

**Johns Creek Presbyterian Church  
Annual Report  
March 7, 2024**





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*The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said,  
“Look, the Lamb of God!” When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.  
Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?”  
They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?” “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”*  
- John 1:35-39

Friends in Christ,

As I reflect on my first month here at Johns Creek Presbyterian Church these words of Jesus immediately came to mind. “Come and see” is deeply relational, extremely invitational, and evokes in us a response to the call of Christ in our lives and in the life of the church. The responsiveness of this church to the needs around us demonstrates the faithfulness of this congregation and I am grateful to be on this journey with you.

I have already seen the eagerness of this congregation to share the love of God with neighbor and community in the work of the various committees and I encourage you to read this annual report with an eye towards where God is calling you to serve in the ministries of JCPC. I want to especially lift the response to the Will to Live and Atlanta Food Bank’s Hunger Walk as examples of the adaptive responsiveness of this congregation. Despite the challenges of these past years, pastoral transitions and the Covid pandemic, JCPC has endeavored to thrive and prepare for the new thing that God is doing here. Before I arrived, I asked about the Will to Live 5k that I read about in an email. Immediately a team was formed, and we had over 30 people participating in the walk. It was my first event with the church and Carrie and I walked alongside and met many in the congregation.

When I asked about the Hunger Walk, I found out that this was not something that JCPC had done in the past. What happened next was inspirational! The church decided to take our feet to the streets again to address hunger in our community. In the future we will have these and other mission opportunities, well planned in advance, but the congregation’s responsiveness is what is most inspiring to me and tells me that this is where I need to be!

Together we will continue to refine our mission and ministries so that the abundance of this congregation will meet the deep needs of our community both within and beyond the walls of the church. Together we will build a deeply connected relational and invitational congregation that will grow in faith and faithful living. Together we will be the place where people come and see for themselves God’s love on full display!

In Resurrection Hope,

## **CARING MINISTRY TEAM**

*To provide opportunities for JCPC members to reach out to others both in the community and congregation, in caring ways.*

**Elder:** Rebecca Eldridge and Alice Ann Nilsen

**Team Members:** Billie Bothwell, David Lee, and Christina Siewe

### **CanCare (David Lee)**

- JCPC is the lead church in establishing CanCare Atlanta. Currently 70 trained volunteers help to fulfill the mission of providing a survivor by the side of cancer patients and caregivers.
- CanCare Volunteers have continued to provide one-on-one peer support to individuals diagnosed with cancer and their caregivers. Some volunteers took turns answering calls on the CanCare Hotline for clients who requested immediate support. Others served on the Prayer and Praise Team and prayed weekly for volunteers and their clients at their request.
- CanCare Volunteers have been unable to serve at Emory Johns Creek Hospital, the Winship infusion Center or the Northside Radiation Center since March 2020 due to the COVID pandemic
- CanCare Atlanta has a coordinator with hospital. Still trying to gain access to patients in the infusion center
- CanCare Atlanta partnered with Johns Creek Beautification to spread awareness of CanCare through their Daffodils for Hope Program. CanCare volunteers have submitted videos telling their story of Hope in Survivorship in three of the daffodil gardens.

### **Holy Hands In Prayer (Alice Ann Nilsen)**

- JCPC Holy Hands in Prayer continued daily prayers for those in need of the Master's healing touch.
- We are thankful to our Lord for His continuous flowing stream of merciful grace. Weekly updates were sent to the prayer team members to pray daily even though some members could not meet in person. Urgent prayers are sent via text message.
- The following were organized for our congregation:
  - Prayer Vigil was held June 2 - 3, 2023
  - We organized the memorial luncheon for the family and friends of three of our deceased members.
  - Lunch Bunch met for lunch one Sunday after worship each month. This group gives members of the congregation an opportunity to meet and have fellowship at a meal together.

### **Knit Wits (Brenda Thompson)**

- Meets weekly to create the prayer shawls. The members continue to work on their individual prayer shawl during the week.
- There was a Blessing of the Prayer Shawls during the worship service on August 27, 2023. Most of the prayer shawls that were made were delivered to those in need.

### **Meals and More (Billie Bothwell)**

- Many meals were delivered to those in need. Desserts were delivered to several of our members who are in nursing homes. Cards and goodie bags filled with treats were delivered to our homebound and to those in facilities.

### **Give a Sole to Save a Soul (Alice Ann Nilsen)**

- We did not have a shoe collection in 2023. Our next drive to collect gently worn shoes for those in desperate need worldwide will be April 7 – May 5, 2024.

