



ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Annual Parish Meeting
Sunday, February 25, 2024
Agenda

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ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MINUTES- February 12th, 2023

Vestry Present: The Rev. Christy Laborda Harris, Meg Nalley– Junior Warden, Kate Sefton-Deacon, Liza Brickey, TJ McKillop, Heather Cruciano, Mary Lou Sefton, Jean Farmer, Jeff Tawney-Clerk, Marshall Ward – Senior Warden & Treasurer

Absent:

Call to Order: Christy opened the meeting at 10:00 am during service. The meeting was called to order at 11:09 am, following the service.

Approval of the 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes: After a review of the 2022 annual meeting minutes, a motion was made to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Senior Warden Report: Marshall thanked the Vestry and congregation for their help and support while Christy was on Sabbatical. He felt honored to have served as warden to the rector. Christy thanked Marshall for his kind words and service.

Junior Warden Report: Meg thanked everyone who helped keep the Church maintained this past year especially her husband Dave. She stated it is a joint effort coordinated with the Parish Administrator and Rector. Christy thanked Meg for all her work.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Marshall Ward reported we started the year with a projected deficit of \$71,301.00. The actual deficit was \$14,061.00. We received a \$24,000.00 onetime IRS Employee tax credit and withdrew \$65,461.00 from the investment fund. Marshall expressed his sincere thanks to everyone for continuing to support the Church through this year. Christy thanked Marshall for his continued dedication and hard work.

Investment Report: Marshall stated the fund was down 12.9% for the year after all fees and expenses which is significantly lower than the 19.4% loss experienced by the S&P index. The average return on our investments since 2016, including the 12.9% loss last year, is still 8.1%. Marshall added Clay Sorrick continues to manage the fund at no cost. Christy thanked Marshall, Clay, and the committee members for all their work.

Scrip: Karen Koenig thanked everyone for supporting this program. St Stephen's purchases Scrip from Raise Right in Michigan. The proceeds are designated for the Godly Play and Nursery programs. Best seller this year was Amazon over \$13,000.00. Gift Cards can also be used for Discretionary Fund Donations. Christy thanked Karen for all her work. Mary Lou Sefton mentioned Easter is coming up and purchasing See's Candy Scrip is a great way to support this ministry.

Rectors Discretionary Fund: Christy reported the fund receives \$100.00 a month from the parish general budget in addition to other donations and is used at her discretion for help in charitable causes. The fund started the year with \$3,845.07 received \$1,200.00 and dispersed \$1,510.62 ending with \$3,534.45.

Deacon's Report Discretionary Fund: Kate Sefton reported this fund is used at her discretion for charitable causes. The fund started the year with \$224.17 received \$2,324.17 and dispersed \$987.66 ending with \$1,336.51.

Altar Guild: Mary McAulay thanked everyone for their continued service in this ministry. We worked very hard to create a beautiful worship space while adapting and adjusting to the return of in person services this year. Mary invited anyone interested in joining the team contact her or Christy.

Centering Prayer Groups: Rod McAulay reported Centering Prayer gatherings are every Monday at 9:30am. Centering Prayer-is introducing a profound silence in our mind and body, enabling our whole selves to be open and present to God.

Music and Choir: Miles McKenzie reported that in 2022, the process of adapting and rebuilding after the pandemic continued. A new sound system was installed in the OSS and the choir has begun regular Wednesday practices and singing in Church again. Miles invited anyone interested to join the choir.

Childrens Ministry: TJ McKillop and Pricilla Johnstone reported for Lynda Higson. The Godly Play program resumed in March, with 5-6 children attending each class. Elizabeth Herold and Lynda taught one Sunday each Month during Church services. Both Lynda and Elizabeth are retiring this year and asked for continued support as the program continues with new teachers and leadership.

Land Stewardship Committee: Jean Farmer reported our Seed to Soul Garden has been a sanctuary this past year for many people in the community. Spending time in the OSS, walking the Labyrinth, and just enjoying the many wildflowers in bloom. The "Friends of The Garden" meet every Thursday from 8:15-11:00 tending to the land. The Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC) students came twice this year. Christy thanked all the members for their work this past year.

Beyond Land Acknowledgement: Jean Farmer reported in 2022 the group spent time learning about the Indigenous History of California, writing articles and informing the congregation about events involving our local Indigenous community. Their symbol in the e-news is an acorn and leaf. Anyone interested in this group should contact her.

Saturday Table: Carole Ward reported it has been an exciting year. We are back to serving about 20 guests each month in the Parish Hall. The volunteers grew by six people last year. Kate Sefton added Aubree makes sure to keep the "free table" filled with supplies donated by St. Stephen's parishioners.

Hat Ministry: Sophie Beth, and TJ McKillop, reported for Cecile Lusby that Parkside Elementary received hats from The Hat Ministry, lovingly created by Cecile and her daughter Morgan Marchbanks.

Global Market Ministry: Christy reported for Heather Cruciano. In 2022 we resumed selling the products from Canaan USA which help support the Palestinian farmers. Due to Covid it has been a slow but enthusiastic return. We branched out this year with Equal Exchange offering new products.

Deacon's Report: Kate Sefton reported having walked the Camino de Santiago Portuguese was an incredible experience. She continues to serve as co-chair on the Diocesan Commission on Ministry. St. Stephen's participated in five Meal Trains in 2022, a paperback book drive for inmates, and we continue to provide for people in need.

Rector's Report: Christy thanked everyone for their support and noted it has served 12 years as rector. She gave a brief overview of ongoing projects on the church grounds and commented on how much our grounds have been used by the community this past year and is especially excited about moving forward with the Playground Project.

Delegates to Diocesan Convention: Christy announced the 2023 Diocesan Convention delegates. They are Carole Ward, Marshall Ward, Priscilla Johnstone, Marie Capria, and Meg Nalley (Alternate). Mary Lou Sefton moved to approve these delegates by acclamation, Carol Ottis seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Vestry Members: Mary Lou Sefton, Marshall Ward, and TJ McKillop will be moving off the Vestry. The nominees for a three-year Vestry term are Serafina Palandech, and Linda Hall. Meg Nalley made a motion to accept these nominees to the Vestry by acclamation, Carole Ward seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Christy presented the outgoing Vestry members with the book, *The power of Rituals* and thanked them for their service.

Adjournment: Christy led the closing prayer. A motion was made to adjourn, seconded, unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Tawney
Vestry Clerk

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

As my first year as Senior Warden draws to a close I am struck with what an honor it has been to serve our church in this way. The main job description of a senior warden is to be supportive of and available to the rector. It has been a privilege to be in this relationship with Reverend Christy during this visionary time of our parish.

2023 was a momentous year as we emerged from the pandemic. There have been so many wonderful moments. I have been fortunate to be a part of Godly Play as it was relaunched, Beyond Land Acknowledgement, the Friends of the Garden, Children's Seasons in the Garden, fundraisers, as well as the county jail book drive and the book drive for Indigenous children. I appreciate our church's openness to exploring new ways to experience the Sacred while keeping practices that are essential to our faith tradition. I look forward to the coming years as the full expression of the Playground emerges.

For me personally, illuminating the stained glass windows in the sanctuary day and night, which might seem like a small change, was to me a profound one. Though it took little effort and minimal cost, it sends a strong message to all that pass by that we are here, the Spirit is alive and the light continues to shine through the darkness. May it be so.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Farmer

JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

The Junior Warden is primarily responsible for the buildings and grounds, coordinating with the Parish Administrator and the Rector.

2023 was another busy year in this Junior Warden's life! Of course, I couldn't have accomplished much of anything without my capable partner in JW and in life, Dave Nalley. Many thanks also to Jeff and Lynda Tawney, Marshall Ward, Miles McKenzie, Christy and Kai Harris.

