



SAINT STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
SANTA CLARITA, CALIFORNIA

2022
ANNUAL
MEETING

OUR VISION
TO BE CHRIST FOR EACH OTHER AND FOR THE WORLD

MARCH 6, 2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

On behalf of the Vestry, Staff, and ministry leaders of St. Stephen's, I am pleased to present to you the 2022 annual report. Like 2020 before it, 2021 brought with it a good deal of challenge as well as some wonderful opportunities to rejoice! In the pages that follow you will find evidence of the vitality of our community. You will hear of our struggles and our triumphs.

Interestingly, 2021 was a dynamic year in a way that the year before was not. Whereas we spent the majority of 2020 in one mode-virtual, this past year saw an ebb and flow of in-person experiences with an exciting and sometimes complex mix of live and virtual engagement.

The work of our Reopening Task Force was critical in making all our in-person efforts both indoor and outdoor safe and manageable and without the dedication of our Tech Guild we would literally be nowhere virtually.

For the second year in a row we moved through Lent, Holy Week and Easter without being able to gather in our beloved sanctuary. However, as we inched closer to Pentecost the Holy Spirit was on the move and on Sunday, May 16th, 2021, we were able to welcome friends and family back into our sanctuary after 427 days. It was a day that was far from normal but full of Joy.

As Spring unfolded, the work of the newly organized Anti-Racism Coalition started to take off and the members of the ARC have brought some meaningful experiences to our community. They have driven critical conversations for us as we journey as a community towards a world free of the scourge of racism.

We welcomed Bishop Diane Jardine Bruce to St. Stephen's twice in 2021. First, she joined us for her official episcopal visitation on Trinity Sunday at the end of May and then again in late June as we celebrated confirmations and my official installation as the 3rd rector of St. Stephen's with a spectacular liturgical service and a celebratory reception in our parish courtyard. My heartfelt thanks go out to everyone who helped to put that very special day in the life of our community together.

We marked three key leadership transitions in 2021. Our beloved Flo Krejci retired from her decades-long service as coordinator of our prayer chain and lovingly passed the torch to Peggy Stabile who has taken on this ministry with grace and passion.

We were sad to say goodbye to long-time Preschool Director, Amanda Foster, who left St. Stephen's to explore a new opportunity and in the early fall we were delighted to welcome Melanie Long into the newly created position of Director of Children's Education and Formation. Melanie brought with her a wealth of experience that will only serve to strengthen our already strong preschool and children's ministry.

Melanie joins Julia Nelson, our Children's Ministry Coordinator, who has done an incredible job of navigating the last two years, in the work of creating a vibrant children's program for the littlest among us.

The other key leadership transition came with the retirement of Rosa Holdredge from her role as Head Usher. We delighted to have parishioner, Michael Branda, step up to this key role in the life of our community.

I offer my personal thanks and the thanks of our entire community to Flo, Amanda, and Rosa for their dedication to our community and for all of their hard work.

In the fall we launched an ambitious pledge drive through our amazing Stewardship Committee and presented our hopes for 2022 to the parish. Amid that, the air conditioning unit that cools our sanctuary reached the end of its life and we were faced with executing an emergency appeal to fund its replacement. Not surprisingly, the people of St. Stephen's rose to the challenge and raised over \$60K in 30 days' time. You will hear more about the state of parish finances in the Treasurer's Report printed in this booklet, as well as live at the annual meeting.

It is a blessing that our preschool has remained vital and healthy all throughout the pandemic. I want to acknowledge our Preschool Board for their excellent leadership during challenging times and offer some very special thanks to Monica Bellows for signing on as our interim Preschool Director following Amanda's departure, and Shannon Murchison for all her hard work helping to ensure that things were running smoothly during the

transition time and beyond. We are blessed by them both in our community. We have a phenomenal teaching staff at our preschool, and they are the reason our school has had such a consistently positive reputation in our city for so long.

As we approached the end of the year things started to feel a bit more familiar with the return of things like Laundry Love, the Blessing of the Animals, Coffee Hour, the Gratitude Sunday Potluck, the DOK Nativity Display and Advent Wreath making! More and more people were joining us in person and all the while our livestream attendance remained strong.

We welcomed three Scout groups to St. Stephen's when their relationship with another faith community was unexpectedly cut short as part of our ongoing commitment to serve the youth of the Santa Clarita Valley. We also enjoyed a rich and dynamic Advent which saw the return of acolytes during worship culminating with our festive Christmas Eve services and the reintroduction of a Christmas Morning Service followed by a community breakfast which provided a gentle end to a year full of peaks and valleys.

Of course, there is so much more that happened at St. Stephen's in 2021 and I look forward to expanding what I have shared here during my address at the meeting.

It must be said that nothing would be possible without the dedication of all our volunteers, all of whom are deeply committed to serving the people of this community and the people this community serves. I want to specifically acknowledge the Altar Guild and our Ushers and Greeters for their holy work of preparing our sacred spaces and welcoming people into it.

Our incomparable Music Director, Judy Baity, provides the soundtrack of our shared life along with Frank Browne and Chris Yahnker who led the choirs of St. Stephen's and all of our choirs' members for their gift of music. And all along, the members of our readers' team continued to beautifully illuminate holy scripture for us as part of our worship experience.

I want to honor our stellar vestry members who give so much of themselves to ensure the strength of our community, especially our wardens, Sheri Flay and Steve Plote as well as, our Treasurer John Fortman, Clerk of the Vestry, Marianne Zinkewicz and Bookkeeper Donna Maldonado for their wonderful work on behalf of St. Stephen's.

Our Sexton, Maria Lopez, is an unsung angel at St. Stephen's. Many folks never get to see Maria, but her impact on our school and parish life is felt every day and we give thanks for her and for all she does for us.

Finally, I wish to express my profound appreciation for our Parish Administrator, Tracy Stapp, who marked 20 years at St. Stephen's in 2021. Tracy is the heartbeat of our community. Serving the people of St. Stephen's is Tracy's ministry and we are all better because of her presence among us. I have the gift of spending every day with her and I could not ask for a better partner on the journey.

I hope you will see the pages of this report as a testament to the work of the Holy Spirit among us. My continued prayer is that you will rejoice in what we have accomplished and resolve yourself to participate in the work we have yet to do.

As always, I ask God's blessing on each and every one of you and on those you love. I can't wait to see what the Holy Spirit does with us next.

For now, this is me sending you love and wishing you peace,

Christopher+

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Rector

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2022 ANNUAL MEETING
ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SANTA CLARITA
March 6, 2022

1. Opening Prayer
2. Appointment of Clerk
3. Meeting Called to Order / Welcome
4. 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes approval
5. Rector's Address
6. Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE)
7. Election Procedures
 - a. Appointment of Inspectors of Election
8. Elections
 - a. Nominations for Diocesan Convention from the floor
 - b. Voting
 - c. Resolution to become members of UBE.
 - d. Resolution for Members of Vestry.
9. Treasurer's Report
10. 2022 Budget
11. Q & A
12. Voting Results
13. Closing Prayer and Dismissal

Proposed Resolution regarding St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Santa Clarita becoming a congregational member of the Union of Black Episcopalians.

Resolved, that at the 2022 Annual Meeting, members of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Santa Clarita should vote to join, as a congregational member, the Union of Black Episcopalians, H. Belfield Hannibal Chapter.

