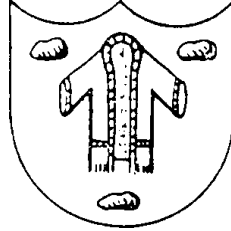


Comfort Care Packs  
for children as they enter Foster Care



St. Stephen's  
Episcopal Church  
Pittsfield Massachusetts  
Annual Report 2024





St. Stephen's Episcopal ChurchPittsfield, Massachusetts

***Annual Meeting Agenda – February 9, 2024***

10am In-person worship and meeting

*Included in the worship insert:*

Welcome and Call to Order

Opening Collect - Prayer for our parish.

Sermon – Rector's Reflections and State of the Church report

*(Wardens, Rector, Finance and Property)*

Prayers of the People

Prayers for the life of this parish

Prayers for those who have died in the past year

Prayers of thanksgiving for those who have served the parish

During Announcement time:

Launching Year-round Stewardship

Presentation of Slate/NominationsElection

Thanksgiving for Outgoing Vestry Members

Adjournment, Closing Prayer, and Dismissal

St. Stephen's Slate for Vestry, Officers, Convention Delegates  
Annual Meeting February 9, 2025

**Continuing on Vestry**

John Garinther  
David Nevin  
J. Christopher Perry  
William O'Neill  
James Alden                   1<sup>st</sup> term  
Caleb Dillon-Harmon       1<sup>st</sup> term

**Electing Today**

**Officers** (elected annually for a one year term)

Co-Warden	John Garinther
Co-Warden	David Nevin
Clerk	Christopher Plankey (non-voting member)
Treasurer	J. Christopher Perry
Assistant Treasurer	William O'Neill

**Vestry Members at-large** (elected to a 3 year term unless otherwise noted)

James Brennan  
William Morey  
Christine Furcinite-Reynolds  
Leah Luczynski (2 year term, fulfilling an incomplete term)

**Diocesan Convention Delegates**

Co-Wardens, Treasurer  
Alternate: Assistant Treasurer

Nominations From the Floor

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## **St. Stephen's Annual Meeting January 29, 2024**

Annual Meeting of St. Stephen's Parish, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

The annual meeting this year was held during the 10:00 a.m. service which was in person as well as live streamed. There were 60 people in attendance.

Meeting was called to order by The Rev. Nina R. Pooley at 10:00 a.m.

Opening prayer: Given by The Rev. Dr. Nina R. Pooley

Rector's Report: See Parish annual report pages 10-14.

Additional report - Work of the Discretionary Fund included on page 15.

Nina's reflection discussed finding ways to create viable solutions for the future, reframing old traditions so they are sustaining and sustainable. Following the ways of Jesus in new, viable, life-giving ways. Following where Jesus leads as we respond to the needs of those around us. Nina spoke to her hope that we continue to respond to the call of Jesus, using this building and our resources to worship God, and to actively love our neighbors. Specifically by extending our Eucharistic table and St. Stephen's Table. "Living into the Jesus Movement - as we embody the wideness of God's Table"

Co-Wardens' Report: Can be found on pages 16 and 17 of the Annual Report;

Craig Reynolds spoke about being agile for the sake of the Kingdom of God, and the work the leadership is doing, and plans to do in the coming year to help us become more agile to meet the needs of a changing world, and specifically the changing needs of the local community.

Treasurer's Report: Suzanne White and Bill O'Neill (treasurer and assistant treasurer) submitted their report, which is included in the annual report on pages 34-43. A summary of which was included in the worship bulletin. Suzanne presented an overview of the finances.

The end of year numbers for 2023 operational expenditures were better than budgeted (we had predicted a deficit of \$104,352.78); the amount drawn from the endowment to cover the operational deficit was \$87,163.78. The 2024 operational budget created by the finance committee and approved by the vestry anticipates a deficit of \$112,379.14.

### **Nominations and Elections:**

Officers Electing Today: (must be elected each year for one year terms - St. Stephens plans for 3 years of service)

Co-Wardens:	Josephine Ellis, John Garinther
Treasurer:	Suzanne White
Asst. Treasurer:	William O'Neill
Clerk:	J. Christopher Perry

At Large Vestry Members electing today (for three-year terms)  
Caleb Harmon, Beth-Ann Hamling

Delegates to Diocesan Convention 2024:  
Co-Wardens and Treasurer: Josie Ellis, John Garinther, Suzanne White  
Alternate: Assistant Treasurer: William O'Neill

No nominations from the floor were made. All positions were elected uncontested.

Adjournment: Nina adjourned the annual meeting at approximately 11:15am.

Closing Prayer: Given by The Rev. Nina Pooley

Respectfully reconstructed from notes,  
The Rev. Nina Pooley

## 2024 Highlights

### January

In-person worship and livestreaming: Sunday 10 AM  
Saturday evening worship, 5 PM 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays  
Zoom Compline Wednesday at 6:30 PM  
St. Stephen's Table serving Grab & Go, Thur. & Fri.  
Knit & Sip Group meets 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday at 5 PM  
Annual meeting in-person during 10 AM worship

### February

Ash Wednesday: Ashes To Go at noon, in-person  
worship at 6 PM  
2 Lenten Adult Ed. Offerings begin  
YPF Movie Fundraiser

### March

YPF Rock Climbing Event  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor and Dining Refresh begins – new flooring  
In-person Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter  
services.

