ANNUAL MEETING 2026

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church



















2025 REPORTS

RECTOR'S MESSAGE
The Rev. Paula J. Toland, 22nd Rector

Annual Meeting
March 8, 2026

Beloved Community,

In November 2025, we completed our Year of Renewal, which was slightly longer than 12 months, having started in September 2024 with the first phase of my sabbatical. It was a really good year, as you can see from reading the reports that are included in this Annual Report. Together and one-by-each we explored what it means to be beloved of God and how we reflect that in the ways we live our faith, in this community and out in the world. Through prayer and worship, formation and fellowship, and just generally being the people we believe God is calling us to be, we expressed our curiosity and wonder about what it means to have a pilgrim's heart as we journey deeper into the heart of God. Also in November 2025, we concluded our seventh year together and are now more than three months into our eighth!

As I look back on 2025, I don't see a year that stands apart from the rest, but rather one that seems a natural progression of our commitment to better understand who and whose we are and how we fit into the story of God at work in the world. I am mindful of the time Bp. Hughes spent with you during her visitation in October, time in which she asked you to share a piece of your personal faith story with others. There was such beautiful energy in the room, there was no doubt at all that the Holy Spirit was present, as is the case so often in this community.

You may remember that at the beginning of last year we asked you to reflect on two prompts about what St. Stephen's means to you. We asked you to share one word that describes your experience at St. Stephen's and one word that you would use to describe St. Stephen's. We shared your responses in a word cloud at the 2025 Annual Meeting. I'm excited to share with you now the new Vision, Mission, and Core Values statement that your Vestry approved based on your responses.

Our Vision

That all people, without exception, know that they are loved by God just as they are.

Our Mission

Inviting all who seek God's love to join us, we commit to living our faith in ways that embody Jesus' mission of mercy, justice, compassion, and hope. Through our worship and prayer, our commitment to social justice and outreach, and our fellowship, we welcome people to experience God's love in their daily lives.

Our Core Values

Our FAITH inspires us to deepen our understanding of what it means to be a beloved child of God and follower of Jesus

We WELCOME all people into a community where diversity is celebrated, people are seen and heard, and everyone is invited to participate in worship, learning, fellowship, and outreach.

We work for JUSTICE, living our faith in relationships with local non-profit organizations and through advocacy about social justice issues.

We share God's LOVE for us, through our love for one another and our neighbors, because we know that it is love that will make the world a better place for all people.

At the end of this year, we will celebrate our 175th anniversary, 175 years of living our faith with boldness and love as we seek to better understand our place in the greatest love story ever told. As always, I am so grateful for you – each and every one of you – and I'm looking forward to celebrating our anniversary and, just as much, to living the day-to-day as we build on the legacy gifted to us by those faithful people who started to form this community in the fall of 1851. Though none of us will be here in another 175 years, I know that the legacy we leave will have just as much meaning and impact.

Peace & Blessings,



Agenda and Reports for Annual Meeting 2026

1. Opening Prayer and Necrology
    a. Good Friday Collect (*BCP,* p.280)
    b. Bruce Swan, Jane Rossiter, Ronald Clarke

2. Determination of Proper Announcement of the Meeting and Presence of a Quorum

3. Appointment of a Recording Secretary for the Meeting

4. Acceptance of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held March 16, 2025

5. Affirmation of Current Officers, Vestry Members, and Clerk

    a. Officers
    Maryalice Chech, Warden for People and Programs
    Roger Riedel, Warden for Property and Preschool
    Ashley Morgan, Treasurer

    b. Vestry Members
    Julia Dorn
    Kira Hanson
    Tom Hillemeier
    Steve Moran
    Linda Soughan
    Fran Taber

    c. Clerk of the Vestry
    Barbara Riedel

6. Nominations for Election:

    a. Vestry Members – We are accepting up to four (4) nominations from the floor to make a one-year commitment with option to complete full three-year terms

    b. Delegates and Alternate Delegates to Diocesan Convention – We are accepting up to three (3) nominations for both Delegates and Alternate Delegates

7. Acceptance of the Annual Reports of Parish Ministries

    a. Clergy, Wardens, and Staff

        i. Rector's Message
        ii. Worship Statistics and Impact for 2025
        iii. Warden for People and Programs
        iv. Warden for Property and Preschool
        v. Preschool Director
        vi. Minister of Music

    b. Liturgical Ministries
        i. Altar Guild
        ii. Lectors, Chalicers, and Ushers

    c. Evangelism, Outreach, and Hospitality

        i. Drumming Camp
        ii. Family Promise Essex County
        iii. Apostle's House (Food Barrel)
        iv. Friends of Music

v. North Jersey Pride
vi. North Porch
vii. Pet Fair

d. Christian Formation
    i. Children & Youth Ministry
    ii. Adult Formation

e. Finance and Budget
    i. Financial Narrative
    ii. St. Stephen's Church Budget, including Preschool and Cemetery
    iii. St. Stephen's Revenue and Expense Charts

8. Living Our Faith: Past, Present, and Future
    a. 175 years of faithful presence and stewardship
    b. Where we find ourselves now
        i. Vision, Mission, and Core Values
        ii. Our ministries
    c. Planning for the future
        i. Legacy Giving: Endowment fund
        ii. Stewardship of our Property: Capital Projects fund
    d. Invitation to Serve
        i. "Regular" ministries
        ii. Major Projects Committee
        iii. 175th Anniversary Committee

9. Open Discussion

10. Closing Prayer, Adjournment, and Dismissal
    a. Prayer for the Parish (*BCP,* p. 817)
    b. Motion to Adjourn
    c. Dismissal

ST. STEPHEN'S ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING MINUTES, March 16, 2025

The Annual meeting was called to order by Rev. Paula Toland at 11:24 a.m. Rev. Paula opened the meeting in prayer.

- Necrology – Rev. Paula named members who have died during this year: T. Felder Dorn, Peter Soltys, Alleen Theile, Anthea Lorie Charles-St. Jules
- We have a quorum.
- Rev. Paula made a motion to appoint Barbara Riedel as Recording Secretary. Fran Taber seconded. The motion passed.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD MARCH 3, 2024.

Ashley Morgan made a motion to accept the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held March 3, 2024. Barbara Churchill seconded. The motion passed.

AFFIRMATION OF CURRENT OFFICERS, VESTRY MEMBERS AND CLERK

a. Officers
    a. Maryalice Chech, Warden for People
    b. Roger Riedel, Warden for Property
    c. Ashley Morgan, Treasurer
b. Vestry Members
    a. Kira Hanson
    b. Steve Moran
    c. Fran Taber
    d. Tom Hillemeier
    e. Linda Soughan
c. Vestry Member Emeritus
    a. Eugene Foley
    b. Sheelagh Clake
d. Clerk of Vestry
    a. Barbara Riedel
e. Diocesan Convention Delegate
    a. Fran Taber
    b. Roger Riedel

Roger made a motion to affirm the current officers, Vestry members, Clerk and Diocesan Delegates. Fran Taber seconded. The motion passed.

