

SAINT STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Stewardship 2025



“and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself
up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

Ephesians 5:2

October 18, 2024

Dear St. Stephen's Family,

Greetings to you in the name of the God who loves you beyond all imagining.



While it seems a bit impossible, the end of the year is in sight. As I write this, we are a mere 68 days from Christmas! Time is moving fast and as history has taught us, these last weeks of the year move by in the blink of an eye.

Looking ahead to 2025, there is so much on the horizon that fills me with hope and enthusiasm. Each new year always brings with it an element of the unknown and that is often exciting and daunting at the same time. One thing that is very well known to me is that the community of St. Stephen's will continue its good work of striving for justice and peace among all people, respecting the dignity of every human being, and grounding itself in sacred tradition combined with a progressive understanding of our Christian call to love our neighbors as ourselves.

There is so much good work being done at St. Stephen's to speak the unconditional love of God for all people and to ensure that St. Stephen's is always a place where in the immortal words of Presiding Bishop Edmund Browning, "there will be no outcasts".

There is also much work to do. Back in September your vestry and I met for our annual retreat. This is a time when we reflect on where we are and where we hope to go in the coming year. You will be hearing more about the work we did together at our retreat and what it means for the congregation.

One thing I would like to share now is that coming out of our retreat we identified **ENGAGEMENT** as our congregational watchword for 2025. As we seek to focus the congregation's energy heading into the new year, we have identified 4 facets of community life we would like to see engagement grow in 2025:

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT-What does it look like for St. Stephen's to be a place where families engage, connect and thrive?

WORSHIP ENGAGEMENT-What does St. Stephen's need to either strengthen, adjust or introduce to encourage greater engagement as a worshipping community?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT-What are the needs of the geographical community that surrounds our campus and how might we better serve them?

SMALL GROUP ENGAGEMENT-How can we encourage gathering beyond Sunday worship to create and strengthen connection between community members?

A community that is engaged is a community that is connected. A community that is connected is life-giving, soul-filling and equipped for service to each other and the world around us. And as we all know the world is crying out for the kind of loving-care that St. Stephen's has been providing for over 60 years.

As many of you know this is the time of year where we get practical, share our plans for the coming year with all of you and ask for your support to help ensure our ability to show up in all the places and ways we are called to serve.

It is important to note that this pledge drive is about our needs for the coming 12-month cycle. This is about what it takes to run St. Stephen's on a day-to-day basis. While there are aspirational aspects

of this budget proposal, this is not a capital campaign tied to a specific project. Many of you have asked about the status of a potential capital campaign.

No decisions will be made about the execution of a capital campaign until after the annual pledge drive is completed. If we cannot fund the regular expenses associated with the operating budget, we will not run a capital campaign.

This pledge drive is about making sure we have what is needed to run and maintain our campus, fairly compensate staff members who give so much of themselves to our community, provide financial resources to engage and empower a diverse roster of ministries and support our community partners.

Included in this email you will see an overview of the proposed numbers. I invite you all to join me Sunday, 11/3 at 9AM in Spurling Hall for a Q & A regarding the proposed budget, where I will share a bit more detail as to how we arrived at this budget. Our Treasurer, John Fortman will also be on hand and together we will answer any questions you may have.

Our theme for our annual pledge drive this year is “Walk In Love”. This is both an invitation and a call to action. I invite you to join together as a community of love walking together in faith to love and serve God, each other and the world we live in. I also hear Jesus’ call to love one another and to let love inform all of our decisions and actions such as what we do with our financial resources.

As you hear me say in church every week, we cannot do all that we do without your financial support. Therefore, I ask you to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider how you will support St. Stephen’s in 2025. Your formalized commitment, no matter the amount, will help the leadership of St. Stephen’s to make smart and informed decisions about what we will be able to do in 2025.

On Sunday, November 24th, 2024, we will celebrate “Gratitude Sunday” with one special service at 9AM followed by a parish celebration and potluck. You can sign up for the potluck here (<https://tinyurl.com/2p9taxpd>) As is our custom at this service we will all place our prayers and pledges on the altar for a special blessing.