Resolved, that the Vestry will review the latest parish finance report and determine the appropriate contribution amount to UBE at its meeting in March of 2022 on behalf of the congregation.

Explanation:

The national UBE website states, "The Union of Black Episcopalians is committed to the Episcopal Church, believing diversity of witness is essential if the larger Church is to be faithful to Christ and successful in its mission to the world. The Union of Black Episcopalians stands in the continuing tradition of more than 200 years of Black leadership in the Episcopal Church".

Beginning with the establishment of St. Thomas Episcopal Church by Absalom Jones in 1794 in Philadelphia, through the election of Barbara Harris as Suffragan Bishop of Massachusetts, to the 2015 election of The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry as Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church. Bishop Curry is the first African American to be elected to the position of Presiding Bishop.

St. Stephen's Anti-Racism Coalition (ARC) has discussed the possibility of our church becoming a congregational member of the Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE). We believe that as St. Stephen's participates in the work of racial healing and increasing our diversity, becoming a UBE member would be a good fit.

According to their website the purpose of the UBE is "to eradicate racism from the structure and governance of The Episcopal Church, to fight racism in society, and to stimulate the growth of Black membership within The Episcopal Church".

Being a UBE member would allow us to begin exploring new methods of acquainting our parish and the public with anti-racism and how to begin eliminating it. We could be more involved in creating an engaging platform for members to engage across social media, digital and print media, newsletters, and other marketing outlets; and to become "a community of vigilance and action regarding matters of injustice, especially the effects of racism in the Church and society," as stated on the UBE website.

Anti-racism is rooted in action - being a UBE member gives St. Stephen's the opportunity to turn our words into action. We would show that we stand in solidarity with those who are discriminated against and treated unjustly. We could attend UBE meetings and conferences to better learn how to educate people about the issues and history of the Black church and become a resource to our community.

ARC presented the membership proposal to the vestry, who then voted unanimously to move forward and bring the proposal to the entire congregation for a vote.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Jo Higginbotham, Chair, St. Stephen's Anti-Racism Coalition

Proposed Resolution regarding the reduction of the number of elected vestry members

Resolved, that at the 2022 Annual Meeting, members of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Santa Clarita should vote to reduce the number of its elected vestry members from 13 to 12 effective immediately.

Explanation:

The Current bylaws St. Stephen’s call for a 13 member elected vestry plus the rector who has full voice and vote as the 14th member of the vestry. It is unusual to have an even number of vestry members. Furthermore, our bylaws do not have any stipulations for what should be done in the event of a tied vote.

In order to avoid future complications the Vestry respectfully recommends to the congregation that the number of elected vestry members be reduced by 1 for a total of 12 elected vestry members and a combined total vestry number of 13.

Respectfully submitted by The Rev. Christopher Montella, Rector, Sheri Flay, Sr. Warden and Steve Plote, Jr. Warden.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Vestry Annual Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2020

1. Members present: Rev. Christopher Montella, Marv Aardahl, Joe Merkens, Marian Krabach, Cindy Swaisgood, Tish Yahnker, John Fortman, Tessa Lucero, Richard Holdredge, Shari Schlaman and Bill Brintnall. Also: John Nelson.
2. The ballots for the vestry and diocesan council representative vote were handed out.
3. Vestry opening prayers by Rev. Christopher Montella.
4. The clerk was designated to take the minutes: John Nelson
5. The outgoing vestry members were acknowledged and celebrated: Tessa Lucero, Tish Yahnker, Richard Holdredge, and Shari Schlaman.
6. The list of candidates for the vestry were announced: Shari Flay, Bob Gregor, Kathleen Jensen, Dave Morrow, Caroline Nold, Steve Plote, Rachel Rieckhoff, and Don Rimac.
7. Representatives for the Diocesan Convention candidates were taken from nominations from the congregation: Dave Fencil, Julia Nelson, Kathy Gero, Brenden Krabach, Caroline Morgan, Bill Brintnall, Mark Young, Mark Bridgeford, and Victoria Bennet.
8. Introduction to St. Stephens, the vestry and support staff- Rev. Christopher Montella
 - a. The Sunday dinners enabled parishioners to engage each other in new ways.
 - b. Many parishioners were noted for their contributions to the church's efforts.
 - c. The gala fundraiser the children and youth went better than expected netting over \$32,000.
 - d. The HR Committee was able to standardize the church and school handbooks into one unified policy.
 - e. A new liturgy structure was initiated complimented by new altar linens and vestments.
 - f. The music director was celebrated inspiring a standing ovation. All the choirs were also applauded.
 - g. Difficulties from the recent wildfires and the Saugus shooting were a difficult time, but the community rallied.
 - h. Looking ahead to 2020 the focuses are:
 - i. Christian Formation
 - ii. Financial Stability
 - iii. Pastoral Care
9. Treasurer's Report- John Fortman
 - a. Contact information for John Fortman was shared.
 - b. The parish and preschool represent one community and thus share costs.
 - c. The preschool made over \$36,000 over the August 2018 to July 2019 fiscal year.
 - d. Parish income was \$10,000 in the red performing much better than expected. This amount represents just 6% of the projected pledges.
 - e. For 2020, the budget has 92 contributing units with a total of \$249,380.

- f. There is still \$6,000 remaining in the capital fund which is designed to be used for large expenditures.

10. Transition- Marv Aardahl

- a. The process of transition was described:
 - i. On 8/13/2018 the prior Rev. departed, and the Diocese support began.
 - ii. On 3/1/2019 Rev. Christopher performed as the guest celebrant.
 - iii. At the Mutual Ministry Review, the vestry established the search process to be a Priest-in-Charge Under Special Circumstances. The next MMR will occur in March 2020.
 - iv. The new Transition Committee formed on Nov. 2019.
 - v. The transition survey will go out on March 2020.
 - vi. Story day will be from the 9th to the 11th of April 2020.
 - vii. Completion of the church profile is expected on 5/25/2020.

11. Ken Higginbotham's 64 years as an acolyte trainer was celebrated and he received a framed congratulations from Bishop Taylor.

12. The vote results for new vestry members: Shari Flay, Kathleen Jensen, Dave Morrow, Steve Plote, and Rachel Rieckhoff. They were presented along with the remaining vestry members.

13. The vote results for Diocesan Convention: Dave Fencil, Julia Nelson, Bill Brintnall Alternates: Brenden Krabach, Caroline Morgan.

14. Next meeting is February 25th, 2019 at 6:30 PM.

15. Ending prayer by Rev. Christopher Montella.

Senior Warden Annual Report

It has been my privilege to collaborate with the amazing people on the Vestry this last year. While we haven't met in person since the pandemic began, it is a testament to the dedicated and wise group of people that comprise the Vestry that we have accomplished many things.

Besides our work as the responsible fiduciary body of the parish – approving expenditures and the budget, the Vestry focused on procedures and guidelines this past year, with cost-sharing between the church and preschool bringing much discussion. The cost-sharing plan was one of my main focuses and I would like to thank Cathy Gero for partnering with me on creating this new document. I was also the lead person shepherding our roof loan through last January. In August, we were able to have a mini-Annual Meeting. Again, I worked with Cathy Gero to present year end 2020 financials as well as mid-year 2021 financials for both the preschool and the parish.