PRESENTATION OF THE SLATE OF NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION:

a. Vestry member
    a. Julia Dorn was nominated.
    b. There can be other Nominations from the Floor up to four (4) Vestry Members. There were no other nominations.
b. Delegates and Alternate Delegates to Diocesan Convention
    There can be nominations from the Floor for one (1) Delegate and up to three (3) Alternates
    There were no nominations.

Steve Moran made a Motion to elect Julia Dorn to the Vestry.
Fran Young seconded. The motion passed.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF PARISH MINISTRIES

a. Clergy, Wardens, and Staff
        i. Rector's Message
        ii. Worship Statistics for 2024

iii. Warden for People and Programs
iv. Warden for Property and Finance
v. Preschool Director
vi. Minister of Music

b. Liturgical Ministries
i. Altar Guild
ii. Lectors and Chalicers, Ushers

c. Evangelism, Outreach, and Hospitality
i. Drumming Camp
ii. Family Promise Essex County
iii. Food Barrel
iv. Friends of Music
v. North Jersey Pride
vi. North Porch
vii. Pet Fair

d. Christian Formation
i. Children & Youth Ministry
ii. Adult Formation

e. Finance and Budget
i. Financial Narrative
ii. St Stephen's Church Budget, including Preschool and Cemetery
iii. St. Stephen's Revenue and Expense Charts

Maryalice Chech made a Motion to accept Annual Reports of Parish Ministry.
Eugene Foley seconded. The motion passed.

The April monthly donation will benefit Family Promise of Essex County.

Budget:
Steve Maico presented the Budget. Highlights were:

The budget for the church expenses was $323,956. The budget for next year is similar at $330,108. That is what it costs to continue the operations of the church. How do you pay for that $330,000? On the Pie Chart illustration for Revenue, Steve reported 31% from pledges and donations; 30% is from the Preschool; and 34% is from prior years operating funds. This past year we used a significant portion of accumulated funds. Within all budgets, it is not possible to know what unplanned expenditures could occur. In past years, it has always been related to facilities.

2025 Budget

Preschool – The Preschool was still recovering from the effects of Covid. There are seventy-five children enrolled, and the number is steadily increasing. One factor that affects enrollment is that there is more competition with schools. Steve reported that in 2025 we will be up to a good revenue figure. It is budgeted for $100, 000 more (about seven more students).

Cemetery – The Cemetery did not perform as expected. The church is supporting the cemetery rather than the cemetery supporting the church. This is an ongoing problem.

How do you get to a point where you do not have to dip into savings?
1) Increase pledges and donations.
2) Increase operation of the Preschool.
3) Increase operation of the cemetery.

The budget for 2025 is conservative. Steve concluded his presentation with a 'balance sheet' of the assets of the church including its history, clergy, staff, vestry, and relationship with the town.

OUR YEAR OF RENEWAL: OUR JOURNEY AS PILGRIMS (video)

Rev. Paula showed a video presentation of what we have accomplished in 2024. She wants us to look at what do we do to move forward. We are coming up on our 175th anniversary. Rev. Paula asked the congregation to consider learning more about the ministries of the church and what they may be interested in participating in. There were explanation sheets for every ministry displayed for sign-up.

CLOSING PRAYER AND ADJOURNMENT

Rev. Paula closed the meeting with prayer.
Barbara Riedel made a motion to adjourn, and Fran Young seconded. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

REPORT: WORSHIP STATISTICS AND IMPACT, 2025

Submitted by Rev. Paula J. Toland

These are the statistics as reported in the annual Parochial Report on February 27, 2026.

Worship Statistics	2025	2024
Average Sunday Attendance in Person *(Sunday and Saturday Evening Attendance for In-Person Worship)*	43	44
Average Sunday Attendance Online *(Sunday and Saturday Evening Attendance for Online Worship)*	73	201*
Average Weekday Attendance in Person *(This would include Holy Week, Longest Night, and other weekday services)*	46	40
Average Weekday Attendance Online	44	133*
Estimated average of unique non-live views of main service *(This is for the week following the broadcast)*	30	15

*These numbers were skewed by the large number of people who joined us online from all over the world following Lorine Charles-St. Jules death and for her funeral. The number exceeded 1000.

Impact	2025	2024
Outreach beneficiaries *(This includes the Preschool, Apostles' House, North Porch, and the Good News Garden. It is estimated weekly impact.)*	250**	60
Average volunteers that are not members	5	10

**This number includes the Preschool.

Baptisms:
Nora Lewis
Callan Jordan

Burials:
Bruce Swan
Jane Rossiter
Ronald Clarke

REPORT: PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS, 2025

Submitted by Maryalice Chech, Warden for People and Programs

With the help of Linda Soughan, Emily Chech, Steve Moran and Ashley Morgan and myself, we had a very successful Easter Egg Hunt for our St. Stephen's children on the church front lawn. We were respectful of children's allergies and all in all we had a great time!

I am happy to report, we were able to collect 9 Turkey Dinner Boxes for our Drumming Camp families. Thank you to all who donated! This year we had an angel willing to deliver all 9 boxes to the families which was wonderful!

We also had a very generous collection of Christmas gift cards (Target/Visa/Shop Rite) for our Drumming Camp families/children. Many, many thanks for all who participated and your generosity!

St. Stephen's continues to be a loving community with several ministries. Please, consider helping with any of our ministries, the Vestry or sign up for coffee hour! The more hands that help, the more we can accomplish!

REPORT: PROPERTY, 2025

Submitted by Roger Riedel, Warden for Property and Preschool

There were several projects completed in 2024 for the Church, Mausoleum and Rectory.

Church and Education Building:

The Parish Hall floor was completely replaced. The new floor had installed additional vapor barriers against high humidity from summer heat. The humidity had damaged the integrity of the floor. Subsequently a large capacity dehumidifier was installed in the basement area under the floor.

The majority of the office and classroom ceiling fixtures were replaced with matching high efficiency long lasting LED bulbs.

Structural defects were detected which were caused by a minor leak in the Narthex ceiling. While addressing a troublesome minor leak in the Narthex ceiling, two bigger problems were uncovered. Severe structural damage to the corner nearest the side entrance and wood rot beneath the Rose Window wall at the rear of the sanctuary. The leaks were repaired. The Rose window was secured and the interior of the corner reframed and surfaces painted to look as good as new.

Another leak was found to be the cause of inconsistent heat in classrooms. Multiple attempts were made to regulate the heat before a leak was found under the floor of the Sunday School classroom doorway.

All things water related were handled by Palmer Heating and Air Conditioning.

The arches in the walls of the Bell Tower were enclosed and painted after unknown decades of absence. This was done in preparation for air conditioning being added to the Sanctuary.

