

The Church of St. John on the Mountain

January 27, 2024



Annual Meeting and Report
for the Year Ending 2023

THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN ON THE MOUNTAIN
ANNUAL MEETING
January 27, 2024 5:00 PM

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Opening Prayer
Priest's Report by the Rev. Beth Rauen Sciaino
Warden's Report by Sue Kennedy & Pete Vollmar
Recognition of Retiring Vestry members by Sue Kennedy & Pete Vollmar
Election of Warden and Vestry Class of 2025
Budget and Finances Report by Joe Ray
Questions
Concluding Prayer
Adjournment

ANNUAL REPORT for the Year 2023

Priest's Report
Warden Report
Stewardship
Music
Budget and Finance
Buildings & Grounds
Christian Formation & Education
Outreach
St. John's Nursery School
Altar Guild
Vestry Bios

PRIEST'S REPORT

Priest-in-Charge Report

The Rev. Beth Rauen Sciaino

Crazy Quilt by Jane Wilson Joyce, in Quilt Pieces

The Liberty Bell in Philadelphia
is cracked. California is splitting
off. There is no East or West, no rhyme,
no reason to it. We are scattered.
Dear Lord, lest we all be somewhere
else, patch this work. Quilt us
together, feather-stitching piece
by piece our tag-ends of living,
our individual scraps of love.

This was the poem and image I offered St. Bernard's Episcopal Church in my report for the Annual Meeting on Jan. 26, 2020, not realizing that a global pandemic and shutdown was around the corner. This poem still speaks to me of life in mutual ministry, with one another and with God, especially the second half -

We are scattered.

Dear Lord, lest we all be somewhere
else, patch this work. Quilt us
together, feather-stitching piece
by piece our tag-ends of living,
our individual scraps of love.

This past year, the parishes of St. John on the Mountain and St. Bernard's agreed to be slipstitched together for three years in an affiliation. The affiliation pulls together two existing quilts made up of pieces of cloth representing worship, Sacraments, history, ministries, and outreach all held together with God's love and parishioners' commitments.

In our affiliation, each parish retains its own independence: its own Vestry, budgets, buildings, and building needs. And yet stitched together we hope our individual scraps of love will be renewed and restored to better serve parishioners and the broader community alike. We are all grateful for the amazing work of the Steering Committee: Joy Baird, Shellie Iossa, Peter Mercer, Michael Mitchell, and from St. Bernard's, Laura Bonamici, Greg Canose, Meg McKee, and Jenny Moss. I am also grateful for the vision, enthusiasm, and support of St. John's Wardens, Sue Kennedy and Pete Vollmar, and Vestry: Joy Baird, Mary Courtemanche, Jody Flegal, Stephanie Hauéis, Rich McGlynn, Michael Mitchell, Lori Morris, Doug Rutz, and Bill Young. Our lay leadership willingly explored God's invitation to dream in new ways.

While many people were unfamiliar with the idea of a priest serving two parishes, clergy know ourselves to be ordained to serve the whole Church, as well as those we meet outside the Church. By serving two parishes in Bernardsville, I have the blessed opportunity to get to know and minister alongside more of God's people in the Somerset Hills. Thank you for welcoming me into worship and administrative leadership at the Church of St. John on the Mountain. I'm grateful for the efforts of St. John's excellent staff, Amy Hopper, Lisa Keenan, Lynn Mitchael, and Grant Mech. May God continue to patch this work of love!



WARDENS' REPORT

Wardens' Report

Susan Kennedy and Pete Vollmar

2023 will be remembered in the life of St John on the Mountain as one of the most important years in the life of our church family. It is the year we opened our hearts to the call of the Holy Spirit. The call of becoming affiliated with our brothers and sisters of St Bernard's, just down the road in downtown Bernardsville. We have created the Episcopal Community of Bernardsville.

We assembled a Steering Committee made of four members of St John on the Mountain; Joy Baird, Shellie Iossa, Peter Mercer, and Michael Mitchell along with four members from St Bernard's; Laura Bonamici, Greg Canose, Meg McKee, and Jenny Moss. They met for the first time at the end of June. They had a Memorandum of Understanding drafted and ready for the Parishes to ratify by mid September. Amazing work by an amazing team. Bishop French commented that their work was "well done and very thorough". They will continue to meet as a committee every quarter in 2024. We owe them all a huge thank you for what they did to get this Affiliation across the finish line.