### April

Adult Ed. Women of the Old Testament begins  
New sign installed on the front lawn  
Church Work Day held  
Shakespeare in the Courts returns  
Deacon Sharon Billetter ordained  
Confirmation with Bishop Fisher  
AGO Organ Recital

### May

Children's Paint & Sip collaboration with Downtown  
Pittsfield, Inc  
Blessing of the Bikes  
Last Sunday Funday until September  
New elevator maintenance company's contract  
begins

### June

In-person worship and livestreaming: Sunday 10 AM  
Saturday evening worship, 5 PM 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays  
Zoom Compline Wednesday at 6:30 PM  
St. Stephen's Table serving Grab & Go, Thur. & Fri.  
Berkshire Pride Festival  
Concert to benefit the Education of Afghan women  
Rev. Nina attends National Episcopal Convention

### July

In-person worship, livestreaming and Zoom compline  
continue  
Lemonade on the Lawn begins  
St. Stephen's Table serving Grab andGo  
Pop-Up Choir launches  
Vestry Retreat

### August

In-person worship and livestreaming continue  
St. Stephen's Table serving Grab andGo  
Kint & Sip meets 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month, 5 PM

### September

In-person worship, livestreaming and Zoom  
compline continue  
Sunday School/Sunday Funday resumes  
New office hours begin  
Pop-Up Choir concludes, Pop-Up Potlucks begin  
Ecumenical Service held on The Common  
New cleaning company hired

### October

In-person worship, livestreaming and Zoom  
compline continue  
Adult Ed book study begins  
Berkshire Jazz concert in Sanctuary  
Stewardship Kick-off  
YPF event at Ioka Farm

### November

In-person worship, livestreaming and Zoom  
compline continue  
New Presiding Bishop installed  
Diocesan Convention at UMass Amherst  
Berkshire Concert choir performs  
YPF delivers meals for Thanksgiving Angels  
Dance Recital in Auditorium

### December

MADD Vigil  
YPF Caroling  
Knit & Sip Group  
Two Christmas Eve services



## From the Register

### *Marriage:*

Harrison Breyo and Shannon Netzer  
Caleb Harmon and Brendon Dillon  
John Hebert and Melissa Morin

### *Baptisms:*

Heidi Batzl  
Silas Mottor  
Avery Tassone  
Gabriel Wynn

### *Confirmations and Receptions into the Episcopal Church:*

James Behnke  
Grace Garinther  
Grant Morin  
Bethany Renaud  
Sarah Renaud  
Kim Roy  
Lily Stasiowski  
Anthony Trapani

### *Burials:*

Violet Barney  
Bill & Betty Eckerson  
Martha Ekstrom  
Julia Groat  
Elizabeth Harrington  
Frances Hills  
John Kie  
Donna Moon  
Diane Plankey

## Vestry Members and Parish Staff

### ST. STEPHEN'S PARISH 2024

#### Officers (term expires)

Co- Wardens	Josephine Ellis (Jan. 2025)
Treasurer	John Garinther (Jan 2025)
Assistant Treasurer	Suzanne White (Jan. 2025)
Clerk	William O'Neill (Jan 2026)
	J. Christopher Perry (Jan. 2026)

#### Vestry Members (Vestry Terms are 3 Years)

Member	Term Expires
Wendy Coakley	January 2025
Chris Plankey	January 2025
John Garinther	January 2025
John Garinther	January 2025
David Nevin	January 2025
James Alden	January 2025
Caleb Dillon-Harmon	January 2027
Beth Anne Hamling	Resigned September 2024

#### Parish Staff

Rector	Nina Ranadive Pooley
Director of Music	Joy Mullen
Office Assistant	Bert Boos
Parish Administrator	Sarah Morrison
Director of St. Stephen's Table	Dan Moon
Sunday Sexton	Roy Stillman
Weekday Sextons	Advantage Employee Network (through September 2024) Ecuadorian Cleaning Co-operative

## Report from the Rector

The Rev. Dr. Nina R. Pooley

### **Scripture:** Micah 6:8

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

and to walk humbly with your God.

### **Opening Prayer:**

Hear our prayers, Holy God. Breathe your Spirit over us and all the earth, that barriers would crumble and divisions cease. Make us more fully your co-healers of the broken world. Unite us with all people in bonds of love, that the whole earth and all its peoples may be at peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### ***A look back and a look forward:***

We spent 2023 engaging in a process of discernment called "Go and See." The purpose of Go and See was to discover the ways Pittsfield has responded to the shifting landscape after the heart of the pandemic. We learned that office space downtown is no longer at a premium (though parking is!). Housing insecurity is a major problem, and food insecurity is rising to crisis levels in the Pittsfield community. In addition, we spent 2023 intentionally discerning who we are as a parish, and who we want to be.