Mausoleum and Cemetery:

The Cemetery Pump House across from Millburn High School had a 6" water supply pipe break and flood across Millburn Avenue for about six hours. The pipe was replaced by Palmer Plumbing and the broken temperature sensitive heater replaced.

The Mausoleum was broken into and vandalized twice after closing. The near fire door was destroyed and needed replacing. The stairwell was cleaned up and painted. A new 24-hour camera security system was installed.

The Kemmerer Family is one of the Cemetery's largest plot owners at St. Stephen's Cemetery. They provided a substantial monetary gift for the maintenance and upkeep of the Cemetery and grounds and property.

Rectory:

The Rectory had its own leaks: a pipe to the boiler needed replacement and a leak on the first-floor bathroom was repaired.

An added thanks to Peter Wick, Ron Toland, Tom Hillemeier, Steve Moran, Adam Krieg, Vinny DeCarvalho, and Rony Cepeda for their help with various projects during the year.

REPORT: PRESCHOOL, 2025

Submitted by Peter Barry, Preschool Director

Note: The Preschool operates on the September to June school year, which is different than our other ministries.

St. Stephen's Preschool continues to thrive. Currently, 78 of our 87 available student spaces are filled, and by the end of the 2025/26 school year that number will rise to at least 81. As we look towards next school year, 67 student spaces have already been filled for September 2026, and the demand is not slowing down. Multiple inquiries continue to pour in from families requesting information about our program. Even with the number of preschool options available in our area, which includes free Pre-K 3, 4 and Full Day Kindergarten programs offered in the surrounding school districts, St. Stephen's continues to prosper within this very competitive market.

St, Stephen's Preschool's success can be attributed to the excellence of its teachers and staff. More than half of the staff have served for over 15 years with St. Stephen's, creating a level of experience and consistency that is unmatched by other programs. It is evident to anyone who visits St. Stephen's that our students are highly engaged, well cared for and happy to be in the presence of those that serve them. St. Stephen's Lead Teachers take pride in working collaboratively with the Director during monthly Lead Teacher Meetings where they discuss and make decisions on instructional practices, policies and procedures, and schoolwide activities and celebrations. This collaboration has led to improved communication, increased levels of staff "buy in," and more efficient implementation of innovative ideas.

There is also an unmatched level of trust that exists between our families and our school. Many of our families send multiple children beginning as infants and staying with us all the way through the kindergarten program. Our parents also serve as our best advertisement, as practically every inquiry comes from a glowing recommendation from one or more of them.

One of the big success stories coming out of the last half of 2025 was the implementation of the preschool management platform called Brightwheel. This platform, used by both school and families, has streamlined and drastically increased the efficiency of so many of the administrative tasks associated with preschools, such as enrollment, attendance, billing, communication and payroll. Brightwheel has truly modernized St. Stephen's Preschool and will play a pivotal role in our continued success for years to come.

With the combination of our amazing staff and our loyal and appreciative families, St. Stephen's Preschool will continue to prosper for years to come.

REPORT: MUSIC, 2025

Submitted by Kim Williams, Minister of Music

Thank you to the Senior Choir members who continued to provide beautiful anthems and lead congregational singing each Sunday and for special occasions. It is an ongoing joy to work with them each week. The camaraderie and support they give to one another is beautiful to witness. Many thanks to our fabulous organist, John, for being a true colleague and collaborator. This year, the group sang for memorial services for Bruce Swan, Jane Rossiter, and Ron Clarke.

The Children's Choir ventured into the dramatic realm this year by learning and presenting a play about Noah's Ark in June, and a Christmas pageant on Christmas Eve. In the winter and spring months, the group sang occasionally during Sunday worship, and also played drums during 2nd Sunday Intergenerational services. They also collaborated with the Senior Choir on an anthem for Palm Sunday.

<u>Other highlights of 2025</u>

- The Senior Choir sang for Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter, with trumpet accompaniment by Peter Wick. John Schucker shared beautiful piano meditations for the noon Good Friday service.
- Members of the Senior Choir were honored with red carnations during Choir Appreciation Day on June 8. Children's Choir members received certificates.
- The twelfth annual Drumming Camp for the children in the PATCH program was held on August 18-22. Lead teacher Ya'-Yah Kamate, assisted by Kim Williams, guided the participants in drumming and dancing.
- The annual Longest Night, also known as Blue Christmas, service featuring meditative and reflective music was held on Dec. 21 in conjunction with Christ Church, Short Hills.
- At the Christmas Eve Festival Eucharist, the choir was joined by violinist, Alisa Wyrick, who, along with organist John Schucker, presented pre-service music and accompanied the choir. Additional instrumentalists included Don Ross, clarinet, and Peter Wick, trumpet.
- Our 2nd Sunday Intergenerational services continue to include more child-friendly music with frequent opportunities for the children to play the drums during the services.

2025 Participants in the St. Stephen's Senior Choir: Alex Cole, Julia Dorn, Kira Hanson, Harriet Jernquist, Jackie Ross, Don Ross, John Soughan, Fran Taber, Peter Wick

2025 Participants in the St. Stephen's Children's Music program: Vera Hillemeier, James Hillemeier, Gabriel DeCarvalho, Connor Howell-Butler, Ava JeanBaptiste, Alex JeanBaptiste, Clara Farrand, Martin Krieg, Rosabelle Krieg, Zoey DeMessier, Ariel DeMessier, Presley DeMessier.

ALTAR GUILD, 2025

Submitted by Julia Dorn, Coordinator



Serving this year on the Altar Guild were Alex Cole, Julia Dorn, Maria Nazareth, Irene Poirier, and Nancy Sieffert. Thank you all for serving! We usually set up for the Sunday service on Friday or Saturday. It generally takes half an hour to an hour to do the setup.

Thank you to Alex for taking care of the linens, Nancy for buying the wine, Maria Card for ordering the supplies and flowers, Ruth for filling in several times, and Reverend Paula for picking up flowers. Also, thank you to other church members for helping with the clean up after the service. Finally, thank you to everyone who help decorate and undecorate/degreen for Easter or Christmas including Maggie, Paula, and Ron.

If you'd like to help with the Altar Guild please e-mail me at Juliadorn231@yahoo.com, or call me at 973-467-9847.

REPORT: LECTORS, CHALICERS AND USHERS, 2025

Submitted by Barbara Riedel



Individuals involved in Church Service perform different functions. Lectors are responsible for reading the lessons and leading the Prayers of the People. Chalice Bearers help the priest by serving wine during Communion, standing beside the priest and offering the cup to those who wish to receive it. Ushers welcome attendees as they enter the church, distribute bulletins, assist newcomers, and respond to questions. Ushers also prepare the church for services, collect and present offerings, and guide people to and from their seats during communion.

This year, children participated in the service on the second Sunday of the month. It was inspiring to hear scripture read by the youth in our congregation. They also carried up the wine, water and wafers to the altar and took the collection.