Until the middle of May we continued to worship and meet online, and our community thrived and supported each other during this time. As a member of our Reopening Committee, I kept up to date on city, county, and state regulations, as well as kept track of case counts in Santa Clarita. I also researched the use of Ultraviolet cleaning systems which was an option the committee chose not to use. Once we were back in the sanctuary it was great to see our traditions continue.

It was my privilege to work with Kathleen Jensen and Steve Plote to plan the long-awaited Installation of Rev. Christopher Montella as our Rector on June 26th. Bishop Diane Jardine-Bruce presided, and we had a glorious liturgy and an outdoor reception to celebrate. We continued striving for justice with the formation of our Anti-Racism Coalition and the continued work of our Immigrant Support Circle. We also welcomed Boy Scout Troops 222 and 2019 (the first female troop in Santa Clarita), and Cub Scout Pack 57 to St. Stephen's, becoming their chartering organization.

With the generosity of our congregation the Vestry was also able to continue our support of our many outreach programs and to give generously to the Child & Family Center, Family Promise, and the Placerita Resource (Pride) Center. I am extremely proud of the way our parish has lived into its Mission Statement:

“To be a loving and inclusive community restoring people to unity with God and each other in Christ through prayer and worship. We are called to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people and to work, pray and give for the fulfillment of God's realm.”

Peace and Blessings,
Sheri Flay
Senior Warden

2021 Annual Report, Formation

It's easy to think that Formation is just another word for adult education, but The Episcopal Church Website says that "Christian formation is the lifelong process of growing in our relationship with God, self, others, and all creation."¹ Educational opportunities, group discussions and seminars give us the chance to get to know each other better and to grow spiritually.

In 2021 Reverend Christopher led us through a Lenten program which was held on Zoom. We were able to have our Advent program, The Heart that Grew Three Sizes, led by Kathleen Jensen, in person in the Parish Hall. Both programs provided nice opportunities for community building and discussion specific to the season.

Our weekly Gratitude Circle continued to meet on Wednesday mornings and the St. Stephen's Book Group, which also meets on Wednesday mornings, offered a nice selection of readings. Both groups are on-going and open to all who wish to participate.

Education for Ministry, a four-year distance learning certificate program through the University of the South in Sewanee, TN continued with second year participants through June of 2021 and then went on hiatus. The group will resume in September 2022 with first year and third year participants. Many people think that one must be ordained in order to be "a minister." The fact is that all baptized Christians are called to be active participants in the church's total ministry. By examining our own beliefs and their relationship to our culture and the tradition of our Christian faith, we can learn what it means to be an effective "minister" in today's world. The EfM program provides participants with the background and education to carry out their ministry. Through small-group study, prayer, discussion and guided reflection, members of the group move toward a new understanding of the fullness of God's kingdom. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Mary Jo Higginbotham or Kathleen Jensen.

The Vestry seeks to promote formation and support ministries. If you have an idea or a passion for something that you would like to share, or would like to know more about the options mentioned above, please contact Kathleen Jensen (current Formation Portfolio reporter).

¹ "About Christian Formation." *Episcopal Church*, 18 May 2018, episcopalchurch.org/posts/lifelongformation/about-christian-formation.

Submitted by
Kathleen Jensen

ALTAR GUILD

The ministry of the Altar Guild is to prepare the elements and space used for our worship. This includes vesting the altar in seasonally appropriate colors, maintaining the silver and crystal, cleaning the linens and preparing the priest's vestments.

We have continued to work with Christopher to have the sanctuary ready for in-person and livestreamed (think camera angles) services. The dedicated members of the Altar Guild have stepped up to this challenge in an amazing manner.

We have appreciated members of the Men's Group, most specifically Steve Plote, and the assistance with the changing of the banners.

While all members of the Altar Guild have supported our ministry, I must specifically recognize Donna Maldonado and the amazing flower arrangements that she continues to create for special services.

This year saw several members need to step back from their ministry to the Altar Guild, and Linda Weifenbach has joined our ministry. At the end of 2021 our members included:

Miriam Aardahl	Cathy Gero	Joanie Stanzione
Karen Fencil	Donna Maldonado	Linda Weifenbach
	Mary Mercogliano	

We are actively looking for new members. Look for an Altar Guild Forum following the 10:00 am service some time this Spring.

Faithfully submitted,

Mary Mercogliano
Altar Guild Directress

2021 Buildings and Grounds Annual Report

This past year we had a number of projects related to COVID-19 at both the preschool and the Church to maintain operation during the continuing of the Pandemic.

There were a number of repair projects around the preschool that were handyman level fixes. There were also a few of those around the church which the B&G people were able to attend to. Rain gutter cleaning, plumbing repairs, Fountain repairs, Light fixtures, Tree trimming, Hydraulic Door closures, etc.

For the preschool we did a roof repair and a reseal of the roof. This was a multiple month project which included structural repairs to the roof and the soffits underneath as well as the resealing of the roof to stop leaking to the soffits and new LED lighting. After some heavy rain we noted that leaks from the air vents in Room 8 and 10 still occurred. This was caused by failed seals of the HVAC duct work and water leaking into the duct and running to the air vents. Resealing of the HVAC duct work is in order.

We also installed MERV 13 filters on the intake ducts for the HVAC system in the sanctuary to meet COVID restrictions.

B&G helped with the research and selection of the air purifiers for the preschool classrooms to combat COVID.

The Rector installation celebration brought a requirement for a shade sail covering of the courtyard area which was designed and installed with the ability to take down and put up as needed for future events or different times of the year.

Multiple Freon leaks to the Air compressor in the 2nd stage of the Sanctuary HVAC system required a replacement of the system. 6 Company Bids were started and the final 3 we got down to comparable system and work pricing and selected the lowest price bid for the exact same equipment. A successful emergency funding request went out the parish and in December we met the amount demanded for the complete replacement system. Project is expected to start in March 2022.

Cost reduction projects included changing the watering cycles for the sprinkler systems. Fixing the Standup water pipe. Changing out the exit signs in the Sanctuary to meet Fire code. Repairing toilets in the preschool and Spurling Hall.

The last project of the year was the amendment to the upstairs parking lot fence and a new gate and a new security access control system for a new breezeway gate. Both came in under budget but the project finished in January 2022.

The Building and Ground committee members were very helpful in pulling off some of these projects and in providing expertise to make the jobs go smoothly. For 2022 we look forward to a couple of group cleaning projects and some light painting work around the Church and Spurling Hall and the new, efficient HVAC system for the Church.

Submitted by
Steve Plote, Junior Warden

Children's Ministry Report 2022

Being flexible seemed to be the theme for the children's ministry for the year 2021. We worked through many changes with COVID protocols as well as struggled with finding sufficient volunteers. However, the year brought new faces to Children's Ministry as well as new opportunities to bring the Word of God to the children.

In October, we welcomed Melanie Long to the church as our new Director of Education and Formation. Along with her role as the director of the preschool, she also works with Children's Ministry lending us her expertise and support. We hope that by working together, we will also be able to bring the preschool and church closer together as a community.

We also welcomed Carol Vestuto as a Sunday school volunteer in November. Having Carol as a regular Sunday school teacher has allowed us to offer the safe and stable classroom environment that we need for our children, and her enthusiasm and talent with the children has been a blessing.

We started the year with more of the same from the previous year. Julia Nelson, working with Katarina Nelson, produced and posted a total of 19 videos on the Sunday school Facebook page during the spring semester.