The reality is that the building is aging, and the maintenance and repairs are going to be more expensive and extensive. One of the largest items, in my opinion, concerns the tree, and resulting damage from the tree, near the entrance to the choir room. The root system has lifted the sidewalk along the east side of the building and has lifted the stairs to the choir room so that the door can no longer be opened. The choir room and the stairs (and the addition to the sacristy) were built in the 1990's and the tree was already there. Everyone loves the tree, and the hope is that we can continue to save the tree by developing workarounds.

Some of the "ordinary maintenance" items from 2023 include:

Filled potholes at entrance to parking lot, located and repaired leaks in OSS landscape irrigation, continuing maintenance of OSS waterfall, including algae mitigation, straighten and reinforce the sign at the parking lot entrance, periodic sanding/staining of OSS altar, purchase and install shade sails on OSS shade structure and reinforce as needed, install exhaust fan in office restroom, replacement of furnace filters, repair of a broken deadbolt in Christy's office, locate and replace backup battery for alarm system (and decline a job offer from the alarm company) and other minor maintenance.

In July, the 100 gallon water heater that had been installed when the building was built, gave up the ghost. Dave and Jeff Tawney labored for hours to get the water heater out of its hiding place between the kitchen restroom and the janitor's closet, which is located between the ladies' and men's restrooms in the breezeway. We ordered a 40 gallon replacement from Sebastopol Hardware and the Tawney/Nalley team spent the better part of a day installing it. Hopefully this new one will also last 50+ years!

The saga of the dishwasher took up most of the summer. Dave spent hours researching solutions for the recalcitrant machine, finally ordering a replacement gauge from eBay since the manufacturer no longer makes them. Dave was able to get it running, with the caveat that we sometimes need to whack it with a rolling pin to get it started. Marshall Ward has researched replacements, and the Vestry has it on the list of things to do, maybe in conjunction with the commercial kitchen/Playground project. Estimates to replace the dishwasher with a comparable commercial unit range in the \$20-\$25k range, so we are trying to keep it running for Saturday Table's use for the time being.

In September, I tripped over a concrete sidewalk and fractured both kneecaps. For the remainder of the year, my participation was mostly of a supervisory nature.

Still on my (long term) list – included here so that they aren't forgotten:

Address concrete steps at choir room.

Repair or realign path from parking lot past choir room.

Clean & repair kneelers at altar rail.

Explore remedies to keep OSS waterfall algae under control (in process)

Repair basin at base of OSS waterfall to mitigate/eliminate leak

Wood trim at parking lot end of roof to be replaced

Respectfully Submitted,
Meg Nalley
Junior Warden

TREASURER'S REPORT, FISCAL YEAR 2023

After the disappointing year of 2022, it is with great pleasure that I write this Treasurer's Report for 2023!

PLEDGES: In 2023, we had a total of 42 pledge cards submitted for a total of \$142,100. This represents a reduction of one pledge unit and \$10,236 from 2022. We finished the year with \$149,115 paid by our pledgers or 104.9% of the pledge card total!

It should be noted that in the last few years, we have lost several long-term pledges. Many because of circumstances related to the COVID pandemic. The money we have drawn from the church investment account has grown each year from \$24,000 in 2019 to \$87,000 in 2023. Christy and the Vestry sponsored a "Pledge Drive" in the Fall and the good people of St. Stephen's stepped-up big time. The goal of the drive was to get \$20,000 in new and increased pledges. The result was over \$57,000 in new and increased pledges! Thank you so much! These new pledges will make a huge difference in 2024!

INCOME: Total income for the year including Pledges, gifts, rental income, fundraising, etc. came to \$232,704. Withdrawals from our investment account were \$87,603 for a grand total of \$320,307 to balance the total Expenses for the year. This represents a 5.2% draw out of the investment account.

Speaking of the investment account, we had an excellent year and our investments grew by an outstanding 13.6%! This is truly exciting when you compare it to 2022 where we took a substantial loss of 12.9%. Overall, the performance of the investment account has averaged over 8% for the years since I became treasurer in 2016.

This year we held our second "Summer Fundraiser" and it was a great success! It followed in the path blazed last year with the inaugural Summer Fund Raiser that featured a Cuban dance band. This year's soiree featured lots of food, fun and dancing to a local classic rock band and raised \$8,719 for The Playground project. We hope to make the "Summer Fund Raiser" an annual event.

If you are interested in seeing the gritty financial details of all of St. Stephen's fund-raising activities, investment account performance, outreach expenditures, etc., all the information is published each month and presented at the Vestry meeting and is available to all parishioners, upon request.

Looking ahead to 2024, the proposed budget shows an increase in income of \$6,500 or 2.9% over the actual income of 2023. You are probably asking: What about the \$57,000 in increased and new pledges?? That's a great question! Unfortunately, we lost a significant amount of pledged income this last year due to a variety of reasons. About \$27,000 of the new pledges made up for the losses and our net increase in pledge money is closer to \$30,000. The balance is made up of Plate donations and Givers of Record which is income that we cannot accurately predict so we always put a conservative number in the budget that we typically exceed by the end of the year. In 2023 we exceeded the budget numbers for Plate, GOR and pledges by \$21,600. Our history indicates that our 2024 income will benefit in a similar way.

The budget also indicates that we will need to increase the draw off our investment account by about \$5,000. In 2023, the actual draw was \$16,000 smaller than the budget prediction and I expect that our actual draw will be less than the 2023 actual draw due to the increased pledge income. Of course, there are no guarantees. A budget is nothing more than an educated guess at our finances for the year.

On the expense side, the budget shows a 3.5% increase in total expenses in 2024 to \$316,836.

Please review the approved 2024 Budget that is included in the Annual Meeting packet. If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to drop me an email or give me a call.

Respectfully submitted,
Marshall Ward - Treasurer, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2023

| | <u>December 2023</u> | <u>December 2022</u> | <u>Difference</u> |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ASSETS | | | |
| Cash & Investments | | | |
| Cash | \$135,646.84 | \$104,311.02 | \$31,335.82 |
| Investment Accounts | 1,594,170.13 | 1,474,181.75 | 119,988.38 |
| Total Cash & Investments | <u>1,729,816.97</u> | <u>1,578,492.77</u> | <u>151,324.20</u> |
| Discretionary Funds | 6,211.17 | 4,795.96 | 1,415.21 |
| Other Current Assets | | | |
| Accounts Receivable | 150.00 | 0.00 | 150.00 |
| Prepaid Expenses | 495.70 | 316.26 | 179.44 |
| UTO Grant Receivable | 0.00 | 145,000.00 | (145,000.00) |
| Paper SCRIP | 0.00 | 2,100.00 | (2,100.00) |
| Total Other Current Assets | <u>645.70</u> | <u>147,416.26</u> | <u>(146,770.56)</u> |
| TOTAL ASSETS | <u>\$1,736,673.84</u> | <u>\$1,730,704.99</u> | <u>\$5,968.85</u> |
| LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCES | | | |
| Current Liabilities | | | |
| Accounts Payable | 4,867.00 | 3,919.00 | 948.00 |
| Prepaid Pledges | 23,100.00 | 17,500.00 | 5,600.00 |
| Facilities Deposits | 245.00 | 522.50 | (277.50) |
| Total Current Liabilities | <u>28,212.00</u> | <u>21,941.50</u> | <u>6,270.50</u> |
| Net Assets | | | |
| Funds without Donor Restrictions | 1,657,199.35 | 1,523,703.78 | 133,495.57 |
| Donor Restricted Funds | 51,262.49 | 185,059.71 | (133,797.22) |
| Permanently Restricted Funds | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Total Net Assets | <u>1,708,461.84</u> | <u>1,708,763.49</u> | <u>(301.65)</u> |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCES | <u>\$1,736,673.84</u> | <u>\$1,730,704.99</u> | <u>\$5,968.85</u> |

