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A safe and sacred space for all in the community.

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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**Our Vision:**  
**To be Christ for each other and  
for the world.**

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**January 25, 2026**

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**2026 ANNUAL MEETING**  
**ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SANTA CLARITA**  
January 25, 2026

1. Opening Prayer
2. Appointment of Clerk
3. Meeting Called to Order / Welcome
4. 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes approval
5. Voting
  - a. 2026 Vestry slate.
  - b. Election of Delegates to Diocesan Convention.
6. Social Media at St. Stephen's  
Justin Baker-Rojas  
Fuzzy Media
7. Rector's Address  
The Very Rev. Christopher Montella
8. 2025 by the numbers
9. Looking ahead to 2026
10. Q & A
11. Closing Prayer and adjournment to lunch.

2025 ANNUAL MEETING  
ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SANTA CLARITA  
February 9, 2025

1. Opening Prayer
  - a. Rev. Christopher opened the meeting with a prayer at 10:37am
2. Appointment of Clerk
  - a. A motion was made by XXX and seconded by XXX to appoint Sheri Flay as Clerk of the Annual Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Meeting Called to Order / Welcome
4. 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes approval
  - a. A motion was made by Lynn Jay and seconded by Ken Higginbotham to approve the 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Voting
  - a. 2025 Vestry slate consists of Hallie Browne, Laine Hedwall, Cheryl Sena, and Nick Vestuto.
    - i. A motion was made by Marilyn Pisa and seconded by Kelsey Raub to appoint the slate of nominees to the Vestry. The motion passed unanimously.
    - ii. Christopher presented the book "Jesus is Calling" to the outgoing members of the vestry Steve Plote, Bob Gregor, Sheri Flay, and Kathleen Jensen
    - iii. He also presented gifts to the outgoing wardens Bob Gregor, Steve Plote and James Mackey who served over the last few years.
  - b. 2025 Nominees for Diocesan Convention Delegates are: Nick Vestuto (Vestry representative), Kathleen Jensen, and Kelsey Raub with Laine Hedwall, Cheryl Sena, and Sara-Anne Nelson as alternates.
    - i. A motion was made by Steve Plote and seconded by Mary Jo Higginbotham to accept the 2025 Diocesan Delegate nominees and alternates as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
6. Rector's Address
  - a. The Preschool and Parish faced unexpected challenges which impacted finances, yet there were opportunities for growth everywhere.
  - b. The Preschool and Parish faced many transitions during 2024:
    - i. Staff changes started off with Vivien Fierta as our new Director of Children's Education and Formation. Next, we said goodbye to our sexton of more than a decade, Maria Lopez. Following Maria's departure, the preschool manager Stephanie Rodriguez resigned to pursue other opportunities, and Anna Douphner was eventually hired as the new administrator. In June we welcomed a new Sexton, Jose Gonzalez, who unfortunately had to resign in December.

- ii. In the parish, our Youth Ministry Coordinator, Gina Gauderrama-Frezieres and her husband moved away during the summer, and Kevin Fulleman stepped in to lead this ministry until the end of the year. And, after several years Julia Nelson stepped down as Children's Ministry Coordinator and Paloma Lozano stepped in.
  - iii. The biggest transition of all was the retirement of our beloved Music Director, Judy Baity, after serving 25 years at St. Stephen's.
- c. Christopher gave his thanks and gratitude to Bob Gregor and Steve Plote for their service as Senior Warden.
- d. The preschool saw a 25% drop in enrollment at the beginning of the 24-25 school year due to students leaving for Universal PreK. This had meaningful implications for both the Preschool and Parish finances. Christopher gave his thanks and gratitude to Vivien Firta for her leadership during this time.
- e. During 2024 it was found that the financial policies and procedures were not as tight as thought, and although there is still room for improvement, overall, the preschool and parish are sound and stable.
- f. Throughout the year parishioners had opportunities for Exploration, Reflection and Celebration –
  - i. The Lent study was based on the book "Entering the Passion of Jesus A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week" by Amy-Jill Levine.
  - ii. Holy week was well attended, including:
    - 1. A service of Tenebrae on Wednesday, which was a collaboration with Roger & Jennie Lamb and the Scenic Hills Singers.
    - 2. Thanks to the vision and work of Mary Jo Higginbotham and the team she brought together, a new, Interactive, Stations of the Cross was presented.
  - iii. In September Bishop Taylor, and Pulitzer Prize winning author Jack Miles came to St. Stephen's to discuss the war between Israel and Hamas.
  - iv. In October, St. Stephen's hosted the biggest Trunk or Treat to date with hundreds of people attending.
  - v. In December, the Scenic Hills Singers presented their annual Christmas Concert, the Advent study was based on Rachel Billups book "An Unlikely Advent," and "Mary's Story" a cantata written by Judy Baity was a fitting exclamation point on her ministry.
- g. The Welcome Table continued to be a safe space for the LGBTQ+ community and was moved from the hall to the chapel to create a more intimate and connected experience. Christopher gave thanks to Kevin Wood who continues to commute from Long Beach to serve as the Music Director of the Welcome Table.

- h. The Scouts continue to make our campus come alive. The congregation had a wonderful celebration on Scout Sunday, and several scouts completed their Eagle Projects around our campus as a symbol of their commitment to us, including a transformation of our pet garden, new parking lot signs, and the new tables in our courtyard.
- i. What Lies Ahead for St. Stephen's:
  - i. The vestry is moving away from a portfolio structure in order to foster more collaboration among leaders. Six key areas of focus were identified – Programming, Connection, Worship, Communication, Operations, and Finance. Two vestry members will focus on each of these areas and there will be intentional overlap between focus areas.
  - ii. Engagement was identified as the watchword for 2025. These are the four areas where the vestry would like to see increased engagement – Family engagement, Worship engagement, Community engagement, and Small Group engagement. This will require the entire congregation to be involved. Children and Youth Leadership is also in need of additional engagement.
  - iii. In 2024 the finance team found several areas that could use improvement. One thing is that too much responsibility lies on the shoulders of the treasurer, so the first thing is that the treasurer will no longer be the chair of the finance committee. Laine Hedwall has agreed to step in as the new chairperson. Additionally, the treasurer and bookkeeper will become non-voting members, the treasurer will now serve a 3-year term, and an assistant treasurer will be appointed with the understanding that this person will be the next treasurer. Additional members have been added to the committee including Kathleen Jensen, the new chair of the Stewardship committee. Stewardship will now take control of pledge tracking, the annual pledge drive, and smaller fundraisers throughout the year. The committee expects these changes to strengthen the function and oversight of the committee.
  - iv. Capital Campaign – Dave Melton and his committee continue to work on the feasibility of a capital campaign. No decisions have been made yet and the decision will be made by the new vestry.
  - v. Nick Vestuto agreed to be Senior Warden,
  - vi. Dr. Joshua Wentz has accepted our invitation to be the new Music Director starting in March, and Christopher thanked Roger and Jennie Lamb for their interim work with the music department.
  - vii. More will be forthcoming regarding how we can continue to support and be engaged in fire relief after the Eaton and Palisades fires, support for asylum seekers, our LGBTQ+ community, the unhoused, and those less fortunate than ourselves.

- j. Thank you's -
  - i. Christopher expressed his thanks to all the volunteers – Ushers, Greeters, Tech guild, Coffee Hour hosts, Frank Browne, Choir Members, Readers, Altar Servers, Acolytes, Altar Guild, and Vestry members, especially the wardens, the treasurer, the clerk, and the bookkeeper.
  - ii. To Eridian Mackey, appointed for one more year as the Youth member of the vestry with full voice and vote.
  - iii. For the four terming off the vestry: Steve Plote, Sheri Flay, Bob Gregor, and Kathleen Jensen.
  - iv. For the Preschool Board, and teaching staff and for our preschool which has been voted Best Preschool in the Santa Clarita Valley for seven years in a row.
  - v. For the support of Rev. Fran Cantella, Rev. Canon Lynn Jay, Rev. Anne Tumilty, Rev. Gary Hall, and Rev. Jim Seipel.
  - vi. For our Sacristan Caroline Morgan who does so much including helping to prepare for the live streams.
  - vii. Especially to Avery Vestuto who has been prepping the livestream while Caroline has been away.
  - viii. To Rosa Holdredge and her bulletin board team, to Paloma Lozano and Carol Vestuto who have taken care of the children in Sunday school.
  - ix. And especially for Tracy Stapp and Erick Long.
- k. Christopher expressed his love for St. Stephen's, and the hope he has for St. Stephen's to change the world by what we choose to do going forward.

## 7. Treasurer's Report – John Fortman

- a. He explained about our accounting system –
  - i. Differences in fiscal years for the church and preschool
  - ii. Fund accounting
  - iii. Double-entry accounting
- b. Income Statements
  - i. Pledge better than expected
  - ii. Explained about transfers and contributions to/from other funds and from the preschool to cover expenses.
  - iii. Net shortfall for the church – (\$13,305)
  - iv. Explained Balance Sheet and that we borrowed \$20,000 from the preschool to cover a checking account shortfall balance and is being paid back monthly.
  - v. Explained that funds are created at the direction of the vestry
  - vi. Preschool income is down due to Universal Pre-K.
  - vii. Preschool is budgeted for a \$65,000 shortfall. The preschool can absorb this loss, and the hope is this will get better.

- c. John expressed his thanks to:
  - i. Marian Krabach, Sheri Flay, Steve Plote, Monica Bellows and Rev. Christopher, Donna Maldonado.