Every week we say the following prayer in church just before we make our offering. I carry this prayer deep in my heart always and I offer it here for you as you pray on what God may be calling you to do to support the mission and ministry of St. Stephen's in the coming year.

Loving God, you alone are the source of every good gift. Everything we have, and all that we are, comes from you. Now, help us to be grateful, accountable, and, with praise and thanksgiving, to give of ourselves generously, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

I give thanks for each one of you and for the blessing of your presence among us. I pray that we will walk in love together into a new year in the life of our congregation with hope, faith and the boldness that comes from knowing that all things are possible with God.

May God’s blessing be with you and St. Stephen’s today and always.

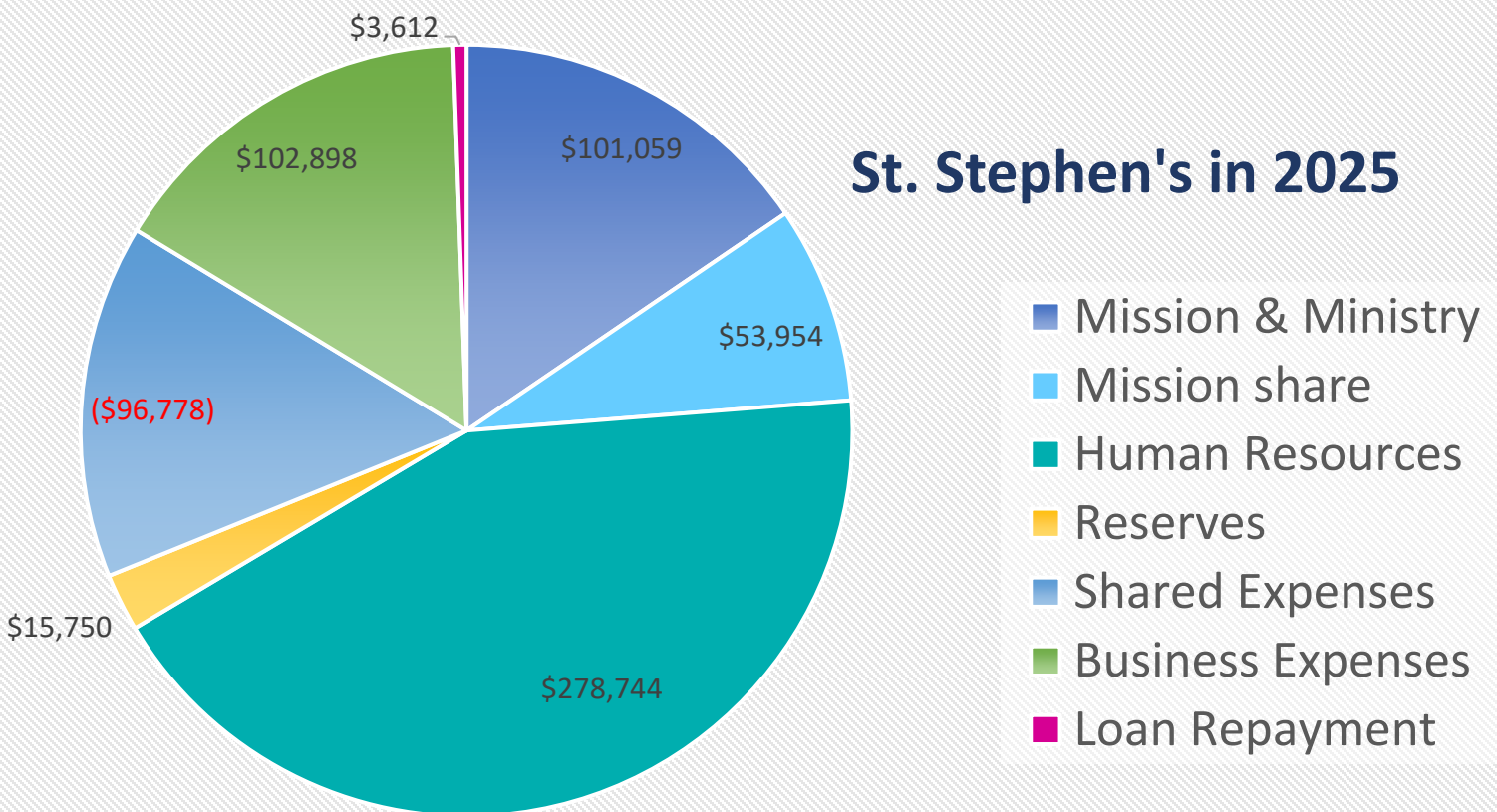
Faithfully,
Christopher+



The Parish Operating Budget is what fuels the day-to-day expenses associated the operation of our campus, supporting our employees, invigorating the worship and program life of our congregation, and honoring our commitments to our community partners and the broader Church.

It is essential to understand that there are costs associated with maintaining and growing our community and the impact of our ministries. An active and dedicated giving program is the cornerstone of our church community's development strategy and plan for growth. Such a program has a direct impact on the enduring vitality of our parish. Here you can see an overview of how what we give, as a community, is allocated to support the operations and mission of this community.

Total Proposed Expenses For 2025 are \$459,239
Total Projected Income From Other Sources \$41,860
Total Projected Pledge Goal For 2025 \$418,000





We invite you to consider how your pledge supports the operations and mission of St. Stephen's. The parish operating expenses are divided into the categories listed below. This breakdown provides us with clarity around what it takes to fund the operations of our congregation.

MISSION & MINISTRY

The funds in this category are used to fuel our programs such as Sunday School, Youth Group, EFM, Altar Guild Expenses and Clergy Expenses not related to HR. They also support our outreach work and support for our community partners such as Bridge to Home and Child & Family Center.

MISSION SHARE

This is essentially our pledge commitment to the diocese. It is calculated at 12% of our normal operating income as referenced on the parish parochial report from the previous year. For 2025 we have requested to keep our contribution flat to 2024.