### **Stephen Ministry (Rebecca Eldridge and David Lee)**

- Seven active Stephen Ministers are currently serving care receivers. A Stephen Minister is always available to meet with individuals after each worship service. Two new Stephen Ministers have been trained. They will be commissioned soon.
- Continuing Education—JCPC works with Johns Creek United Methodist Church to provide speaker programs on a variety of subjects throughout the year.
- Grief Support—Currently five families are receiving Grief Support literature on coping with the death of a family member or loved one. The Stephen Ministry team has provided Grief Support literature to 4 active care receivers.
- New Mothers—A Stephen Minister coordinates with the Knit Wits Ministry to provide baby blankets made with love and care as a gift from our congregation during a visit to new mothers.
- Memorial Services—Stephen Ministers serve as ushers, greeters, and family support at JCPC. We have had three services.
- Safe Harbor—Plans are being made to reestablish this ministry. Safe Harbor occurs in November. This luncheon will provide support discussion for church members who have experienced a loss during the last year. This provides support before the holidays, which often is a tough time of the year.

## CONNECTING MINISTRY TEAM

*Energizing current JCPC disciples and cultivating new ones*

**Elders:** Reed Maurer and Jay Winfred  
**Team members:** Sheila Cooley, Dennis McLynn, Johnny Melin, and Steve Navarro  
**Staff:** Karla Arnold

The Connecting Team endeavors to energize existing church members and welcome newcomers to grow the family of God at Johns Creek Presbyterian Church and in the greater community. Building upon last year, 2023 was about continuing to get back to the events that make this church congregation feel more like a family. The three F's – food, fun, fellowship – are our specialty! Throughout 2023, we bested our 2022 total of six congregational events and held seven events!

- **February 12<sup>th</sup> Chili/Soup Luncheon** – This was an event that was held after the Church service in the Great Hall. It was a BYOCP style lunch (Bring Your Own Crock Pot) where members brought a variety of chilis and soups as well as having cornbread, salad and beverages. We had 94 people attend!
- **March 13<sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday Dinner** – A time-honored tradition at JCPC where we come together on Ash Wednesday to enjoy a meal before the service. The dinner is at no charge to those that want to attend and enjoy roast pork (with Jezebel sauce), roasted potatoes, sauteed veggies, applesauce, dessert and beverages. We had 54 people attend filling ten tables in the Great Hall.
- **May 13<sup>th</sup> JCPC Movie Night** – A lovely Saturday evening filled with shoulder-checks and lighting the lamps as we enjoyed Miracle! A Disney® remake of the 1980 USA Hockey team's journey defeating the much stronger Soviet team en route to winning the Gold in Lake Placid! Dinner started at 5:30 p.m. and was what every hockey fan wanted – Hot Dogs and Nachos with Oreos for dessert...washing it all down with soft drinks, tea and water! The movie began at 6:30 p.m.
- **September 9<sup>th</sup> Rise Meal** – The Connecting Team partnered with the Mission Team for the second annual "Rise Against Hunger" activity. This year we had 43 participants of all ages scooping, measuring, bagging, and sealing meals to be shipped to families in need around the world, they remained for conversation over a tasty meal of rice and beans, salad, and dessert.
- **October 29<sup>th</sup> Kirkin' Luncheon** – Continuing the theme of collaboration, the Connecting Team worked with the Worship Team to plan and execute a potluck lunch after the Kirkin' o' the Tartan service. We provided the spiral sliced hams and members signed up for and brought in sides, desserts, and beverages. It was held in the Great Hall, and we had 75 people attend!
- **November 15<sup>th</sup> Giving Thanks Dinner** – We hosted another festive celebration complete with Turkey, dressing, gravy and all the sides and desserts you could think of! Church members donated mashed potatoes, green bean casseroles, cranberry jelly, rolls, dressing, and pies. The JCPC Preschoolers made the centerpieces again this year with turkeys as the look they wanted for the event. Dinner began at 6:00 p.m. and we had 85 people attend.
- **December 13<sup>th</sup> Crockpots, Carols and Cocoa** – A wonderful event to gather together for fellowship, food and song to get in the spirit of the season! Poinsettias adorned the center of each table and members were asked to bring soups and/or chili to warm up their vocal cords and we served tea, water and hot cocoa! The fun started at 6:00 p.m. and we had 45 people attend.

We look forward to continuing all these events and many more in 2024. The joy of serving and connecting with others leads to a vital and active life for you and for the Church. We are always looking for more team members to come and help make each subsequent year better...Come and join the fun!

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...*

**Elders:** Dawn Melin and Bella Rizzo

**Team Members:** Jeff Arnold, Lisa Lucas, Spencer Olsen, and Brenda Thompson

**Staff:** Rev. Steven Barnes (Jan-Mar), Rev. Brian Daoust (May), and Rev. Jim Simpson (July-Dec)

The Christian Education Team develops and delivers educational programming to JCPC members and friends through a variety of channels that include Sunday School classes, small groups, special events, and the JCPC website.