#### 8. 2025 Church Budget

- a. The pledged amount is \$343,165.
- b. Preschool income is expected to be lower, so the “Occupancy” share received from the preschool will be lower.
- c. We are expecting to ask the Diocese to use our current year’s income instead of 2023 income for our Mission Share amount.
- d. Loan principle is an expense in this budget.
- e. It is a balanced budget with a net “0”.
- f. This budget largely covers fixed expenses that can be controlled like utilities, payroll, and services we need to run the parish.
- g. Mission and ministry expenses were stripped from the original budget.
- h. Expenses for ministries, outreach, and music to come from their respective fund accounts.
- i. Rev. Christopher has decided to postpone his sabbatical to 2026.
- j. The St. Stephen’s community has more than doubled its giving since Rev. Christopher started 6 years ago.

A motion was made by Laine Hedwall and seconded by Chris Yahnker to accept the treasurer’s report as presented. The motion passed unanimously with John Fortman abstaining.

#### 9. Communication Support Appeal

- a. Christopher presented a proposal from Fuzzy Media, a social media and digital marketing group, to improve our advertising to the world around us.
- b. Personal invitation is not the norm anymore, so we want to say who we are, what we stand for, what we’re about, what life is like here, and all the wonderful things we do here.
- c. Most of the work currently falls on Rev. Christopher and Tracy Stapp.
- d. The main goal is to bring new people into our parish.
- e. The finance committee and the vestry both approve this proposal.
- f. If implemented, the total additional cost to the budget would be \$22,000 starting in March and continuing to March 2026.
- g. After breaking down the amount per pledging household for the year, month and week, Rev. Christopher asked for everyone to look for an email that will be sent out asking for an increase in pledge to cover this communications proposal.

#### 10. Q & A

- a. Carolyn Randall – She is having a horrible time finding the bulletin to download on the new website. and that some of the links are dead links.



- i. Rev. Christopher apologized for the trouble. All the links are at the top of the home page, but they will look to see if they can improve their visibility.
  - b. Marilyn Pisa – Asked for an explanation of the loans.
    - i. John explained we have three loans. 1) A loan from the Diocese for the building of the sanctuary. 2) A loan with Episcopal Community Credit Union for the repair of the preschool roof and the soffits. 3) A loan from the Preschool to be paid back in full by December 31, 2026.
  - c. Dave Warburton - Reinforced support for the communications proposal and asked everyone to consider supporting it as well.
  - d. Rev. Lynn Jay – Asked why the music expense is “0”
    - i. Rev. Christopher explained that music will be funded through the music fund rather than the operating budget.
  - e. Jeff Stabile asked for more details of the Communication Proposal and if there would be additional expenses above \$22,000.
    - i. Both the Finance Committee and Vestry have vetted the proposal, and it will most likely have a very nominal additional expense which can be supported through the designated funds.
  - f. Christopher spoke about the Mission Share Fund (St. Stephen’s pledge to the Diocese) and St. Stephen’s appeal to the Diocese for 2025. The expected pledge by a parish to the Diocese for 2025 is 12% of normal operating income based on 2023 income. St. Stephen’s will be asking for the contribution to be based on 2025 expected income. It is a formal process and not guaranteed.
11. Rev. Christopher led a closing prayer and adjourned everyone to lunch at 11:58am.

Respectfully submitted, Sheri Flay

Dear People of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in the City of Santa Clarita,

On behalf of the Vestry, Staff, and ministry leaders of St. Stephen's, I am pleased to present to you the 2025 Annual Report. The reports that follow highlight a community of people who take their baptismal vow to seek and service Christ in all people seriously. A people striving for justice and peace among all people and a people whose love of God and all that God has created shines out in our city like a beacon.

It is a privilege to be the rector of this parish and I get so excited reading the reports and reflecting back on all of the ways that life manifested in our community in the previous year. 2025 was indeed a dynamic year in the life of our community! We welcomed many new faces to the community and staff while at the same time shared some heartfelt goodbyes. To be sure, 2025 was not a year free of challenge. Yet even though it was a time of transition and challenge, the Holy Spirit proved to be alive and active in our parish and our preschool. Throughout it all the hope, determination and love of the people of St. Stephen's fortified our city and the community we have co-created here provided a balm for many in our community who struggled in the last year.

During our pledge drive I would often ask people to close their eyes and try to imagine a Santa Clarita without St. Stephen's in it. It's a hard thing to do and not something any of us really want to picture. Yet sometimes we have to consider the alternatives in order to know that we are on the right path. A few years ago, the Vestry set a goal to re-establish St. Stephen's as the heartbeat of our city. After reading these reports it's clear that this community is a vital part of what makes the heart of Santa Clarita beat and that is cause for rejoicing!.

Reading these reports fills me with gratitude for the dedicated work of our ministry leaders and for all of you who give so much of yourselves to ensure that St. Stephen's truly is a place where everyone gets to come as they are and be welcomed while we all grow and change together.

It is no understatement to say that we are living in complex times. The Church must serve the world as it is in order to create the more just world we seek for all people. Thanks be to God, the good people of St. Stephen's are not content to remain stagnant. We are not who we were a year ago, nor are we who we will be a year from now. That is why it is important that we mark this moment by taking stock of the last year.

As you read these reports, I hope you will all find yourselves and some of your own story reflected in our parish story. As I often say, our community may be anchored in our buildings and grounds but this community is defined by the people here who together make up a spectacular mosaic of love, light and hope.

As we look ahead to 2026, let us take some time to reflect back on 2025, give thanks, and rejoice in the blessing that is the parish of St. Stephen's.

Faithfully,  
The Very Rev. Christopher Montella

## Senior Warden 2025 Report:

Hello and welcome to my first summary report as Senior Warden of St. Stephen's. To say that it has been quite a learning experience this past year would be an understatement. The vestry met each month to discuss and take action on several issues that came up on our agenda.

We began with our initial team building in February which involved getting familiar with the church's 2025 budget and monthly treasurer reports. Throughout the year, we discussed and voted on appropriations for various buildings and grounds projects and outreach ministries.

Beginning in April, we brought back vestry visibility in the form of the Vestry Person of the Day every Sunday. Also, in April, I became a voting member of the Finance Committee. For the first time in many years, we helped organize our participation in the Santa Clarita 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade. As Senior Warden, I assisted the various supply priests in the running of services while Christopher was away. Both John Alexopoulos (our Junior Warden) and I worked closely with Reverend Christopher on various issues concerning the church and pre-school. As the summer ended, the three of us planned the vestry retreat weekend where we were able to more closely define the specific "bucket lists" of ministries that each member will focus on. Michael Branda and I are working together on "Sacred Service" which involves ministries that work directly with our Sunday Worship. As Senior Warden, I have been given the opportunity to run our monthly Vestry meetings (which is an entirely new thing for me that I'm still navigating!)

In the fall, we moved into planning and discussions (along with the Finance and Stewardship Committees) for the 2026 budget. In November, Christopher, Sara-Anne Nelson, Kathleen Jensen and I represented St. Stephen's at the Annual Diocesan Convention in Riverside where we participated in the election of our new Bishop.

Also throughout the year, I've been able to help our ushering staff, participate as an MC, Crucifer, Chalice Bearer, reader and member of our Altar Guild. Oh, and I try to stay on key in our choir bass section.

As mentioned earlier, it has very much been a learning experience and I am so grateful for the guidance and encouragement of Reverend Christopher, our Junior Warden John Alexopoulos and all the vestry: Hallie Browne, John Fortman, Michael Branda, Laine Hedwell, William Hendley, James Mackey, Dave Melton, Caroline Morgan, Collin O' Leary, Cheryl Sena, Leslie Smith, and Marianne Zinkewicz.

Peace,  
Nick Vestuto, [seniorwarden@st-stephens.org](mailto:seniorwarden@st-stephens.org)

## **Junior Warden 2025 Report**

As Junior Warden I have focused along with our Senior Warden Nick Vestuto on the support of our parish and its congregation. This has been possible through collaboration with our entire leadership team including Rev Montella, members of the vestry and congregation volunteers. I served as a member of our search committee for our new Sexton to support the care and growth of our facility and have been engaged in support of our preschool board. As part of the Executive committee, I am moving forward with our Parish Leadership to develop a Vestry calendar of projects and annual commitments, to keep us focused on our path in 2026.

Building and Grounds has taken a large part of my time this past year to address or support infrastructure issues which are a natural part of facility aging. This is a group effort and a special thanks goes out to each member of Building and Grounds as well as members of the congregation who helped us accomplish our movement forward this year. Along with our Sexton Octavio, we have found and corrected leak issues in irrigation including sprinklers, control valves and pipes. Our sexton undertook a cleanup of the Memorial Garden to provide our parishioners with a clean area to remember others. We continue to work to resolve the drainage issue in the courtyard, and have increased the number of sump pumps available to handle heavy rain. The dishwasher in Spurling Hall was replaced, following failure of the old unit.

A new Eagle Scout project was completed at the front of the Church providing us with 3 new flagpoles. Facility storage is being investigated. We are in process to complete installation of security upgrades to the campus within the scope of the grant our church received, including gates, fencing and security cameras as well as roller shades in the preschool. I look forward to reviewing existing planting/ trees in 2026, and freshening our outdoor preschool area.