We discerned that the core of our identity involves **being intentionally welcoming of all people, with a focus on families and children.** There is power in being a truly welcoming community of faith - and embodying God's love to all people. To that end, we have: continued the banners on the building, encouraged nametags to make things easier on those who visit/are new (and the rest of us!). Created obvious spaces in the sanctuary for kids - up front where they can see and hear what's going on and feel more included in the worshipping community. Even if you don't have kids, the Kids' Own Space articulates a core value of this community - kids and parents are welcome and valued. And we discerned our call - we affirmed that **addressing food insecurity** still resonates deeply with us.

### ***Responding to the increase in food insecurity:***

As we entered 2024, we had thought our work would involve a careful, intentional conversation and planning around expanding the reach of St. Stephen's Table. While we were discussing the best way to make that happen - food insecurity grew exponentially in early 2024. By April, we noticed a dramatic and consistent increase in the number of meals being served by the St. Stephen's Table Team. By fall, this number was nearly double the number of meals served weekly in prior years. As a parish we should be incredibly proud of the ability to respond to the sudden growing needs of the community around us. Dan and the Table volunteers rose to meet it consistently and we are grateful for their dedicated service.

We continued to discern how best to meet the needs of those experiencing food insecurity. During the summer we took an informal survey of our clients, and that information reinforces our decision to maintain a to-go model. In addition to the population being served prior to COVID, the population currently receiving meals includes a higher percentage of those who are housed but experiencing food insecurity. Many are bringing meals home to family or neighbors. As we face the increased demand, we've run into edges of our capacity to turn out meals in an hour. For 2025 we are implementing a two-meal/person meal limit, unless the situation is known to us in advance. As we look to the year ahead, we will be wrestling with an appropriate upgrade for the kitchen, and a shift in our model. Nearly all of the other meal sites in downtown Pittsfield are completely run by volunteer efforts. While we are incredibly blessed to have Dan Moon's expertise and generous spirit running our kitchen, he

is only human and a limited resource. In 2025, working with Dan, we hope to continue to build a solid volunteer structure to support the work of the Table.

***A Wider View:***

We realized that the discernment of 2022 and 2023 needed to be expanded a bit. While the work of the vestry focuses primarily on the day to day, month to month running of the church - we needed a wider view. I invited a handful of former leaders to join me and our wardens to take a multi-year look at where we've been, and particularly, our financials over the last 15 years or so.

I wanted a better understanding of our deficit spending and operational expenses. Together, we considered parish finances of the last 15 years, and realized that we needed a more strategic, multi-year approach for the future. In order to sustain the worship, mission and ministry of this parish, the leadership would need to find ways to reduce the deficit spending and operational expenses. The work of this group and their suggestions of ways to move forward were presented to the vestry at a day-long vestry retreat. At that retreat our vestry leadership considered the big picture of our resources - both financial and human. They have committed themselves to the difficult and uncomfortable work of facing into our deficit spending and finding new ways forward.

This conversation was a timely one, as Sarah Morrison decided to reduce her work hours to 21 per week and also elected to get her health coverage elsewhere. Her decisions have allowed us to begin reducing our operational expenditures. In addition - the vestry decided to end the payment of choir honorariums. With the help of our wardens, Ken and I were able to get an exception from Berkshire Health Systems, enabling me to be added to his health insurance policy. This, too, reduces our operational expenses. Costs we cannot control (utilities, cost of living, higher food costs) continue to increase, making reducing our annual expenses a challenge. But we are working to create a more sustainable on-going budget.

I realize this work is happening in parallel with our building refresh and our upgrading of the heating system. These expenditures address necessary, long-term concerns as we sustain our building. The funding for these is not included in our annual budget/expenditures. Though of course, all of our expenditures are drawn from our collective resources. In 2025, we will work to address the costs incurred, and the ways we can contribute to the long-term wellbeing of our parish. Together, we will be faithful, intentional stewards of our parish, as we live into being the people of God we are called to be.

Siblings in Christ, as many of us can attest, the more we invest of ourselves, the more we receive from our involvement with this parish community. Being engaged in this community strengthens our deep sense of belonging to God and one another. In difficult times as well as joyful ones, that sense of belonging makes all the difference. I am deeply grateful to belong to this faithful community.

**Closing Prayer:**

Glory to God whose power, working in us,  
can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine:  
Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church,  
and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. **Amen.** *Ephesians 3:20,21*

Faithfully,  
Nina+

## **A Snapshot of the Work of 2024:**

### Worship:

Seasonally based Worship; and Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals

Saturday Evening worship continued throughout 2024. Thanks to a clergy team (David DeSmith, Bill Loutrel, Tom Damrosch and myself) we offer this worship service in the chapel twice monthly (2nd and 4th Saturdays).

### Mission and Ministry:

The work of the discretionary fund is included at the end of this report.

We continue our "banner ministry" with seasonal banners on the outside of the building.

We maintain our support and increased presence at Berkshire Pride, including fabulous temporary tattoos and selfie frames. We also continued to create and supply the kids' activity packs

St. Stephen's Table - mentioned above. In addition, see specific report by Dan Moon.