### Adult Education

Our Sunday morning programming, known as *Come\*Learn\*Connect*, includes a variety of studies selected and designed to engage participants in thoughtful contemplation of scriptural applications. Sessions are led by talented clergy and layperson facilitators. For 2023, these programs included:

- Common Theological Questions
- What Led to the Cross?
- Biblical Translations
- Faithful Citizenship
- Gospel of Mark
- The Great Ends of the Church
- The Flawed Family of God
- Season of Hope and Anticipation: Advent Themes in the Four Gospels

### Small Groups

A robust Small Groups program continues to be a vital ministry at JCPC! Men's and women's groups based upon shared interests and biblical topics are available across different days and times, some in-person and some using Zoom. The Hills Angels group resumed in 2023, and a new group for Preschool Moms was started. A complete list of JCPC Small Groups can be found on the website. The multiple Zoom accounts maintained by the Christian Education team were consolidated into three licenses, saving over \$1000.

### Children's Education

Kindergarten through fifth grade children are involved in Children's Sunday School, the Children's Sermon, Children's Worship Bulletins, and Children's Worship each week. The instructional materials used for the classes are drawn from the PCUSA's "Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living" curriculum and include Bible stories, arts and crafts, games, and music, taught by creative and dedicated adult volunteers through the following units of study:

- Practice Joy
- Practice Spiritual Disciplines
- Live in Community
- Forgive
- Advent workshops

Special events for children in 2023 included the annual Easter Egg Hunt and worshipping with their church family in the chapel on Communion Sundays. We look forward to expanding worship leadership opportunities for children in 2024.



**Nursery Care**

Children ages four and younger are cared for during worship services by professional childcare contracted staff, allowing parents peace of mind and safety reassurance while they attend worship.

**Other Christian Education Offerings**

The Christian Education team also provides resources to enhance individual and group study. In 2023, these included:

- Devotional resources for Lent (“Inward Work for Outward Living”) and Advent (“Celebrating Abundance”) provided to all interested church members
- Parenting seminar targeted for preschool families with Karen Stubbs, of “Birds on a Wire” ministries, offered jointly with Johns Creek Baptist Church and Johns Creek Methodist Church preschools
- Discussions regarding Men’s and Women’s retreats and Vacation Bible School are ongoing. None of these programs occurred in 2023.

As we move into 2024, the Christian Education Team is committed to finding creative and meaningful ways to support and engage members and friends. Please join us!

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...*

**Elder:** Dawn Melin

**Staff:** Lisa Lucas and Lisa Desmond

The 2023-2024 school year is the preschool's 29th year of continuous service to families in the North Fulton, South Forsyth, and Western Gwinnett communities.

### Mission

The mission of Johns Creek Presbyterian Preschool is to provide a quality social and educational experience in a safe, warm and loving Christian environment. We believe in educating the whole child. The Preschool uses a variety of enrichment activities, games and materials to create an atmosphere which fosters a child's intellectual, social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and spiritual development. This is accomplished through our play-based Christian curriculum where the children learn through small and large group learning, circle time, play centers, projects, and other special programs.

### Specials

In addition to the classroom curriculum, the children also participate in our Chapel, Music and Movement, Story Telling, Science and MEGA Fun (Math, Exercise, Garden, & Art) specials. We seek to integrate a spiritual and Christian dimension in all areas of learning. A summer camp is also available and consists of two theme-based weeks each summer.

### Enrollment

JCP Preschool enrollment is currently at 143 students (97%) and includes a diverse student body of children from twelve months to Young 5's. Our outstanding staff consists of 34 dedicated women; many of whom have been employed with us for more than 15 years.



To quote a mother of a preschool student:

*"We have loved our year at JCP Preschool! It has been a wonderful experience from everything learned academically and spiritually to the friends made. The teachers hold a special place in our hearts.*

*I appreciated the variety and breadth of topics in the specials classes!"*

## YOUTH MINISTRY

### *Bringing the teachings of Christ to Middle School and High School Youth*

**Elder:** Bella Rizzo  
**Team Member:** Vivek Furtado  
**Staff:** Rev. Brian Daoust

In **January**, the Youth met on MLK weekend to pack lunch bags for the Central Night Shelter, and they prepared for Youth Sunday.

In **February**, our Youth Sunday was our first service jointly with the youth of Casa Brasil. Our youth elder joined their band and some of their youth read liturgy with ours. Our youth elder at the time and our current youth elder delivered an inspiring message.

In **March** - multi-church family ski retreat with JCPC, Casa Brasil, On the Way, and PHPC.

In **April**, JCPC was the host site for the Northview High School Baccalaureate service in the Chapel for their students with area religious leaders from the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist communities, including Pastor Brian.

In **May**, we welcomed Pastor Jim and he and Pastor Brian shared the pulpit to celebrate our graduates. We concluded our twice monthly youth Bible study and celebrated an end of year youth group event.