With in-person attendance still not a feasible option for the church during Holy Week, Children's Ministry distributed Holy Week-in-a-Box to all the youth in the church. The box contained items to mark each day of Holy Week such as a palm for Palm Sunday, prayer bracelets for Good Friday, and a bell to ring for the Saturday Vigil service.

Out of an abundance of caution, children's programs did not resume when the church reopened for in-person worship in the summer. However, on the last Sunday in September, children were once again attending in-person Godly Play. We also resumed the Pathfinders program. Started as a Zoom for upper elementary children during the pandemic, Pathfinders now meets after church on Sundays adjacent to YESS. We are using Spark Lectionary from Sparkhouse to explore each Sunday's gospel reading with games and discussion.

During the month of December, COVID numbers were still somewhat stable, so we were able to put on several seasonal events. In conjunction with the Daughters of the King's nativity display, Children's Ministry provided a variety of Christmas crafts suitable for all ages. Everyone was welcome to make cards, ornaments or decorate their Advent wreath while enjoying Christmas cookies and hot cocoa.

The preschool with the Children's Ministry also held its first collaborative event in December with a Gingerbread House-making party. This evening activity included families and friends from both the preschool and church. We are hoping to bring more events like this in 2022.

Finally, the Christmas pageant made up of YESS members, performed as scheduled for the Family Christmas Eve Service. All children in attendance were able to dress a part and play a role in the pageant. We had more than 24 children participate.

Children's Ministry would like to thank all the people who have helped us keep Children's Ministry going through these unprecedented times. Whether you volunteered to be a second person in Sunday school, helped with the pageant or manned a craft table, you made a difference. These programs give our children purpose and community, and we couldn't offer that without the support of St. Stephen's members.

Submitted by
Julia Nelson

Daughters of the King

Daughters of the King (DOK) is a worldwide spiritual sisterhood of women dedicated to prayer, service, and evangelism. Our Chapter's name is "The Woman at the Well", referring to John 4:1-40 where Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well and talks about "living water".

DOK is defined as an order, not an organization because we accept a "Rule of Life" and then take a vow to uphold the Rule of Prayer and the Rule of Service. We are strengthened through the discipline of a Rule of Life and supported through the companionship of our sisters.

Many women are looking for spiritual growth and development, and to have some fun and social time too. Our monthly gatherings are planned to offer opportunities to delve into a variety of prayer practices, participate in discussions of spirituality, and study other related topics. But there's more....

For Epiphany 2021, Dawn Baity told us about "Three Kings Day" in Spain and showed pictures of the celebration. One month we practiced writing our own "lamentations" and in June we had fun "meeting" Mary and other women of the Bible when they got together to talk about Jesus!

We find that getting together regularly helps strengthen our faith, provides resources to deal with daily challenges, and often arouses our personal philosophy of being Christian - all while we bolster our journey to experience God in everyday activities.

One of our "gifts" of service to St. Stephen's is to create the "Annual Nativity Display" during Advent, inviting parishioners to bring their personal nativity sets to be part of the presentation. In recognition of All Saints Day, we presented an array of crosses made by parishioners to honor the "accidental saints" in their lives and in memory of those who have died.

We are women who desire a closer walk with the Lord, and we recognize that our faith is not to be a private faith hidden in our hearts. We invite women of St. Stephen's to find out more about our order. If you'd like more information about DOK, please speak with one of our members - you can tell who we are by the distinctive silver cross we wear.

Submitted by
Mary Jo Higginbotham



Report from the Treasurer

The resilience and generosity of this congregation is a blessing to behold. 2021 continued to present interesting challenges, including the ongoing pandemic. During the year we finished the resurfacing of the roof and soffits over the classrooms, reconstructed the wrought iron fences and gates to make our campus more secure, and we are ready—and completely pre-funded with your donations—to replace the broken AC compressor. Our pledged income for 2021 matched expectations and total pledges continue to grow. With grace and strength, the folks of St. Stephens manifested all these things in a way that can only be a testament to your faith.

With the guidance from the vestry, St. Stephen's reached out to and partnered with local community organizations, helping to fund the work of The Child and Family Center, Family Promise of Santa Clarita, and the SCV Pride Center.

St. Stephen's Preschool, under Amanda Picard's leadership as the school year ended in July 2021, and now under Melanie Long's, thrives well beyond our expectations, all while facing unique challenges of their own. Even through the changes and upheavals, Preschool families steadfastly love this ministry, helping to restore some of the funds partially depleted during the 2020 lockdown.

We are looking forward with abundant hope that 2022 and beyond will bring increased financial health and wellbeing to St. Stephen's, helping to provide new ministries and to strengthen existing ones.

Lastly, there are many who make this endeavor a joy, but I want to particularly thank and recognize our Bookkeeper, Donna Maldonado, with whom I work almost daily to try to make sense of all this; our Senior Warden, Sheri Flay, who helps keep me on track with what needs doing, our Parish Administrator, Tracy Stapp, who is a wealth of historical information, and to our rector, The Rev. Christopher Montella, who inspires me to continue getting better at what I do.

Respectfully submitted,

John Fortman

Treasurer

Church Balance Sheet

	1-Jan-21	31-Dec-21
Assets		
Cash in Bank	113,340	156,141
Other Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,431	2,129
Depreciated Fixed Assets*	1,010,642	1,076,809
Total Assets	1,126,413	1,235,079
Liabilities		
Short-Term Liabilities	606	804
Long-Term Liabilities	96,533	142,087
Total Liabilities	97,139	142,891
Fund Balances	1,029,274	1,092,188
Liabilities and Fund Balances	1,126,413	1,235,079

*Does not include depreciation for 2021

Church Operating Income Statement and Budget

	FYE 2020	Budget 2021	Actual 2021	Budget 2022
Income				
Pledge	250,318	269,272	269,533	285,996
Plate	30,530	29,150	42,716	37,500
Other	4,846	37,351	39,719	10,865
Total Income	285,694	335,773	351,968	334,361
Expenses				
Mission Share	36,252	37,788	37,788	40,418
Staff	248,684	259,388	255,005	274,003
Operations	91,841	118,696	123,892	134,721
Total Expenses	376,777	415,872	416,685	449,142
Net Income before Preschool Cost Sharing	-91,083	-80,099	-64,717	-112,743
Preschool Cost Sharing	60,705	85,539	84,542	90,363
Net Income after Preschool Cost Sharing	-30,378	5,440	19,825	-24,418

Preschool Balance Sheet

	<u>01-Jan-21</u>	<u>31-Dec-21</u>
Assets		
Cash in Bank	163,321	179,347
Other Cash Assets	601	601
Receivables and Deposits	<u>1,206</u>	<u>-22,335</u>
Total Assets	<u><u>165,128</u></u>	<u><u>157,613</u></u>
Liabilities	<u><u>3,409</u></u>	<u><u>10,469</u></u>
Fund Balances	<u><u>161,718</u></u>	<u><u>147,143</u></u>
Fund Balances and Liabilities	<u><u>165,127</u></u>	<u><u>157,612</u></u>