Reverend Beth Rauen Sciano (Pastor Beth) became our Priest in Charge on October 1, 2023. She leads our 7:45 Rite I worship service, and our 9:00 Rite II with Music worship service. She stays for coffee hour with us and then heads down the mountain to lead Worship at 11am with the people of St Bernard's. Her ability to lead both congregations with grace, positivity, engagement, and enthusiasm is inspirational.

We welcomed Grant Mech as our Interim Music Director after Gloria Yin departed for Baltimore last Spring. Grant is an extremely accomplished and talented musician and choral director. We look forward to expanding the range of our Choir with Grant leading the way.

We are very fortunate to have our dedicated, efficient, and kind staff members, Amy Hopper and Lisa Keenan. They have made the transition for Pastor Beth as smooth as possible.

Lynn Mitchell continues as Director of Christian Education. She greets the children every Sunday morning with a warm smile and a prepared Bible lesson. Sunday school meets in the Parish Hall every Sunday morning at 9. All ages are welcome. Nursery Care (for infants through age 4) is provided in a Classroom downstairs every Sunday morning. We are glad to have Jess Graisser providing babysitting for our youngest members.

Carey Kane and Kathy Tober are the Directors of the St John's Nursery School. They have included a full report about the school later in this report. The St John's Nursery School has an outstanding reputation in our community and we are grateful to Carey and Kathy for their leadership.

In 2023 we bid a final farewell to Eleanor Dean, Leanna Mottern, and Marion Kingsford Trousoff.

We witnessed the baptism of Remy Maurice d'Amboise and welcomed him to our Church community.

Ministry Report continues on the next page >>

The Vestry says goodbye to Joy Baird, Mary Courtemanche, Michael Mitchell, Doug Rutz, Bill Young and Warden Pete Vollmar as of this meeting. Your Vestry has served as diligent, faithful, thoughtful leaders throughout the entire Transition process. After consultation and reflection with the Diocese, your Vestry voted to reduce the size of the Vestry from 9 members and 2 wardens, to 7 members and 2 wardens. The Diocese advised that we needed to “right size” our Vestry to reflect the current size of our Congregation. Please take some time to become familiar with the Vestry members and know we are all approachable and able to answer any questions or concerns you have.

We are all praying that 2024 is the year of optimism. Optimism for the future of St John on the Mountain with Pastor Beth leading us to where we are being called. Optimism that we will share more fellowship and friendship with our brothers and sisters at St Bernard’s. Optimism that we can share the good work of our Lord with those who are willing to open their hearts.



STEWARDSHIP

2024 Stewardship Report

Bob Courtemanche, 2024 EMC Chair

As the annual report goes to press we have 49 confirmed pledges with \$260,759 committed to support our community. Thank you to all who have pledged for your generosity. The result to date is a reduction from 54 pledges received for 2023. We are still following up with those who pledged last year but have not confirmed a pledge for 2024. We continue to have budget challenges so any and all members of the Community are welcome to support St. Johns financially with a giving estimate.

For those interested in submitting a giving estimate, you may do so by emailing me, Bob Courtemanche, at bob.courtemanche@gmail.com or Lisa Keenan at l.keenan@sjotm.org, or by returning your giving estimate card to Lisa’s attention . Thank you for your contributions to the financial health and stability of our Parish.

MUSIC

Music

Grant Mech, Director of Music & Organist

I am very grateful for the welcoming and supportive community that SJOTM is, as well as its strong history of music as an important component of liturgy and parish life. Since starting as interim music director in September, the church staff and choir have been proactive stakeholders in the music program’s maintenance and development. The choir is meeting regularly for rehearsals on Sundays following services for which it participates. There were several visits by organ curator Jim Konzelman to work on the instrument in the sanctuary in 2023. Repairs were made on both visits, as well as plans for future repairs, etc, to keep the instrument functioning and reliable. We anticipate being able to announce the ordering of a continuo organ from Taylor and Boody, which is slated to arrive in 2027. I am looking forward to opportunities for the SJOTM music program to collaborate with the programs of St. Bernard’s and St. Mark’s this spring.