Welcoming members of the greater community - in 2024 our building hosted:

The Berkshire Immigrant Center, Jewish Family Services Afghan resettlement program, BIC/JFS essential closet, Language Justice translation services, Shakespeare in the Courts, Downtown Pittsfield Inc. Paint and Sip programs, Ecuadorian Folk Dance recital, ESL classes, A Better Life program, AA and NA meetings, and Cathedral of the Beloved (office space and kitchen access).

Our sanctuary hosted: Trans remembrance, MADD event, First Responders Community Forum, a concert to benefit education for Afghan women, and Berkshire Jazz performance; in addition to musical offerings relocated from Zion during their construction: Berkshire Concert Choir, and Berkshire Children's Choir holiday concert.

### Formation and Fellowship:

Compline every Wednesday evening on Zoom at 6:30pm, thanks to the leadership of David Nevin.

Sunday Funday: (Sunday School) offered twice a month by our teachers: Josie Ellis, Suzanne White, Chris Plankey, Craig Reynolds, Angie Moon. Thank you, teachers!

Adult Education:

With gratitude for those who offered their time and talent to make these possible.

Good Enough: 40ish Devotionals for a life of Imperfection, book study led by Chris Plankey and Craig Reynolds.

Lenten Bible Study: The Passion According to John, Marc Britt, 4 Thursday evenings

Eastertide: Biblical Women of the Hebrew Scriptures, led by Louise Penny, 4 Sundays

Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again, by Rachel Held Evans, book study led by Craig and Chris Reynolds, Josie Ellis and Nina+

Writing an Ethical Will, conversation led by Jim Brennan and Craig Reynolds

Parish Potlucks - in our newly refreshed dining room. (Stay Tuned for these to resume.)

Care of St. Stephen's Community:

**Pastoral Care Team**

Our members: Angie Moon, Claudia Curry, Debbie Stillman, Bill Frazier, Sue Smith, Liz Trapani and Sara Garinther. Eucharistic visits were made, cards and phone calls, as well as prayer shawl deliveries.

**Prayer Shawls, and Knitting Group**

In 2024 we distributed 44 prayer shawls (knit by a large group of knitters, including: Sue Smith, Suzanne White, Sandy Soule, Marcie Nevin, Laura Kelly, Paula Mourey, Connie Bullard, and myself. (Please forgive me if I've left anyone off this list!)) Shawls have been gifted to our members and beyond to our friends, family, neighbors and colleagues.

Our monthly knitting gatherings continue, as a group meets to knit and crochet prayer shawls and other projects. First Tuesdays of each month, 5-6:30 in the Guild Room (all are welcome!)

Collaboration with Campus of Downtown Churches:

*Cathedral of the Beloved, First United Methodist, First and South Congregational, St. Stephen's, Zion, with new addition in 2024 of Price Memorial AME Zion Church. (First Baptist Church will be joining our collaboration in 2025.)*

Together we discuss our collaborative work to support those in need in Pittsfield, as well as social justice issues affecting the most vulnerable. We plan collaborative worship for our parish communities including:

*Holy Week Events:*

Palm Sunday - liturgy of the Palms began on Dunham Mall together.

Maundy Thursday worship - included Cathedral of the Beloved

Good Friday - Procession of the cross, walked the 'stations' in downtown Pittsfield.

Easter Vigil - Fire at First/South; Word at St. Stephen's, Water/baptismal vows at First UMC, and Eucharist at Zion. (Nina is point person for this event.)

*Other events:*

A Summer worship service on the Commons

In 2025 - we will add a Blue Christmas service

## Work of the Discretionary Fund 2024

The purpose of the Rector's Discretionary Fund is to allow our community to assist those in need in a timely and confidential way. The fund is completely dependent upon donations. I wanted to give you a sense for the work we've done through the Discretionary Fund. Thanks to your generosity, we are able to assist our neighbors in significant ways. Without getting into personal details, here's the scope of what's been possible through that funding for 2024:

- \* Funds to send several youth and parents to St. John the Divine.
- \* Support for young adult retreat.
- \* Support for the knitting ministry.
- \* Meals to support members experiencing medical trauma/distress
- \* Car repairs for single mom needing support
- \* Gifts in Thanksgiving (for ministries of volunteers at St. Stephen's) - St. Stephen's Table, Cathedral of the Beloved, and Shakespeare and Company (Shakespeare and the Courts).
- \*Rent assistance for multiple families.
- \*Electricity bills for individuals in need.
- \*Clifford Oil and Berkshire Gas payments for individuals in need of heat.
- \*Donation to Cathedral of the Beloved in celebration of their 10th anniversary.
- \*Thanksgiving Angels donation.
- \*Support for South Community Food Pantry.
- \* Pan Mass Challenge donations on behalf of the parish
- \* Donations to PACC fuel fund (Pittsfield Area Council of Congregations)
  
- \**Other outreach to the community:* Pride Banners/give away items on table/ Love is Love St. Stephen's business cards, Banners for building, and supplies for kid activity bags too:)

## Report of the Co-Wardens

All shall be Amen and Alleluia.