In **June**, the Youth went to Montreat and once again shared a house with PHPC and I led evening worship gatherings and talks with our kids and those from Casa Brasil. The Mission Team organized and led a highly successful mission week of local mission opportunities, including the Youth Group packing bagged lunches for First Presbyterian and delivering them. A few youth from Casa Brasil joined us for the delivery and lunch out.

In **July**, the youth went to Florida for hurricane relief, tarping houses and demoing storm damaged interiors. We took a few kids from Casa Brasil and that inspired us to plan 2024's joint trip to Brazil. It was an incredible trip and we invited new youth and gained a new youth parent volunteer from the JC Preschool. We spent much of the summer promoting a joint worship service with Casa Brasil, which they hosted. Both JCPC and Casa Brasil each brought the number of attendees that we usually see at weekly worship, filling the Youth Garage to capacity for worship and dinner.

In **August** and **September**, the Mission Team led a hugely successful Habitat for Humanity build day up in Gainesville, which some of our youth attended. We also hosted a joint Youth Group kickoff for JCPC, PHPC, and Casa Brasil. We shared a few joint youth nights with PHPC for mental health lessons.

In **October**, we unloaded pumpkins on delivery day and hosted the annual Pumpkin Patch for three weeks. The youth staffed the patch for a whole Sunday and many Casa Brasil youth volunteered for shifts.



In **November**, the youth had a fall day retreat out to Fort Yargo for our youth, and PHPC joined us. It was cold enough that we cut the day short, but we still enjoyed grilling out, s'mores, and campfire songs.

In **December**, JCPC youth went to PHPC for appetizers and games and then hosted PHPC and Casa Brasil for dinner, dessert, and white elephant gifts. We held a JCPC youth alum college gathering for students in town on holiday break.



On and off campus, we've continued our twice monthly Bible studies before school at Chick-fil-A for the youth.

We have begun to see great connections with the preschool. Two of those families have become active in our church and youth programs this year. One of the preschool teachers and her children went on the Florida youth mission trip and plan to attend the trip this summer as well. One of our youth refurbished the outdoor chapel for his Eagle Scout project.

There are two partner churches which continue to meet here at JCPC. The Portuguese service, Casa Brasil, is growing rapidly. They have not only added tremendous growth and vitality to our campus, but they've made improvements to the youth space that can be enjoyed by JCPC, KCC, and other outside groups. As a result, that space has become the preferred family gathering space before both weddings and funerals.

## MISSIONS MINISTRY TEAM

*Give, Go, Live*

**Elders:** Helen Simpson and Debi Doverspike  
**Team Members:** Joanna Pope, Barry Lucas, Celia McCarty, Gail Nearing, Honey Cunningham, Margy McLynn, and Ross Johnston  
**Staff:** Rev. Brian Daoust

In 2023, the Mission Ministry Team continued to support ministries and activities locally and internationally.

### LOCAL MINISTRIES INCLUDE:

• Hands of Christ	\$23,398
• Promise 686	\$5,059
• Blessing Fund	\$258
• Bashor Men's Night Shelter	\$5,059
• Habitat for Humanity	\$3,794
• Disaster Relief Fund-GA Red Cross	\$5,059
• Montreat Conference Sponsor	\$632
• Rise Against Hunger	(\$8,000 designated \$)
• LifeSouth Blood Drive	

### INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS INCLUDE:

• Youth Mission Trip to Mexico	\$1,205
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## 2023 MISSION PARTNER ACTIVITIES

### **HANDS OF CHRIST**

- Sent volunteers to the Co-op during February as well as during Mission Week in June.
- Helped stock the shelves by giving food donations in the grocery basket at church each week.
- Holiday support: JCPC members donated and packed 96 Thanksgiving dinners for Co-op families as well as 100+ summer survival bags for youth. JCPC members helped in the Christmas Shop and with upcoming move.
- Weekly volunteering: several JCPC members have made a weekly commitment to the ministry. Two served as Board Members, while the others work in the front office, pantry and drive-up food or pick up donations from local stores.
- JCPC members attended the annual gala at the Payne-Corley House in Duluth.
- Anonymous donation from JCPC member continues to assist families to move from expensive extended stay hotels to apartment living. To date, 10 families have been assisted with first and last months' rent.

## **PROMISE 686**

- This year the JCPC Promise 686 Team focused on numerous 686 CarePortal requests and answered 10 requests for items such as beds, rent assistance, Uber cards to assist with transportation, baseball cleats and more. We provided \$3,161.90 in financial support to families and children in foster care. We were able to identify and establish a relationship with a youth shelter and we will begin to support the shelter in 2024.
- We provided Christmas presents for the 17-youth housed in the shelters and provided meals and staples for each shelter/home.

## **BASHOR MEN'S NIGHT SHELTER**

In 2023, JCPC served during 5 different dates at the men's shelter in downtown Atlanta. Serving at the shelter brings so many of our congregation together and you are all so faithful to sign up for contributing to the meals, driving down to the shelter, serving the guests and spending the night.