BUDGET & FINANCE

2023 Financial Report

Joe Ray & Kathy Christie

2023 Financial Report

2023 financially ended better-than-budget, with a net loss of (\$45,007) vs a budget loss of (\$95,007). Pledge income and non-pledge contributions were better than budget by a total of \$28,000, though with no significant fundraiser income the overall income was only ~\$10,000 better than plan overall.

The biggest contribution to the narrower net loss was on the expense side, particularly Personnel, driven by lower cost than anticipated in the budget for clergy and organist. This favorability stemmed from several months of supply clergy and organist as well as lower cost for shared clergy following our affiliation with St Bernards which began during October. Our program and operations costs were also slightly lower than budget, the latter despite above-plan costs to run the campus caused in part by exterior repair costs. In all, expenses were ~\$40,000 lower than budget.

The resulting net loss of (\$45,007) was far better than our budgeted loss. While it was a loss, unlike the two prior years this budget favorability did not entail any PPP loan nor a withdrawal from our investments; however, the cash balance was not enough to permit a restoration of the \$50,000 withdrawal from investments that we made in 2022.

2024 Operating Budget

The 2024 Income and Expense Budget plans for a deficit of (\$41,034). While this is a big improvement over the 2023 Budget, it is not sustainable for many years. The 2024 Budget mirrors our actual results for 2023 in most areas. The Finance Committee and Vestry have analyzed expenses and made reductions where possible. The bottom line for our parish is that we will require greater income in the coming years to eliminate the deficit.

Pledge income is determined by the Giving Estimate forms returned to the office. As of mid-January, we have collected 48 estimates for a total of \$260K. In 2023, we had 57 pledges for a total of \$264K. We believe there are a few more giving estimates to be returned for 2024 and ask that you let us know your intention if you have not yet responded. We are a self-funded organization that is dependent on the giving of our members to sustain worship and operation of the campus.

There is no budget for a **Fundraiser** in 2024; however, this is a source of income that can help if we have members willing to organize and promote an event. If anyone is interested in helping or has an idea for an event, please let Beth or a member of the Vestry know. **Program expenses** show a slight increase in 2024 to be sure we can provide babysitting in the nursery on Sunday mornings. We expect other program expenses to be flat year over year.

Personnel costs will be significantly reduced in 2024 compared to the 2023 budget. As a result of the affiliation with St. Bernard's, we reduced clergy compensation by 50%. Organist compensation is reduced, and there are no merit or cost of living increases for the staff. **Operating expenses** are budgeted to be about \$3,000 less overall in 2024. St. John's Nursery School will be covering additional expenses based on their usage of our buildings.

St. John on the Mountain			
Year End Cash, Savings, and Loan Balances			
		<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Checking		\$55,150	\$45,510
Capital Reserve		\$78,901	\$40,344
Savings		\$1,253,358	\$1,252,018
Diocesan Investment Trust		\$86,598	\$101,156
Capital Campaign		\$438,726	\$353,807
Construction Loan		\$50,000	\$50,000