We shall rest and we shall see.

We shall see and we shall know.

We shall know and we shall love.

We shall love and we shall praise.

Behold our end which is no end

- excerpt from An African Prayer Book by Desmond Tutu

As another year at St. Stephen's finishes, we reflect on how we've been the heart and hands of Christ to our community. Questioning, pondering, and knowing. ***All shall be Amen and Alleluia.***

St. Stephen's provides a stalwart presence in our community, not only for our dedicated parishioners who worship with us week upon week, but also to those who attend a few times a year. Even more so to those who find themselves unexpectedly with a life changing event and turn to St. Stephen's looking for comfort and understanding. ***We shall rest and we shall see.***

Then there are our brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we can provide a hot meal twice each week with a smile and encouraging word. Or how we open our doors most days to give a place of strength for those who battle the hardest demons inside themselves. A beacon in the night for those who might need a little bit more to make ends meet, fix a vehicle, find a warm place to sleep for the night. This is who we are called to be. ***We shall see and we shall know.***

You may recall our "Go and See in 2023" campaign - we wanted to know where St. Stephen's "fit" in the changing landscape of our community. We asked a lot of questions, visited other non-profits doing important work and realized our expertise was right here in our building. We learned our welcoming value to our community, in addition to the amazing worship experience, is truly staring us in the face. It is St. Stephen's Table, the AA/NA meetings, being a landlord to mission-worthy tenants, providing financial assistance from the rector's discretionary account that you so generously fund and so much more. With this in mind, our Go and See group provided a 3-pronged focus for 2024 and beyond: sustain the heating system, refresh our welcoming spaces, and enhance the St. Stephen's Table ministry.

Our path was set forth but not without some challenges and expensive bumps along the way. In 2024, we had to secure a new cleaning crew, a new IT provider, a new elevator contract, and organ/piano repairs. New tenants came and other tenants left. For the building, the long-awaited HVAC study was completed and options provided were prohibitively expensive for the most part. Your Property Committee thought outside the box and will move forward with less expensive (albeit still costly) options. The deferred maintenance and refresh of spaces most seen by those in need - the dining room, the Allen St entrance, and the foyer was completed. We installed new ceilings, new floors, new paint, new carpeting and it all looks amazing. It was delightful to use the newly renovated dining room for celebrating ordinations, confirmations, parish potlucks, and lovingly remembering those who passed.

The ministry of St. Stephen's Table was pushed to its limits this year. As food prices increased, so too did the needs of our community. The parish received calls for more volunteers, more donations, and a renewed understanding of the valued ministry in our community. We began to track the number of meals served, create meal plans, identify key volunteers to lead when needed and revisited making St. Stephen's Table a 501c3 so that more revenue sources can be used. This work will be a focus of 2025. ***We shall know and we shall love.***



A new investment both financially and spiritually will be required in 2025 if we are to continue to the 3-pronged focus outlined above. However, the questions abound:

- How do we sustain the outreach while also managing the upkeep of the building?
- How do we reward the dedication of our staff while prices continue to rise, and revenue continues to decrease?
- Where do we find more tenants, more parishioners, more families with children?
- Why can't it be like it was 50 years ago?

Using a quote from The Rev. Jenny Gregg during Francie Hill's funeral, "We are here now." Our reality looks different and we must begin to right-size and think differently about how our finances are managed. We can't operate as if there are hundreds of children in Sunday School and pews are brimming to full on Sunday. Your Vestry is primed to shift the landscape of how we do "church business", but we do know God is present among us and in all things. We keep our eyes on Him. *We shall love and we shall praise.*

***Behold our end which is no end.***

Respectfully submitted,  
Co-wardens Josie Ellis and John Garinther

## Administration Ministry

"The mission of the Administration Ministry is to be good stewards of the physical property, supplies and human resources of St. Stephen's Parish. We will accomplish this through careful planning and judicious use of resources, responsible maintenance and improvement of property, and support and guidance of parish staff."

## Property Committee

2024 was a busy one for the property committee. A number of projects carried over from the previous year were completed and a number of significant new projects launched.

2024 saw the completion of a major project carried over from the year prior. Our inventory of stained glass windows was fully restored and protected. This was among the largest projects our committee has overseen in nearly 20 years. All stained glass and accompanying window frames in the building were professionally inspected, cleaned, repaired, and sealed by stained glass artisans. Our chapel windows were removed entirely and rebuilt off site in the contractor's studio. Old, yellowed protective layers were removed from our sanctuary's upper windows and either cleaned or discarded. All related window frames were repaired and painted. The total project cost was \$180,000. Our cost was defrayed significantly thanks to a community preservation grant we were awarded in the amount of \$125,000. Thanks to this project, all lower windows and the large one facing East St. are now protected from the outside by a thick layer of tempered glass. This restorative work and the added level of protection ensure our stained glass assets remain a source of pride for St. Stephen's for generations to come.