Thanks to people who served during 2025:

Fran Taber, Kathy Conway, Tim Conway, Barbara Churchill, Ladi Owolabi, Kira Hanson, Peter Wick, Fran Young, Steve Moran, Barbara Riedel, Roger Riedel, Eric Maurer, Vinny DeCavalho, Margaret Farrand, Katie Lynch, Irene Poirier, Jennifer DeLeon, Maryalice Chech.

The children who served:

Rosabelle Krieg, Martin Krieg, Clara Farrand, Vera Hillemeier, James Hillemeier, Ava Jean-Batiste, Isabella Jean-Baptiste, Alexander Jean-Baptists, Connor Howell-Butler, Gabriel DeCarvalho.

If you would like to participate in the service, we are happy to welcome you to join. Please contact Rev. Paula.

REPORT: DRUMMING CAMP, 2025

Submitted by Fran Taber, Kim Williams, Maria Card and Rev. Paula



The 13th year of St. Stephen's Drumming Camp was fabulous, thanks to:

- enthusiastic campers and staff
- the generosity of the St. Stephen's of Kansas Charitable Trust
- the hard work of church members and friends of St. Stephen's.

This year's group was enthusiastic and included many returnees who have been at camp in prior years.

We welcomed campers and staff for five afternoons during the week of August 18th – 22nd and the theme of this year's camp, "**I Am Unique. I am Me**" was emblazoned on T-shirts and the invitation to the family picnic.

A total of twenty-one children attended ages six to thirteen.

Church Partners: Once again we got support from other parishes in the Diocese of Newark:

- St. George's, Maplewood loaned us two large tents.
- Church of the Epiphany and Christ Church, West Orange loaned us their excellent church van, and their wonderful driver/chaperone Barbara Hamilton.
- Rev. Martin Malzahn from The Church of St. Paul & Incarnation in Jersey City donated the snacks.

Transportation: We were grateful to share part of the grant money with the church in West Orange as thanks for their loan of their van.

We also paid their driver/chaperone Barbara Hamilton, who's become a regular St. Stephen's Drumming Camp staffer. She watches over the campers as she drives the bus, stays for the whole day, participates in the activities and helps serve the meals. We appreciate her great responsible presence and good humor. Counselor Shayla Graham accompanied Barbara as bus chaperone and served as all-day counselor. Shayla made a special contribution this year, since she was able to collect all the enrollment documents early, enabling us to plan accurately for the number of campers and the various ages.

Our 2nd van was driven by Mr. Charles, who came back to us after an absence of several years. Riding in his van was our long-time partner, Delouise Monroe. As always Ms. Del served as bus chaperone, all-day counselor, and took special care of some of the younger (and more rambunctious) campers each day.

Planning: In 2025 St. Stephen's again benefited from the organizational and creative talents of Maria Card, our Church Administrator. Maria helped manage enrollment and scheduling, purchased supplies, and she even contributed baked goods to the picnic.

In addition to Maria's work as Project Administrator, Kim Williams assisted in the role of Project Manager, with an emphasis on recruiting and coordinating the work of more than 20 volunteers from the parish family. The volunteers' help was invaluable and ranged from planning and serving food for the daily meals, to assisting the staff with set-up and clean-up, and many, many other tasks in between. We couldn't do it without all of them!

Art: Katie Ross (Jackie/Don Ross's daughter) planned and taught the art class. Last year Katie was Carole Francis' assistant, and this year she was in charge: planning the projects, purchasing supplies and instructing the campers on how to do each project. Her sister Beth served as her assistant. Katie's a real artist in her 3rd year at Pratt. As camp counselor, her patience with the campers and enthusiasm for the art was a great addition to our staff.

Activities: as always, our campers enjoyed all our traditional Drumming Camp activities, and learned very fast:

- they did African drumming and dancing with Yah'Ya Kamate
- they created arts and crafts projects
- they stenciled custom T-shirts
- they loved the outdoor games.

Food: campers and staff enjoyed lots of good food all week, served under the trees on the church lawn. Our meals always get high praise from our campers, and 2025 continued that tradition.

Thursday night we had S'Mores. Campers and staff enjoyed roasting marshmallows over the fire, smashing them between graham crackers with a Hershey bar, then making a mess as they ate them.

Family Performance and Picnic: on the last day, the campers' families attended a drumming and dance performance by Yah'Ya and the drummers, followed by a large family picnic. Many of the families have participated for several years and we all enjoy eating together.

As we do every year, we gave every camper a new backpack stuffed with school supplies based on their grade and guided by the Newark Public Schools' supply list.

In addition, each camper got a "goody bag" of snacks and fresh produce from our Good News Garden.

Safe, Comfortable Familiarity: the staff and volunteers who come back year after year add to the strength of this ministry. The campers and their families are comforted to find staff they know, and the staff is always excited to meet new campers, to see how much the returning campers have grown since last year, and to think about which of the older ones might grow into counselor candidates.

The campers get lots of personal attention, and our safe environment and familiarity are hallmarks of this ministry.

Thanksgiving and Christmas: again in 2025 St. Stephens gave the campers' families Thanksgiving turkey boxes, with all the supplies needed to cook Thanksgiving dinner, and holiday gift cards at Christmas to help families buy gifts for the children and offset the cost of holiday meals.

Grateful for the support of St. Stephen's of Kansas: after all these years, St. Stephen's Church is tremendously grateful for the funding from St. Stephen's of Kansas Charitable Trust. In 2025 they provided $15,000. That funding enables our church to provide this ministry to these children.

We're fortunate to be able to offer St. Stephen's Drumming Camp – 2026 will be the 14th year!

REPORT: FAMILY PROMISE ESSEX COUNTY, 2025

Submitted by Linda Soughan, Coordinator

St. Stephen's continued its 30+ years of Family Promise of Essex County ministry in 2025 as we continued to serve as a host congregation. Family Promise houses families in extended stay hotels with the host congregations providing ShopRite or DoorDash/Grubhub gift cards as well as some groceries for the families.

In 2025, we hosted two weeks (April 13th and September 21st). During these hostings, we provided Shop Rite gift cards totaling $990 as well as 6 bags of groceries.

We will continue this ministry in 2026 with hosting dates of April 11th and September 13th.

Thank you for your generosity and continuing and enthusiastic support of this long time St. Stephen's ministry!

REPORT: Apostle's House FOOD BARREL, 2025

Submitted by Julia Dorn, Coordinator



There were 4 food barrels sent to Apostle's House in 2025. The barrels include nonperishable items with mostly canned food such as soup, tuna, and vegetables. Boxes of pasta, jars of peanut butter, and bags of rice are other items donated. Thank you to everyone who helped bring the cans home in order to record the items, check expiration dates, and pack the bags. The bags are then picked up and taken to Apostle's House. In December the Preschool donated items to the food barrel in honor of St. Lucia.