BUDGET & FINANCE

St. John on the Mountain 2023 Financial Results and 2024 Operating Budget

	<u>2023 Budget</u>	<u>2023 Actual</u>	<u>2024 Budget</u>
No. Pledges	53	57	48
Pledge Amount	\$251,315	\$264,115	\$260,059
Average Pledge	\$4,742	\$4,634	\$5,418
Income			
Pledge Income	\$246,315	\$259,069	\$255,059
Contributions	\$17,000	\$32,076	\$29,000
Altar Guild/Flowers/Music	\$5,000	\$6,565	\$5,000
Interest Income	\$100	\$45	\$100
Fundraisers	\$20,000	\$1,216	\$0
Investment Income	\$25,192	\$25,068	\$25,165
Total Income	\$313,607	\$324,039	\$314,324
Expenses			
Programs			
Altar Guild	\$6,000	\$6,879	\$6,000
Music	\$5,000	\$3,533	\$5,000
Worship	\$500	\$545	\$500
Christian Ed	\$500	\$609	\$500
Sunday Nursery	\$1,000	\$700	\$2,100
Visiting Clergy	\$1,800	\$687	\$1,800
Fellowship	\$2,000	\$2,720	\$2,000
Total Programs	\$16,800	\$15,673	\$17,900
Personnel	\$215,172	\$179,536	\$ 163,581
Operations			
Building & Grounds	\$84,010	\$92,674	\$86,100
Contingency	\$2,500	\$0	\$2,500
Office	\$24,000	\$25,380	\$23,000
Insurance	\$32,555	\$28,130	\$34,490
Conference & Education	\$5,575	\$940	\$2,787
Expense covered by SJNS	(\$27,000)	(\$26,966)	(\$30,000)
Total Operations	\$121,640	\$120,158	\$118,877
Total Internal Expense	\$353,612	\$315,367	\$ 300,358
Mission Outreach	\$15,000	\$13,260	\$15,000
Diocesan Pledge	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Affiliation Expenses	\$0	\$419	\$0
Total External Expense	\$55,000	\$53,679	\$55,000
Total Expenses	\$408,612	\$369,046	\$355,358
Net Income	(\$95,005)	(\$45,007)	(\$41,034)
Capital Expense	\$0	\$11,023	\$0

ST JOHN ON THE MOUNTAIN FINANCIAL FORECAST 2024/2025

Kathy Christie

Capital Expense Review

St. John's has two sources for capital expense payments to repair, maintain, improve, or renovate major parts of our campus: Capital Reserve Fund and Capital Campaign Fund. Our buildings are showing their age, and we have significant needs for these funds to fix the problems. During the past two years we have made some necessary improvements using capital expense money (see below). There are additional projects that need to be funded over the next two years (see further below) in addition to always present surprise breakdowns.

2022/2023 Projects Completed

Pave/Improve Church Parking Lot and PH Driveway	\$ 121,326
Install Acoustical Panels in Parish Hall	\$ 49,007
Replaced Floor in Hallway of Church Building	\$ 16,500
Repair and Re-glaze all Stained Glass Windows	\$ 38,550
Install Water Treatment Remediation	\$ 15,000
Install New Video Streaming Equipment in Church	\$ 17,500
Replace Boiler in Chapel	\$ 54,223
Repair Broken Windows in Parish House	\$ 3,300

Capital Projects To Be Completed 2024/2025

	Cost Estimate
Replace Slate Roof Above Church and Chapel (including flat roof areas)	\$400-600K
Lighting in Church Sanctuary	\$50K+
Chapel Foundation Repair	????
Organ Repairs and Maintenance	????
Parish House Repairs	
Replace HVAC, Renovate Bathrooms,	
Replace Garage Doors, Repair/Replace Roof	

As you can see, we have spent more than \$300K in the last two years repairing, replacing, and maintaining several important areas of our campus. And you can see there are several more projects to be completed in the next two years. Additional research will be done in the coming months to get accurate cost estimates for the remaining projects. There is a committee who is working on this: Pete Vollmar, Sue Kennedy, Bill Young, and Peter Clarke. If you are interested in joining this group, please let a committee member or the office know.

It is clear that we will need to run a Capital Campaign to raise the remaining funds needed to complete these repairs since the roof repair and replacement will cost between \$400-600K. Once we have accurate cost estimates for the other projects, the Parish will be informed of our expectations. In the meantime, please thoughtfully consider your ability to contribute to the campaign for the future of St. John's.

Buildings and Grounds

Pete Vollmar

While not wanting to sound like a broken record, 2023 was another year of trying to stay ahead of an infrastructure that is like a leaky bucket. You plug one hole and another one pops up.

Speaking of leaks, we replaced all of the cork flooring in the church hallway, atrium, and Chapel Sacristy with luxury vinyl tile (LVT) after the water leak from the Men's bathroom suffered in July 2022. I think you will all agree it really brightened up the space. It is also much easier to maintain.

The long awaited controller for our HVAC system was installed in Spring 2023. While it is easier to program the system now, our HVAC system, which was installed during the major renovation done in 2008/09, is a difficult system for even our professionals to diagnose and repair. We had to replace the boiler in the Chapel this fall after a crack was found in the old boiler. The old system ran on steam which is an antiquated form of heat. The new system is much more energy efficient and can keep the temperature in that space a constant, comfortable temperature.