John Alexopoulos

[victograph@gmail.com](mailto:victograph@gmail.com)

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Acolytes

**Committee/Ministry chair:** Mary Mercogliano

**Vestry liaison (if different):** Rev. Christopher

**Committee members:** Meghan & Tayson Bernabe, Erick Castro, Eridian, Elise & Jillian Mackey, Clara Nold, Kelsey Raub, Daniel & Gabriella Rosser, Emily & Lily Torres. As needed support by Cathy Gero, Tessa Lucero, Eleanor Nold, Steve Plote, Michael Richards, Nick Vestuto. (participation during part or all of 2025)

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** Trainings as scheduled by rector/worship committee. Individual training provided as needed.

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### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

Acolytes support worship at St. Stephen's. At the 10:30 Sunday service we typically have a crucifer and 2 torch bearers. For festival services we add a thurifer and boat bearer and, at times, a banner bearer.

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### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- Mary Mercogliano took over scheduling of acolytes early in the year.
  - Addition of acolyte members
  - Everyone training in October with update to procedures
- 

### 3. A Highlight from the Year

Adding youth and adult acolytes to the team.

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#### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Some acolytes have dropped from regular participation; we look to add more youth and adult acolytes so that participation does not need to be as frequent.

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#### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- Increase membership
  - Individualized training as necessary and an annual all service participant training.
- 

#### **6. Gratitude**

Grateful for the response we have had when inviting people to join as an acolyte.

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#### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

- Please consider becoming an acolyte. Training is provided and we will pair you with experienced people the first several times you serve.

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Altar Guild

**Committee/Ministry chair:** Mary Mercogliano

**Vestry liaison (if different):** Rev. Christopher

**Committee members:** Miriam Aardahl, Erick Castro, Sally Drake, Cathy Gero, Donna Maldonado, Kelsey Raub, Michael Richards, Joannie Stanzione, Nick & Carol Vestuto,

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** Seasonally

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### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

In weekly teams we prepare the sanctuary for worship. We change out colors as the liturgical seasons change. We maintain the linens and vessels used for the celebration of the eucharist. We prepare for and support weddings and funerals and other non-Sunday services as requested by the rector.

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### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- De-greening after Christmas
  - Lent
  - Holy Week/Easter
  - Pentecost
  - Ordinary Time
  - Advent
  - Christmas
- 

### 3. A Highlight from the Year

Grateful for new members joining the Altar Guild over the course of the year.

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#### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Looking to add new members who can commit to support a team responsible for a specific Sunday each month. Ideally each team would have 3 members so that it is easier to cover absences.

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#### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- Always looking to add more people to the ministry, as a member of a weekly team or as supplemental support.
- 

#### **6. Gratitude**

Members of the congregation joining us to prepare for and un-do after major feast days that require extra preparation and decoration. Grateful to have members who have taken on specific ministries within the ministries of the Altar Guild.

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#### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

- Continue to support the worship life of the congregation, bringing the rector's vision to reality.



## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Anti-Racism Coalition

**Committee/Ministry chair:** Mary Jo Higginbotham

**Committee members/ Core Members:** Rosa Holdredge, Mary Roberti, Peggy Stabile, Desiree Spencer-Walters

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** As needed

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### Overview of the Committee's Work

ARC is an anti-racism organization, and while anti-racism intersects with numerous social justice issues, ARC's work is centered on racial equity rather than the full spectrum of social justice concerns.

Our Mission is to "Explore, discuss, and understand personal and systemic racism to be able to:

- Provide educational opportunities to transform minds & behavior.
  - Equip us & our parish with appropriate means to stand up against racism.
  - Encourage reconciliation with ourselves, with God & all of God's people.
  - Inspire true acceptance of all persons as being made in God's image.
- 

### Major Activities or Events in 2025

- Members of ARC joined members of SCV NAACP and community leaders at a press conference in March to stand against recent episodes of racism perpetrated against Black students in our local high schools. We stood in solidarity and spoke out to expose the injustice and demand appropriate action.
- In August, ARC donated \$500 & 4 full school backpacks to families in need through coordination with NAACP.
- Hosted a table at September Ministry Fair with Trivia Game and opportunity for parishioners to volunteer and find out more about ARC's work.
- In October, sponsored "*Sunday Best*"- Parish movie night, a documentary of Ed Sullivan's legacy of equality as he broke barriers by booking Black artists.

- ARC collected food for Thanksgiving Dinners in November and donated 84 full bags to SCV families (coordinated through Hart School District).
  - Monthly bulletin board displays in narthex, created by Rosa Holdredge, and other displays throughout parish hall and outside areas.
- 

### **A Challenge or Area for Growth**

We are always looking for more people to help support our cause and volunteers with ideas to help us plan more activities and events.

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### **Gratitude**

Thank you very much to everyone who has their time, energy, ideas and action!

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### **Participation welcome in 2026**

If you are interested in helping ARC in any way, please contact any ARC representative or Mary Jo Higginbotham by email at *maryjohigg@gmail.com*

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Buildings and ground

**Committee/Ministry chair:** John Alexopoulos

**Vestry liaison (if different):**

**Committee members:** Steve Plote, Dave Melton, Marv Aardahl, Joe Merkens, Bill Gannon, Octavio Barba

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** Bi Monthly

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### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

The focus of our committee in 2025 was to provide support of the Parish facility to assure that our mission of providing a place of worship and support to our parishioners and community.

To assure that the facility is prepared for weather or other events which might affect ability to serve congregants or community members.

To review and recommend maintenance or improvements to our Building and Grounds, as needed to provide a safe and welcoming atmosphere to all who come to our campus.

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### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- Continued Maintenance of Systems
  - Flooding mitigation in Courtyard/ Drainage
  - Implementation of State Grant for Parish
  - Reduction of Water Usage
  - Storage area reset.
- 

### 3. A Highlight from the Year

New Eagle Scout Project completed/ Flag Poles

#### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Courtyard Drainage continues to require attention.

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#### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- Installation of elements listed in the State Grant/ Preschool Shades/ Gates
  - Spurling Hall, Storage needs to be increased.
- 

#### **6. Gratitude**

We are thankful for the gifts of each member of our community and the work accomplished by their combined efforts.

We are thankful to the volunteers who show up when something needs to be done.

We are thankful for the addition of our new Sexton Octavio Barba who brings energy and expertise to the maintenance of our Parish.

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#### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

Please see any member of the committee, or text the Junior Warden. We need your hands to assist, this is our parish, you do not need to be an expert in maintenance.

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Campus Renewal & Vision - Technology

**Committee/Ministry chair:** John Alexopoulos, Dave Melton

**Vestry liaison (if different):**

**Committee members:** John Noonan, Tracy Stapp, Erick Long, Octavio Barba

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** We typically have onsite meetings with contractors, as needed. Typically, our committee meetings are via phone calls or meet/zoom, as needed.

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### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

The purpose of this committee is for keeping up with advances and changes in technology so our parish can stay in touch with the community as effectively as possible.

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### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- Replaced our campus security gate system to better control campus entry and exit
  - Upgraded all staff computers to Windows 11
  - Improved staff computer backups
  - Installed creative lighting for church services
  -
- 

### 3. A Highlight from the Year

The installation of a new campus security system.

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#### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

One of our ongoing technology challenges has been the improvement and the reliability of our internet access. Without reliable internet, our online meetings and service livestreaming can get interrupted without warning.

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#### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- The installation of a campus wide security monitoring system
  -
- 

#### **6. Gratitude**

I am thankful for each of my committee members and the projects everyone has tackled this past year.

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#### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

- You can always get involved in our technology adventures, like volunteering at our tech booth
- If you have a skill like lighting, sound, phone systems, internet systems, and computers or you see a need that can be helped, please feel free contact one of us. We can always use your creativity

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Melton

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Ministry name:** Children & Youth Ministries - Godly Play and YESS

**Ministry coordinator:** Shannon Brintnall

**Vestry liaison:** Hallie Brown & Collin O'Leary

**Committee members:** n/a

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** every Sunday

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### 1. Overview of the Ministry's Work\*

Godly Play is a Montessori based Sunday School curriculum for children in preschool and elementary school and Youth Engaged at St. Stephen's (YESS) is our youth group program for junior high and high school students.

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### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- Shannon Brintnall installed as Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator
  - Trunk or Treat
  - Gingerbread house decorating night for children and families
  - Christmas Pageant
- 

### 3. A Highlight from the Year

Having the opportunity to work with and get to know the children, youth, and parents at St. Stephen's.

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#### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Changes in leadership which have impacted participation in children and youth ministry. Both programs would benefit from stronger attendance and new children and families in the congregation.

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#### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- Increase attendance/participation in both programs
  - Recruit “once in a while volunteers” for substitutes as needed
- 

#### **6. Gratitude**

Much gratitude for those in the congregation who have stepped in to support our program, to the families who entrust us with their children for their religious education. And for the support of Reverend Christopher and Missy Morain (Missioner for Christian Formation, Children, Youth: Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles) for their guidance in the revitalization of our youth ministry program.

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#### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

- Volunteer to be a “sub” for when we need coverage
- Help in creating Godly Play materials

\* This report has been written from the perspective of September 2025 forward



## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Communications Committee (*Comm Comm*)

**Committee/Ministry chair:** Julie Johnson

**Vestry liaison (if different):** Marianne Zinkewicz

**Committee members:** Richard Holdredge, David Warburton, Tracy Stapp, Rosa Holdridge, Bob Gregor, Marianne Zinkewicz, Laura Hunt, Kelsey Raub

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** 1 x a month

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### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

The Communications Committee (Comm Comm) meets monthly to review and guide parish communication efforts in support of our shared vision "To be Christ for each other and the world." Through thoughtful planning and collaboration, the committee oversees communication plans, bulletin board updates, and coordinated messaging for parish needs, including special food assistance during times of community hardship such as government shutdowns. We advise and actively monitor the parish website and social media presence to ensure that information is clear, welcoming, and reflective of Christ's love in action. This year, we established a working relationship with Fuzzy Image Media to better understand our social media profile and to begin meaningful conversations about expanding our reach by inviting more voices, perspectives, and people "into the room."