- We served over 300 men with a delicious meal of sloppy joes, green beans, potato salad and cuties.
- Yes, that is over 300 pieces of pound cake the shelter guests (and JCPC servers) enjoyed!
- The youth group made over 600 sandwiches last year!
- Our JCPC preschool joined the fun and contributed items for breakfast and lunch bags.
- Our overnight volunteers stayed at the shelter for 5 nights last year.

## **LIFE SOUTH BLOOD DRIVES**

- JCPC sponsored 6 blood drives during 2023 with 6-10 donors participating in each drive.
- Each donation saves 3 lives!

## **2023 PUMPKIN PATCH**

Over 1700 pumpkins were delivered and generated a profit close to \$4500. Community members enjoyed family and friend time in the patch with pictures, games, and baked goods. Preschool and daycare classes also brought field trips to our patch for story time and hunting for tiny pumpkins just their size. Many JCPC members worked the patch earning credits for mission trips and conferences. The Boy Scouts assisted in set up, unloading, and patch clean up. Three farms came and picked up the extra pumpkins for their livestock.

## **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**

JCPC provided support for two Habitat for Humanity events in 2023:

- June 17th - 10 JCPC volunteers helped put on the "Hounds for Habitat" fundraiser at Newtown Park in Johns Creek. Volunteers facilitated: one mile walk, a Johns Creek Police Department K9 demonstration, dog dress up competitions, music, food, vendors, fun and more!
- August 12<sup>th</sup> JCPC volunteers framed the second floor of a home for the Christina Eber family in Forsyth County. This was a multi-generational crew with several volunteers from the Youth group as well as adults of all ages.

## **YOUTH MISSION TRIP**

The JCPC youth traveled to Pine Island, Florida, off the coast of Fort Myers, staying at Buckingham Presbyterian Church; this church has hosted teams since the devastating hurricane Ian in October of 2022. Two adults and 13 youth, 2 from Casa Brasil, worked all week in record July Florida heat to: tarp roofs on four homes and one classroom trailer at a local church, remove water damaged walls, furniture and personal items, ministered to families who lost everything, and took care packages of cake and cookies to the Pine Island Fire Department who have been working around the clock for months. There were numerous

inspirational stories involving bringing neighbors back together and sharing our Brazilian connections with a couple who once went to Brazil to build churches.

### ***MISSION WEEK- JUNE***

Many JCPC members served throughout the week.

- Sunday – Promise 686 Speaker, collected backpack drive donations.
- Monday – collected lunch food items and prepared sandwiches for First Presbyterian Church.
- Tuesday – The Youth delivered the packed lunch bags to First Presbyterian Church.
- Wednesday- Donated school supplies and assisted in packing backpacks.
- Thursday- JCPC Preschool Playground- Pulled up and prepare playground carpet for new surface.
- Friday – Hands of Christ- Sorted cans of donated food and packed nonperishable bags.
- Saturday – Assisted Habitat for Humanity with volunteers for the Hounds for Habitat fundraising event at Newtown Park.

### ***RISE AGAINST HUNGER***

Rise Against Hunger is a global movement to end hunger by empowering communities, nourishing lives and responding to emergencies. On September 9, seventy-four volunteers from JCPC, Casa Brazil and our local Scout troops, packed 20,624 meals that were sent to Haiti. JCPC is committed to Rise Against Hunger in 2024. 34 volunteers stayed for dinner prepared by the Connecting Team.

### **2023 REPORT ON DECEMBER ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFT FAIR:**

- Hands of Christ received \$900.00
- Bashor Men’s Shelter received \$285.00
- Beacon of Hope received \$115.00
- Compassion International received \$490.00
- Promises 686 received \$235.00
- JCPC Mission Trip Support received \$200.00
- Habitat for Humanity received \$200.00



## **WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM**

### ***Glorifying God through our Worship Services and Music Ministry***

**Elders: Roy Davey and Marilyn Davis**

**Staff: Rev. Steven Barnes, Interim Pastor (Jan. – April), Rev. Dr. Jim Simpson, Interim Pastor (May - Dec.), Heidi Chinnock, Director of Music Ministries and Organist (Co-Director, Jan. - May), Christian Traylor, Co-Director of Music Ministries (Jan. - May)**