Speaking of comfortable, Acoustical panels were installed in the Parish Hall in February 2023. The panels were something that we had hoped to do at the time we renovated that entire space in 2008/09 but we didnt have the funds to do at that time. We have received many comments that you can actually hear the person talking next to you now when having a conversation. They not only function well, but they are very attractive and blend in with the walls.

In August, new equipment was installed to make the home worship-viewing experience easier. We have more superior camera equipment and better microphones throughout the church. The process to stream the services was migrated from Zoom to YouTube as well which is a much more secure network. It also gives us the ability to record the services for viewing at a later date. Thank you to John Tober who continues to operate the equipment at the church every Sunday morning.



Another long delayed project was preserving and sealing all of stained glass windows in the Church and Chapel. There was damage due to insects and adverse weather on the sills so they were all cleaned and re-conditioned at the same time as the preservation. Huge thanks to Jane Mercer for finding the very accomplished contractor and coordinating their work. They were a crew of 4 young men who came from North Carolina who work for Associated Crafts & Willet Hauser. All done during the hottest part of the summer.

Finally, our literal leaky bucket. The roof over the Chapel Sacristy and main hallway continues to leak. The leak has gotten worse in the past year with all the multiple inch, multiple rainstorms that plague our area. We are at the point now where we have to replace that section of the roof as well as other areas where the slate has deteriorated to the point of no return.

Many thanks to those of you who have supported all of our efforts to keep the campus looking its best. We are always looking for volunteers who want to help.



Children's Christian Formation

Lynn Mitchell, Director of Children's Ministries

Sunday School

We are using the curriculum *Feasting on the Word*. The weekly lessons are lectionary based.

Students in grades Pre-K-7th read or listen to the Bible story and work on a craft, project, or game related to the theme of the story. This year we have 63 youths (nursery through 12th grade) at St. John on the Mountain, with approximately 6 attending Sunday school, Pre-K through 7th grade.

Lent

This year during Lent Sunday school children collected coins totaling \$143.47. The Outreach Committee matched this, and the money was donated to CASA SHaW.

Easter

Our annual Easter egg hunt was held on the church lawn following the 10 AM church service.

Advent and Christmas

On the first Sunday in Advent we made Advent wreaths for both kids and adults. There were 21 youth participants in the Christmas pageant this year.

Confirmation Class

In September of 2022, eight students began attending confirmation class with Lynn Mitchell on Sunday mornings twice a month at 9am in the meeting room of the Parish Office building.

We used the curriculum *Confirm Not Conform* for our lessons. This curriculum encourages the students to explore their beliefs and to become active in their faith.

These students continued attending classes through June of 2023. We are now waiting to hear when Bishop French will be able to come to St. John on the Mountain to confirm these students.

Youth Group

Students in grades 6th - 12th have been invited to attend youth group meetings on Sunday evenings approximately once a month. They play games, enjoy a meal together, and work on creative projects and service projects.

In February 2023, our youth group members and confirmation students served seven different soups during Coffee Hour on Souper Bowl Sunday. They collected a total of \$410, which was donated to the Food Bank Network of Somerset County. We also co-hosted our annual Pancake Brunch with the youth members at St. Mark's in Basking Ridge. All proceeds from this event were also donated to the Food Bank Network of Somerset County.

OUTREACH

Outreach Commission

Sue Kennedy and Kathy Tober, Co-Chairs

Outreach - 2023

What we achieved with your time, talent, and treasure:

For 2023 the Vestry allocated \$15,000 to Outreach to address the needs of our communities. Here is what we did with your money, time and talent to help those in need. Our attention focused on three areas: Hunger, Shelter, and Community Needs.

HUNGER continues to be a big problem in Somerset County. Our main vehicle to reach the food insecure is the Food Bank Network of Somerset County. We provided volunteers in April and November at the food pantry outpost at the United Methodist Church in Somerville. We collected hams, chickens, turkey breasts, and lasagnas for Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Thank you for your generosity.

We supported the Giving Garden, a three-church effort in Basking Ridge, that grew 4,377 lbs. of food that was distributed to the homeless veterans at the Lyons VA, the God's Co-op Food Pantry at the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church, and the Food Bank Network of Somerset County. We are always in need of

volunteers at the garden!