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### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- Collaboration with Fuzzy Image Media on Parish Profile and Demographics
  - Special Food Needs Drive
  - Consulting and advising with Reverend Christopher
-

### **3. A Highlight from the Year**

The Comm Comm served as a liaison with Fuzzy Image Media, guiding an important fact-finding phase that laid the foundation for a new and more intentional social media program. This thoughtful groundwork with Reverend Christopher is enabling Fuzzy Image Media to implement a social media strategy that reflects who we are as a parish and supports our call to be Christ for each other and the world.

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### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Membership involvement is an area of growth for us. We would like collaboration with more St. Stephen's Parish stakeholders, so that we can more genuinely reflect our dynamic parish life in our communications.

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### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- Demographic Survey
  - Update to the Welcome Brochure
  - Review Signage in the front of the Church
- 

### **6. Gratitude**

We are deeply grateful for the spirit of camaraderie and shared purpose within the Comm Comm! We also give thanks for Rev. Christopher's steady guidance and pastoral insight, which ground our communications in faith and mission, and for Tracy's invaluable administrative assistance!

---

### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

Join us on the first Monday of every month at 3pm on Zoom!  
Refreshments are provided in your own fridge!



- Take pictures of St. Stephen's community life and email them [photos@st-stephens.org](mailto:photos@st-stephens.org)

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** The Order of the Daughters of the King

**Committee/Ministry chair:** Kathleen Jensen

**Vestry liaison (if different):**

**Committee members:** We currently have about seven active members

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** Monthly meetings on the first Sunday of the month, host Coffee Hour on the second Sunday of the month.

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### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

The Woman at the Well Chapter of the Order of the Daughters of the King is comprised of women who are dedicated to prayer and service. We strive to enhance spirituality at St. Stephen's and provide opportunities for prayer and reflection. Our members also participate in many other ministries and are dedicated to the prayer chain.

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### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- Monthly Chapter Meetings
  - Epiphany House Blessing Packets
  - Assist at funeral receptions
  - Coffee Hour for Graduates
  - All Saint's Day Crosses, workshop and display
  - Nativity Display
  - Monthly Coffee Hours
  - Prayer chain
- 

### 3. A Highlight from the Year

Our Nativity display is an annual highlight. We enjoy the teamwork involved in setting it up and the joy it brings to the parish.

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#### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Growth itself is our challenge for the coming year. Our chapter has been decreasing due to people moving away and attracting new members is a challenge. The traditional nature of the Order feels a bit old fashioned, but our work of prayer and service never goes out of style. Joining an order is a big commitment and people seem reluctant to do so. As a result, we need to do a better job of communicating our purpose, the support we provide, and the contemporary importance of the work we do.

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#### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

We are looking forward to planning a morning retreat during the season of Easter and a book exchange or other evening activity during the summer. These will be open to everyone.

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#### **6. Gratitude**

I am so thankful for the prayer and support of the Daughters! Their willingness to serve and help each other is a true gift.

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#### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

Everyone is welcome to join us for our sponsored events or a chapter meeting! If you are interested in finding out more about the Order please contact Kathleen Jensen (jensencurl@gmail.com) or speak with any of us (you can recognize us by the crosses we wear).

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Ministry name:** Education for Ministry (EfM)

**Ministry chair:** Mary Jo Higginbotham, Mentor

**Vestry liaison (if different):**

**Committee members:**

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates:** Wednesday evenings (Sept - June)

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### Overview:

EfM invites people of God to discern and act in faith through small group reflection! Education for Ministry (EfM) is a program of lay theological education that combines worship, spiritual reflection, group and individual study.

EfM “lives” at the School of Theology of the University of the South in Sewanee, TN, and is offered at St. Stephen’s as a “satellite” program. It’s a unique formation program that helps the faithful discover the Christian tradition, bringing it into conversation with your experiences of the world.

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### Major Activities in 2025

This year, St. Stephens has six participants in three different levels of EfM:

- Engaging with the Old Testament
- Immersing oneself in the New Testament
- Embarking on a journey through Christian History

Plus worship - By recognizing the presence of God with us in every session, we explore ways to deepen our individual spirituality and share responsibility for leading worship, exploring different expressions like poetry, music, and types of prayer.

EfM is learner driven - through reading, videos, and discussion you decide what’s relevant to your faith journey. No tests or papers due. Ever.

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### **A Highlight from the Year**

In December, we took a “field trip” to St. John’s Cathedral in downtown Los Angeles to attend a special appreciation dinner concert honoring Bishop John Taylor. It was sponsored by several diocesan multicultural ministries and included phenomenal entertainment by the Episcopal Chorale, an Oaxacan Band, and Chinese Dancers.

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### **A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Living in community! We value creating sacred space where people feel welcomed and safe. We practice offering stories of our experiences and listening with ears of our heart.

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### **Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

Many people have been taught that one must be ordained to be a minister - We are called to continue the ministry of Jesus - to be the hands, heart, and incarnate body of Christ in our own place through worship, reflection, and service to others. Would you like to learn more about how you can do these things?

Are you looking to deepen your faith?

Do you want to know more about the Bible, Christian Tradition, and Church History?

Are you hoping to understand how your personal experiences and beliefs bring you closer to God and God's people?

If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, EfM may be for you.

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### **6. Gratitude**

We extend our appreciation to all those who have participated in EfM in the past and have since lent their time, talent and donations to the program. Thank you very much!

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### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

All seekers Welcome! You do not need to be an Episcopalian to enroll. You do not need to be a Christian. If you are interested, please contact Mary Jo Higginbotham at [maryjohigg@gmail.com](mailto:maryjohigg@gmail.com)

## **Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting**

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**Committee/Ministry name: Finance Committee**

**Committee/Ministry chair: Laine Hedwall**

**Vestry liaison (if different):**

**Committee members: Nick Vestuto, Marian Krabach, Mary Roberti, Steve Plote, Sheri Flay, Kathleen Jensen, Christopher Montella, Monica Bellows, John Fortman, Donna Maldonado**

**Year of report: 2025**

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate): The Finance Committee meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month.**

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### **1. Overview of the Committee's Work**

The Finance Committee is the budget and finance component of the Vestry of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. The Finance Committee operates under authority granted to it by the Vestry and provides financial guidance and information for the Vestry to enable the Vestry to make informed budget and finance decisions. The Finance Committee provides the Vestry with prudent and timely financial information to bolster the Vestry's efforts to implement the priorities of the vestry and the church.

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### **2. Major Activities or Events in 2025**

- Implementation and adherence to the Vestry approved budget for 2025.
- Monitors and informs Vestry of all financial transactions of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.
- Provides monthly analysis of income and expenses of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and advises Vestry of potential future financial opportunities or concerns relating to ongoing financial management of the church.
- Advises Vestry of any needs to adjust current annual budget of the church to address unplanned income or costs.

- Provides financial information and analysis of Preschool Financial information for review by Preschool Board of Directors and the Vestry.
  - Analyzes proposed Preschool Annual Budget for presentation to Vestry for approval.
  - Monitors and informs the Preschool Board of Directors and the Vestry of all financial transactions of St. Stephen's Preschool.
  - Helps to update Vestry by identifying future financial needs of the church including costs associated with upkeep, repair, and modernization of existing church campus infrastructure.
  - Helps the Vestry and other ministries within St. Stephen's in financial planning or budgetary concerns and how to address individual needs of the various ministries of the church.
- 

### **3. A Highlight from the Year**

The Finance Committee began 2025 with a reorganization of duties with the goal of providing in depth and complete financial reporting to the Vestry, as well as identifying how the committee can better assist the Vestry in making sometimes difficult financial decisions for the well-being of the parish.

One of the highlights of the year was the approval of a more modern and fundamentally sound computer accounting system that makes financial reporting more complete and easier to produce. The Committee recommended, and the Vestry approved a change from the accounting system Church Windows to Quick Books which will enable the Vestry and the Finance Committee to be better informed about all financial transactions of the church and the preschool. Quick Books is much easier to work with and allows multiple assigned users to work simultaneously to produce clear, concise, and accurate financial reports for the Vestry and the Finance Committee. The Quick Books accounting system is operating for the church at this time. It is expected the Quick Books system will be completely operational for the Preschool by March 1, 2026.

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### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Increasing giving to the church and trying to control costs and expenses of the church is always a challenge or area for growth in any church. Better organization of financial reporting coupled with monthly in-depth analysis of income, expenses, as well as potential analysis of future giving or expenses will provide for a stronger financial



understanding of the ongoing needs of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. A strong financial foundation will enable St. Stephen's to continue growth and prosperity in the future.

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## **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- Complete transition to the Quick Books Accounting System.
  - More complete and easier reports to help committee members and the Vestry to identify financial needs or opportunities for the congregation.
- 

## **6. Gratitude**

St. Stephen's has been blessed with many committed and faithful members of the church who have donated not only their time and efforts to building St. Stephen's for the future, but financially supporting the church with their pledging commitments and their financial gifts to St. Stephen's. We have been blessed with very active and knowledgeable members of the committee who have dedicated their work on the committee to providing excellent financial and budgetary guidance to help build on the giving efforts of the congregation while at the same time keeping control of ongoing operational expenses and costs.