2024 saw another major project completed from the year before. In 2023, the church designed and purchased a new sign on our front lawn. In the spring of 2024 it was installed. The process for seeking input on the design and location of the new sign as well as the permitting process were quite involved and time-consuming. Our new sign stands as yet another source of pride for St. Stephen's, displaying in a very outward way the vitality of our church community and what we stand for in our larger community.

2024 saw other easily recognizable signs that our church community is alive and well. Launched and completed in 2024, this project saw new flooring, updated lighting and fresh paint combine to refresh the first floor foyer. The dining room received the same treatment along with a new ceiling. The 3 restrooms on the first floor were painted as well. It has been over 20 years since these spaces were improved and the project was made possible thanks to funds dedicated to ensuring we remain good stewards of our cherished facility.

2023 launched perhaps the single largest project the property committee has taken on in decades. We were tasked with assessing our facility's heating system and making a recommendation to bring it back to a state of operating reliably and efficiently. In its current state, the system was limping along requiring constant human oversight. Over the years, many layers of redundancy had failed, eroding our confidence that our heating system would make it for more than another winter or two. Early in 2023, we hired professional HVAC consultants to assess our heating system. We immediately recognized a project of this scope would have us relying on our existing system for at least the next 2 to 3 winters. This spurred immediate action to address certain long-overdue repairs and improvements.

Our HVAC consultants delivered their long-awaited feasibility in December of 2023. We spent the first two months of 2024 studying it, making our recommendation to your leadership team, and working with

them to come up with a plan. 2024 saw a plan put into motion to combine the continued use of the most reliable components of our existing heating system with a laundry list of significant improvements and repairs. The result is a heating system designed to maximize efficiency and reliability while keeping overall cost at the forefront of every conversation we've had about it. With proposals for this work both forthcoming and accepted, we look forward to keeping you up to date on this once-in-a-generation project.

Other accomplishments for 2024:

1. A supplemental forced air heating system located in the south end of the sanctuary was restored to working order for the first time in 15+ years.
2. As part of larger conversations about the efficiency of our heating system, complex work is underway to explore installing commercial overhead fans in the sanctuary.
3. The Allen Street doors were painted.
4. The float valve in our boiler feed tank was rebuilt.
5. The water fountain on the first floor was replaced.
6. A map of all plumbing and wiring within the dining room ceiling was created.
7. Spurred by a difficult permitting process for our new sign and conversations about making our front entrance handicap accessible, a significant amount of time and energy were devoted to conversations that continue concerning the church acquiring ownership of our front lawn.
8. Security cameras were installed in the Allen St. stairwell to improve safety and security.

The Property Committee members are:

John Garinther, chairperson  
Don Phipps  
Chris Plankey  
Roy Sutton  
Al Symonds

Please feel free to ask committee members any questions about our property or point out any issues that you think may have been overlooked or need attention. If this glimpse of our work interests you, we'd love to have you join our committee. Thank you for continuing to support our property with your time, talent, and treasure.

John Garinther  
Property Committee Chairperson

### **Parish Library**

The Parish Library is located in the Guild Room. The collection is organized by subject and the Dewey decimal system is used. The children's section has books ranging from preschool interest up to young adult.

As the church season changes, pertinent books are pulled out of the collection and are displayed for ease in browsing. Materials can be checked out for a month and instructions are located on the top of the card catalog.

Respectfully submitted, Sara Garinther, Parish Librarian

## Finance Ministry

### Finance Committee

Please see the report of the treasurers beginning on page 33.

## Christian Education Ministry

### Adult Formation

Please see the Rector's Report page 11.

### Sunday School

Children's Formation 2024: Sunday Funday 2024-2025

**Proverbs 22:6:** "Start children off on the way they should go,  
and even when they are old, they will not turn from it."

You know children are comfortable in a space when they arrive with their parents and immediately start enjoying the space, whether with Legos or puzzles or stuffed animals. We are grateful to the parents who see the value in what our Sunday Funday teachers bring to the classroom twice a month for our eager attendees as we focus on making St. Stephen's "their place." Here are some examples of how we've joyfully spent time with the kiddos...

Last year, we put away the Alleluias for Lent ("burying" them in the undercroft) then retrieved them after Easter. We spent time helping out various ministries; coffee hour, greeting, stewardship. We had a fabulous end-of-school-year celebration in May where we made "fire" slime for Pentecost (fire in color only!).

This year during the season of Caring for One Another we had a guided discussion about how we show the people around us we love them and shared some ways they demonstrate their love for us. We pointed out how St Stephen's does this for our friends and neighbors through the work of St. Stephen's Table for example. While we shared, we drew, cut out, and decorated paper people chains to show how we're all interconnected by God's love for us and our love for one another. Also during this season we all helped carve a heart into a pumpkin and placed a candle inside symbolizing how we all emanate God's love from within.

We enjoyed making Advent wreaths for the kids and the parish, and we learned about each candle on the wreath while coloring a sheet featuring the words, hope, peace, love, and joy. We got into the Holiday spirit by crafting candy canes and wreaths from beads and pipe cleaners. We tied ribbons on them and brought them home to hang on our Christmas trees.