SHELTER continues to be a huge challenge in New Jersey. This year we supported HomeSharing Inc. which helps “seekers” of housing find “providers” who have room in their homes. This helps both parties, often allowing home owners to stay in their homes, and to get needed help and companionship.

We continue to support CASA SHaW (Court Appointed Special Advocates for Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren Counties). This year we donated two bikes and helmets to their program. St. John on the Mountain and St. John's Nursery School provided Christmas gift for 30 children identified by CASA SHaW. We also bought gifts for parents and family members to “shop” at a pop-up store in the CASA headquarters so more children could be provided with Christmas gifts.

COMMUNITY NEEDS

This year, we partnered with the St. John's Nursery School to provide diapers and wipes to Moms Helping Moms, an organization that provides diapers to underserved families in New Jersey. While we have not supported them with financial donations, the diaper drives we conducted in 2023 resulted in 3,704 wipes and 703 diapers provided to families in need in our community. Moms Helping Moms supports 95 partner organizations with 50 organizations on a wait-list.

Additional projects included Yates County Family, a charity in upstate New York that provides warm winter clothes and children's toys. We provided eighteen members of the Youth Group, each with a \$100 gift card, to buy clothing and toys to support this program. We also supported Moms on a Mission, a joint venture with the Bernardville Public School system that provides gift cards to parents in the school system for items their children need, but can't afford. We also sent a donation to Episcopal Relief and Development.



Outreach Committee members include: Hilary Thomas Dorer, Nina Dixon, Mike Ewing, June Enos, Betsey Blair, Sue Kennedy, Kathy Tober, and Pastor Beth Rauen Sciaino.

We are committee of compassion, not judgment! We welcome you to bring your ideas of how we can support others in need.

Our 2023 expenses are summarized below.

Outreach 2023 Expenses		
Category	Charities	Total Expense
Hunger	Food Bank	\$1,500
	Giving Garden (dues)	\$250
		Hunger Total: \$1,750
Shelter	HomeSharing	\$1,000
	CASA SHaW: Christmas Gifts	\$1,503.53
	CASA SHaW: Bikes/Helmets	\$156.53
		Shelter Total: \$2,660.06
Community Needs	Little League Team Sponsorship	\$500
	Yates Family Christmas	\$1,800
	Moms on a Mission	\$800
	Episcopal Relief and Development	\$500
	William Richardson Funeral	\$1,000
	Bishops Cup Golf Sponsorship	\$400
	Discretionary Fund	\$2,500
	Supplies for Students	\$1,500
		Community Needs Total: \$9,000
		GRAND TOTAL: \$13,410.06

***Thank you all for your continued support of Outreach.
We look forward to working with you in 2024.***

St. John's Nursery School

Carey Kane & Kathy Tober, Co-Directors, Lauren Diemar, Head of Curriculum

St. John's Nursery School (SJNS) student enrollment is currently at 64 students for the 2023-2024 school year which is a decrease of 4 students over the prior year. We have 25 students across our 4 and 4+ classes (5 days/week), 22 students in our 3s classes (3 days/week), and 16 students in our 2s classes (2 days/week). Each class is staffed with one Lead Teacher and an Assistant Teacher allowing SJNS to provide low student-teacher ratios and optimal small group time. Currently, there are a total of 6 Lead Teachers and 7 Assistant Teachers on staff for our morning program but not all staff work 5 days a week. Additionally, at the request of our Board of Trustees we have made our PM Program more continuous and as such have 2 additional part-time staff members to help with this program. There are a total of 49 students taking part in different components of our PM Program which runs Monday through Thursday from 12:30 pm to 2:15 pm.

Lauren Diemar, Director of Curriculum, leads the school in the planning and execution of our chosen curriculum "Creative Curriculum". Lauren diligently provides the teachers with a plan for various studies as well as ideas for implementing each one in the classrooms at an age appropriate level. Creative Curriculum is a research- and evidence-based method that fosters decision-making and critical-thinking skills through both child- and teacher-directed activities. The following units of study are planned in our classrooms this school year: 4/4+ classes: 1) Beginning of the Year Rules & Safety; 2) Buildings / Roads; 3) Clothing (currently underway); 4) Exercise; 5) Gardening. 3s classes; 1) Beginning of the Year Rules & Safety; 2) Trees; 3) Clothing (currently underway); 4) Balls; 5) Insects. 2s classes: 1) Separation/Routine/Beginning of the Year; 2) Brushes; 3) Clothing (currently underway) 4) Light; 5) TBD-based on interest.