Preschool Operating Income Statement and Budget

	Actual FYE <u>7/31/2021</u>	Budget FYE <u>7/31/021</u>	Budget <u>8/2021- 12/2021</u>	Actual <u>8/2021- 12/2021</u>
Income				
Tuition	337,875	549,550	212,444	249,860
Other Income*	<u>93,592</u>	<u>4,370</u>	<u>320</u>	<u>7,561</u>
Total Income	<u><u>431,467</u></u>	<u><u>553,920</u></u>	<u><u>212,764</u></u>	<u><u>257,421</u></u>
Expenses				
Staff	283,067	397,496	177,432	180,852
Operating	37,490	46,832	24,722	23,339
Occupancy Share to Church	39,146	56,163	24,040	24,040
People Share to Church	<u>23,095</u>	<u>25,000</u>	<u>10,415</u>	<u>10,224</u>
Total Expense	<u><u>382,798</u></u>	<u><u>525,491</u></u>	<u><u>236,609</u></u>	<u><u>238,455</u></u>
Net Income	<u><u>48,669</u></u>	<u><u>28,429</u></u>	<u><u>(23,845)</u></u>	<u><u>18,966</u></u>

*During FYE July 31, 2021: PPP Loan Forgiveness: \$49,982; Grant: \$40,000, Misc. \$3,610

Hospitality Annual Report

This past year has seen a lot of changes. We started with virtual church services then moved to in person outside and finally to in person in the sanctuary.

We formed a Reopening Task Force to make decisions and carry out the protocols of the CDC and the Bishop. Cleaning was doubled, filters were changed, steps were taken to insure 6-foot distance was maintained, and masks and hand sanitizer were available.

We also had needed to find a new Head Usher as Rosa Holdredge decided to retire her position. Michael Branda volunteered and took over as of July 1st. He has a great core group of volunteers and is currently working on expanding the group to include ushers for funerals.

Coffee Hour has been ever changing due to Covid-19 but Kimberlee Bridgeford and Sheri Schlaman have been doing a great job.

Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour has had to become very flexible during the pandemic. Shari Schlaman and Kimberlee Bridgeford with their very special Coffee Barista Diane Shaw oversaw coffee hour when it was safe to have in Spurling Hall after the 10 am service.

The snacks were individually wrapped and purchased at the supermarkets. And everyone was asked to wear their masks when not eating their snack or drinking their beverages. We tried to make sure there were Gluten Free snacks for those who needed them.

We have a signup sheet for those who wanted to host Coffee Hour and have several volunteers. Daughters of the King have graciously hosted once a month when we were able to meet after the service.

We had a wonderful coffee hour for Halloween, with Bingo and prizes, games and festive table decorations.

Each month or season, Shari and I made sure the coffee hour tables were decorated and inviting for all who wanted to attend.

We look forward to getting back to a regular coffee hour schedule and have all volunteers be trained about setting up, serving and cleaning up after coffee hour.

Coffee Hour continues to be a very important part of St. Stephen's. We want everyone, visitors, and established parishioners to feel like the theme song from "Cheers", "where everyone is glad you came, and where everybody knows your name"

Respectfully Submitted,
Claudia Alexopoulos

HUMAN RELATIONS 2021

Human Relations was a new Vestry Portfolio in 2021 that comprises of Human Resources, Anti- Racism Coalition, Immigrant Support Circle & LGBTQ+

Human Resources is a committee that was formed to update the Church and Preschool Handbook in 2020. It did not meet as a committee in 2021. The committee includes: Jennifer Aston, Mark Young, Bill Brintnall, Shannon Murchison, Marian Krabach, Brendan Krabach. Vestry Member Jennifer Aston oversaw Human Resources for both the Church and the Preschool during 2021. Jennifer and Christopher Montella worked on the following: updated job descriptions & employer agreements, amended the Handbook, posted job openings, exit interviews, one on one with teachers, reviewed vacation time, facilitated the hiring of our new Director of Children's Education and Formation, Melanie Long. Jennifer continues to be available as HR questions and issues arise.

Anti-Racism Coalition is made up of 10 members including: Mary Jo Higginbotham, Chair, Jennifer Aston, Karen Fencil, Tom Spencer-Walters, Peggy Stabile, Richard Holdredge, Rosa Holdredge, Renee Schluter, Rod Schluter, Paula Olivares, Judy Baity and Steve Plote. This group met once a month to plan book discussions, fireside chats and special events. Each month a book discussion was held over Zoom. Each month a fireside chat was hosted either in person or via Zoom depending on Covid-19 surges. This group has received great feedback about the work they are doing.

Immigrant Support Circle was led by Karen Fencil, Fran Cantella, Judy Ferkel and Christopher Montella. This group was on hiatus for the majority of 2021. In late 2021 the ISC engaged in conversations with Victorville UMC to provide financial support for their "Guest House" program envisioned to provide support for asylum seekers. These conversations are ongoing.

LGBTQ+ is programming led by Christopher Montella. Planning for the Welcome Table happened in 2021, this worship will not start until March of 2022. The Welcome Table will include worship, communion, dessert & discussion on the third Wednesday of each month @7pm starting in March. The feedback thus far has been very positive.

Submitted by
Jennifer Aston

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT - MUSIC MINISTRY

The members of music ministry of St. Stephen's continue to serve our church community, but in a limited capacity. We are still laboring under the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic but serving just the same to praise God through the presentation of music in our worship services.

Below is a brief description of the individual groups that comprise our music ministry and their current status as we enter the third year of the COVID pandemic.

- The **Parish Choir** provides choral music for our regular and special worship services. When St. Stephen's resumed in-person 10:00AM services in May, the choir, though masked, joined the services in September to provide musical leadership once more. To help facilitate this, Caroline Morgan continues as our faithful choir assistant and Sheri Flay is our dedicated librarian. They both make things go a lot smoother in rehearsal and at worship services. In addition, we wish to thank those of you who served in the **PICK-UP** choir during the summer months. The Parish Choir has limited rehearsals on Thursday evenings at 7:30 PM.
- The **Ringers** provide handbell and chime music for special worship services. Currently, they are not functioning on a regular basis. The Ringers played beautifully in the Christmas Eve service. They are under the leadership of Chris Yahnker.
- The **Stones**, our praise group, provide praise and contemporary music. This group does present music occasionally and provided music for the Blue Christmas service. Frank Browne continues to serve as the leader of this group.
- The **Youth Choristers**, formally known as the Children's Choir provide music for special, designated services. Currently, this group is not functioning.

In addition, we have been blessed with the special assistance of the following persons:

- Roger Lamb
- Tayson Bernabe
- Gertrude Bradley
- Wendy Stackhouse
- Terry Dexter
- Yolanda West
- Christopher Montella
- The Elegant Music Brass and String Trios
- The Yahnker Family

A special thank you to all of our special musicians.

Status of other music ministry activities:

- The **Parish Choir** retreat was canceled again this year due to COVID.
- The music director gives private music instruction to anyone who makes a request. You may start at any time and there are openings. Currently there are no students.
- Members of the music staff continue to provide arrangements or editions tailored for their specific groups and/or for the congregation.

We really need additional members in all of our groups. We ask each of you to consider becoming a part of the music ministry in some capacity.

We wish to thank the congregation for your continued support and to acknowledge the participation and encouragement of our rector, Christopher Montella.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith M. Baity, Music Director

St. Stephen's Annual Report 2022 – Outreach

The Outreach ministries of St. Stephen's continued to support our local community throughout 2021, while navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are so appreciative of all of our ministry leaders and volunteers for donating their time and efforts!