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Statement of Financial Activities
For the Year Ending December 31, 2023

| | Actual | Budget | Variance | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| | | | \$ | % |
| Income | | | | |
| <i>Offerings</i> | | | | |
| Pledge Offerings | \$149,114.57 | 150,000 | (\$885) | -0.6% |
| All Other Offerings | 46,843.30 | 22,900 | 23,943 | 104.6% |
| <i>Total Offerings</i> | \$195,957.87 | 172,900 | \$23,058 | 13.3% |
| Interest & Investment Income | 135.93 | 0 | 136 | - |
| Facilities Usage Donations | 26,051.25 | 26,400 | (349) | -1.3% |
| Fundraising Income | 2,586.71 | 0 | 2,587 | - |
| Restricted/Designated Offerings | 5,456.00 | 0 | 5,456 | - |
| Transfers from Designated Funds | 2,516.90 | 0 | 2,517 | - |
| Transfers from Unrestricted Reserves | 87,602.71 | 52,000 | 35,603 | 68.5% |
| Total Income | \$320,307.37 | \$251,300 | \$69,007 | 27.5% |
| Personnel | | | | |
| Clergy | 128,571.63 | 130,070 | (1,498) | -1.2% |
| Office Staff | 29,118.42 | 32,803 | (3,685) | -11.2% |
| Music Staff | 36,872.00 | 35,591 | 1,281 | 3.6% |
| Other Payroll Expenses | 5,825.67 | 5,985 | (159) | -2.7% |
| Total Personnel | \$200,387.72 | \$204,449.00 | (\$4,061) | -2.0% |
| Buildings & Grounds | | | | |
| Property Taxes & Insurance | 10,726.25 | 10,250 | 476 | 4.6% |
| Utilities | 14,456.57 | 12,780 | 1,677 | 13.1% |
| Maintenance & Supplies | 13,776.04 | 10,560 | 3,216 | 30.5% |
| Landscaping & Grounds | 8,813.81 | 7,500 | 1,314 | 17.5% |
| Total Buildings & Grounds | \$47,772.67 | \$41,090.00 | \$6,683 | 16.3% |
| Administration | 8,135.51 | 8,350 | (214) | -2.6% |
| Programs | | | | |
| Worship & Music | 1,551.63 | 2,045 | (493) | -24.1% |
| Education | 100.80 | 500 | (399) | -79.8% |
| Fellowship | 865.62 | 900 | (34) | -3.8% |
| Other Program Expenses | 3,491.52 | 2,650 | 842 | 31.8% |
| Total Program Expenses | \$6,009.57 | \$6,095 | (\$85) | -1.4% |
| Diocesan Apportionment | 48,229.00 | 41,520 | 6,709 | 16.2% |
| Other Expenses | - | 0 | 0 | - |
| Outreach | 9,772.90 | 1,800.00 | 7,973 | 442.9% |
| Total Expenses | \$320,307.37 | \$303,304 | \$17,003 | 5.6% |
| Net Surplus (Deficit) | \$0.00 | (\$52,004.00) | \$52,004.00 | |

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Net Assets Report
December 31, 2023

| | <u>December 2023</u> | <u>December 2022</u> | <u>Difference</u> |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| FUNDS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS | | | |
| Unrestricted Reserves | | | |
| Cash Reserves | 1,583,131.13 | 1,464,304.37 | 118,826.76 |
| Miscellaneous Unrestricted Bequests | 15,158.91 | 158.91 | 15,000.00 |
| Brown Bequest | 38,675.01 | 38,675.01 | 0.00 |
| Total Unrestricted Reserves | <u>1,636,965.05</u> | <u>1,503,138.29</u> | <u>133,826.76</u> |
| Unrestricted Designated Funds | | | |
| Camp Scholarship | 250.00 | 250.00 | 0.00 |
| Altar Guild | 4,937.23 | 4,300.10 | 637.13 |
| Music Fund | 420.00 | 420.00 | 0.00 |
| Sabbatical Fund | 10,765.35 | 10,765.35 | 0.00 |
| Youth Fund (from SCRIP Income) | 3,861.72 | 4,830.04 | (968.32) |
| Total Unrestricted Designated Funds | <u>20,234.30</u> | <u>20,565.49</u> | <u>(331.19)</u> |
| TOTAL FUNDS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS | <u>\$1,657,199.35</u> | <u>\$1,523,703.78</u> | <u>\$133,495.57</u> |
| DONOR RESTRICTED FUNDS | | | |
| Outreach Funds | | | |
| General Outreach Fund | 7,263.36 | 7,263.36 | 0.00 |
| Fire Relief | 105.00 | 105.00 | 0.00 |
| Food Pantry | 125.00 | 0.00 | 125.00 |
| Laguna Art Project | 140.00 | 140.00 | 0.00 |
| Meal Train | 200.00 | 200.00 | 0.00 |
| Quilters | 111.58 | 111.58 | 0.00 |
| Global Market Fundraising | 3,505.13 | 2,402.79 | 1,102.34 |
| Total Outreach Funds | <u>11,450.07</u> | <u>10,222.73</u> | <u>1,227.34</u> |
| Playground | | | |
| Donations & Grants | 50,354.58 | 32,826.92 | 17,527.66 |
| 2023 Fundraising Event | 8,719.67 | 0.00 | 8,719.67 |
| UTO Grant | 145,000.00 | 145,000.00 | 0.00 |
| Transfers from Bequests | 27,166.66 | 27,166.66 | 0.00 |
| Play Area Costs | (33,423.05) | (32,898.56) | (524.49) |
| Picnic Tables | 561.71 | 0.00 | 561.71 |
| Kitchen | (170,674.32) | 0.00 | (170,674.32) |
| Other Expenses | (7,670.00) | (2,220.00) | (5,450.00) |
| Total Playground Funds | <u>20,035.25</u> | <u>169,875.02</u> | <u>(149,839.77)</u> |
| Other Donor Restricted Funds | | | |
| Labyrinth | 166.00 | 166.00 | 0.00 |
| Community Dinner Grant | 13,400.00 | 0.00 | 13,400.00 |
| Rector's Discretionary Fund | 5,009.66 | 3,534.45 | 1,475.21 |
| Deacon's Discretionary Fund | 1,201.51 | 1,261.51 | (60.00) |
| Total Playground Funds | <u>19,777.17</u> | <u>4,961.96</u> | <u>14,815.21</u> |
| TOTAL DONOR RESTRICTED FUNDS | <u>\$51,262.49</u> | <u>\$185,059.71</u> | <u>(\$133,797.22)</u> |

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
2024 Operating Budget
Approved 1/30/2024