Thank you to:

- Maria C. who makes creative posters/graphics of the announcements for the newsletter and the doors.
- Ruth who is writing the scripts for the announcements.
- The team (Barbara, Kira, and Steve) who make the announcements and make them fun.
- Barbara and Roger for picking up the last barrel and taking it to Newark.
- And thanks to everyone who contributes cans and boxes to the barrel !

REPORT: FRIENDS OF MUSIC, 2025

Submitted by John Schucker, Organist

Our acclaimed, Baroque-style tracker or mechanical action organ was designed and built in 1970 for Saint Stephen's Church by the noted German organ builder Rudolf von Beckerath, a leader in the 20th-century revival and further development of the mechanical keyboard action of organs of the time of J. S. Bach which had been considerably eclipsed by the introduction of modern electrical action earlier in the century. When the previous organ began to fail, members of the St. Stephen's Organ Committee traveled to hear many organs in the U.S. and Canada before enthusiastically acclaiming Beckerath as the clear choice for St. Stephen's. For 56 years, our Beckerath organ has beautified our worship services and, through the Friends of Music, has offered a music ministry to the larger community with recitalists from near and far who have relished the opportunity to perform here on this fine instrument.

As with most any arts organization, the cost of presenting our organ recitals to the public is not usually covered by ticket sales or, in our case, donations given at the door by those who attend. In order not to exclude anyone from experiencing these recitals, we do not require a set admission fee to attend, but ask those who come to contribute what they can. Additional gifts are required to fully finance the continuation of this ministry. Friends of Music was organized when the organ was first installed, specifically to help finance these recitals and its donors include parishioners and non-parishioners alike.

From the outset, the recital series has attracted well-known concert organists, often with international credentials, as well as local artists. The main expenses involved in presenting the recitals are the artist's fees. These fees totaled $3,500 in 2025. Contributions to Friends of Music, including donations from attendees collected at the recitals totaled $3,479 this year. Fortunately, the donations received essentially covered the cost of the recitals, despite the fact that donations of all kinds had dropped off significantly during the Covid pandemic and in these subsequent years.

The recital series is typically comprised of two recitals per season, with the first recital occurring later in the fall and a second scheduled in the late winter or early spring, straddling two calendar years. The first recital in 2025 was given by Bálint Karosi, a native of Hungary on April 27 at 4 PM. To showcase our Baroque-style organ at its finest, we requested that Dr. Karosi perform an all-Bach program. This choice seemed especially popular with the audience of around 60 attendees, which included a much greater number of parishioners than we normally have attending the recitals. The great majority of those who attend are usually non-parishioners, coming not only from greater New Jersey, but also from our neighboring states of Pennsylvania, New York, and also Connecticut, a true testament to the quality of both the performances and the organ.

Dr. Karosi is recognized as a leading authority on the music of Bach since winning 1st prize in the International Bach competition in Leipzig in 2008 as well as 1st prizes at international organ competitions in Miami and Dublin. He has performed extensively throughout Europe and North America to great acclaim. He is also a composer, holding a DMA from Yale University in composition. The audience seemed particularly delighted by his own composition which he played as an encore — an homage to Bach, which was a fitting, modern complement to the varied all-Bach program he performed. In addition to his busy concert career, Dr. Karosi

serves as Director of Music and Organist at First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia and has made many highly regarded recordings, including the gargantuan feat of recording the complete works of J. S. Bach.

The second recital of the year was on October 26th and was given by Christopher Houlihan, who returned to St. Stephens after playing once before on the series in 2018. Always a pleasure to host, Christopher played a varied and exciting program of both Baroque and more modern works for a smaller, but enthusiastic audience of about 40 or so. He serves on the faculty of Trinity College in Hartford, CT as the John Rose Distinguished College Organist, Director of Chapel Music and Artist-in-Residence. In this post he succeeds his mentor, John Rose, who, incidentally, gave the dedicatory recitals on our organ here at St. Stephens when the organ was first installed in 1970. Mr. Houlihan has performed in many of the most important concert venues across the country including The Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), Davies Symphony Hall (San Francisco), The Kimmel Center (Philadelphia), and Walt Disney Concert Hall (Los Angeles) with glowing reviews in major newspapers including the *New York Times, The Los Angeles Times,* and *The Washington Post.* It is indeed a very special experience to hear artists of this stature and exceptional ability performing in the intimate setting of St. Stephens.

Aside from the generosity of the financial donations to Friends of Music, keeping the recital series going involves many people behind the scenes at the recitals and the "Meet the Artist" receptions afterwards which are generously provided by a steadfast group of volunteers. These dedicated volunteers who beautifully organize these events and provide wonderful refreshments include Irene Poirier and Jennifer DeLeon, Margaret and Clara Farrand, Julia Dorn, Barbara and Roger Riedel, Steve Moran, Alex Cole, Maria Nazareth, and Ron Toland. Maria Card, our Parish Administrator, not only offers her expertise in promoting the recitals, but has also volunteered her time to help organize the receptions. John Schucker, consulting with Reverend Paula, is responsible for finding and engaging the performers. The rest of us can support this wonderful cultural outreach to the greater community by helping to promote the series to people outside the parish or by simply attending and enjoying these world-class recitals. As always, the warmth and hospitality of this congregation always makes a great impression on those whom we welcome.

The next performance is scheduled for April 26, 2026 at 4 PM and will feature Dr. Damin Spritzer, Area Chair and Associate Professor of Organ at Oklahoma University. Although she is known for often promoting the work of female composers, Dr. Spritzer will perform a program mainly devoted to the music of Bach, since we have decided to try to feature the great Baroque master's music in at least one program a year.

Before closing, another important fund should be mentioned which was established when the organ was installed to cover the cost of maintaining the organ. The original investment made by the parish to commission the building and installation of this exceptional instrument would have been a considerable expense for the parish at the time. The cost of an instrument of this quality today would easily be in excess of $1,000,000 and therefore out of reach for this small parish. Thanks to the great foresight of the congregation almost 60 years ago, we continue to enjoy their investment, but must be certain to protect and maintain it properly. Because the organ is extremely well built, these maintenance costs have been relatively low up until now. Aside from normal tuning and regulation, a repair to the wind supply was necessary this past year in order to keep it playing properly. As the instrument ages, there will be more expenses associated with its upkeep. But like the historical organs which inspired its tonal design, with proper maintenance, this organ can continue to make music for worship services and concerts for centuries to come.

REPORT: NORTH JERSEY PRIDE, 2025

Submitted by Steve Moran and Barbara Riedel, Coordinators

The North Jersey Pride Festival is an annual event celebrating the LGBTQ+ community, held at Maplewood Memorial Park with over 10,000 attendees. St. Stephen's has hosted a booth at the festival for three consecutive years. On June 8, 2025, from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m., attendees were able to visit various merchants, businesses, and non-profit vendors, enjoy a designated food court, and participate in activities at the kid's zone featuring games, inflatables, and face painting. The festival also featured a main stage presenting both local and national musical acts. Members of the congregation volunteered to manage the booth throughout the day, engaging with numerous visitors. Many discussions focused on St. Stephen's Church and its relationship with

the LGBTQ+ community, highlighting the inclusive spirit of the event and reinforcing our commitment to fostering a welcoming environment where love begets love.