Food & Item Collections:

Thank you so much to Mary Jo Higginbotham for continuing to manage our donation drives each month from the St. Stephen's parking lot. The food and items collected support those in need throughout the Santa Clarita Valley via donations to Child & Family Center, Family Promise, Church of Hope, SCV Food Pantry, and Bridge to Home. Also thank you to all of the volunteers who have assisted Mary Jo at these collections, as well as those who have donated!

Recycling Drives:

Malcolm Blue and Diane Shaw have done an amazing job at collecting recyclables at our monthly collection drives and turning that into actual cash donated directly to the church. In 2021, a total of \$871 was raised. Thank you, Malcolm and Diane as well as all who have supported them!

The Walk to End Alzheimer's:

Over the summer, I organized a 3-part virtual series to provide additional education to those affected by Alzheimer's Disease, which was hosted by St. Stephen's. The Walk to End Alzheimer's took place in October at Bridgeport Park, and the St. Stephen's Team raised \$4,594 total to support The Alzheimer's Association in finding a cure.

Project Angel Tree:

We'd like to thank Judy Ferkel for all of her dedication overseeing the Project Angel Tree program through St. Stephen's. In 2021, we began a leadership transition for this ministry as Judy began to step back. We appreciate Erick Long for managing this past year's efforts. In 2021, our Angel Tree program provided the most Christmas gifts we've ever collected, to 58 children in 23 families throughout the Santa Clarita Valley. The gifts were delivered by the Scouts of Troop 2222.

Laundry Love:

Cindy Swaisgood's connection with our local community through the Laundry Love program is truly a blessing. Thank you so very much Cindy for everything you do with this ministry. Sadly, there had been a 16-month gap in providing Laundry Love services due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, even though our Outreach only provided services for 5 months during 2021, we were still able to increase the amount of services provided, with

an increase in the number of people served each month. The total support for the year was ultimately 261 Washes and 194 Dries.

Used Eyeglass Ministry:

As Malcolm Blue reported last year, the Used Eyeglass Ministry was placed on pause in 2020 due to COVID. Unfortunately, efforts were ultimately cancelled in 2021 once learned that our receiver had discontinued their program. Malcolm is currently looking into alternative organizations to donate to, meanwhile storing previously donated eyeglasses at his home. The donation box continues to reside in Spurling Hall for those who wish to donate. Thank you, Malcolm, for your efforts in this challenging time!

In Other 2021 Outreach News:

The realities of the pandemic continued to effect Santa Clarita’s social support programs, limiting their ability to assist those in need. Outside of our individual ministry initiatives, St. Stephen’s would also like to support these very important programs when possible. Therefore, the following donations were made in 2021.

The SCV Child & Family Center’s mission is to provide quality care and services to children and families in need. The center’s annual fundraiser “Taste of the Town” has been affected by the pandemic. To show our support, \$1,000 was donated to the center by St. Stephen’s. If you would like to learn more about the Child & Family Center or to donate, please visit www.childfamilycenter.org

Family Promise of Santa Clarita serves our local homeless community by providing shelter, meals, and support services. Due to the pandemic, the organization was unable to utilize local churches to provide temporary shelter to families. As a result, they had to transition to local motels and transitional housing options, which ultimately incurred additional costs. St. Stephen’s donation of \$1,000 allowed Family Promise to cover one month of transition housing costs (\$900) plus a motel stay (\$100) for a family in need. For more info about Family Promise or to donate, please visit www.familypromisescv.org

Submitted by: Jason O’Leary

Pastoral Care Annual Report

At the start of 2021 pastoral care ministries were limited due to Covid restrictions. Gradually, these ministries have been able to operate at a greater and more personal capacity.

The International Order of St. Luke the Physician: The Order of St. Luke resumed hands-on healing on the 2nd and 4th Sundays beginning in October. They may need new members, so for those interested please look out for any upcoming announcement.

Pastoral Care Team: Pastoral Care Team continued making their weekly calls to homebound parishioners. The ministry celebrates their two-year anniversary March of 2022!

Lay Eucharistic Ministry: St Stephen's is not currently sending LEMs out to those who cannot come to church. The need for more LEMs needs to be evaluated.

Prayer Chain: Peggy Stabile took over for Flo Krejci in May of 2021. Thank you, Flo, for your many years of service in this ministry! The prayer chain is active and continues to pray for those in need.

Christopher was fully vaccinated in April of 2021 and was able to resume hospital visits at that time. He resumed pastoral visits in August of 2021.

Submitted by

Shannon Brintnall

PRAYER CHAIN 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

After 23 years of devotion to our St. Stephen's Prayer Chain which she instituted in 1997, parishioner Flo Krejci retired as coordinator on her 90th birthday last spring. With Flo as my mentor, I assumed the position as coordinator in April 2021.

Each Friday, an updated list of those for whom our prayers have been requested is submitted to our parish administrator, Tracy Stapp, who then includes it in the Sunday bulletin. On average, approximately 50 names appear on the list. At home, in whatever fashion works for them, more than 30 members of St. Stephen's Prayer Chain (including all Daughters of the King chapter, whose vows include a Rule of Prayer) hold these names up to God in prayer. Ours is largely an electronic operation: each request comes to the coordinator from the clergy, from the church office, and from members of the parish and the preschool by any means available and is then disseminated to the prayer chain via email. If there is further information available later, updates are also emailed.

As a rule, names remain on the list for at least a month, or, if requested, for longer; some are placed in an "ongoing needs" category because of long-term situations. The first of each month a more detailed version of the bulletin list is emailed to the chain, replacing the previous month's version. If there are members without computers, the monthly list is mailed to them.

There is a strict rule of confidentiality regarding all submissions to the prayer chain. As explained in the Weekly Bulletin, those who prefer that their petition remain confidential may make that clear when they submit the request. Those who submit details and relationships with the recipients of our prayers, however, can expect that when their request comes in, it will be shared with the members of the prayer chain as written. Each week, the first names of those for whom petitions have been submitted are announced at our Sunday services during the Prayer of the People. As always, prayer chain members continue to respect confidentiality with all requests.

Because they carry out their ministry quietly and unseen, the members of the prayer chain are virtually anonymous. It is, however, a vital service in any congregation. Anyone who is willing to give a few minutes of time each day, even several days a week, is welcome to join; there are no qualifications or special skills other than dedication and the ability to maintain the required confidentiality.

Respectfully submitted: Peggy Stabile



St. Stephen's Preschool 2021 Annual Report

St. Stephen's Preschool continues to be a staple in the faith based preschool community serving over 100 children, their families as well as employing 17 staff members.

While the COVID-19 pandemic continues and is ever changing our hope and prayer is that preschool remains a time for discovery and learning as well as just a little bit of "normalcy" for the children. During the preschool day children can engage in "free choice," circle time, whole class activities, outside play time, music, science, and other enriching activities. Each month, the activities are geared around various themes that include seasons, holidays, and other special/significant events.

January through the end of the school year 2021 the preschool continued providing daily services in our classrooms. Some changes did occur such as limiting the number of students in each classroom so that teachers could take their much deserved and needed breaks during outside time. We have continued to look at each classroom as its own cohort and as a result have only had to close individual rooms related to COVID-19 rather than the entire program. Staff were able to schedule outside play times in such a way that no co-mingling or crossing of classroom cohorts occurs. Only 2 rooms are outside at any given time which allows for children to be able to socially distance themselves while on the yard.