| | Historical Comparative Information | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| | 2024 <u>Budget</u> | 2023 | | Δ 2024 Budget vs. 2023 Actual | |
| | | <u>Budget</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>\$</u> | <u>%</u> |
| INCOME | | | | | |
| Offerings | | | | | |
| <i>Pledge Offerings</i> | 171,520 | 150,000 | 139,495 | 32,025 | + 23.0% |
| <i>All Other Offerings</i> | 24,200 | 22,900 | 55,063 | (30,863) | - 56.1% |
| Total Offerings | <u>195,720</u> | <u>172,900</u> | <u>194,558</u> | <u>1,162</u> | <u>+ 0.6%</u> |
| Investment & Interest Income | 120 | 0 | 136 | (16) | - 11.7% |
| Facilities Usage Income | 26,490 | 26,400 | 26,051 | 439 | + 1.7% |
| Fundraising Income | 10,000 | 0 | 2,587 | 7,413 | + 286.6% |
| Other Income | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | n/a |
| Restricted/Designated Offerings | 1,200 | 0 | 6,856 | (5,656) | - 82.5% |
| Transfers from Subsidiary Accounts | 0 | 0 | 2,517 | (2,517) | - 100.0% |
| Transfer from Unrestricted Reserves | | | | | |
| <i>Budgeted Sustainable Transfer</i> | 36,000 | 52,000 | 38,274 | (2,274) | - 5.9% |
| <i>Transfer necessary to offset Deficit</i> | 49,856 | 52,004 | 49,329 | 527 | + 1.1% |
| Transfer from Unrestricted Reserves | <u>85,856</u> | <u>104,004</u> | <u>87,603</u> | <u>(1,746)</u> | <u>- 2.0%</u> |
| TOTAL INCOME | <u>319,386</u> | <u>303,304</u> | <u>320,307</u> | <u>(921)</u> | <u>- 0.3%</u> |
| EXPENSES | | | | | |
| Staff Expenses | | | | | |
| Clergy | | | | | |
| <i>Rector</i> | 132,081 | 123,690 | 125,705 | 6,376 | + 5.1% |
| <i>Deacon</i> | 3,152 | 5,180 | 1,859 | 1,293 | + 69.5% |
| <i>Assisting/Supply Clergy</i> | 1,200 | 1,200 | 1,007 | 193 | + 19.2% |
| Total Clergy | <u>136,433</u> | <u>130,070</u> | <u>128,572</u> | <u>7,861</u> | <u>+ 6.1%</u> |
| Lay Staff | | | | | |
| <i>Office Staff</i> | 24,757 | 25,628 | 21,795 | 2,962 | + 13.6% |
| <i>Music Staff</i> | 37,741 | 35,591 | 36,872 | 869 | + 2.4% |
| <i>Nursery</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | n/a |
| <i>Bookkeeper</i> | 7,580 | 7,175 | 7,323 | 257 | + 3.5% |
| Total Lay Staff | <u>70,078</u> | <u>68,394</u> | <u>65,990</u> | <u>4,088</u> | <u>+ 6.2%</u> |
| Other Payroll Expenses | 5,920 | 5,985 | 5,826 | 94 | + 1.6% |
| Total Staff Expenses | <u>212,431</u> | <u>204,449</u> | <u>200,388</u> | <u>12,044</u> | <u>+ 6.0%</u> |

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
2024 Operating Budget
Approved 1/30/2024

| | Historical Comparative Information | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| | 2024 <u>Budget</u> | 2023 | | Δ 2024 Budget vs. 2023 Actual | |
| | | <u>Budget</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>\$</u> | <u>%</u> |
| Operating Expenses | | | | | |
| Church Programs | | | | | |
| <i>Worship & Music</i> | 2,080 | 2,045 | 1,552 | 528 | + 34.1% |
| <i>Education</i> | 500 | 500 | 101 | 399 | + 396.0% |
| <i>Fellowship</i> | 900 | 900 | 866 | 34 | + 4.0% |
| <i>Other Program Expenses</i> | <u>1,900</u> | <u>2,650</u> | <u>3,492</u> | <u>(1,592)</u> | <u>- 45.6%</u> |
| Total Church Program Expenses | 5,380 | 6,095 | 6,010 | (630) | - 10.5% |
| Buildings & Grounds | | | | | |
| <i>Taxes & Insurance</i> | 10,250 | 10,250 | 10,726 | (476) | - 4.4% |
| <i>Utilities</i> | 15,395 | 12,780 | 14,457 | 938 | + 6.5% |
| <i>Maintenance & Supplies</i> | 10,560 | 10,560 | 13,776 | (3,216) | - 23.3% |
| <i>Landcaping</i> | <u>8,500</u> | <u>7,500</u> | <u>8,814</u> | <u>(314)</u> | <u>- 3.6%</u> |
| Total Buildings & Grounds | 44,705 | 41,090 | 47,773 | (3,068) | - 6.4% |
| Administrative Expenses | 8,350 | 8,350 | 8,136 | 214 | + 2.6% |
| Fundraising Expenses | 2,000 | 0 | 0 | 2,000 | n/a |
| Parish Outreach | 2,900 | 1,800 | 9,773 | (6,873) | - 70.3% |
| Diocesan Apportionment | 43,620 | 41,520 | 48,229 | (4,609) | - 9.6% |
| Other Expenses | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | n/a |
| Total Operating Expenses | 106,955 | 98,855 | 119,920 | (12,965) | - 10.8% |
| Total Expenses | 319,386 | 303,304 | 320,307 | (921) | - 0.3% |
| NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | n/a |

THE PLAYGROUND OPERATING BUDGET

BUDGET

| Income | Month | Annual |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Coffee sales | \$ 5,500.00 | \$ 66,000.00 |
| Beer/Wine sales | \$ 8,250.00 | \$ 99,000.00 |
| Kitchen Lease | \$ 2,000.00 | \$ 24,000.00 |
| COGS Coffee | \$ (1,650.00) | \$ (19,800.00) |
| COGS Beer/Wine | \$ (2,475.00) | \$ (29,700.00) |
| Gross revenue less COGS | \$ 11,625.00 | \$ 139,500.00 |

Expenses

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Advertising & Marketing | | |
| Bank Charges & Fees | \$ 150.00 | \$ 1,800.00 |
| Equipment Rental | \$ 500.00 | \$ 6,000.00 |
| Insurance | \$ 350.00 | \$ 4,200.00 |
| Legal & Professional Services | \$ 350.00 | \$ 4,200.00 |
| Meals & Entertainment | | \$ - |
| Office Supplies & Software | \$ 150.00 | \$ 1,800.00 |
| Payroll Expenses | | \$ - |
| Employer Taxes | \$ 390.24 | \$ 4,682.88 |
| Regular Wages | \$ 4,336.00 | \$ 52,032.00 |
| Benefits | \$ 520.32 | \$ 4,682.88 |
| Repairs & Maintenance | \$ 300.00 | \$ 3,600.00 |
| Square Fees | \$ 40.00 | \$ 480.00 |
| Taxes & Licenses | | \$ - |
| Utilities | \$ 350.00 | \$ 4,200.00 |
| Total Expenses | \$ 7,436.56 | \$ 87,677.76 |

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Net Operating Income | \$ 4,188.44 | \$ 51,822.24 |
|----------------------|-------------|--------------|

Assumptions:

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| CAFÉ & BAR General/Summer Hours: | Average sales per day coffee: \$250 |
| 9am - 3pm Tuesday - Thursday | Average sales per day beer/wine: \$375 |
| 9am - 8pm Friday - Saturday | 22 days/20 guests/average ring \$12 |
| Closed Sunday and Monday | 22 days/20 guests/average ring \$18 |

Staff Expenses

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Manager: \$21/hour, 37 hours/wk | \$ 2,992.00 |
| Cashier/Server: \$16/hour, 21 hours/week | \$ 1,344.00 |
| | \$ 4,336.00 |

T-Thurs: Mgr 7 hrs, Cashier 3 hrs
 Fri - Sat: Mgr 8 hrs, Cashier 6 hrs

OPTIONAL STATEMENT FROM OTHER FINANCIAL REPORTS PRESENTED IN WRITING

RECTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND Report for 2022

| | | |
|----------------|--|-------------------|
| Receipts: | | |
| | From parish general budget | \$1,200 |
| | Donations from parishioners | \$1,810 |
| | Total Receipts: | \$3,010 |
| Disbursements: | | |
| | Housing | \$984.79 |
| | Food | \$100 |
| | Food/Gas cards | \$200 |
| | Ahli Arab Hospital | \$200 |
| | Scholarship Support | \$50 |
| | Total Disbursements | \$1,534.79 |
| | Beginning Balance (January 1, 2023) | \$3,534.45 |
| | + Total Receipts | \$3,010.00 |
| | - Total Disbursements | \$1,534.79 |
| | = Balance as of January 1, 2024 | \$5,009.66 |

The fine print about how discretionary funds work...

The existence and use of clergy discretionary funds largely rest on a canon of the Church, III.9 5(b)(6), regarding "almoner's funds," as well as a long tradition implementing this canon in our congregations. The canon describes the alms and contributions as being designated for "pious and charitable uses" as the Rector determines. From this canon it has been concluded that it would be inappropriate to use them for items that are generally funded through the parish budget (vestments, books, etc.)