Many thanks to Rev. Paula, Ron Toland, Maria Card, Steve Moran, Barbara Riedel, Roger Riedel, Vinny DeCarvalho, Adam and Rosie Krieg, Margaret and Clara Farrand.

REPORT: NORTH PORCH, 2025

Submitted by Barbara Riedel, Coordinator





North Porch Women & Infants' Centers is a non-profit organization providing emergency aid in the form of baby supplies to mothers and infants in northern New Jersey. North Porch operates centers in Newark, Paterson, and Dover, as well as a satellite center in Hackettstown.

This year, collections were organized for two specific needs identified by the Center. In May, toiletries such as lotions, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hair products, wipes, and powder were collected. In October, diapers were gathered. The congregation and Preschool parents participated in these collections. North Porch coordinators were grateful for the ongoing support from St. Stephen's.

Throughout the year, donations can be left in the Narthex of the church in the North Porch box.

REPORT: PET FAIR, 2025

Submitted by Steve Moran and Barbara Riedel, Coordinators





On October 5, 2025, St. Stephen's and Christ Church held the Third Annual Pet Fair and Blessing. Rev. Paula Toland and Rev. Bowie Snodgrass greeted people and blessed the animals. We had seven vendors, representatives from St Hubert's Animal Welfare Center and children's activities. Big Romance Band added a wonderful atmosphere to the occasion. There were three pet blessings at 1:15 pm, 2:15 pm, and 3:15 pm. Snacks and water were for sale. Seeing people caring enough about their animals and wanting them blessed was touching. The event was enjoyable for everyone.

Many thanks to Maria Card, Susan Nunez, Rev. Paula Toland, Rev. Bowie Snodgrass, Melissa Bristol, Barbara Riedel, Steve Moran, Jennifer De Leon, Ron Toland, Linda Soughan, Maria Nazareth, Rowen Whistler, and Clara Farrand.

REPORT: CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY, 2025

Submitted by Rev. Paula J. Toland

Children & Youth Ministry continued to be an active, engaging ministry with the children and young families in the parish. Our children continue to grow their faith through a curriculum that invites them to read or hear biblical stories and then explore them creatively through interactive activities. Since Advent 1, when we returned to the Revised Common Lectionary in our worship services, the children have explored the same story or theme as the adults. The families are invited to encourage ongoing curiosity at home using a Family Sheet that summarizes the lessons.

There were a few significant changes in the ministry this year. The first is that Grace Savioa-DiGregorio left the position at the end of October. We are grateful to Linda Dorenfast for her ongoing commitment to our children, which meant less disruption for the kids, and to Linda Soughan for volunteering to help out while we search for a new Children & Youth Minister. They make a wonderful team.

Before we began the search for a new Children & Youth Minister, the Finance Committee and Vestry agreed to some adjustments to the position, in the hope that this would help in the search for Grace's replacement, while also helping us to do more with our middle and high school students. Though we have only two teens at the moment, we have a good number of children who will be in middle and high school before we know it. Thanks to the "Miss Lindas" we have had the opportunity to take our time to find the right person to fill the position permanently.

In April we welcomed the first youth acolytes in many years, with seven children and youth trained to be crucifers and torch bearers. They have served primarily in the Second Sunday services, as well as on a couple of special occasions. It has been a delight to have this increased level of participation in our worship services.

In June, the children and youth presented a mini pageant about Noah's Ark, written by Miss Kim (Williams). In December they presented an original Christmas pageant, complete with a set. A huge thanks to Miss Kim for adapting the nativity story into a pageant, to the Miss Lindas for their help as costumers, and to John Soughan for being the "stagehand."

REPORT: ADULT FORMATION, 2025

Submitted by Rev. Paula J. Toland

In 2025, in addition to the ongoing monthly Reading with the Rector gathering, we offered a four-part "Women of Advent" series using resources from Candler Foundry, a program of Emory University. Using the story of eight women from the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, we explored different ways of being faithful to God and followers of Jesus.

We also spent some time exploring pilgrimage, the primary theme of our Year of Renewal, which was from September 2024 thru early November 2025. We hosted three "First Friday Fellowship" gatherings in the Fall. Each included a shared meal, a PowerPoint presentation about Rev. Paula's pilgrimages to the Holy Land (2014), Camino de Santiago and Spain (Sept. 2024), and the United Kingdom (May 2025), as well as some truly good conversation.

The meals reflected the places Rev. Paula visited, with authentic (and some almost authentic) foods from each place. We made the connection between famous sites in the Holy Land to the biblical stories. We talked about embodied pilgrimage and community while enjoying photos of the Camino de Santiago and the Spanish way of life. And we made connections to our Christian heritage via the Church of England while reflecting on the physical church and the way it informs our faith today.

Looking ahead, there are a couple of adult formation opportunities in the early planning stages:

- Based on the successful year-long weekly Bible study from Advent 2021 to Advent 2022, when we began using the three-year Gafney lectionary, we are planning a regular weekday Zoom (perhaps hybrid) Bible study to begin sometime after Easter.
- Given that we have welcomed so many new people and families to the parish over the past few years, not all of whom are "card carrying" Episcopalians, we are starting to explore a series that invites people to learn more about the Episcopal tradition and, perhaps, be confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church.

FINANCIAL NARRATIVE, 2025

Submitted by Steve Maico, Business Manager

The overall 2025 financial results for St Stephens Church were positive and total Church assets had substantially increased (approximately 300% in cash and investments over 2024). The Church is the owner of three business units: Church, Preschool, and Cemetery/Mausoleum and has continued to strengthen its financial position over the past several years while meeting many challenges that have had significant financial impact on financial resources. Of particular note:

- The church continued to focus on recovery from Covid and facility issues created by unusual weather events and the impact on our historical buildings.
- The Preschool's goals of increasing enrollment had not yet reached pre-covid levels but were showing gains. The Preschool also celebrated the retirement of the school director and the installation of a new director. This investment in a new school director has already begun to show positive gains in Preschool operations and in total enrollment.
- The St Stephens Cemetery has shown significant improvement in financial gains due to the keen oversight of trust fund investments and the contracted management company for the Cemetery.

Church financial results for 2025 showed strong support from pledges and were above budget by 7%. Expenses were within budget and no part of the budget was impacted by lack of resources. The Church was very fortunate to receive several large gifts during 2025 which greatly added to the financial foundation which should provide significant stability and resources to plan for the future care and maintenance of the historic facility and organ. The Church in 2023, filed for a qualified federal ERTC Program for the tax years 2020 and 2021. These filings which were prepared by our payroll processor Paychex yielded a total of $540,300 which has been put into investment accounts to generate earnings for Church Facility and special other church projects. The Church also received a bequeath of $134,000 to support designated Church programs. Other designated gifts are received each year to support special programs or functions of the Church which would otherwise not be funded through general donations. The overall status of Church operations was performance above budget and building a more solid foundation to continue the Church ministry.