The preschool families continue to utilize both the early bird as well as lunch bunch options available for extended care. The full day option has seen the addition of new students October through December with a high of 10 students attending on Wednesdays. The preschool has seen steady interest from prospective families who tour, and new enrollments continued throughout the end of the year into 2022. Our website www.st-stephens-preschool.org, Facebook, Instagram and word of mouth continue to be some of the first resources for prospective parents.

Over the summer Miss Amanda made the difficult decision to leave St. Stephen's and took another position to grow professionally. Miss Monica Bellows and Miss Shannon Murchison long time teachers helped to fill the void until a new director was found. Miss Nelly also returned to St. Stephen's temporarily filling in as administrative assistant. In mid-October Melanie Long joined the St. Stephen's community as the new Director of Children's Education & Formation.

Teachers and children continue to go about their daily activities such as learning, playing, and growing in our safe and nurturing preschool. Families and staff take comfort in the fact that children are happy and in an environment that it committed to their health, safety, and well-being. We greatly appreciate all the church parishioners who give to preschool in a variety of ways whether it be materials, support, or their time. In addition, we are eternally grateful to all our preschool staff, without their continued commitment to St. Stephen's none of this would be possible. Our teaching staff has shown great resilience and adaptability throughout the COVID pandemic. Their impeccable professionalism and the manner in which they have arrive each day to support, teach, and care for our children is in my opinion unsurpassed.

<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Asst. Teachers</i>	<i>Director</i>
Monica Bellows	Gwenda Brown	Melanie Long
Parminder Bhogal	Christina Troupe	
Julie Davenport	Shannon Phanhong-Sommer	<i>Rector</i>
Laurie Crevier	Kristin Sargeant	Christopher Montella
Leslie Viera	Marta Brecht	
Adriana Santana	Sandra Duran	<i>Admin. Asst.</i>
Shannon Murchison	Diana Patino	Nelly Vincent (Temp)
	Jennifer Lackey	
<i>Substitute Teachers</i>		
Sharie Telles	<i>Sexton</i>	<i>Bookkeeper</i>
Robin Silver	Maria Lopez	Donna Maldonado
Yesenia Pappas		

The preschool program's enrollment has been better than what was projected prior to opening in the fall. The program as it is currently operating is proving to be fiscally sound. At the end of the year the program received a facility stabilization stipend (grant) from the California Department of Social Services in the amount of \$6500. As things begin to stabilize and we see growth in enrollment for next year, we will also continue to look at making some capital improvements and upgrading office and classroom spaces and machines. Some of these items may include new copy machines, chairs, and improvements to our playground. In addition, both California Licensing and the Diocese continue to suggest having an operating reserve in the amount of six months' worth of expenses in case of an emergency or disaster. I will continue to seek out grants and other opportunities to ensure these items can be achieved.

The Preschool Board continues to be very supportive of the preschool program. They value the importance of ensuring that St. Stephen's Preschool remains the caring, nurturing, developmental preschool that it is. It has been very helpful having the participation of two staff representatives on the board. I appreciate the expertise offered by all and the time each dedicates to the meetings. The 2021 Board members were:

Christopher Montella	Melanie Long	Steve Plote
Monica Bellows	Parminder Bhogal	John Fortman
Marv Aardahl	Mark Young	Tricia Foley
James Webb		

SAGES 2022 Annual Report

Sagacious, Active, Generous, Energetic Seniors

SAGES is open to all members of the congregation who are at least fifty (50) years of age or older. There is no upper age limit. Our goal is to share and support each other and to have fun. As senior members of St. Stephens we encourage socializing with each other by getting together for a monthly lunch on the second Thursday at 1:00 pm at one of our local restaurants. Our main goals are to enjoy good fellowship, enjoy good food and support our local community. We strive to be with each other and support our lives together by keeping in touch with one another.

2021 was especially difficult because of Covid-19. In spite of staying home we were unable to meet for our monthly lunches until August. However, in trying to stay connected we offered to our members weekly Zoom meetings held every Thursday at 12:00 pm.

We were able to resume our lunches in August 2021 until the end of the year. Our new normal was as follows: August: Wood Ranch, September: Mom Can Cook, October: Grand Panda and November: Olive Garden. Also, in October, we went to see Mamma Mia at the Canyon Theater Guild.

We also had our special Christmas Holiday Brunch in December hosted by Richard and Rosa Holdredge at their lovely home. We enjoyed Rosa's wonderful cooking, Richard's tri-tip BBQing and their warm hospitality.

This year we added a special Movie Day on the Fourth Thursday of every month. We met at the Laemmle Theater in Downtown Newhall at 1:00 pm to enjoy watching a movie of our choice. The movies that we saw were Never Say Die, Aretha, Nomadland and The Father.

This year we also kept in touch with each other by sending birthday wishes, and if needed, get well wishes to our members. This was facilitated by our Sunshine Committee.

We supported Project Share the Grace, coordinated by Marian Krabach, by contributing elementary grade school supplies and reading books for Elementary schools in the Santa Clarita Valley. In addition, we assembled and distributed hygiene kits to the following: Domestic Violence Center of SCV

Respectfully Submitted by Linda Weifenbach

SAGES Chair: Don Rimac

SAGES Event Coordinator: Linda Weifenbach

SAGES Sunshine Coordinator: Anne Sjolund

Stewardship Committee Annual Report

Stewardship is a theological belief that we are responsible for the world; we need to take care of it and look after it. The St. Stephen's Stewardship Committee continuously strives to communicate to all members of our community that we should be using our gifts of Time, Talent and the Treasure that we have been given to live out our faith and complete our Baptismal vows. While many believe stewardship is focused on fund raising alone, our responsibilities as stewards is to provide for the needs of our St. Stephen's family. To this objective, the Stewardship Committee, especially in the last few years, has decided to implement Stewardship as an "all-year experience." We continue to focus on the gifts of time, talent and treasure developing a variety of ways, i.e. experiences, each member of the parish can contribute to St. Stephens.

The theme for our Pledge Drive during 2021 and for the subsequent ways parishioners could contribute to St. Stephens was "Every Perfect Gift." The theme and image for *Every Perfect Gift* are wrapped in the metaphor of the butterfly and chrysalis emphasizing the philosophical and spiritual idea of the soul breaking free from its shell free to discover, to inspire, to create, to communicate, to share. Our parishioners are asked to share their time, their talent and their treasure.

"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." James 1:17



The committee met on a regular basis throughout the spring and summer of 2021 developing a "year-round" planning grid to shape our schedule for the summer and fall programs related to our fall pledge drive. The pledge campaign kick-off was on October 10th and ended on November 21st. The challenges to everyone in the parish related to SARS-CoV-2 was always in our thoughts and prayers and the development of ways the parishioners could draw closer to the St. Stephen's community sharing in any way they could in their own personal way. Our approach during the fall was to engage all members of our community further; broaden our outreach and structuring our methods around mailing pledge cards, bulletin announcements, statements made by Reverend Christopher during the announcements at each Sunday's service and individual follow-up phone calls to discuss the timing of pledges and challenges with individual parishioners. One example of community engagement was our very successful Ministry Fair (thank you Kathleen Jensen) held in September of 2021 with 28 ministries participating. Several parishioners asked why the Stewardship Committee sponsored the event and that is because through our ministries we demonstrate how we share our time and talent, i.e. *stewardship is about more than money*. Finally, our Financial Update to the parish on August 8th went very well. There were 28 parishioners present (plus 2 children). Several questions were addressed from the group and delegates were elected to the upcoming convention.

