

St. John in the Wilderness

White Bear Lake, Minnesota

Parish Profile



A People of God with a Christ-Centered Vision

St. John in the Wilderness is a Christ-centered Episcopal congregation whose purpose is to pray, grow and serve God and all people.



"St. John's is a close community where people can worship and get to know each other."

We support each other spiritually and practically both inside and outside of church and strive to be a visible sign of God's love in the wider community.

We exist to be a sanctuary where all are truly welcome.

We seek to follow Jesus by loving God, caring for one another, and serving our neighbors and each other, especially times of uncertainty and change, remaining rooted in the Bible, worship, prayer and community.

The Church is the People of God

Founded over 165 years ago, St. John in the Wilderness is the oldest church in the White Bear Lake area. With a deep connection to history, we celebrated our centennial anniversary in our current sanctuary building in 2025. Generations of faithful people have shaped a parish grounded in Episcopal tradition, openness, and hospitality.

"Loving, vibrant, welcoming community for all kinds of people."

Today, the church is sustained by committed lay leaders, staff, and volunteers who lead bible study, worship, music, adult and children formation, outreach, pastoral care, and governance.

Our Current Staff

- Part time non-stipendiary Associate Priest
- Part time Deacon
- Part time Rising Generations Minister
- Part time Music Minister
- Part time Parish Coordinator
- Part time Financial Administrator
- Part time Sexton
- Part time Nursery staff

Please see full list of committees and ministries here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BU9NwUzOIbutMs_gJPyn_ZbktWM_7jlt/view?usp=sharing

God is calling this congregation to continue being a welcoming spiritual home, nurturing faith across generations while empowering lay leadership to share the work of ministry.



Where God Has Placed Us

St. John in the Wilderness is located in White Bear Lake, Minnesota, a community with deep history, growing diversity, and evolving needs. White Bear Lake has a population of nearly 24,000 and is located in the northeast metro area of Saint Paul. Compared with a decade ago, White Bear Lake remains largely stable, though its population has declined slightly as household sizes are somewhat smaller.

The city has a median age in the early 40s, with adults 65 and older now comprising more than 20% of the population, while children remain just under 20% of residents. Racial and ethnic diversity has increased in White Bear Lake over the past decade, particularly among younger residents and school-age families. While the city remains predominantly white (just over 80%), there has been steady growth among Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Black and multiracial residents.

Economically, White Bear Lake continues to be moderately affluent with a median household income in the low to mid \$80,000 range and high rates of homeownership. Over the past decade, housing costs have risen, and while overall poverty rates remain relatively low, there is a greater spread in household income levels than in the past. Long-time residents on fixed incomes, renters, and lower-income households increasingly live alongside higher-income households, reflecting a broader range of economic circumstances within the community.

Our building includes a beautiful, historic worship space and spaces that foster worship, music, education, fellowship, and community service. Our sanctuary is now over 100 years old with stained glass windows lining the walls of the sanctuary. Oak pews provide seating for about 200 people, including a balcony showcasing a large circular stained-glass window. All young at heart are invited to explore our Pray Ground, a soft space for prayer and play during worship.



Music for worship includes a Casavant Freres nineteen stop pipe organ installed in 2000 as well as a Steinway grand piano. The bell tower is home to a bell cast for the parish in 1877 in Pennsylvania, which is rung every Sunday to start and end the service from a rope in the Sacristy.



The 1925 building also includes a library, the rector's office, a fireside meeting room, parish office, and a recently renovated meeting parlor on the main level. Upstairs, the Rising Generation Minister has an office as well as the Music Minister's office, which is off the choir room. The choir room has another grand piano. Two youth rooms and two restrooms complete the floor. The Parish Hall and Education wing were added in 1960s including a full kitchen, fellowship hall, 7 classrooms, a nursery, and an additional restroom. An elevator providing accessibility to all 4 floors was added in 1980. We share a parking lot with the local library, and we are just two blocks from the lake. While the building requires ongoing care, it remains a beautiful and beloved gathering place that embodies our identity as a spiritual refuge.



What God hopes for Us

In the next 3–5 years, we believe that God is calling us to welcome all, to deepen our identity as a spiritual, welcoming, inclusive, and intergenerational faith community. Our dreams include strengthening youth and family ministries, growing and developing faith formation, growing our outreach/ Faith in Action ministries, and building sustainable systems that welcome all, and nourish volunteers.

“I believe that we need to continue to emphasize community outreach, especially to those who are having difficulties with hunger and housing.”

Challenges include demographic shifts, financial sustainability, leadership transition, and navigating political polarization with compassion and love. We seek a priest who is a thoughtful preacher, compassionate pastor, supportive teacher, skilled communicator, and collaborative leader- someone who can foster unity among diverse perspectives and build bridges around shared values, empower lay ministry, and guide us faithfully into the next chapter.

Hopes and Dreams

- Greater connection to the White Bear Lake community
- Build unity while honoring diverse perspectives
- Be a beacon/example for each other and the world, living God’s two greatest commandments: Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind and love your neighbor as yourself This is included above the chancel “Love one another as I have loved you”

Challenges Faced

- Continuing to appeal to young families while growing membership across all ages and demographics.
- Expanding and deepening volunteer engagement and empowerment
- Fostering and developing communication and relationships between members
- Intentionally welcoming and supporting the spiritual development of visitors and new members as they find meaningful connection and opportunities for spiritual growth.
- Connecting more deeply to the White Bear Lake community

Qualities We Seek in Our Next Priest

- A patient, thoughtful teacher who can help people of all ages and stages grow in faith.
- A clear, compassionate communicator across generations and perspectives.
- An engaging, insightful homilist who connects scripture to everyday life with clarity, hope and depth.
- Ability to guide the congregation in building relationships with the greater White Bear Lake community
- Confident yet humble, self-aware, and willing to seek support when needed.
- Vision-minded but realistic, able to set priorities and sustain healthy ministry while being fiscally responsible.
- Organized and attentive administrator, with proven ability to supervise staff, set clear expectations and ensure accountability.
- Pastoral presence who listens well, builds relationships, and connects personally with parishioners

"We need someone who welcomes all, engages with all ages."



Resources

Please see attachments for parochial report and budget.