Registration materials for 2024-2025 are now available. Priority Registration for current students, SJNS families (current and past), and SJOTM/St. Bernard's parishioners is open until January 31. After this date, all available spots will be open to the public until all spaces are filled. Tuition for the 2024-2025 school year will be increased by approximately 3% with the resulting tuition rates for the upcoming school year as follows: 2s = \$3,602; 3s = \$5,017; 4/4+ - \$7,595.

SJNS continues to partner with Preschool Advantage, a non-profit organization that provides scholarships to families who might otherwise be unable to afford the tuition of a nursery school program. SJNS is proud to have 1 student from Preschool Advantage in attendance this year. The St. John's Scholarship fund is currently offering financial assistance with funding of the afternoon program for this student for which the family is extremely grateful.

In terms of facilities, new floors were installed over the summer which gives the classrooms a fresher, cleaner, and brighter feel. Additionally, we received our official renewed license just before Christmas break which expires on June 27, 2026.

SJNS makes ongoing visits to other area schools with the purpose of these visits being to make sure that what we are teaching aligns with future schooling and to make sure that we can give optimal advice to our parents for the best future fit for their students. To this end, the 3's team, Mrs Kane, and Mrs Diemar visited Peck on October 3rd. We heard from their new therapist about anxiety in children and had a tour of the Kindergarten Building. On November 28, Mrs Diemar and the 4s team visited St. Elizabeth's to observe a Kindergarten math and literacy lesson and meet with the new head of admissions. On November 29, Karen the Head of Admissions and the Director of the Lower School from Peck visited SJNS. On December 13th, the new Director of Admissions at Far Hills Country Day School visited SJNS and was able to see our classrooms and talk with administrators. Mrs Diemar and the 4/4+ team are working on a date to visit their kindergarten. Additionally, on January 26th, two kindergarten teachers from St. E's will be visiting SJNS. They have never seen the school in action and we are excited to show it off. We are also working on visits this spring for SJNS staff to Bedwell, Far Hills Country Day, Gill and The Willow School.

We are always excited to welcome new families to SJNS and always enjoy giving tours of our special school to interested families. Please contact the nursery school directors at director@sjotm.org to schedule a tour of our nursery school and obtain application materials.

ALTAR GUILD

Altar Guild

Jody Flegal

“Heavenly Father, you have entrusted us with the vessels and adornments of your house. Of your mercy, grant that we may hold them in reverence and respect, and so handle them that our work may find acceptance in your sight; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen”

The Altar Guild at St. John on the Mountain is made up of 4 teams of 2-3 members responsible one weekend a month for setting up the Church and Chapel for worship and Holy Communion. In addition to weekly services, we help prepare for weddings, funerals, baptisms, and seasonal services such as Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter.

Several Altar team members manage the fresh flower arrangements on the altars each week. We would like to encourage participation from our parishioners to please sign-up for flower dedications; the flower charts are located on the bulletin board in the main hallway.

Over the past few years, several of our devoted and committed members have moved or retired, leaving open the need for more volunteers to fill our teams. The commitment is minimal and flexible; one hour to set up either Friday or Saturday morning and 15 minutes on Sunday morning to set-out and clean-up! We welcome anyone who might consider joining the Altar Guild as either a regular team member or as a substitute.

From *The New Altar Guild Book* by Barbara Gent and Betty Sturges:

“Altar guild work goes on quietly behind the scene. The work is often not noticed because in normal circumstances average worshipers don’t think about the familiar scene in front of them as long as it is familiar. They don’t consider who has put the ornaments and furnishing in place or who cares for them.”



VESTRY

In 2024, we are welcoming three new members of the Vestry along with a new Junior Warden!