The Preschool continued to build enrollment from the Covid years and also successfully transitioned to a new director. Enrollment is steadily increasing, teacher turnover is well below other preschools, and a significant investment in preschool operations and systems was made in 2025. The Preschool continues to support the Church with a substantial cash contribution each month, and total net income for 2025 was above budget. The budget for 2026 assumes that enrollment will continue to grow and the net contribution will be more than 2025.

The Cemetery maintained operations in 2025 according to the budget plan and showed a small net profit which has reversed a downward trend. The long-term goal of the Cemetery is to provide a contribution to the operations of the Church, however in several years past the Church needed to support the Cemetery. Sales are performed by a third-party sales firm, and the results of their efforts have been well below expectations. We have increased our expectation of sales in 2026 to a level of performance promised and expected. The expenses of the Cemetery have been held to a minimal level of maintenance; however property or facility issues can arise that are not budgeted which rely on the Church to solve.

The 2026 budget is anticipating a better year, and it shows that St Stephens has committed the resources to continue to build its programs and ministries for 2026. The budget is not without challenges; however, the Rector, Vestry and congregation can continue to grow and build the vision of St Stephens on a solid foundation that exists today.

Combining the 2026 budgets of all three operating divisions, the Church will need to provide an estimated $49,000 of savings or investment income to support all expenses. The expectation going forward is that the Preschool will continue to increase enrollment, Cemetery sales will increase to a level expected, and the Church will increase its pledges to more than fill the budget gap and provide for the future vision of St Stephens to grow.

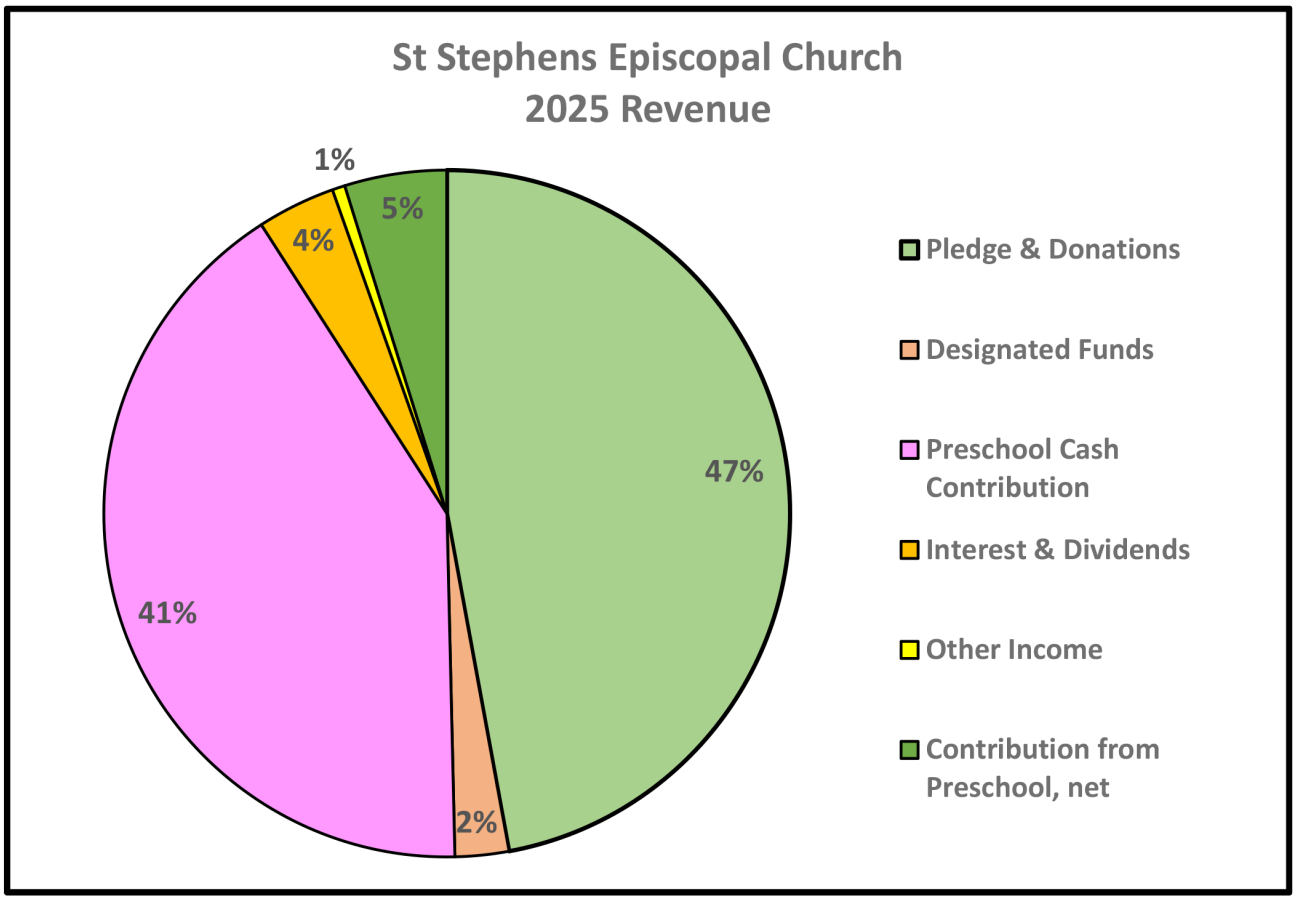
St Stephen's Church
Financial Results 2025 + Budget 2026
W/ Operating Divisions