### ***Today's Challenge, Tomorrow's Legacy***

In the year 2023 the Worship Ministry Team focused on leading the congregation in vibrant and celebratory Christian worship. Our dedicated team took the Churchwide Assessment Tool "CATS" survey encouragement to heart and soul to use music to "Deepen Our Worship Experience" and worked diligently to re-invigorate many areas of service. Continuing our single 10:30 a.m. worship service format, many Academy of Fine Arts instructors again gave strong musical worship support this year as guest musicians with their beautiful music. The congregation enjoyed the addition of musician bios to worship bulletins to highlight their many gifts being offered in our worship services. The congregation welcomed them back very enthusiastically. Beginning in the Fall, our Handbell Choir was reformed and played five times in worship. The Guitar Group was reformed and played eight times in worship. Even the Chiming of the Hour was simplified and opened to non-musician bell ringers to engage a wider group of participants in the worship service. Liturgist Training was well-planned and coordinated in July by Rev. Dr. Jim Simpson to train and provide confidence to the lay readers who read passages from the pulpit every Sunday. The Worship Ministry Team splendidly decorated the chapel worship space and surrounding areas on the first day of December to usher in the Advent and Christmas seasons, delighting visitors and members with a Chrismon Tree, window wreaths and candles, poinsettia flowers, greenery, and a creche.

A goodbye to Rev. Steven Barnes in April led to a welcoming of Rev. Dr. Jim Simpson in May. Both delightful interim pastors were instrumental in providing our church with a depth of training and leadership as our congregation awaited the selection of our new pastor.

Team Member Angela Baker volunteered to represent our team and serve on the Elder Nominating Committee. Our ministry team also welcomed Kim Dowd as Wedding Coordinator and celebrated when the team joyfully provided Welcome Desk coverage during the months of February and August. The congregation enjoyed the musical gifts and talents of Co-Director Christian Traylor through the end of May. Highlights of our Worship celebrates our Presbyterian liturgical year:

### ***Epiphany to Lent- Ordinary Time after Epiphany***

- Begins and ends with festivals that concern the identity of Jesus Christ (Baptism of Our Lord/Transfiguration);
- Also, the lectionary readings highlight the themes of Christian vocation, discipleship, and community.
  - January - Ordination and Installation of new elders/Baptism of Our Lord
  - February – Youth Sunday/Transfiguration, Ash Wednesday

### ***The Lent and Easter Seasons***

- Ash Wednesday, we marked the beginning of the season of Lent with an evening worship service following a churchwide dinner.
- Palm Sunday, Rev. Steven Barnes' last day in the pulpit
- Holy Week: Tenebrae Worship Service on Maundy Thursday
- Easter – Resurrection of the Lord - The chapel was decorated with Easter lilies, and worship attendance was 220. Communion was served. Music included guitars at sunrise service and a few handbell ringers and brass quintet at 10:30 a.m.



### ***Day of Pentecost***

- Celebrating God's gift of the Holy Spirit. The 50<sup>th</sup> day after Easter Sunday.
- Pentecost Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, using the symbols of flames, wind, and a dove, we wore red and shared information about Pentecost.

### ***The Time After Pentecost/Ordinary Time***

- The extraordinary time when we discover that in Christ our lives are filled with grace, forgiveness, and hope. We live as people of faith.
- Mother's and Father's Days – May/June - In lieu of giving flowers to JCPC mothers, a special offering was collected for Caring Hands, Presbyterian Homes of Georgia to celebrate mothers throughout our church community. The congregation enjoyed a short video about PHOG. Similarly, a special offering in honor of all fathers was collected for Bashor Men's Shelter.
- Sinta-se em Casa Brasil – July 29 - Casa Brasil hosted JCPC at their Saturday night worship service in the Youth Garage followed by fellowship and a dinner.
- World Communion Sunday – October 1 - Partnered worship service with our nested congregations: Casa Brasil and Crossings Community Church.
- Kirkin' O' The Tartans - October 29. The beauty and crispness of the Fall season lent itself to the new outdoor parade of over 25 tartan banners led by Scottish bagpipes, drums stepping off from the back of the property near the kitchen turning at the Pumpkin Patch, across the front lawn and up through the front doors of the church and into the Chapel. A wonderful day was made complete with a Kirkin' Luncheon after the service.



- Dedication Sunday - November 5 – Presentation of our 2024 Pledge Cards along with Time and Talent forms – Youth elders ('Tomorrow's Legacy') participated in serving communion.

### ***Advent to Christmas***

- We celebrate Christ's coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again.
- Hanging of the Greens Service - December 3 - Scripture readings, hymns, and communion were all a part of this worship service as we decorated the chapel on the First Sunday of Advent.
- Lessons & Carols- December 17 – Handbells, guitars, and Chancel Choir led this service, using the traditional Advent "O Antiphons" reflecting on God's promises to us.
- December 24 - We offered 2 very different services this day: The 10:30 a.m. Service for the Fourth Sunday of Advent and a 5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight service.