We provided a lesson on the Baptism of Jesus by having our own baptism of baby dolls while learning the importance of being "marked as Christ's own forever".

Most recently at the end of January we had the kids (and a teacher) from Zion join us. There were 4 students from St., Stephen's as well as 6 from Zion. The Zion students ranged from age 5 months through high school. The 2 girls from middle and high school were nice helpers with the 5 month old. We talked about the prophet Jeremiah and how when God called him, he said that he was just a boy. Our theme was, "even though we are small, we can do big things". and discussed ways we help show God's love and how God might call us. We drew pictures of ways that we can do big things. A funny thing was once one child

shared that they took out the garbage, it became the thing that several others wanted to draw about as well. We also made Valentine's cards to give out to shut-ins.

Angie said it best, "It has been a pleasure getting to know the children who come regularly and we are blessed to have these families participating."

Respectfully submitted by the Sunday Funday teachers;  
Josie Ellis                      Chris Plankey                      Suzanne White  
Angie Moon                      Craig Reynolds

## **Young People's Fellowship**

### **Youth Programming Annual Report 2024**

The Young People's Fellowship is made up of middle school, high school and some college students in the Berkshires. It draws from St. Stephen's, the downtown campus of churches, St. John's in Williamstown and is open to any other interested teens and parishes. YPF holds events once a month during the school year. Most events are kept intentionally agnostic in order to keep the group open to all teens and to encourage more participation. Youth participants have voiced the importance of keeping these events secular and welcoming to their friends with different beliefs.

Our monthly events focus on Service and Fellowship. Adult volunteers provide administrative and logistical support and are trained in Safe Church practices. Thanks to all who volunteer to support the group, especially Sara Garinther! The activities of YPF are planned and implemented by a Youth Leadership Team which includes teen representatives James Behnke, Grace Garinther, Jacob Billeter, Mariam Poling and Linnea Kaiser-Clark. YPF looks to include teens from other parishes and towns; teen ministry is enriched by having a group large enough to have a genuine peer community. We have teens join our events from St. Stephen's and Zion Lutheran in Pittsfield, Trinity Church in Lenox, St. John's in Williamstown and All Saints in N. Adams.

YPF Highlights of 2024 include

- Christmas caroling for St. Stephen's parishioners (3rd annual)
- Delivery for Thanksgiving Angels
- Spring Sleepover at St. John's Williamstown
- Blanket making/flower arrangements for Hillcrest Cancer Care unit
- Meal(s) prepared and served at St. Stephen's Table.
- Creation of backpacks provided to kids and teens entering foster care
- Fundraiser family movie for backpacks
- Pumpkin Hay Ride and harvest fun at Ioka Farm
- Rock-climbing at Central Rock Gym

YPF Goals for 2025 include

- Continued outreach to/collaboration with area parishes
- Fundraising for Foster Care Backpacks and for our group
- Plan another trip/overnight experience
- Continuation and expansion of formal youth leadership of the group

It is an honor to facilitate this multifaceted and collaborative ministry.

Respectfully submitted,  
Matt Behnke

## Outreach Ministry

### St Stephen's Table

Through the collective efforts of your donations, service, and kindness, St. Stephen's Table has successfully navigated the challenges of 2024. This year has brought an increase in the number of individuals we serve, highlighting the growing challenges of food insecurity and homelessness in our community. For us these challenges include increased financial demands and a need for greater physical time and planning to meet these pressing needs.

#### Meeting the Challenges of 2024

Despite these challenges, our dedicated volunteers have risen to the occasion. They have tirelessly picked up generous donations from Crescent Creamery and Panera Bread, prepared and assembled meals, and made thousands of trips up the church's stairs to ensure everything runs smoothly. Their efforts exemplify a deep commitment to service and to the mission of St. Stephen's Table.

#### Grace Notes: Elevating Service Through Connection

In his book *Unreasonable Hospitality*, Will Guidara describes the concept of "Grace Notes" as "a sweet but nonessential addition to your experience" that can have a disproportionately positive impact. These small, thoughtful touches—like putting quarters in a parking meter for a guest—enhance the human connection and leave lasting impressions.

As someone who has embraced service as a calling—whether managing a restaurant, teaching students, or preparing meals for St. Stephen's Table—I am continually inspired by this concept. Service is more than just meeting a need; it is an act of connection, a way to deepen relationships and bring dignity to those we serve.

#### The Heart of Our Ministry

Our volunteers embody this spirit of service. Much like a kitchen crew, they bring together diverse personalities, humor, stories, and philosophies—all united by a shared belief in the power of service. Week after week, they bring their time, energy, and resources to ensure that meals are prepared, kitchens are cleaned and organized, and the community is cared for.

This year, a notable increase in the number of guests began in the spring, placing greater demands on our team. Volunteers responded with flexibility and determination, even when it meant creating alternate meals when food supplies ran low. Their resilience and commitment to this ministry's mission have been truly inspiring.