DEACON'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Receipts:

| | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| From parish general budget | \$600 |
| Parishioner donations | \$540 |

Total Receipts: \$1140

Disbursements:

Food & Gas (gift cards, handed out as needed))
\$150 February Scrip
\$300 June (250 @Safeway, 50 @Brew)
\$300 November Scrip (to Sonoma Acts of Kindness)
\$200 December Scrip

Total Disbursements: \$950

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Beginning Balance (January 1, 2023) | \$1011.51 |
| + Total Receipts | \$1140 |
| - Total Disbursements | \$950 |
| = Balance as of December 31, 2023 | \$1201.51 |

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE REPORT 2023

The Committee met via zoom several times in the spring and summer of 2023 to review the cash position and authorize the quarterly distributions based on $\frac{1}{4}$ of 2.5% of the 5 quarter moving average balance of the account.

Then in the fall Christy appointed two new long-needed members of the Committee: Tom Brownell and Serafina Palandech.

The expanded Committee has met twice in the fall months and authorized some bonds purchases at higher rates and also noted the cash position needs to stay high to allow for the Vestry's authorized large cash withdrawal coming up to fund some of the costs of the expanded playground and coffee shop.

Rates of return for the year were negatively affected by rising interest rates which caused the face value of bonds to decline (note this is a temporary paper loss until the bonds mature) and by the need to maintain large amounts of nearly nonproductive cash for playground eventual use (playground project went more slowly than anticipated)

Rates of return were positively affected by strong stock market returns for the year 2023.

The rate of return for the entire account for the year (not time weighted) was 13.62%

John Nykamp continues to promptly make the calculations for withdrawals and year end results as well.

For the Committee
Clay Sorrick
St. Stephen's Investment Committee

SCRIP REPORT

St. Stephen's buys Scrip from Raise Right in Michigan for our parishioners to purchase gift cards to spend at stores or online. The proceeds are then designated for Godly Play and Nursery programs.

This last year, scrip sales were over \$4,000, and we are ending this program. The sales have decreased as the percentage of our proceeds has been reduced.

Beginning inventory for 2023:

\$2,100.00

The purchases and sales for 2023 are:

| <u>Purchased</u> | <u>Sold</u> | <u>Fees</u> | <u>Proceeds</u> |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| \$2,000.00 | \$4,100.00 | \$10.50 | \$92.08 |

Inventory carryover is \$0.

Special thanks to Mary Lou Sefton for spreadsheet assistance.

St. Stephen's has been participating in EScrip for many years and will continue to use this program. This program works with Community Cards from Olivers Market in Sonoma County or Pacific Market in Sebastopol. I do have our account number needed when you acquire the enrollment forms at the stores. Some of you have already enrolled, and if you need assistance with this process, please talk to me.

Thank you for purchasing Scrip to support St. Stephen's children.

Karen Koenig

FUNDRAISER REPORT

August 2023 Fundraiser Concert - The church raised over \$8000 at the event through dinner and drinks tickets and donations. Four picnic tables (\$6000) were donated at the event or shortly afterwards. Most importantly, we also created a fun event with great music, delicious food and a spirited community atmosphere. Many thanks to the band - WAJ Trio and Friends (church members Marshall and Bruce), my co-organizer Heather, our cooks (Jen and Seraphina), and the other 35 volunteers that helped out taking shifts. Thanks everyone!

Linda Hall

OPTIONAL STATEMENT FROM OTHER REPORTS PRESENTED IN WRITING

ALTAR GUILD REPORT

This report will be short and sweet. During the pandemic the Altar Guild was pivoting, sometimes weekly, as we adapted to the changing protocols. The good news is we now have established routines for our indoor and outdoor Sunday services. The sweet part is we have 2 new members, Judy and Doug Lebrecht. Judy works magic with flowers and Doug is a detail person. They are a wonderful addition to the Altar Guild. We always welcome new members, maybe that's you!

Respectfully submitted,
Mary McAulay

BEYOND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In 2021, a committee created a land acknowledgment and land statement for our church, as a first step in our relationship with the local Indigenous community and a deeper understanding of the land we are stewarding.

In 2022 a group of us dove deeper in learning about the Indigenous history of what is now California, reading books, watching podcasts, and visiting museums. We spent the next few months compiling what we learned and wrote the lengthiest e-news articles every printed to share our learnings. Let me know if you are interested in reading them.

In 2023 we continued reading books and have made a connection with Redbud Resource Group, a local Indigenous led non-profit whose goal is to improve public health outcomes for Native American communities through education, research, and community partnership. Several of us have taken their online class on Going Beyond Land Acknowledgement, which I highly recommend. We also partnered with them for our Native American authored books for Native children book drive, donating over 100 books to Indigenous children and to school libraries in our county. We attended an event with Pomo Dancers at the coast as well as a Pow Wow in Santa Rosa. In addition, thanks to Roberta Llewellyn we were able to meet Malcolm Margolin who has written extensively about California Native Peoples. This was a highlight of the year. Keep your eyes out for the little acorn in the e-news as we share ways to connect with the local Native American community.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Farmer

BOOK CLUB ANNUAL REPORT

The Book Club was initiated by Cecile Lusby in 2015. During the past 8 years, despite the pandemic and Cecile's stroke, we have read 93 books. We currently have congregants and non-congregants in the group which includes former teachers, a nurse, a lawyer, a scientist, authors, administrators/managers and world travelers who add a wealth of experiences to the discussions of the books we read. The stimulating and sometimes opposing viewpoint conversations are spiced with not only with the variety of the books we read, but also the delicious potluck brunches we share. We learn about the human spirit, world cultures, historical events, and the art of storytelling from the books we read, and we enjoy our discussions on the writing style and intent of authors. We meet regularly on the last Thursday of each month at 1 p.m. with a potluck meal and our conversations may last up to 2 hours. All

are welcome to join this stimulating ministry where hearts and minds journey through shared literature.

Blessings,
Kathy

CENTERING PRAYER

A formal gathering for Centering Prayer has continued sporadically through this past year and is continuing this year. We meet Monday morning at 9:30 in the church and after a short reading – a poem or commentary on silent prayer – we enter into silent prayer for twenty minutes. There is a core of participants and energy to have this continue on a regular schedule with individuals taking turns to convene and keep time when I (The Rev. Rod) am out of town. Centering Prayer is a wonderful way to begin each week, resting in the presence of God and opening ourselves to the divine light in our souls. Receiving that love empowers us to go forth and share our love with the world.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rod McAulay, Convenor

CHILDREN'S SEASONS IN THE GARDEN

Lauren Broersma-Grossman (a Friend of the Garden) and Jean Farmer lead quarterly gatherings in the church garden on Saturday mornings for children 3-8 years of age. During this time the children engage in arts and crafts that relate to a nature theme, and we explore the garden, noticing seasonal changes. It is wonderful to see the children engaging with the land in this way.

Our dates for 2024 are March 23rd, June 22nd, September 21st, and December 14th.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Farmer

GLOBAL MARKET MINISTRY

Overall, the ability to shop with a credit card has been a great addition to this project, increasing sales and making it easier for everyone to participate.

Canaan

They planted so we can eat, we plant so they will be able to eat.

The last year has been a tumultuous one for Palestinians, to say the least. Feeling like they have been denied a space in the world, in the political system; with Canaan they are finding a way to belong, to be a part of the modern economy. The organization works with over 1,000 artisan family farms spanned across 43 different villages and through it all they have been able to continue to find ways to assist farmers and make possible the export of oil.

We have been part of that assistance.

Members of St. Stephen's have been generous in their support of this mission, especially in the last few months, including contributing to the purchase of olive trees.

To see some of this beautiful land and hear their story, you can watch this short video:

<https://canaanpalestine.com/pages/about>

Thank you for your continued support.