### **How does the Worship Ministry Team prepare for all these wonderful services?**

- Christian Worship joyfully ascribes all praise, honor, glory, and power to the Triune God.
- The Worship Ministry Team is responsible for ordering Christian worship faithful to the authority of the Holy Spirit speaking in and through Scripture. Our responsibilities associated with this goal include:

#### ***Preparing the Chapel for Worship***

##### ***Members of the Liturgical Arts and Chapel Guilds***

- Ensured pew racks were organized and supplied with Bibles, hymnals, giving envelopes, prayer cards, attendance pads, sharpened pencils, and Stephen Ministry informational cards.
- Prepared chancel area, placed appropriate paraments, and prepared baptismal font when appropriate.
- Prepared Communion elements and maintained oil in the candles on the Communion table.
- Provided floral arrangements in the chancel each Sunday, supplied and arranged poinsettias during Advent and lilies at Easter; set up seasonal decorations in the worship space.



##### ***Members of the Usher Teams***

- Maintained the Usher Manual and trained ushers.
- Welcomed worshippers with a bulletin and a smile; counted and recorded worship attendance numbers.
- Provided additional support for special worship services such as Hanging of the Greens and Holy Week.
- Tidied Chapel and collected attendance sheets after worship services.
- Locked up the entire church and turned off lights each Sunday after worship.

##### ***In Support of Worship***

- Recruited, trained, and scheduled:
  - Usher teams for all worship services.
  - Volunteers in the preparation/disposition of Communion elements.
  - Lay liturgists to assist in leading worship each week.
  - Scheduled elders to serve Communion during worship services.

- Introduced a more sanitary way of serving the Communion elements during the Winter months while the flu/Covid was prevalent.
- Held a Worship Ministry “Did You Know” to recruit members of the congregation to the Team. Established Worship Team goals prior to developing financial objectives for the 2023 budget.
- Continued revision of the JCPC Wedding Manual.

#### ***In Support of Outreach / Connecting / Community Engagement***

- Christmas tree/greenery sales – an annual event that supports the decoration of the church for Advent and supports the music ministry.
- Cookies, Crockpots & Caroling – assisted with and participated in singing familiar Christmas carols with members of JCPC, led by the Guitar Group.
- Staffed the Welcome desk before and after the Sunday service during two months of the year.

#### ***Music Ministry***

- Music is an important part of the worship life of JCPC. All music in our worship, including hymns, anthems, solos, and instrumental music, is an offering of praise, thanks, and prayer to God. We are blessed with many gifted musicians who provide a wide variety of music styles in worship. For those who wish to actively take part in the music ministry, there are opportunities for Adult and Youth – Handbell Choir, Chimers, Chancel Choir, Guitar Group, and vocal and instrumental solos.
- The Chancel Choir members enjoy a wonderful musical experience as they collectively volunteer nearly 2000 hours of singing service to the church in one year’s time.

#### ***Academy of Fine Arts (AFA)***

- Private music lesson enrollment remains strong at 75 students, with 8 instructors offering high-quality instruction on wind, string, keyboard, and brass instruments.
- AFA instructors offered gifts in kind to the church by providing beautiful music to enhance worship
- Partnered with Creative Movement and Dance to offer tap/ballet lessons from September to May, with one instructor and 12 students enrolled.
- Partnered with Johns Creek Arts Center to offer 14 summer camps at JCPC, registering over 200 campers in drawing, painting, and theater camps.
- Held numerous recitals throughout the year.
- Gifted to the church the following:
  - Gifts in kind from academy instructors enhancing our Sunday worship services (\$2,750).
  - Pledged \$15,000 to the general operating budget of the church.





## STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

*Being thoughtful stewards of critical JCPC treasures*

**Elders:** Jeff Arnold, Rich Shuler, Jim Pope, Tom Traylor, and Rick Zellmer

**Team Members:** Rob Dowd, David Eldridge, Mac Jordan, and Steve Simpson

**Staff:** Pastor Steven Barnes, Pastor Jim Simpson, and Elizabeth Uhles

The Stewardship Team monitors and manages many of the functions of the operations and finances of our church. It is made up of several sub-teams under the Stewardship umbrella that include Finance, Personnel, Technology, Banking and Compliance, Property, and Facility Usage.

### ***Finance***

JCPC began the 2023 calendar year with an approved operating budget of \$911,171. This budget reflected significant reductions in expense from the previous year, particularly related to personnel costs. Despite the reductions in expense, the budget anticipated that JCPC would finish the year with a deficit of \$29,208.

However, under the leadership of Rev. Steven Barnes, Rev. Jim Simpson, and a dedicated group of Session members, JCPC experienced a significant increase in giving throughout the year that resulted in actual income of \$921,427. Simultaneously, JCPC was able to reduce projected expenses across multiple areas. As a result, the church ended 2023 with a surplus of \$40,161.

The Stewardship team has completed, and the Session has approved, a budget of \$949,348 for 2024. This budget reflects higher anticipated costs related to personnel, property, and technology. These higher costs will be offset by the increase in pledges for 2024 as well as the carryover of surplus funds from 2023 and greater projected giving from both visitors and new members.