Junior Warden: Michelle Ray

The Ray family came to SJOTM in 1999 and have made such wonderful friends throughout the years! When daughters Annie and Sophie were young, Michelle spent several years as a Sunday school teacher, a Youth Group leader and a Christmas pageant director. She has also served once on vestry.

Michelle is currently employed by Bayer where she works on a commercial brand team. She has spent about 15 years in pharmaceutical healthcare and prior to that about 15 years in the consumer package goods industry generally throughout working on brand strategy and management.

Michelle grew up in California, Texas, NJ, and Atlanta before heading to Denmark for a year with the Rotary Club and then to the University of Virginia where she got a BA in Chemistry and met Joe. The rest is history as they say!

Vestry Class of 2025: Craig Johnston

Craig is an established artist and operates Somerset Appraisal and Estate Services and resides in Basking Ridge, NJ. He is on the board for St Martins House Foundation, Basking Ridge, NJ and a regional museum.

He has been a member of St John on the Mountain Church since 1998 and has been a past member of the vestry.

Vestry Class of 2025: Peter Mercer

Peter has been a member of SJOTM for over 25 years. He and wife, Jane, were married here in 1995 and now reside in Harding. He has served as member of the Vestry here twice previously and has been a member of the Steering Committee related to our affiliation with St. Bernard's Church. Pete is a Lector, has led a Search and Discernment process and has been actively involved with the Open Table and Church outreach activities for many years.

As a volunteer, he has served on the boards of the Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity, the Visiting Nurse Association of Somerset Hills and, currently, the Somerset Hills Community Health Foundation. Additionally, he has been Chair of the Advisory Council of the College of Health Sciences at the University of Delaware. Peter earned a BS at Delaware and MBA at University of Pennsylvania. He served two years active duty as a US Army Infantry officer and enjoyed (mostly) a 37 year career in many locations in human resources leadership at General Electric and Honeywell.

Vestry Class of 2025: Dan Zielinski

My name is Dan Zielinski and my wife Kat, son Thomas and I have lived in Bernardsville since 2021. I work as a Managing Director for Bank of Montreal, responsible for our Compliance and Risk Management practices and Kat works with private art collectors. Kat serves on the Board of the Bernardsville Library Foundation and I am a member of the Bernardsville Environmental Commission. Our son Thomas was born in 2021, was baptized in the Chapel at St. John's in 2022, and is now enrolled at St. John's Nursery School.

My wife Kat and I began attending services virtually at St. John's in 2021, when we moved from Chicago to Bernardsville. Kat's family has always had close ties with the Episcopal Church and faith, and we were married at her alma mater, Sewanee: The University of the South. Growing up in Bernardsville, I knew of the great community at St. John's, and I am grateful to the Church for welcoming my family and me into the congregation. I very much look forward to further supporting St. John's by serving on the Vestry.



QUALIFICATION OF VOTERS

CANON 49: Sections 2 and 4. (DIOCESE OF NEW JERSEY) THE VOTERS SHALL BE BAPTIZED, AT LEAST SIXTEEN (16) YEARS OF AGE, DOMICILED IN THE PARISH, OR ADJACENT THERETO, OF GOOD MORAL CHARACTER, ADHERING TO THIS CHURCH AND TO NO OTHER RELIGIOUS BODY, REGULAR ATTENDANTS AT THE SERVICES OF THE CHURCH IN SAID PARISH, MEANING THEREBY THOSE WHO ARE MORE FREQUENTLY PRESENT THAN ABSENT UNLESS FOR GOOD CAUSE PREVENTED AND REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE PARISH FOR SIX MONTHS NEXT BEFORE THE SAID ANNUAL MEETING IN THE MANNER PRESCRIBED BY THE VESTRY OF SAID PARISH... (HAVING RECEIVED HOLY COMMUNION AT LEAST THRICE IN THE PRECEDING YEAR.

✠ THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN ON THE MOUNTAIN ✠

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Carey Kane
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WARDENS & VESTRY

WARDENS

Sue Kennedy &
Pete Vollmar

Vestry

Class of 2023

Michael Mitchell, Lori Morris,
Doug Rutz, Joy Baird,
Mary Courtemanche, Bill Young

Class of 2024

Stephanie Haueis, Jody Flegal,
Rich McGlynn

Treasurer

Joe Ray