Equal Exchange

Equal Exchange's mission is to build long-term trade partnerships that are economically just and environmentally sound. They support Fair Trade principles such as: Promoting labor rights and the right of workers to organize, safe and sustainable farming methods and working conditions, and equitably distributing the economic gains, opportunities and risks associated with the production and sale of these goods.

We support these goals by buying their coffee, tea, nuts, dates and, of course, chocolate.

Thank you for your continued support of these small cooperatives which are a vital part of our economy.

Heather Cruciano

GODLY PLAY

In March of 2023, Linda Higson and Elizabeth Herold decided to step down as Godly Play teachers. Linda has been teaching since 2004, and Elizabeth since 2015. Stella Finley was the classroom assistant. They were meeting with the children once a month. There were often 4-5 children attending the monthly class. We give great thanks to these teachers for their expertise and their gentle, structured guidance of our children over the years. They were great role models.

Rev. Christy put a call out to our congregation to carry on Godly Play. She was hopeful that the classes could happen every week. 14 members of our congregation stepped forward to be a part of this new weekly ministry.

Rev. Christy organized a training at our church with Godly Play trainer Diana Pagel. Diana guided us on how to tell a story and create an environment of wonder. With the guidance of Diana, each of the 14 teachers brings their unique skills of storytelling, prayer, and song.

Diana also reorganized our Godly Play room for ease of progression through the church calendar year. We were also fortunate to have Theresa Fritz hand paint some of the Godly Play figures to be more current, as well as organize the art center.

Since June we have gone from 4-5 students attending Godly Play classes to 5-15 students attending weekly classes. This has been an opportunity for the children of St. Stephen's to build a unique community. The children are encouraged each week to wonder about what the stories mean, and what is important to them about the story and to let this wondering manifest itself in their work after the storytelling.

We are delighted to work with each of your children while building a spiritual community of children and parents. We look forward to walking through this next year with you all.

Respectfully submitted,
Liza Weaver Brickey

HAT MINISTRY

We are in our third year of being a two person team. There are a lot of hats to do, so we are interested in getting new members or in getting a new lease on life with having each volunteer do a couple of hats.

What we have instead are Cecile and her knit wool or wool blends hats and we have Morgan and her cotton Crochet hats. We did seventy units. That was our give away, plus the ones that were too small which we plan to give to the foster care services. We gave 70 hats to 3 classes.

We could use some more yarn.

Cecile Lusby

LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE & FRIENDS OF THE GARDEN

Our land continues to provide sanctuary for our congregation, members of the greater community, as well as many bird, insect and plant communities.

Any time of day children and adults can be found walking the labyrinth, playing in the playhouse or playground, chatting at a picnic table or under the entry arch, or wandering through the gardens. The Sacred is being experienced inside and outside of our church walls. We have a wonderful relationship with the Seed Garden. They create a beautiful garden and provide free seeds in the seed library located in our community room.

We continue to have a small and committed core group that meets on Thursday mornings to plant, weed, prune, mulch and tend to what needs doing in the garden. We all have a strong connection to and commitment to this land, as well as the sense of a spiritual community developing.

We continue our relationship with Occidental Arts and Ecology. Although this year the rain prevented them from doing a work project here, the permaculture students came and learned about the work being done here while walking about in the pouring rain.

This year we focused on planting the area between the labyrinth and the Outdoor Sacred Space, improving the plantings in the Ancestral Memorial Garden, and mulching, mulching, mulching where ever we could.

May the Seed to Soul Food Forest be a place of sanctuary for you.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Farmer

MUSIC AND CHOIR

2023 felt like the first normal year for the choir after the pandemic. We decided to continue rehearsing and singing anthems while worshiping in the OSS instead of taking a break for the entire summer. In 2024, we will be exploring new music with the choir. We will also start looking into options to repair or replace our old organ in the sanctuary to ensure that we can continue having organ music for years to come!

Respectfully submitted,
Miles McKenzie
Minister of Music

READING TOGETHER ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

This group first met in February to read and discuss The Quest for the Living God by Elizabeth Johnson and then proceeded to read The Four Vision Quests Of Jesus by Steven Charleston. We averaged 4-8 participants.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Hall

SATURDAY TABLE

With Covid far enough behind us, we continue to invite our guests into the Parish Hall to tables that are set, and food that is served on real plates. During the warmer months, some of our guests like to eat outside, so a table is always prepared for them. There are some guests who still prefer to take their lunch “to go” and those who will take a lunch or two to someone who is unable to come themselves. Our guests remain grateful for the food, music, and community. It is wonderful to see them linger, singing along with the music, sometimes dancing, and visiting with each other.

We are serving about 25 guests each month. Our list of volunteers who provide food continues to grow. Some of the new volunteers stay for the lunch and to help greet and serve our guests. Deacon Kate sometimes attends with her great-niece, Aubree. Aubree makes sure to keep the “free table” filled with various supplies such as socks, rain parkas, toiletries, and blankets, donated by St. Stephen’s parishioners.

Jean Farmer, Heather Cruciano, and I thank all the volunteers who tirelessly help to provide food and/or supplies for our guests each month. It takes all of us working together, and continues to be a blessing to see, share a meal, and visit with our guests each month.

Respectfully submitted,
Carole Ward

ST. STEPHEN'S "GREEN TEAM" STATUS REPORT

The concept of a parish Green Team (GT) is a result of a resolution adopted at the Diocesan Convention of 2022. The Diocese resolved to strive for "Carbon Neutrality" (CN) in the operation of the church by the year 2030. This resolution supports a similar resolution by the national church during the General Convention of 2019.

Specifically, the GT task is to create a plan for St. Stephen's to achieve CN by 2030 and present the plan to the Vestry by the end of 2024. The Diocese is providing advice and financial support for this work.

Currently, the St. Stephen's GT consists of Reverend Christy and Marshall Ward.

The idea of being Carbon Neutral is that we balance the CO₂ that we release through our operations with activities/programs that result in the absorption of the same amount of CO₂.

In 2023, we completed gathering the information required to ascertain how much CO₂ we are responsible for putting into the environment. This includes all energy consumption by the church as well as the fossil fuels burned by people coming and going from the church. All this information has been put into an online "Carbon Footprint" calculator.

The next step will be to bring in an expert to conduct an Energy audit on the facility. They will then generate a report listing the ways in which we can cut our energy usage such as LED Lighting and new energy efficient appliances. This will occur in February.

The remaining steps for this year will include evaluating the energy savings recommendations and finalizing the plan for achieving Carbon Neutrality by the year 2030.

If you have any questions, or would like to join in the effort, please feel free to contact me.

Best regards,
Marshall Ward

ZERO WASTE COMMITTEE REPORT

As part of the global imperative to reduce carbon emissions the vestry voted in a Zero Waste policy for the church, urging all users on our grounds to use only ecologically sound, compostable or recyclable products, eliminating or reducing plastic use on the property.

Coffee hour has been our first area of implementation. It has been a bit of a challenge to begin making these changes, especially since hot drink cups are not recyclable or compostable in Sonoma county. But we have been forging ahead, replacing all of our plates with compostable ones, cups made from recycled paper that will go into the landfill but decompose much better than plastic, and our utensils are now bamboo. Ideally parishioners will bring their own coffee cups which is slowly making its way into our culture.

There is a goal of using only ecological, refillable products in our kitchen as well. As such we are using a new dishwasher powder and hope to replace the dish soap soon.

The Zero Waste Committee hopes to continue its education by publishing articles on how to bring the concept into our homes and everyday lives.

Heather Cruciano

DEACON'S REPORT

We are not hopeful because we are denying reality. The world looks as grim to us as it does to anyone paying attention today. We know how difficult it will be to turn this reality around. And yet, we are certain about the outcome...by an unbreakable partnership with the source of hope itself, the eternal Spirit of renewal.