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## **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

- It is a key priority in 2026 to identify an Assistant Treasurer. It is important to have support for our current Treasurer, John Fortman. John began his last 3 year cycle as Treasurer at the beginning of 2025 and it is expected that the Assistant Treasurer will become the Treasurer in January of 2028.
- We will also need additional finance committee members for the upcoming year to fill vacancies as they arise.

## 2025 In Review

		Year End 12/31/2025	
		2025 Budget	2025 Actual
<b>Income</b>			
	Pledge*	346,415	348,852
	Plate	33,000	34,642
	Easter/Christmas/Thanksgiving	4,000	16,163
	Fundraising	1,300	1,729
	Rental	4,697	6,407
	Other	100	2,640
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>389,512</b>	<b>410,433</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
	Mission Share	58,401	58,612
	Interest on Loans	1,980	2,578
	Principal on Loans	16,800	19,398
	Salaries and Benefits	287,995	286,776
	Utilities & Facilities	51,914	50,006
	Office Expense	4,150	5,043
	Technology Expense	12,734	13,417
	Taxes and Insurance	30,000	35,646
	Program Expense	4,025	9,244
	Ministries Expense	0	1,177
	Outreach	0	2,177
	Advertising & Communications	768	3,801
	Music Expense	1,712	6,734
	<b>Miscellaneous Expense</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>8,320</b>
	<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>471,479</b>	<b>502,929</b>
	<b>Income less Direct Expense</b>	<b>-81,967</b>	<b>-92,496</b>
<b>Fund Transfers and Shared Costs</b>			
<b>Less Fund Transfers Expense</b>			
	Transfers to Non-Operating Funds	9,600	9,600
	Transfer to Rector's Discretionary	1,500	1,500
	<b>Total Transfers Expense</b>	<b>11,100</b>	<b>11,100</b>
		-93,067	-103,596
<b>Add Shared Costs with Preschool</b>			
	Preschool Occupancy	43,176	43,176
	Shared HR with Preschool	34,160	34,498
	Other Shared Costs	9,900	7,608
	<b>Total Shared Costs with Preschool</b>	<b>87,236</b>	<b>85,282</b>
	<b>Total Fund Transfers and Shared Costs</b>	<b>76,136</b>	<b>74,182</b>
	<b>Net Operating Fund Income</b>	<b>-5,831</b>	<b>-18,314</b>

# Church

## Balance Sheet - Year End 2025

**12/31/2025**

### Assets

#### Current Assets

Cash in Banks	225,123
Other Cash and Cash Equivalents	6,213

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Total Current Assets	231,336
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Fixed Assets - Net of Depreciation	920,983
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<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>1,152,319</b>
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### Liabilities

Accounts Payable - Vendors	7,210
Payroll Tax and Benefits Payable	571
Note Payable - LA Diocese*	95,729
Loan Payable - ECFCU	24,189
Note Payable - Preschool	16,959
Prepaid Pledge	4,600

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<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>149,258</b>
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### Fund Balances

Operating Fund Balance	27,984
Operating Reserve Fund	40,963
Buildings & Grounds Fund	14,293
Children and Youth Fund	0
Children & Youth Fund (2025)	940
Children & Youth Staff Offset	30000
Rector's Discretionary Fund	2886
Altar Guild	
Altar Guild Fund (2025)	656
Altar Guild SK Higginbotham Sub-fund	1,312
Altar Flowers Fund	3,706
Laundry Love	3,594
Music Fund	3,086
Outreach	10,788
Daughters Of The King	426
EfM Fund	1,032
Anti-Racism Coalition Fund	1,105
Sabbatical Reserve Fund	9,000
Welcome Table (R)	-51
Scout Project Fund	

Scout Project Residual Sub-Fund	2,168
Scout Meditation Garden	0
Scout Signage Project	0
Scout Preschool Mural	0
Scout Flag Pole Project	-600
Communications Fund	3,503
Rick Martin Bequest	68,682
Fixed Asset Fund	751,098
Fund Balance Adjustments	26,490
<b>Total Fund Balances</b>	<b>1,003,061</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balances</b>	<b>1,152,319</b>

### Fund Reorganization - 11/4/2025 Transfers

#### Funds Before Reorganization

Fund Name	Balance 1/1/2025	Balance 11/3/2025	Transferred Out
Operating Fund Balance	1,230	-8,295	0
Operating Reserve Fund	5,747	9,747	0
Project	171	171	171
Other Directed Donations	615	615	615
Altar Flowers	6,338	4,939	2,374
Pass Through	1,196	1,704	1,704
Welcome Table	602	601	602
Endowment Fund	445	445	445
<u>Fundraising Master Fund</u>			
Gala	37,786	0	
Vision Master Plan	-4,500	0	
Capital Campaign 2023	-23,275	7,094	7,094
Memorial Garden	370	370	370
Pet Memorial Garden	568	603	603
Immigrant Support Circle	15,361	11,362	7,226
Bookstore	767	876	876
Family Promise	1,029	1,028	1,029
Share the Grace	114	114	114
Chimes & Bells	-6	-6	-6
Altar Guild	41	555	556
Scott Higginbotham Fund	517	1,297	1,297
Rick Martin Bequest Fund	0	175,162	30,000
Music Fund	2,206	4,248	25,000
Outreach	1,382	2,417	25,000
Children & Youth Fund		940	26,490
Laundry Love	3,675	3,833	0
Buildings & Grounds Fund	7,306	6,770	0
Rector's Discretionary Fund	-2,018	-1,136	0
Daughters of the King	226	426	0
EfM Fund	1,032	1,032	0
GLEAM-LA Diocese LGBTQ+ Commis	2,100	0	0
Anti-Racism Coalition	2,628	2,148	0
Sabbatical Reserve Fund	9,000	9,000	0
Welcome Table	3,057	430	0
Scout Patio	798	0	0
Scout Master Fund			
Scout Project Residual Sub-Fund	0	3,168	0
Scout Meditation Garden	232	0	0
Scout Signage Project	237	0	0
Scout Preschool Mural	300	0	0
Scout Flag Pole Project	0	0	0
Communications Fund	0	5,503	0
		<b>247,161</b>	<b>135,696</b>

#### Funds After Reorganization

Transferred In	Balance 11/4/2025	Fund Name
25,000	16,705	Operating Fund Balance
38,005	47,752	Operating Reserve Fund
973	7,743	Buildings & Grounds Fund
		Children and Youth Fund
	940	Children & Youth Fund (2025)
30,000	30,000	Children & Youth Staff Offset
9,245	11,662	Outreach
		Altar Guild
556	556	Altar Guild Fund (2025)
1,297	1,297	Altar Guild SK Higginbotham Sub-fund
4,136	3,000	Rector's Discretionary Fund
-6	4,242	Music Fund
0	2,565	Altar Flowers Fund
0	3,833	Laundry Love
0	426	Daughters Of The King
0	1,032	EfM Fund
0	2,148	Anti-Racism Coalition Fund
0	9,000	Sabbatical Reserve Fund
0	430	Welcome Table (R)
0		Scout Project Fund
0	3,168	Scout Project Residual Sub-Fund
0	0	Scout Meditation Garden
0	0	Scout Signage Project
0	0	Scout Preschool Mural
0	0	Scout Flag Pole Project
0	5,503	Communications Fund
0	68,672	Rick Martin Bequest Fund
26,490	26,490	Final Balance Adjustment/Write Off
<b>135,696</b>	<b>247,164</b>	

## Preschool

### Income Statement - Operating Fund

**FYE July 31, 2025 and Interim December 31, 2025**

	FYE 7/31/2025		5 Months Ended 12/31/2025		
	Annual Budget	Actual	Annual Budget	YTD Budget	Actual
<b>Income</b>					
Tuition & Fees	541,551	571,976	768,151	317,694	298,336
Other	13,400	6,101	10,200	5,000	1,150
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>554,951</b>	<b>578,077</b>	<b>778,351</b>	<b>322,694</b>	<b>299,486</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
<b>Transfers to Church</b>					
Occupancy	54,100	54,096	65,000	17,990	17,990
Shared HR	43,169	34,754	43,180	18,270	16,142
Shared Other	7,396	7,292	17,204	5,235	4,021
<b>Total Transfers to Church</b>	<b>104,665</b>	<b>96,142</b>	<b>125,384</b>	<b>41,495</b>	<b>38,153</b>
<b>Transfers to Non-Operating Funds</b>					
Transfers to Non-Operating Funds	12,600	13,600	22,996	9,580	9,580
<b>Total Transfers to Non-Operating Funds</b>	<b>12,600</b>	<b>13,600</b>	<b>22,996</b>	<b>9,580</b>	<b>9,580</b>
<b>Other Expense</b>					
Salaries & Benefits	458,178	480,026	566,015	241,299	229,645
Office	5,125	9,299	3,625	1,510	4,041
Program	12,225	11,298	26,800	13,344	10,493
Professional Development	4,000	2,733	2,000	0	1,235
Maintenance	2,500	5,125	2,500	1,335	2,890
Memberships	2,754	2,331	2,754	2,754	726
Technology	8,650	7,384	7,850	3,765	2,592
Insurance	6,788	11,284	6,788	3,000	2,333
Misc	3,000	4,383	8,000	3,330	1,908
<b>Total Other Expense</b>	<b>503,220</b>	<b>533,863</b>	<b>626,332</b>	<b>270,337</b>	<b>255,863</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>620,485</b>	<b>643,605</b>	<b>774,712</b>	<b>321,412</b>	<b>303,596</b>
<b>Net Operating Fund Income</b>	<b>-65,534</b>	<b>-65,528</b>	<b>3,639</b>	<b>1,282</b>	<b>-4,110</b>