	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expense</b>	<b>Net Operating Income</b>
<b>2023 Approved</b>	881,963	(911,171)	(29,208)
<b>2023 Actual</b>	921,427	(881,266)	40,161
<b>2024 Projected</b>	949,348	(949,348)	0

The Stewardship Team anticipates that several substantial capital expenditures will need to be made in 2024 to further secure our physical plant and our network infrastructure. They include an upgraded electronic locking system, a new phone system, and technology upgrades to enhance cybersecurity. These expenditures are not reflected in the operating budget and will be drawn from reserve funds. Once each of these expenditures is defined, detailed information will be shared with the Session for their consideration and approval.

The Stewardship Team asks for your continued support and prayers.

### ***Banking and compliance***

The current outstanding balance on our mortgage through First Citizens Bank (as of December 31, 2023) was \$ 1,284,820.78 resulting in a monthly loan payment of \$8,036.31. The loan is amortized over twenty years at a floating rate of 1.95% + LIBOR (London Inter-Bank Offered Rate), not to exceed a maximum rate of 3.88%. The loan matures in August of 2028. The remaining balance at that time will then be restructured.

Please note that in 2020, an anonymous gift was made by a JCPC family that reduced the outstanding balance of our mortgage by \$500,000. This reduction in our loan principal resulted in an annual savings of over \$53,000 in mortgage expense.

## ***Personnel***

The Personnel Committee supported our JCPC staff through transitions in 2023, including the elimination of the part-time Christian Education and Co-Director of Music staff positions, the change to a four-day office work week, and the transition to a second interim senior pastor. These changes required prioritization of staff support services. JCPC staff responded by working closely together and with members to ensure that critical events continued, including weekly worship services, small groups, mission team events, and caring teamwork including supporting grieving church family members. In the midst of many changes and transitions, our staff helped JCPC thrive and even restart additional offerings such as handbells and the guitar group.

With the changes in staffing this year, personnel expenditures decreased even though we were able to provide three percent hourly increases for the remaining staff. Job responsibilities and staffing priorities will need to be adjusted in 2024 with our new senior pastor.

The Personnel Committee has expressed our appreciation of our JCPC staff's efforts in 2023 and will continue to look for ways to support staff in 2024!

## ***Technology***

### **2023 Technology Report – JCPC**

JCPC technology was in a stable state for the year, with few issues to deal with. The Comcast communications infrastructure continues to perform at levels well above the 99% reliability level. As a result, we extended our contract with them for another 3 years, receiving further discounts on our monthly bill, as well as a \$500 debit card, to use as we desired. In addition, we transitioned mobile phone service over to them, reducing our monthly costs for that service. We will add our new pastor to the plan once he comes on board.

We have had a few equipment replacements over the year, as our desktops and other devices age out of useability or break down. We have found avenues to purchase equipment at less than market prices, holding these expenditures down.

Our A/V systems have performed well, and we have received excellent comments on the quality and consistency of our online services. After a few bumps early, this process and technology have settled in.

The big project on the horizon is to find a replacement for our old door security system. While it is still operating, we have maximized its usage, we can no longer find good service for it, and we also need to incorporate cameras into the proposal. We expect to make a selection within the first quarter of 2024, with installation soon thereafter.

## ***Property***

Our focus in 2023 was to continue our efforts to catch up on maintenance and improvements that were deferred during the closure during Covid. Current building and safety codes required that we move the propane tank that powers 3 furnaces and a water heater in the offices (the house). A lightning strike near the area of the pumpkin patch required that we remove a 200-year-old oak tree. Some of the wood from that tree is being used to make a communion table for the outdoor chapel. To reduce costs, we have changed several of the outside services we use to maintain the facility. We have embarked on a journey to clean our facility, particularly closets and storage areas have been cleaned and organized. This effort will continue throughout 2024.

Our commitment to green energy has been very effective. The solar arrays on the roof created 70 MWh of power in 2023. Over the past 5 years we have reduced CO2 emissions by more than 400,000 lbs.

As our facility ages the demand for attention increases. Just like the homes we live in there is always something that needs attention at our church. To accomplish those tasks while remaining mindful of expenses we are utilizing a volunteer army whenever possible. This consists of our members, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and other groups in the community.

Over all our grounds and facilities are in good order and we are operating at or below budget.

***Facilities Usage***

The following groups used our facilities during 2023:

- AA Groups (13)
- Boy Scouts
- Girl Scouts
- Johns Creek Arts Center
- Academy of Fine Arts
- Pure Hearts of Georgia
- Philharmonic Art Center Company
- Team Elite Baseball
- National Charity League
- Lambert Softball Boosters
- Forefront Arts

In 2023, we received income of \$15,900.00 for facilities usage.

We also sponsored two “nested churches” that hold weekly services:

- Casa Brasil Church with worship language in Portuguese
- Crossings Community Church with worship language in Korean