(Bp. Steven Charleston)

Much of the work St. Stephen's does in the community leans on turning difficult realities into opportunities for ministry. We serve others in partnership with Sonoma County agencies that include Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative, Interfaith Council of Sonoma County, West County Homeless Advocates (WCHA), Sebastopol City Council, the Commission for Intercultural Ministries and Sonoma Acts of Kindness. We continue to see and hear from local people in real need of shelter, long-term housing and/or funds for housing. Christy and I been able to use some discretionary funds to help out, and I continue to work with our connections to agencies that can offer ongoing help.

St. Stephen's has long supported Gaza's Ahli Arab Hospital in the Holy Land, and we are devastated by the news coming from that area. The conflict in Israel and Palestine is decades old, but this year's sharply increased killings have brought that area international attention.

In another ministry, St. Stephen's sponsored a Origami Crane "Fold-In" to benefit the people of Ukraine in their fight for peace, sovereignty and democracy.

For the third year we have done a book drive for the county jail as a way of supporting the often-unseen incarcerated members of our community. We collected several hundred books which will hopefully improve the quality of life of the inmates. In addition, partnering with Redbud Resources this year we had a Native Youth Book Drive, collecting over 100 books written by Indigenous authors, to be given to Indigenous youth in our county as well as local school libraries.

St. Stephen's, along with other local Episcopal churches, participated in a Pride March with other faith communities and the greater community. We marched and sang, sharing with individuals "God loves you, no matter what!" This heartfelt comment brought tears to several of those watching.

In 2023 St. Stephen's parishioners participated in several Meal Trains, bringing food to our friends who need a little help while facing or recovering from stressful passages in their lives. I'm always astonished at how quickly these spots fill up. Turns out we not only love to eat, we love to feed each other!

St. Stephen's is also very involved in a food ministry we share with other local faith communities. The Inter-Church Food Pantry provides emergency food to people living in the greater Sebastopol area. It is located at the head of the St. Stephen's parking lot. St. Stephen's members take part by contributing food collected monthly in response to specific needs, as well as by serving on the board and volunteering at the pantry.

My pastoral care work continues, part of which is visiting and part to connect people to one another for this purpose. I love that St. Stephen's community not only reaches out to help one another, but reaches out to me when someone needs pastoral contact. I am honored to be with individuals here as they move through illnesses and changes in life circumstance.

There are now 10 people who can serve as Eucharistic Ministers, some already trained, some in training or refreshing their skills. There are three young people serving as acolytes, and a couple more have shown interest. Our pool of ushers is slowly growing as well, and there are now 9 people greeting folks at the door every Sunday. Supporting people as they learn and grow in lay liturgical ministry is interesting and rewarding.

I continue to serve as co-chair of the Diocesan Commission on Ministry, which helps discern and guide the formation of the baptized for ordained and lay ministry. This is a rewarding way to be involved in the growth of the Episcopal Church and allows us to meet and learn from amazing ministers of all kinds.

I have submitted my letter of retirement to the Bishop; this is a requirement of the canons because I have turned 73. However, Bishop Megan has told me she wants me to stay on. This is also my wish.

I am glad to find myself in prayer more often, both as regular practice and spontaneously; this practice allows me to stay refreshed and ready for work as your deeply grateful deacon.

Deacon Kate Sefton

RECTOR'S REPORT

Dear People of St. Stephen's,

This past year has been an exciting one at St. Stephen's. In 2023, our community grew significantly—both numerically and in our life and activity together. Our average Sunday attendance in 2022 was 52 people. In 2023, it was 71 people. This is an increase of 37% and nearly 20 people per week! More significant than numbers, it has been such a great joy to welcome new individuals and families into our community. I have very much enjoyed the opportunity to begin to get to know folks as they join us and to see them get involved in our life together.

Another big shift that came with this growth was the increase in children at St. Stephen's. I am so very grateful to those who helped to prepare us to receive these children and their families by recruiting a new team of Godly Play story tellers and planning a training in April. In May of last year, we went from offering Godly Play once a month to offering it weekly. We now have anywhere from 6 to 15 children attending Godly Play on a weekly basis. I am so grateful to the team of adults who minister with our children in this powerful program.

I have loved seeing a variety of lay-led groups and programs come into being. Some of these exist for a season and others have been going for years. I am thinking of our monthly book club and potluck, the reading together about Christianity group, the beyond land acknowledgement group, our friends of the garden, and I would even perhaps include centering prayer though it is led by a clergy person. I think it is a sign of a healthy and growing church community that when someone or a few folks have a desire to study something, or practice something, or care for our land, they gather together and offer that thing of which they dream. I am so grateful to share this ministry of formation with all of you!

This past year we also saw significant growth in our giving- which was exciting and a relief as our finances continue to be my greatest area of concern for our community's health. For our 2024 pledge campaign, your vestry and I set a goal of \$20,000 in increases in existing pledges and in new pledges and we blew that goal out of the water increasing by \$57,720 (nearly three times the goal amount). Additionally, we increased the total pledged by \$30,620. The fact that we were able to increase the total amount pledged by this much is extremely significant when lost pledges from folks moving away or dying are considered (which accounted for around \$25,000). See below for other information about this year's pledge campaign.

Even with this AMAZING response and plans to fundraise at least \$10,000 this year, we are still projecting a deficit of just under \$48,000 for 2024. This is of course concerning. I am grateful to those who remember us in their estate planning. Their gifts make up our investment account and make it possible for us to continue funding our life together with such a deficit and for us to follow the dream of The Playground and create a new commercial kitchen. Once the kitchen is created, we will be looking into the possibility of attracting weddings and other celebrations to help close our operating deficit.

For me, 2023 was also about a continual push toward the creation of The Playground Community Café.¹ We spent much of the year researching options for the creation of a commercial kitchen;

¹ As a side note, I do not believe our growth is unconnected to our commitment to this new thing we are doing. It has been shown that organizations/communities doing something new tend to grow, so much so, that organizations in decline are counseled to do something new to disrupt their decline and kick-start a period of growth.

designing ours with our architect, contractor and restaurant kitchen design company; and then working through the permitting process. I am so thrilled that we have received the conditional use permit from the city planning department, the building permit, and the approval letter from the county department of health services. Hopefully by the time we gather for this annual meeting construction will have begun on our new kitchen!

I am beyond excited about the year to come at St. Stephen's. We should be set to open The Playground Community Café sometime this summer. There is still much to be done and worked out but I am so excited by what the Spirit has been up to in our midst. I believe the soil has been prepared and the seeds planted for this community to grow here on our property. Over the past number of years, St. Stephen's has become more and more known and trusted in our community. Our relationships with the Seed Garden, Joyful Noise Gospel Choir, Tree House Hollow Preschool, the families of Mini Music and our fundraiser concerts have helped us build relationships and to welcome people to this land, demonstrating our desire to share this land and be in relationship. The Playground will give us a place to gather together, to chat over a cup of coffee, and to learn from one another. I cannot wait to see what is in store for us as we open ourselves to this opportunity.