## Preschool

### Balance Sheet FYE July 31, 2025, and Interim December 31, 2025

	8/1/2025	7/31/2025	12/31/2025
<b>Assets</b>			
Cash	216,029	136,549	172,432
Note Receivable - Church	0	23,124	16,959
Accounts Receivable	27,859	13,705	-8,753
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>243,888</b>	<b>173,378</b>	<b>180,638</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Accounts Payable	1,263	-1,425	-362
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>1,263</b>	<b>-1,425</b>	<b>-362</b>
<b>Fund Balances</b>			
Operating Fund Balance	89,228	23,695	19,650
Pass Through	610	875	1,305
Operating Reserve Fund	150,806	136,996	141,996
Scholarship Fund	1,979	1,979	1,979
Buildings & Grounds Fund	0	11,257	16,069
<b>Total Fund Balances</b>	<b>242,623</b>	<b>174,802</b>	<b>180,999</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balances</b>	<b>243,886</b>	<b>173,377</b>	<b>180,637</b>

## 2026 Church Budget

<b>ABUNDANCE</b>	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget
Donations			
Pledges	346,415	348,852	345,440
Plate	33,000	34,642	33,000
Special Offering - Easter, Christmas	4,000	16,163	4,000
Total Donations	383,415	399,657	382,440
Fundraising	1,300	1,729	1,300
Rental of Facilities	4,697	6,407	4,425
Interest Income	100	2,640	2,500
<b>TOTAL ABUNDANCE</b>	<b>389,512</b>	<b>410,433</b>	<b>390,665</b>
<b>INVESTMENT IN MISSION</b>			
Diocesan Mission Share Contribution	58,401	58,612	63,000
Repayment of Loans	(Int. Only)	(Int. Only)	(P&I)
PS Line of Credit & Parking Lot Resurfacing Repayment			8,480
Payment - Note Payable ECFCU 2/8/2021 (Roof Loan)	1,380	1,978	7,380
Payment - Note Payable EDLA 1/1/2001 Building Loan	600	600	1,404
Total Repayment of Loans	1,980	2,578	17,264
Transfers to Reserves			
Monthly Transfer to Operating Reserve Fund	4,800	4,800	4,800
Monthly Transfer to Building and Grounds Fund	4,800	4,800	6,000
Transfer to Rector's Discretionary Fund	1,500	1,500	1,500
Monthly Transfer to Sabbatical Fund	0		0
Total Transfers to Reserves	11,100	11,100	12,300
Parish Human Resources			
Payroll			
Clergy Payroll			
Rector Salary	19,954	19,960	20,207
Rector Housing	69,650	69,650	70,538
SECA Offset	0	6,855	6,942
SECA 2019	0	0	7,099
Total Clergy Payroll	89,604	96,465	104,786
Lay Staff Payroll	111,228	115,152	115,958
Total Payroll	200,832	211,617	220,744
Benefits			
Benefits - Clergy -	28,590	26,472	32,965
Benefits - Lay Staff	9,819	7,290	8,578
	38,409	33,762	41,543
Employer Tax and Unemployment			



Unemployment Benefit	1,560	1,050	1,164
Payroll Tax	11,258	10,385	12,877
Total Employer Tax and Unemployment	12,818	11,435	14,041
Total Parish Human Resources	252,059	256,814	276,328
Campus Operations			
Utilities & Facilities Expenses	51,914	50,006	52,900
Office Expense	4,150	5,043	5,550
Technology Expenses	12,734	13,417	13,706
Property Tax	8,000	8,519	8,750
Insurance	22,000	27,127	24,000
Total Campus Operations	98,798	104,112	104,906
Ministry & Service			
Program Expenses			
Clergy Expenses	1,800	3,023	2,000
Sabbatical Clergy (Funded - Sabbatical Reserve)	0	0	7,800
Sabbatical Fund Reimbursement	0	0	-7,800
Supply Clergy	1,250	3,375	1,750
Children & Youth Ministry			
Children & Youth Ministry	6,006	6,431	16,557
Funding from Children & Youth Fund	0	0	-10,000
Total Children & Youth Ministry	6,006	6,431	6,557
Outreach	0	2,177	0
Other Program Expense	975	4,022	2,300
Total Program Expenses	10,031	19,028	12,607
Communications and Advertising Expenses	768	3,801	14,000
Music Expense			
Regular Music Expenses	1,712	6,734	2,000
Salaries	29,928	23,527	35,808
Total Music Expense	31,640	30,261	37,808
Misc. Expenses	1,000	8,320	3,750
Total Ministry & Service	43,439	61,410	68,165
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENT IN MISSION</b>	<b>465,777</b>	<b>494,626</b>	<b>541,963</b>
Net Income	-76,265	-84,193	-151,298
Preschool Shared Expense Offset			
Preschool Occupancy	-43,176	-43,176	-80,592
Shared HR	-34,160	-34,498	-35,429
Other Shared Expenses With Preschool	-9,900	-7,608	-12,100
Total Preschool Shared Expense Offset	-87,236	-85,282	-128,121
<b>NET INCOME AFTER OFFSET</b>	<b>10,971</b>	<b>1,089</b>	<b>-23,177</b>

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Ministry name:** Food Pantry Collections

**Ministry chair:** Mary Jo Higginbotham

**Vestry liaison (if different):**

**Committee members:** Mary Roberti, Diane Shaws, Yolanda Quijada

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting:** First Saturday of each Month. \*Next Collection: Sat., Feb. 7, 2026, 9am - 11am

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### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

- Collecting nonperishable food (including dog & cat food) each month.
  - Promoting and posting "most needed items list."
  - Delivering monthly to the Food Pantry and other community organizations
- 

### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

Depending on the amount and number of donations we receive each month, a major portion of our collection is delivered to the SCV Food Pantry. In addition, we make smaller donations to the following local organizations:

- Santa Clarita Veteran Services Collaborative
  - Family Promise
  - Bridge to Home
  - FYI (Fostering Youth Independence)
  - BaNC (Basic Needs Center) at College of the Canyons
  - Church of Hope
- 

### 3. A Highlight from the Year

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#### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Each month a “most needed” item list is published in our parish newsletter - Please watch for it and gear your donations to that as much as possible.

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#### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- -
- 

#### **6. Gratitude**

Thank you, Lord, for giving us the ability and opportunity to share with others. We appreciate all that our parishioners have done and given throughout the year.

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#### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

- Please feel free to bring your donations to church and leave them in the designated box in the narthex any Sunday if you can't make our monthly date.
- Volunteers are always welcome! We especially welcome students who are needing "community service hours" for school.

## **Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting.**

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Everyday Church Life

**Committee/Ministry chair:** Marianne Zinkewicz

**Vestry liaison (if different):** Leslie Smith

**Committee members:** Leslie Smith & Marianne Zinkewicz

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** Every two weeks

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### **1. Overview of the Committee's Work**

We oversee various groups that contribute to church life. These groups include:

SAGES, Daughters of the King, Communications Committee, Circle of Gratitude, Angel Tree Network, Ushering, Coffee Hour, Dinners for Eight, Crafters Group

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### **2. Major Activities or Events in 2025**

- SAGES Luncheons
  - Weekly (Sunday) Coffee Hours
  - Daughters of the King (Monthly)
  - Communications Committee (Monthly)
  - Ushers (On-going)
- 

### **3. A Highlight from the Year**

SAGES Luncheons are always fun and bring people together.

The Ushers Group are much needed and the organization of it is under control thanks to all our volunteers.

The Communications Committee works with Fuzzy Media Company and works with us to guide our Social Media.

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#### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Areas for growth, in my opinion, would be coffee hour, Angel Tree Network, and Dinners for Eight.

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#### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- More growth in the Communications area in getting our Church's word out there.
  - Need more volunteers for Coffee hour
- 

#### **6. Gratitude**

I feel blessed to be a part of this ministry and knowing that I am helping out in areas that might need guidance and advice.

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#### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

- It would be nice to get more volunteers to help out in a lot of our ministries
- Participants should always voice their opinions about what to do and how to help

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Justice, Inclusion & Outreach

**Committee/Ministry chair:** Cheryl Sena and William Hendley

**Vestry liaison (if different):**

**Committee members:**

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** Varied

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### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

**Justice, Inclusion & Outreach** is a new umbrella for the good works St. Stephen's is dedicated to doing in the church and greater Santa Clarita communities. Parishioners at St. Stephen's have continued to contribute their time, energy, and passion to numerous groups and activities, both within and outside the church.

