

Junius Presbyterian Church Administrative Commission
Final Report to the Presbytery of Geneva
June 2026

A Brief History of Junius Presbyterian Church

Main source: materials from the celebration of the church's 175th Anniversary in 1989

Initially organized as a Congregational Church in 1811, the church became known as the 2nd Presbyterian Church of Junius in March 1814. A church building was erected in 1824 and the church grew from 28 to 100 members by 1834. Various improvements have been made to the church building over the rest of its lifetime, including electricity added in 1945, pews installed in 1954, a basement with full kitchen added in 1968, and a new metal roof installed 2016.

The church has been linked with other neighboring churches at various points in its history. Between 1957 and 1976, the church was yoked with the Tyre Reformed Church. Between 1977 and 2010, the Junius Church was covenanted with the Oaks Corners Presbyterian Church.

The first pastor was Rev. Howell Powell and the last pastor was Rev. Ellen Donnan who served the congregation from 1993 to 2023.

Over the years the church did a Chicken Barbecue in May that many people to travel to attend and support the church. Other dinners such as Ham, Roast Beef, and Chicken and Biscuits were incorporated to help raise funds for the church. It was found to be a time of fellowship for the members and many community members. Besides helping with the Presbytery Mission projects such as 2 Cents a Meal and other special offerings, the church has done youth scholarships to Camp Whitman and to New Wilmington Mission Conference. We have for several years supported a missionary overseas. Pathway Home, Seneca County House of Concern, Phelps Food Cupboard, and Lyons Food Cupboard has received food donations throughout the years. There was a Blessing Cupboard that was available to the community. Also, there was a shed for St. Pauly Textiles that people could drop off clothing. Vacation Bible School, a Clown club, Dog Training Club, Youth Groups, Bible studies, and Book Clubs were open to the community throughout the years. The last sign for the church was an Eagle Scout project.

Summary of the work of the Administrative Commission (AC)

In accordance with the Charge approved at the March 28, 2023 regular meeting of the Presbytery of Geneva, the following work has been completed:

AC meetings

The AC held its first meeting May 3, 2023 with David Ashby (TE), Harriet (Penny) Haynes (RE), Elizabeth Newell (RE), and Kristi Ward (RE) as members. Elizabeth Newell agreed to serve as moderator and Kristi Ward agreed to serve as clerk. Eleanor Beattie agreed to continue as accountant. Over the next four months the AC carried on the work typically done by the session as it prepared to call a congregational meeting to discuss the future of the church.

Congregational meeting

A duly called congregational meeting was held at the Junius Presbyterian Church on September 22, 2023 to discuss the future of the church, the role of the Administrative Commission (AC), and to act on the recommendations of the AC. All members for whom addresses (email or USPS) could be found were informed of the meeting and its purpose.

With a quorum present, options for the future of the church were discussed along with the role of the AC and the steps that would be involved in closing the church, if that was the decision of the congregation.

The recommendations of the Administrative Commission as listed below, were approved unanimously by the members present.

- The Junius Presbyterian Church be dissolved;
- Debts and other obligations of the church, if any, be satisfied;
- The contents of the church be donated, sold, or disposed of as the AC determines after discussion with the congregation, giving priority to returning items donated by members to their family;
- All other assets, including all funds and proceeds of the sale of any real and personal property, become property of the Presbytery of Geneva.
- The corporation be dissolved, as soon as the way is clear.
- Authorize the AC to take any further actions on the congregation's behalf necessary or advisable to complete the disposition of the church's real property and the corporate dissolution.

The congregation also voted unanimously to recommend to the AC that any remaining funds following the sale of the building and the dissolution of the corporation be donated to Camp Whitman or a non-profit organization in the community.

The congregation affirmed that the reading and approval of the minutes of this meeting be deferred until the next meeting of the AC.

Arrange for the pastoral care of the congregation

The church was without pastoral leadership starting February 1, 2023. The final worship service was led by Rev. Ellen Donnan on January 29, 2023, her last Sunday before retiring.

Letters written by the AC went out to members and friends of the Junius Church, encouraging them to find a new church home. Letters of transfer were sent for two members.

Financial status and management of financial assets and obligations

The AC accepted the 2023 financial statement from Ellie Beattie, Accountant. For the year 2024, in an effort to limit expenses until the building was sold, the Building Fund and Memorial Fund were transferred to the General Fund. The AC voted Kristi Ward as Treasurer until the property was sold and all bills paid. The AC accepted the financial statement for 2024 that was provided by Kristi Ward and found no issue of concern. The church checking account was closed on April 23, 2025 and the remaining balance of \$2,953.04 was transferred to the Presbytery of Geneva.

The Presbyterian Foundation was notified of the church dissolution in 2025. Quarterly payments and remaining funds were turned over to the Presbytery of Geneva.

Securing the Session records

All church records still with the church, including Session minutes, church registers, and other financial and legal records have been organized and relevant items will be delivered to the Presbyterian Historical Society PC(USA) archives in Philadelphia. Older records had already been sent to the Presbyterian Historical Society.

Church inventory:

An inventory of church belongings was completed and a list of available items was shared with the presbytery. Some items found a home at Camp Whitman, the Ovid Federated Church, First Presbyterian Church in Ulysses, and at The Presbyterian Church in Geneva.

Selling the church building and property:

Steinbrenner Law Offices, LLC, of Rochester, NY served as our attorney for the sale of the church property and dissolution of Junius Presbyterian Church.

Following approval by the Administrative Commission (July 5, 2024), the Presbytery of Geneva (August 20, 2024) and the Supreme Court of the State of New York County of Seneca (November 15, 2024 and updated order on January 17, 2025), the real property of the Junius Presbyterian Church was sold to Eric R. Lyon on January 28, 2025 for a sale price of \$25,000 plus \$8,895.00 in closing costs. Seller's additional disbursements, fees and credits brought the net proceeds due to the Junius Presbyterian Church at closing to \$24,646.77. A check was issued to the Presbytery and received February 26, 2025. The congregation recommended that the proceeds from the sale go to Camp Whitman.

Dissolving the church corporation

Following approval by the Administrative Commission (July 5, 2024) and the Presbytery of Geneva (August 20, 2024), AC representatives signed the verified petition to the Supreme Court of the State of New York, County of Seneca to dissolve the corporation of the church. A public notice of the dissolution of the church corporation was published four times in the Finger Lakes Times. The Supreme Court of the State of New York County of Seneca dissolved the Junius Presbyterian Church on April 23, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

The Administrative Commission of the Junius Presbyterian Church

David Ashby TE, Elizabeth Newell RE (moderator), Harriet Haynes RE, and Kristi Ward RE (clerk)