I am beyond grateful to be on this journey with you!
Christy+

PLEDGING HISTORY AT ST. STEPHEN'S

| Pledge Year | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| # of pledges | 53 | 56 | 57 | 59 | 60 | 55 | 61 | 60 |
| # of new pledges | 11 | 12 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 10 | 3 |
| # of pledges not renewed from prior year | | - | - | - | - | 9 | 3 | 3 |
| # of pledges increased | | - | - | - | - | 21 | 23 | 25 |
| # of pledges decreased | | - | - | - | - | 12 | 5 | 3 |
| Total Pledged | \$124,356 | \$142,842 | \$157,324 | \$172,283 | \$158,215 | \$175,237 | \$162,942* | \$177,702* |

**2019 onwards is amount pledged. Prior years are actual year-end numbers.*

| Pledge Year | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| # of pledges | 48 | 43 | 41 | 52 |
| # of new pledges | 5 | 3 | 11 | 19 |
| # of pledges not renewed from prior year | 15 | 13 | 13 | 9 |
| # of pledges increased | 16 | 20 | 13 | 25 |
| # of pledges decreased | 12 | 5 | 6 | 2 |
| Total Pledged | \$152,934* | \$150,336 | \$142,300 | \$171,520 |

6 pledges stayed the same

The **2** decreased pledges add up to a decrease of **\$5,900**

The **25** pledges that increased add up to an increase of **\$19,770**

The **19** new pledges total **\$38,650**

The **9** pledges from 2023 that were not renewed in 2024 total **\$27,395**

NOMINATIONS

DIOCESAN CONVENTION DELEGATES (5 NEEDED + 1 ALTERNATE)

Jean Farmer

St. Stephen's has been a very special place for me and my husband Mark for many years now. I am amazed at what a small church can be and what it can accomplish. This community is welcoming and kind, offering opportunities for contemplation and action. I have been involved in various projects over the years here, including the Come to the Well services, Saturday Table, the Land Stewardship Committee, Friends of the Garden, Beyond Land Acknowledgement and more recently the vestry and this past year, as senior warden. I am offering to serve as a delegate because I want to get a better sense of our Diocese and the issues taking place in the larger church.

Priscilla Johnstone

I found St. Stephen's church in 2015 as I was seeking a place to worship. This is now my spiritual home; I have experienced the power of such a community of shared relationships and intentions, of living in Love, service, giving and humility. We were called by Christy a few years back to expand our vision of community beyond our walls, to welcome all to our space - this expanded vision of welcome has deepened my own faith and my own view of the world. I am grateful for our parish, our priest and the Episcopal church.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to serve as a Delegate as it is a way to see our church/Diocese/TEC in action; it also allows us to connect with other parishes & individuals and learn more about each other.

Carole Ward

I was born and raised in San Mateo, attending St. Matthew's Episcopal Church where I was baptized and confirmed. In 1977, I moved to Santa Rosa where I met Marshall. We were married at the Church of the Incarnation in 1983 and attended church there for many years.

Marshall and I have been attending St. Stephen's for 13 years. The community of St. Stephen's is unlike any other church I have attended. We have opened our church doors wide, taking our work out into the larger community as well as drawing the community in with Saturday Table and the development of our Outdoor Sacred Space, the Labyrinth, and our land. I am excited to see the Playground come into fruition as we get to know the larger community better with the opportunity to break bread together.

My ministries include Choir, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, Saturday Table, Altar Guild, lector, and intercessor. I served on the Vestry from 2016-2019 serving as Sr. Warden the last two years. I have attended convention as a lay delegate six times, the last time being in 2023.

Marie Capria

I was born in Yonkers, New York and am the youngest in the family with two older sisters and one brother. I was raised Catholic. I learned at a young age how to pray (Our Father, Hail Mary, etc) also to love others and respect the elders. As a family we prayed at bedtime, morning and at every meal.

In 1987 I was hired as a clerk at the Postal Service. I got married in 1991 and moved to Port St. Lucie, Florida. In 2000, I fell in love with Tina. We both went to St. Bernadette Catholic Church, which brought love and support back into me with God.

In 2005 I had colon cancer. In 2009, Tina and I moved to Sebastopol where my sisters lived. We visited different Churches, none filling my spirit. On Easter Sunday 2022, we attended St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Since that day on I fell in love! The people are so lovely and it hit my God calling to continue on.

On September 11th, I was received into the Episcopal Church by the Bishop. Since then I have learned and still learning about the Episcopal Church. Both Christy and Kate show so much love to the Parish it's amazing.

I have read Your Faith, Your Life and now own my own copy of the Book of Common Prayer. I participate in Saturday Table and enjoy hosting coffee hour. I served as a delegate to convention in 2023 and greatly enjoyed the experience. In 2017 I retired from Fulton Post Office. In 2015, Tina and I married at Villa in Santa Rosa. We have two rescue pups and we love cooking, gardening, and helping others in need. And, yes, I also believe in angels after 14 surgeries. I thank the good Lord.

Ava Wanlin

My name is Ava Wanlin and I am excited to be one of the St. Stephen's delegates to attend the Diocesan Convention this year.

Above all I treasure my family. I met my husband, Jerry, in 1989 and we married in 2000 at the Episcopal Seminary in Berkeley where I worked from 1993 to 2004. We have two adult sons, Aaron and Dan. Our youngest son, Joseph, who was developmentally delayed, died in 2006. We have three grandchildren, Ilana, Isaiah and Oliver.

I have been a meditator for nearly 50 years and have practiced traditions from Mindfulness to Transcendental Meditation to Christian meditation. In 2002 I led a Christian meditation group for about 3 years at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in my former neighborhood. I became friends with the Priest, the Rev. Pamela Higgins, who attended our meditation group. I began studying with her and attending church services regularly. In 2006 I was confirmed by The Rt. Rev. Marc Hadly Andrus at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

Jerry and I moved from the Bay Area to Guerneville in 2018. During the pandemic when we were sheltered in place, my best friend, Mary McAulay, invited us to try an on-line service from St. Stephen's. We were drawn to Rev. Christy Laborda Harris and her message rang true to us. Once we were able to attend in person, we became part of the parish.

In the story of Goldilocks and The Three Bears, her final choice was the Baby Bear's bed. Not because it was better than the other beds but because it was just the right fit. In the same way we have become a part of St. Stephen's because it is just the right fit for us!

Marshall Ward – alternate

Hello! I was born on March 5, 1960 and raised in Santa Rosa, a resident of Sonoma County my entire life. I attended the Santa Rosa Junior College for two years before transferring to Sacramento State University where I completed a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1983. After college, I started work at Hewlett-Packard/Agilent Technologies/Keysight Technologies in Santa Rosa where I worked for 39 years until my retirement in January of 2022.

Four weeks after my college graduation I married the love of my life, Carole, and we will celebrate our 41st wedding anniversary in June, 2024. We have three daughters. We also have six grandchildren ages 4, 7, 16, 18, 24, and 29 years.

Carole and I have been regularly attending St. Stephen's for 13 years. We both sing in the choir and really enjoy being a part of this church community. I play guitar and Bass guitar and have played for many functions here at St. Stephens over the years. I have attended Redwood Empire Cursillo weekends and continue to be active in that ministry. We also very active in several programs at St. Stephen's. I have served on the Vestry twice and have filled the role of Senior Warden. I have also been the Treasurer at St. Stephen's since 2016.

For recreational activities, I like to go camping, play golf, play music, hike, and travel to new places. A few years ago I formed a small band with some friends called The Ward, Ahlvin and Jones Trio. We have since expanded to a quintet. We enjoy playing classic rock for the local homeless shelter and charity fund raising events. I also love to cook and enjoy spending time with friends and enjoying good food and wine.

VESTRY MEMBERS (2 NEEDED)

Carole Ward

See her bio under Delegates Nominations on page 29.

Rachel Prandini

I grew up in Sebastopol and went on to live in various parts of California during college and beyond. My husband TJ McKillop and I moved up to Sebastopol from the East Bay when our older son Danilo was born. We first came to St. Stephen's when Danilo was seven or eight months old and have been grateful for the community here ever since. We welcomed our younger son Judah in 2018. Now both of our kids regularly run wild around the church property as if it is their own backyard!

Though I was not raised in the Episcopal Church, I feel very at home here, with deep appreciation for the church calendar and theological teachings. I am currently involved in the Godly Play ministry for the children of St. Stephen's.

I work as an immigrant rights attorney focused on how immigration law and policy impacts children. In my current role at a San Francisco-based non-profit, I provide training, technical assistance, and written resources for immigration attorneys and other advocates on helping kids obtain immigration status, and I engage in policy work advocating for fairness to immigrant children and youth at the local, state, and national level. In my "free" time, I love to run, garden, read, dance, and spend time with friends.

NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

REPORT OF CLERK ON ELECTIONS

CLOSING PRAYER

ADJOURNMENT