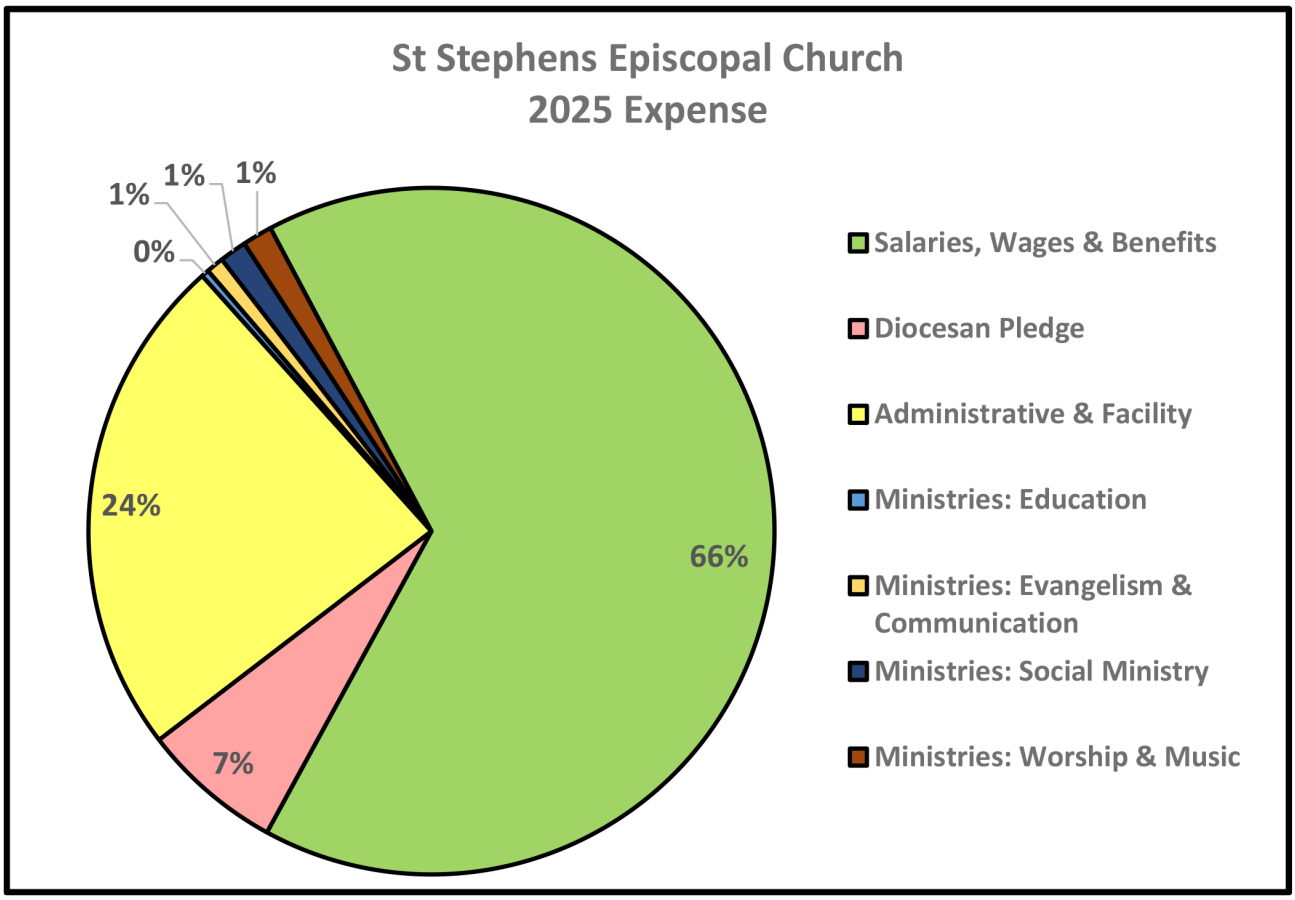
St Stephens Episcopal Church	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget
Income:			
Pledge & Donations	$127,012	$136,951	$129,000
Designated Funds	7,170	7,355	4,240
Preschool Cash Contribution	120,000	120,000	120,000
Interest & Dividends	5,980	10,713	8,514
Other Income	3,000	1,743	1,135
Contribution from Preschool, net	3,336	14,000	41,531
Contribution from Cemetery, net	0	0	3,803
Prior Yr Funds / Other Inv	64,000	0	49,000
Total Income	$330,498	$290,762	$357,223
Gross Profit	$330,498	$290,762	$357,223
Expense:			
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	$187,072	$190,370	$224,558
Diocesan Pledge	19,230	19,230	23,450
Administrative & Facility	109,876	68,764	94,060
Ministries:			
Education	3,050	1,045	3,300
Evangelism & Communication	4,825	2,391	4,610
Social Ministry	2,000	3,707	2,500
Worship & Music	4,055	4,072	4,225
Total Ministries:	13,930	11,215	14,635
Total Expense	$330,108	$289,579	$356,703
Net Operating Income	$390	$1,183	$520
Other Non Operating Inc & Exp:			
Grant Income	$0	$540,346	$0
Estate Gift	131,000	134,000	0
Designated Gifts	14,500	97,577	14,500
Insurance claims	0	32,070	0
INV gain (loss) + Int Income	0	580	0
Total Other Non Operating Income	145,500	804,573	14,500
Other Expense - Facility & Designated	14,500	111,139	14,500
Net Other Income & Expense	$131,000	$693,434	$0
Net Income	$131,390	$694,617	$520

St Stephen's Church
Financial Results 2025 + Budget 2026
W/ Operating Divisions

St Stephens Preschool	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget
Income:			
Tuition & Fees	$1,233,205	$1,231,636	$1,397,869
Other Income	925	7,412	4,325
Total Income	$1,234,130	$1,239,048	$1,402,194
Gross Profit	$1,234,130	$1,239,048	$1,402,194
Expense:			
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	$952,352	$920,123	$1,044,322
Administrative & Facility	278,442	288,619	308,341
Total Expense	$1,230,794	$1,208,742	$1,352,663
Net Operating Income	$3,336	$30,306	$49,531

St Stephens Cemetery	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget
Income:			
Sales and Commissions - net of Trust Contributions	$27,500	$27,668	$35,000
Rental Income	9,600	9,600	9,600
Trust Inv - Int & Dividends	45,000	59,339	72,000
Prior years operating funds	21,463	0	0
Total Income	$103,563	$96,607	$116,600
Gross Profit	$103,563	$96,607	$116,600
Expense:			
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	$2,689	$2,665	$2,770
Administrative & Facility	100,874	90,738	110,027
Total Expense	$103,563	$93,403	$112,797
Net Operating Income	$0	$3,204	$3,803


St Stephens Episcopal Church
2025 Revenue
47%
2%
41%
4%
1%
5%
Pledge & Donations
Designated Funds
Preschool Cash Contribution
Interest & Dividends
Other Income
Contribution from Preschool, net


St Stephens Episcopal Church
2025 Expense
66%
7%
24%
0%
1%
1%
1%
Salaries, Wages & Benefits
Diocesan Pledge
Administrative & Facility
Ministries: Education
Ministries: Evangelism & Communication
Ministries: Social Ministry
Ministries: Worship & Music

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

"A diverse Episcopal parish, a life-giving sanctuary, a place where love begets love. Seekers, doubters, and believers find a comfortable place in our midst."

119 Main Street, Millburn, NJ 07041 / 973-376-0688 / ststephensmillburn.org
Rector: The Rev. Paula J. Toland; Emergency Contact: 508-542-1327
Parish Administrator: Maria T. Card

Minister of Music: Kim Williams; Organist: John Schucker

Members of the Vestry
Maryalice Chech: Warden, People & Programs; Roger Riedel, Warden, Property & Preschool;
Ashley Morgan: Treasurer; Fran Taber; Kira Hanson; Linda Soughan; Steve Moran;
Tom Hillemeier; Barbara Riedel: Recording Secretary & Clerk

Sheelagh Clarke; Eugene Foley: Vestry Emeriti

If you wish to receive the weekly e-newsletter, please contact the parish office at 973-376-0688 or church@ststephensmillburn.org.