>	<b>\$26,061.28</b>	<b>\$28,238.00</b>
Office Expense	3,000.00	3,113.37	2,800.00
Church Communications	6,000.00	5,870.28	6,000.00
Workers Comp and Insurance	3,200.00	2,589.91	3,037.00
Bank Fees & Unanticipated	2,500.00	2,331.87	2,200.00
Computer Expense	2,000.00	0.00	2,500.00
Bookkeeping Service	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
Legal Fees <sup>3</sup>	0.00	0.00	8,000.00
<b>Total Administrative Expense</b>	<b>\$22,700.00</b>	<b>\$19,905.43</b>	<b>\$30,537.00</b>
Church School Curriculum	500.00	0.00	0.00
Vacation Bible School	500.00	0.00	750.00
Adult & Family Faith Development Programs	250.00	118.58	240.00
IFC Library	250.00	250.00	250.00
Leadership Training	500.00	0.00	500.00
<b>Total Education Expense</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>	<b>\$368.58</b>	<b>\$1,740.00</b>
Worship Materials	600.00	438.94	900.00
Music Program	1,000.00	588.36	1,206.00
Honoraria	2,000.00	1,500.00	2,500.00
Worship Conference	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
Funerals/Memorial Services	200.00	95.78	200.00
Fellowship	1,600.00	1,266.73	5,400.00
<b>Total Worship Expense</b>	<b>\$5,400.00</b>	<b>\$3,889.81</b>	<b>\$11,206.00</b>
Congregational Care	500.00	0.00	500.00
Membership	300.00	0.00	0.00
Council Discretionary	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
Community-Building Events	1,000.00	701.96	750.00
<b>Total Member Services</b>	<b>\$3,800.00</b>	<b>\$701.96</b>	<b>\$3,250.00</b>
Discretionary Mission	2,000.00	1,060.00	2,000.00
Pastor's Discretionary	2,000.00	500.00	2,000.00
PATH	1,000.00	1,000.00	2,500.00
<b>Total Mission Expense</b>	<b>\$5,000.00</b>	<b>\$2,560.00</b>	<b>\$6,500.00</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$355,021.97</b>	<b>\$295,534.00</b>	<b>\$348,511.88</b>
<b>Net Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$(66,377.89)</b>	<b>\$18,385.56</b>	<b>\$(28,724.80)</b>

<sup>2</sup> SJU's WLIFC Operating and WLIFC Capital Reserves budget is based on our counterproposal submitted to WLIFC to resolve our rent dispute.

<sup>3</sup> Anticipated Legal Fees associated with the Rent Dispute and the WLIFC lease will be paid from the OSAIC Wealth investment account.

----- *End of Report* -----