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### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- a. **The St. Stephen's Men's Group**, under the leadership of Dave Morrow, meets for breakfast and fellowship on the first Saturday of the month at Dink's Deli in Granary Square in Valencia. All members of the St. Stephen's community are welcome to join us. The group helps maintain the building and grounds, assists the Altar Guild in preparing the church for Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and other important days in the church calendar, and supports church fundraisers. They plan to restart their annual retreat after a multi-year hiatus.
- b. **The St. Stephen's Book Study** met monthly on Thursday mornings in the sacristy and on Zoom to read and discuss books. Books discussed this year include The Book of Joy, a book about a conversation between Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama, and a book by Episcopal priest Lindsay Hardin Freeman, Bible Women. Everyone is welcome to join! Contact Judy Ferkel for additional information.
- c. **The St. Stephen's Book Group** is a new group that formed based on interest received at last year's Ministry Fair. The group meets on Tuesday nights every other month in the upstairs lounge to discuss secular books, and it averages 6-10 participants per meeting. Books discussed over the past year include: The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride, The Midnight Library by Matt Haig, James by Percival Everett, The Emperor of Gladness by Ocean Vuong, Buckeye: A Novel by Patrick Ryan, Great Expectations: A Novel by Vinson Cunningham, and This is Happiness by Niall Williams. Contact William Hendley for additional information.

- d. **The Angel Network** is a relatively new ministry at St. Stephen's that helps provide care and support to other parishioners. The network comprises smaller communities of warm-hearted friends, known as *halos*. The *halo* groups consist of 8-10 members who intentionally care for one another, because we are all in need of a kind word, phone call, text, e-mail, or healing touch from time to time. The group is currently recruiting new members; please reach out to Marianne Zinkewicz for additional information.
- e. **The Third Annual "Trunk or Treat"** took place on Saturday, October 25 in the church parking lot and was a huge success on all fronts. As a safe and fun way for families and children to dress up in costumes and trick or treat, the event was well attended with over 250 participants that featured parishioners and residents serving treats from over twenty decorated cars and trucks, as well as an array of arts and crafts, face painters, a bouncy house, food trucks, bumper cars, a dunk tank (featuring Rev. Christopher!) and more.
- f. **The Santa Clarita Valley 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade** was one of the summer highlights for St. Stephen's. Over 30 parishioners walked the parade route down Main Street to Lyons Avenue, and over to Orchard Village Drive, winning the 2<sup>nd</sup> place prize for Best Religious Float in the process! And once again, as in years past, the church was open to parade participants and observers for water and bathroom breaks. It was a joyful and empowering day for all those who participated, and we're hoping to have an even bigger presence at this year's parade! Contact Shari Schlaman for information.
- g. **The Welcome Table**, now in its third year at St. Stephen's, continues to be a safe space crafted by and for the LGBTQ+ community. We meet on the first Tuesday of every month in the Rev. Lynn Jay Memorial Chapel for a potluck dinner followed by music, prayer, discussion, and communion. It is a unique and meaningful experience where we celebrate diversity and explore our faith in community as our true, authentic selves.
- h. **Holiday Drive Partnerships:**
  - **Santa Clarita Child & Family Center Adopt-A-Family** - St. Stephen's partnered with Santa Clarita Child and Family Center's annual Family and Teen Gift Drive to adopt five families and provide up to twenty \$25.00 gift cards from November 14-13. The committee created a digital donation platform, and several parishioners signed up to donate, shop, and provide gifts for five families with two to four members. Donors provided gifts for each family member (from a list of ideas), wrapped and delivered the gifts, and delivered them to the church. Several parishioners donated \$25 gift cards from Walmart and Target. Committee members organized the gifts by family and delivered them to the Center. William Hendley and Cheryl Sena co-coordinated these efforts
  - **Foster Youth Independence (FYI) Youth Holiday Gift Drive** - St. Stephen's partnered with FYI to provide gifts to teens. FYI provides Santa Clarita Valley's transition-age foster youth (ages 16 to 25) with the necessary services, support, and resources to ensure they can access educational opportunities and reach their goals. The organization donated several gifts to approximately six youths.

Nineteen people from the congregation purchased gifts. Tracy Stapp coordinated these efforts.

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### **3. A Highlight from the Year**

Our committee is grateful to each and every committee dedicated to justice, inclusion, and outreach at St. Stephen's. One highlight of the year was the generosity of our parish during the Christmas Season. Families pitched in and provided presents for the Santa Clarita Community.

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### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Justice, Inclusion & Outreach is a brand-new designation at St. Stephen's, which presents the challenge of developing an understanding of the direction we would like to pursue for each of these service areas within our church community and the Santa

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### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

Explore what Justice and Inclusion mean to the Saint Stephen's Community

Focus Outreach on Justice and Inclusion

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### **6. Gratitude**

Heavenly Father, we are grateful for the generosity of our parish and the good works we do in our community to realize a more just and inclusive world. May we continue to embrace our call to give from our hearts and provide service, in Jesus' name, Amen.

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### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

**Portfolio's Participation Goal:** *Meet with each ministry that falls under the Justice, Inclusion, & Outreach Portfolio to better understand how we can better support each ministry*

**If you would like more information or get involved with our Justice, Inclusion & Service Ministries, contact Cheryl Sena [mizsena@gmail.com](mailto:mizsena@gmail.com)**



## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Outreach/Laundry Love

**Committee/Ministry chair:** During the year monthly reports were sent to Sheri Flay and Nick Vestuto.

**Vestry liaison (if different):** Please see above.

**Committee members:** Diane Shaw, Mary Merercogliano, Martha Lewis and the two women who work at the Laundry: Esmerelda and Nadia.

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm-7:30 pm for twelve months.

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### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

This ministry has affected so many lives, from families, the homeless and students from the local college. This year we partnered with the Newhall Library and provided free books in English/Spanish as well as information that provided free lunches for elementary school children during the Summer Break. Laundry Love encourages everyday hospitality, rekindling trust within the community through human care and unity built by selfless concern and consistency. Through St. Stephen's we were able to provide 1,180 clean loads of laundry to our community.

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### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- Partnered with the Newhall Library
  - Partnered with Mental Health in the San Fernando Valley
  - Served approximately 800+ Guests
  - Provided: fruit, vegetables, cookies, bottled water, candy canes, books, etc.to everyone in the laundromat
  - Added (2) new volunteers
-

### **3. A Highlight from the Year**

There are so many highlights. Probably the books received from the Newhall Library, especially the children's books provided by one of our volunteers for Christmas. The families were very happy and grateful.

### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

We have to share a small parking lot with other businesses, and the street parking has been affected by additional parking restrictions.

### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- Our donations will be limited this year, because of the current economy.
  - To develop additional resources.
- 

### **6. Gratitude**

Through our additional volunteers and your assistance we were able to brighten lives and serve our community.

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### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

- All donations are appreciated: laundry detergent, bleach, large clean plastic bags for the Guests clean laundry.
- The Laundry Love table with glass jars for donations and the bin is located in the Narthex for any donation. Thank you.

## **Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting**

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**Committee/Ministry name: Music**

**Committee/Ministry chair: Josh Wentz**

**Vestry liaison (if different): Caroline Morgan**

**Committee members: Alexander Georgakis, All Parish Choir members, Stone Praise Band, Handbells ringers, and guest musicians**

**Year of report: 2025**

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate): Weekly on Thursdays from 7:30-9:30 pm and Sundays from 9:30-10:15 am.**

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### **1. Overview of the Committee's Work**

The Music area transitioned in 2025 with the hiring of two new staff members: a Director of Music, as well as a Pianist/Organist. Together with the Pastor, Vestry, and other key members of the parish, we have developed a meaningful, faith-based, sustainable plan for future growth and continue to lead worship with music that supplements and enhances worship for all parishioners.

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### **2. Major Activities or Events in 2025**

- Holy Week & Easter
  - Christmas Eve
  - Hiring of two staff members
  - Resurrection of the Handbells
  - Expansion of Choir
  - Hosted a Gospel Choir Festival
  - Hosted 'Amahl and the Night Visitors,' which featured many members of the Parish Choir
-

### **3. A Highlight from the Year**

We had a Choir Retreat in September where we dreamed of ways to be a more professional, faith-centered ensemble. We made a renewal of individual commitments to serve the church.

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### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Musicality, sight-reading, and commitment to being on time and focused for rehearsals. I would also like to see more regular choristers and bell ringers emerge from the congregation and the community.

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### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- Add 2-3 more regular choir members
  - Increase budget through giving, fundraising, and sponsorship or events at St. Stephen's to allow for hiring of potential scholarships singer(s)
- 

### **6. Gratitude**

I am forever grateful for the insight and leadership of our Rector Christopher for his vision, guidance, and prayerful commitment to worship at St. Stephen's and the community. I'm also incredibly grateful for the dedication of those in the Vestry, particularly those in the music groups, who stay late, lock up, come early to set up, and give so much of their time and talent to make our church great.

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### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

- Parishioners are invited to come sing in the Choir;
- Can't sing – if you can count, come ring a bell. We will be meeting more regularly in 2026.

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Prayer Chain

**Committee/Ministry chair:** Peggy Stabile

**Vestry liaison (if different):** Pastoral Care

**Committee members:** Because we carry out our ministry quietly and unseen, the members of the prayer chain are virtually anonymous. There are, however, over 30 prayer warriors who participate in the ministry.

**Year of report:** 2025

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**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** While we do not hold formal meetings, there is frequent contact with members via email. As each prayer request comes in, our coordinator transmits it to all members. Each Friday, we send an updated prayer list to Tracy Stapp who enters the entire list by first name and makes sure that the new names are included in the Prayers of the People. At the beginning of each month an updated list is sent to our members.

---

### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

At home, in whatever fashion works for them, more than 30 members of St. Stephen's Prayer Chain hold these names up to God in prayer. They also observe strict confidentiality as to the contents of each request. Ours is largely an electronic operation: each request comes to the coordinator from the clergy, church office, and members of the ministry, parish and preschool and is then disseminated to the prayer chain via email. If further information is submitted, updates are also emailed. Each Friday, our coordinator sends an updated list of first names only to be published in the Sunday Bulletin.