HUMAN RESOURCES

HR funds are used to cover the cost of employee salary, benefits, payroll taxes, etc. for employees not directly tied to a particular ministry including the Rector, Parish Administrator, Sexton, and Bookkeeper.

RESERVES

This is money that we save to cover the cost of unexpected expenses not covered in the operating budget, the Rector's sabbatical fund and the parish operating reserve.

SHARED EXPENSES

This number represents funds that are contributed by the preschool to cover the cost of shared employees, facility use and utilities per the established cost sharing agreement between the parish and preschool. It is always represented on the parish budget as a negative number as it is a credit to our bottom line.

BUSINESS EXPENSES

These funds are used to cover the cost of business expenses such as utilities, taxes and insurance, technology, office supplies and cleaning and maintenance.

LOAN REPAYMENT

This represents monthly payments that are made to replay two outstanding loans to the diocese related to the construction of the sanctuary and the roof repair of the preschool building in 2021.

ST. STEPHEN'S PROPOSED 2025 OPERATING BUDGET		
Operating Fund Income		
Operating Income from Donations		
Pledge Number		418,000
Total Plate		33,000
Total Special Offering		4,000
Total From Donation		455,000
Operating Income from Other Sources		
Total Operating Income from Fundraising		1,300
Total Rental		3,460
Other Income		100
Total Operating Income from Other Sources		4,860
TOTAL OPERATING INCOME		459,860
Expense		
MISSION SHARE		53,954
INTEREST ON LOANS		3,612
Operating Fund Transfers & Shared Expenses		
Total Cost Sharing from Preschool - HR		-43,702
Total Cost Sharing Occupancy & Other		-53,076
TOTAL SHARED EXPENSES		-96,778
TOTAL RESERVE CONTRIBUTIONS		15,750
Payroll		
Total Clergy Payroll		92,300
Total Lay Staff Payroll		130,544
Total Payroll		222,844
Benefits		
Total Benefits - Clergy		29,003
Total Benefits - Lay Staff		11,742
Total Benefits		40,745
Total Employer Tax & Unemployment		15,155
TOTAL HUMAN RESOURCES		278,744
Business Expense		
Total Utilities & Facilities Expenses [1]		51,914
Total Office Expenses		5,750
Total Technology Expenses		15,234
Total Taxes and Insurance Expenses		30,000
TOTAL BUSINESS EXPENSES		102,898
Mission & Ministry		
Total Program Expenses [2]		22,993
Total Outreach Expenses		7,250
Total Communications Expenses		26,346
Total Music Expenses		40,220
Total Misc. Expenses [3]		4,250
TOTAL MISSION AND MINISTRY EXPENSE		101,059
TOTAL EXPENSES		459,239
TOTAL OPERATING INCOME		459,860
	+/-	621