We thank Richard Holdredge with the assistance of members of our community for the videotaped and edited personal testimonies for our worship services. We would also like to thank the Communications Committee and all of the members of our congregation who provided personal testimonials during our worship services. The Stewardship Committee also has recently sent thank you notes to all members of the parish to acknowledge their prayerfully donated time, treasure and special talents to the St. Stephen's community in the past year.

The Stewardship Committee continues to focus on Pastoral Care, Social Justice Initiatives, Campus Improvements, our Children and Youth Ministry, Church Communications and Long-Range Financial Planning. Our charge is to continue our responsibility to reach out to everyone in our expanding community and provide the framework to integrate their talents and resources into our common objectives.

Results of the Pledge Drive for 2022, while not reaching our target objective of \$325,000, shows we have 87 pledges totaling \$282,822 (02/22/22). This total currently exceeds the pledge drive total for 2021 of \$278,771 (2/1/21) by 2 %. Again, the Stewardship Committee appreciates the efforts of our parishioners during such challenging times.

Finally, the Stewardship Committee members, including Richard Holdredge, Michael Branda, Bob Gregor and Kathleen Jensen, would like to recognize Cathy Gero (Chair) for her vibrant leadership, her contribution of her time, talent and treasure and for keeping us organized and focused on the central theme of our work. The Committee has had several very productive meetings in the past several months discussing the proper balance across the three items seminal to our success, i.e. contributing time, talent and treasure to the St. Stephen's community. The task remains for everyone.

Respectively submitted,
Bob Gregor

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Technology – 2022 Annual Report

Technology at St. Stephen's has become increasingly important as our world evolves. To meet the challenges, we have two main areas of focus: infrastructure and operation (although we typically do not refer to them in these words).

Infrastructure is comprised of the technical "stuff": computers, cameras, audio systems, software, WiFi, and Internet. During the past year, the most significant accomplishments are:

- Install a low-cost, high-speed internet connection, using T-Mobile's new "5G Home Internet" service.
- Install a new WiFi setup that now covers the entire campus with strong WiFi, including an isolated "guest" WiFi network.
- Redesign campus-wide data network, including remote administration tools to help quickly fix problems from any location.
- All office computers have been regularly tested and backed up.
- Responded as needed to solve any problems with network, computers, or printers.

Operation is the use of the infrastructure. The most visible use is for Liturgy services, including live streaming. The Tech Guild, which every week operates the "tech table", is a team of dedicated folks who have learned how to broadcast a live, high quality video production. We have several people currently trained to do this and are adding more as time progresses.

Respectfully Submitted by John Noonan and Dave Melton

Ushers

I officially took over as Head Usher on July 1st and spent the next several months gaining a better understanding of the role, its needs and the people I had the pleasure of serving with. Overall, I believe this ministry has gone well, especially with the challenges presented by Covid.

Presently, I am working on documenting all the responsibilities and procedures for both the ushers and greeters. This will serve as a training device and reminder for all of the volunteers. It will also help for those Sundays when I am not able to make it to the worship services. Having all the responsibilities and procedures written down should make certain that everything runs smoothly when I'm gone.

Our only need is for additional volunteers. My goal is for my never being on the schedule so I can serve as a back-up in case someone has to drop out at the last minute. So, my plan is to share our needs with the current volunteers, have them commit/recommit to at least once a month, and see if some will commit to more. And also, to ask for volunteers to commit for funerals. Once we learn where we're at, I may need to reach out to the church for more volunteers.

Submitted by
Michael Branda

Annual 2022 Worship Report

Worship Highlights 2021:

With COVID protocols and return to Worship practices dominating our energies, we still managed a robust Worship life in 2021. Most of our 2021 COVID protocols were thoughtfully and successfully administered. Through summer and fall of 2021 our Re-Opening Task Force, led by John Alexopoulos, worked to ensure safety protocols were upheld at St. Stephens. In December 2021 Acolytes returned to worship. Our combined attendance (virtual and in-person) has remained consistent, even given the COVID restrictions. For example, as a highlight, Sunday, Dec 5, 2021, had more than 100 people at the 10 am service. In 2021, Michael Branda took over coordinating the Greeters and Ushers. While we welcome Michael we also extend a tremendous thanks to Rosa Hall-Holdredge who served as coordinator for many years.

Even with maintained attendance at our in person worship services, the Tech table continued to support and stream the 10am service throughout 2021. It became easier and much more graceful to stream the service thanks to Ryan Yahnker and his development and construction of our beautiful tech booth!

Reverend Christopher's formal installation as 3rd Rector of St. Stephen's was celebrated on Saturday, June 26, 2021, and Bishop Bruce joined us for another celebratory moment in the life of our community.

Steve Plote continues to organize our readers for worship. For the 7:45 AM service we have five readers and for the 10 AM we have thirteen readers.

The Altar Guild continues to bring tremendous support to our worship services. The Altar Guild is still looking for new members.

St. Stephen's continues to offer a beautiful, robust music program led masterfully by Judy Baity to support our Worship. Our Worship music is supported by the Parish Choir returning to in person service in 2021, the St. Stephen's Ringers, and the St. Stephen's Stones joining us for Worship services.

Respectfully,
Julie Johnson

Youth Engaged at St. Stephens (Y.E.S.S.)

Y.E.S.S. is for youth in grades 6-12 and provides foundation, formation, and fun in an inclusive environment to help young people grow in their faith, their understanding of themselves and the world we live in as they journey towards adulthood.

As we zoomed into 2021 (literally!), Y.E.S.S. continued to meet on Sundays for discussion and Wednesday evenings for game time led by Rev. Christopher, Sheri Flay and Caroline Morgan.

We started the year by focusing on making resolutions and using those resolutions to improve our relationships with each other, our families, and our friends. We then journeyed into the wilderness of Lent together with a series appropriately titled "Into the Wilderness".

We continued meeting through the season of Lent and decided that during this journey we would all be intentional about putting love into the world in whatever way we were able. We talked about the Ten Commandments which led to a discussion of whether rules in our lives were important. Our youth brought special conversations to us every time we met. As we continued to navigate the pandemic and meeting on Zoom everyone started to feel some fatigue. Meeting virtually is different from meeting in person so at this point all decided that we would give zoom and youth group a break.

We returned in June for in-person activities! We started out by meeting at 4:00pm on Sunday evenings, but after a while we eventually returned to our after-church schedule. from 11:45am-1:00pm.

During the season of Advent Y.E.S.S. explored themes relating to Christmas and the birth of Jesus. One exercise was to say the first thing that came to you when you heard the word "Jesus." which we used to create a word cloud that will inform future explorations of Jesus as we move through 2022. Our activity culminated with members of our youth group taking on key roles in the return of our annual Christmas Pageant during the 3 o'clock Christmas Eve service.

Our Youth continue to be vital members of the congregation and have, by their unconditional acceptance and love for one another, modeled what the future looks like for St. Stephen's and the world.

Respectfully submitted by
Sheri Flay, Caroline Morgan and Christopher Montella