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### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- On average, 56 individuals and family groups were beneficiaries of our prayers on their behalf each month.
- Additionally, the repose of the souls of 60 deceased family members and friends were also recipients.

- Our booth at the Ministry Fair was staffed by three enthusiastic members of the Prayer Chain and those who stopped by our table participated in creating a paper prayer chain which is now displayed in Spurling Hall.
  - We also provide the list of names of the deceased which are announced at our All Saints Day service.
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### **3. A Highlight from the Year**

Six new members joined our ministry as the result of our participation in the Ministry Fair!

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### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Increasing membership

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### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- Increase membership
  - Hold a group meeting with Rector once a year.
- 

### **6. Gratitude**

We are especially grateful for Tracy Stapp who transmits many requests to us each week and disseminates our list to the parish in each Sunday's bulletin. We are thankful, too, that we can carry out our ministry quietly and unseen. We realize that this is a vital service for our congregation and willingly give a few minutes of time each day to pray for the special needs of others.

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### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

There are no qualifications or special skills needed to join the Prayer Chain other than dedication to the needs of others and the ability to maintain the required confidentiality.

*For more information or to join the Prayer Chain  
please call Peggy Stabile at (661) 993-1881*

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Stewardship Committee

**Committee/Ministry chair:** Kathleen Jensen

**Vestry liaison (if different):** Michael Branda

**Committee members:** Michael Branda, Bob Gregor, Richard Holdredge, Mary Beth Knox, Steve Plote, Marianne Zinkewicz

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** Monthly, on the first or second Wednesday of the month via Zoom

### Overview of the Committee's Work

Our work is to encourage stewardship at St. Stephen's and to encourage members of the parish to joyfully support the parish with their time, talent and treasure.

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### Major Activities or Events in 2025

- Thank you notes for 2025 pledges
  - Ministry Fair
  - Pledge Drive
  - Gratitude Sunday Potluck
- 

### A Highlight from the Year

The Ministry Fair was a wonderful opportunity to see so much of the work we all do at St. Stephen's on display. I am so grateful for all the Ministry leaders and participants who stepped up to showcase their amazing work!

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### A Challenge or Area for Growth

A continual challenge for Stewardship is education. Making sure everyone understands the importance of their pledge for helping St. Stephen's hopes and dreams become a reality is always important.

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## **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

A successful pledge drive for the 2027 Operating fund is our main goal. We are also looking forward to a vibrant Ministry Fair and working on creating information for legacy giving.

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### **Gratitude**

We are so thankful to everyone at St. Stephen's for sharing their gifts of time, talent and treasure. It is everyone working together that makes our church amazing!

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### **Participation welcome in 2026**

Anyone wishing to join the Stewardship committee can speak with any of our members. We are always looking for great ideas!



## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Ushers/Greeters

**Committee/Ministry chair:** Nick Vestuto

**Vestry liaison (if different):** Rev. Christopher

**Committee members:** Committee members: Michael Richards, Michael Branda, Mark and Kimberlee Bridgeford, Dennis Bauwens, Bob and Ginny Gregor, Cindy Swaisgood, Sara-Anne Nelson, Mary-Beth Knox, John and Claudia Alexopoulos, Tom and Desiree Spencer-Walters, Raye Arias, Linda Weifenbach, James Mackey, Bill Nold, James and Kimberly Torres, Cheryl Sena, Keith Thompson, Marian Krabach, Carol Vestuto, Avery Vestuto, Tricia Foley, Ruby and Nate Hasper, Marianne Zinkewicz, Dave Morrow and Julie Witter.

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** Weekly with ushers scheduled.

---

### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

Welcome all the congregation and visitors by creating a warm and friendly atmosphere. Answer any questions and assist those in need to their seats. Conduct the offertory and guide parishioners during communion. Straighten up and clean the sanctuary after service. Secure the church before leaving.

---

### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- Lent
  - Holy Week/Easter
  - Pentecost
  - Funeral and Memorial Services
  - Special night services (Christmas Eve, Blue Christmas, Ash Wednesday, etc)
-

### **3. A Highlight from the Year**

Michael Richards and Marian Krabach have stepped up in leadership roles as I have taken on responsibilities with additional ministries.

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### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

Looking to organize a standard rotation of teams for each week of the month.

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### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- More standardized training for each new usher.
  - Additional participation from people who would like to explore this ministry.
- 

### **6. Gratitude**

I'm most grateful to Michael Richards who has really grown into this leadership position. He tirelessly works to get the schedule together and open the church every Sunday. Also, to Marian Krabach who has taken the reins of training our ushers and greeters. Her leadership and commitment is a blessing.

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### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

We are always looking for new ushers and greeters. In fact, if you're a newcomer, it's a great way to get to know everyone.

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Worship Committee

**Committee/Ministry chair:** Rev. Christopher Montella

**Vestry liaison (if different):** Michael Branda

**Committee members:** Rev. Christopher Montella (Pastoral); Caroline Morgan (Sacristan); Mary Mercogiliano (Altar Guild); Josh Wentz (Music/Choir); Nick Vestuto (Ushers/Greeters); Steve Plote (Acolytes, Readers, Cup Bearers, MC); Erick Long (Sound/Technology); Kimberlee Bridgeford (Hospitality); Shari Schlaman (Hospitality); Shannon Brintnall (Children & Youth); Michael Branda (Vestry Liaison).

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** Quarterly (first Wednesday of the quarter)

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### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

Enhancing the worship experience by bringing together the different worship functions, and by planning and coordinating their individual efforts. Offering a better worship experience, one that energizes and enlightens the worshippers causing them to better serve Christ, each other, and the world.

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### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- Regular Worship Services along with Special Services (e.g., Holy Week, Advent, Christmas, Welcome Table, etc.)
- Quarterly worship service planning which included updating of an online worship calendar used to coordinate activities among the various worship functions.
- Training session for worship volunteers to ensure that everyone was clear on their role and responsibilities.
- Layperson Eucharist Ministry (LEM) visits began to bring communion to those unable to leave their homes.
- Instructional Eucharist began to instruct the worshippers in the meaning and purpose of the different aspects of the worship service.

- Offering non-alcoholic wine as a communion option for those worshippers who are sober or choose not to drink.
- 

### **3. A Highlight from the Year**

We held a training session for all worship volunteers to ensure that everyone knew what was required of them and to ensure smooth coordination between the different functions. This training also included an update on some changes being made in the worship service. As a result, the various worship teams were better equipped for their roles as a part of the worship services.

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### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

It's easy to fall into a "one-size-fits-all" approach to worship. So, we have begun tailoring specialized services to meet the specific needs of individual groups, such as The Welcome Table (LGBTQ) and LEM (home-bound). We need to better understand the worship needs of our parishioners and neighbors (maybe have specialized services for youth, Spanish-speaking, families who are busy on weekends).

---

### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- To conduct a worship survey among our congregation and our neighbors to receive their feedback regarding our worship service and their needs regarding worship.
  - Based on the feedback received from the worship survey, we will explore the possibility of creating some more individualized services.
- 

### **6. Gratitude**

For all the volunteers who faithfully served to make worship at St. Stephen's the success that it is. For their attending the worship training session and faithfully showing up every Sunday and pouring their hearts into the worship service.

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## **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

- Volunteering to be a part of the worship service (choir, usher, greeter, reader, MC, acolyte, cub bearer, altar guild, tech/sound, hospitality, childcare). There are so many opportunities to serve, there is something for everyone.
- Layperson Eucharist Ministry (LEM) Visits – bringing communion to those who are unable to make it to church to receive communion.

## Ministry/Committee Reports for Annual Meeting

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**Committee/Ministry name:** Worship Leaders

**Committee/Ministry chair:** Stevan Plote

**Vestry liaison (if different):**

**Committee members:** N/A

**Year of report:** 2025

**Meeting frequency and dates (or approximate):** N/A

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### 1. Overview of the Committee's Work

WORSHIP schedules and confirms the people that will be MC, CB, Readers for each Sanctuary service. Desire to bring more parishioners into the weekly service schedule.

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### 2. Major Activities or Events in 2025

- Training of newly interested parishioners in the 4 service disciplines
  - Scheduled people from list of confirmed participants for each discipline
  - Found replacements for individuals that had a conflict with a specific service schedule date
  - Found replacements the day of service for no shows to scheduled roles
  - Coordinated with Usher roles, Tech Table, Acolyte scheduling to not overlap
  - Coordinated people that serve with Church Administrator for inclusion in Weekly Bulletin
- 

### 3. A Highlight from the Year

We never had a service that was short participants for each discipline

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#### **4. A Challenge or Area for Growth**

We still need more Reader, MC and CB candidates for 7:45 service and more MC and CB candidates for 10:30 service

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#### **5. Looking Ahead: Goals or Needs for 2026**

- 2 more CBs for 10:30 service to reduce the load on the 2.5 that are normal
  - 2 more readers, 1 MC and 2 CBs for 7:45 service use
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#### **6. Gratitude**

We thank God for the ability to serve and to teach the congregation each week and bring the literature and spirit of the holy Trinity to the community that attend St Stephens

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#### **7. Participation welcome in 2026**

- Please sign up or contact Steve Plote to join the group to be an active participant in the weekly services at St Stephens.
- Parish members to get trained in each of the disciplines of each service role