In addition to your pledge of financial support, we encourage everyone in the congregation to explore the many different opportunities available at St. Stephen's to give of your time and talent. See below a listing of our dynamic ministries and the leaders associated with each them.

Ministry Leaders		
Ministry		Contact
Acolytes	Kevin Fulleman	youth@st-stephens.org
Altar Servers (Acolytes, Readers, Chalice, & MC)	Steve Plote	seplote@aol.com
Altar Guild	Mary Mercogliano	mary.mercogliano@gmail.com
Angel Network	Rev. Christopher	christopher@st-stephens.org
Angel Tree	Grace Pendleton	grace@st-stephens.org
Anti-Racism Coalition	Mary Jo Higginbotham	maryjohigg@gmail.com
Bookstore	Mary Jo Higginbotham	maryjohigg@gmail.com
Book Study Group	Judy Ferkel	mrsferkel@me.com
Building & Grounds	John Alexopoulos	victorgraph@gmail.com
Children's Ministry	Paloma Lozano	childrensministry@st-stephens.org
Choir/Music Ministry	Judy Baity	jmbdmbymb@sbcglobal.net
Circle of Gratitude	Rev Fran Cantella	revfran@sbcglobal.net
Community Care	Grace Pendleton	grace@st-stephens.org
Daughters of the King	Kathleen Jensen	jensencurl@gmail.com
Education for Ministry	Mary Jo Higginbotham	maryjohigg@gmail.com
Finance	John Fortman	treasurer@st-stephens.org
Food Pantry	Mary Jo Higginbotham	maryjohigg@gmail.com
Hospitality	Kimberly Bridgeford & Shari Schlaman	kwesley297@aol.com smstravelbug@gmail.com
Laundry Love	Cindy Swaisgood	cynthiaswaisgood@sbcglobal.net
Men's Group	Dave Morrow	Dmorrow1452@gmail.com
Order of St. Luke	Richard Holdredge	holdredge@earthlink.net
Prayer Chain	Peggy Stabile	pstable@pegasus2.net
Preschool	Vivien Firta	vivien@st-stephens.org
Recycling Drive	Diane Shaw	dshaw@calarts.edu
SAGES	Linda Weifenbach	lindaweifenbach@icloud.com
Scouts	Tish Yahnker	tish.yahnker@gmail.com
Stewardship Committee	Kathleen Jensen	jensencurl@gmail.com
Tech Team	Erick Long	long.erick@gmail.com
The Welcome Table	Rev. Christopher	christopher@st-stephens.org
Ushers/Greeters	Nick Vestuto	nvestuto@gmail.com
Walk To End Alzheimer's	Jason O'Leary	joleary41@mac.com
Y.E.S.S. (Youth Group)	Kevin Fulleman	youth@st-stephens.org



Giving at St. Stephen's

Financially supporting the mission and ministry of St. Stephen's has many options, whether paying your pledge, or making a new or recurring donation:

- Online on St. Stephen's homepage:
st-stephens.org/giving
- Text the word GIVE to 661.228.8909
- Mail the pledge card and/or donation to:
24901 Orchard Village Rd.
Santa Clarita, CA 91355
- Use an envelope in the pew and place in the plate
 - Use the QRC



We are deeply grateful for your presence,
your commitment,
and your support.