#### Gratitude and Acknowledgment

As I reflect on the year, I am deeply grateful to the sponsors, donors, and volunteers who make this ministry possible. Your generous donations of food, financial resources, and supplies have been the backbone of our efforts, enabling us to meet the growing needs of our community. Whether it's the simple act of picking up milk and bread, cleaning the kitchen, or making countless trips up and down the stairs, every contribution matters. Together, we embody the spirit of St. Stephen's Table—a spirit of service, compassion, and unwavering dedication to addressing hunger and housing insecurity.

On behalf of everyone at St. Stephen's Table, thank you for your continued support and for making a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve.

**With gratitude,**  
Daniel Moon

## Parish Life and Stewardship Ministries

"The mission of the Parish Life Ministry is to communicate and provide opportunities for fellowship. This will be accomplished by calling upon individuals within the parish and community to integrate them into the life of the parish."

"The mission of the Stewardship Ministry is to nurture and make thoughtful and prayerful use of parish assets, including time, talent and financial resources. We will accomplish this through education, encouragement and careful management of all parish resources."

## Greeters

For the 2024 calendar year, greeters were scheduled for the 10:00 a.m. Sunday service, welcoming parishioners and guests at both the Allen Street and East Street entrances.

We remember fondly, Joan Morrow, who served faithfully these many years and who passed on earlier in the year. She is, undoubtedly greeting new entrants at the "Heavenly Gate" with her beautiful smile and words of wisdom.

Visitors were invited to sign the "Guest Book" at the East Street entrance.

Thank you to all who faithfully served in this important ministry. New volunteers are always welcome. Volunteers through 2024 were:

Susan LeBourdais

Claudia Austin Curry

Sandy Soule

Joan Evans

Diane Forsyth

Craig & Christine Reynolds

Respectfully,  
Paula Morey

## Coffee Hour/Lemonade on the Lawn

Warning... Joke ahead!

How do most Episcopalians take their coffee?

Very seriously!

In 2024 we continued to hold Coffee Hour/Lemonade on the Lawn twice each month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays. This allows our dedicated team of hosts to serve only once a quarter or so. The schedule also matches our Sunday school and Adult Formation offerings, allowing everyone to join in the fun.

After experimenting with holding Coffee Hour at the East Street entrance of the sanctuary in the first quarter of the year, we returned to the Guild Room in Lent. The hope was that folks (newcomers in particular) would feel more comfortable grabbing a cup of coffee and sharing a few kind words on their way out the door. It worked! But while the number of cups served and treats consumed increased, the cramped quarters seemed to discourage people from lingering and engaging as deeply with one another. Thanks to everyone who helped make the test happen. Here's to trying new things!



Many thanks to our wonderful Coffee Hour hosts for their dedication, flexibility, and generosity. If you would like to host Coffee Hour, please contact Craig Reynolds or the Parish Office for more information.

Craig Reynolds

## Communications

The communications ministry includes the St. Stephen's Website, the newsletter and the weekly email. In conjunction with these, Debbie Stillman and Jim Alden sent birthday and anniversary cards to hundreds of member in 2024.

### Weekly Parish Email

The weekly email blast continues to keep parishioners and interested community members up to date on events at St. Stephen's. Parish Administrator Sarah Morrison expertly crafts each issue of the blast which is transmitted each Wednesday. Please contact Sarah with any newsworthy events or announcements.

### ***St. Stephen's Offerings - Parish Newsletter***

*St. Stephen's Offerings* is the parish newsletter launched in 2023. Designed to supplement the weekly email blast, the newsletter offers a more detailed, comprehensive look at parish ministries. Published twice in 2024, the newsletter is delivered primarily via email with printed copies available at the church. Past issues are [archived on the website](#).

Many thanks to Sarah Morrison, our Parish Administrator, for compiling the articles written by parish leaders, producing the actual publication, and designing its new look.

## Website

### Worship

The [parish website](#) continued to be a hub for worship and connection in 2024. Throughout the year the website housed the live stream of the weekly worship service. Recordings of these streams are archived on our [YouTube channel](#).

Worship live streams and recordings registered 2,684 views and 477 viewing hours in 2024 – a gain of 21% vs. 2023. Many thanks to Ken Pooley for the time he invests in producing each week's stream (and streaming for special events). Ken established the livestream system and works tirelessly to improve the quality of its output.

The website also houses digital copies of our seasonal worship booklets and each week's Sunday bulletin.

### Other Website Content

In addition to worship services, the website continues to highlight [recent parish news and upcoming events](#). The site also offers a digital archive of important parish documentation, including the [parish calendar](#), the [monthly newsletter](#), [minutes of Vestry meetings](#), and [annual reports](#).

### Overall Website Performance

In 2024 the site registered 37,300 pageviews, a 60% increase over 2023. 46% of visits to the website in 2024 were made from a mobile device or tablet. Suggestions for site improvements are always welcome.

*Respectfully submitted, Craig Reynolds, Website Coordinator, Live Stream Assistant*

## Cooking and Baking Committee

The cooking and baking ministry has resumed! The committee participated in several funeral receptions in 2024 as well as the reception following Sharon Billetter's ordination to the diaconate. St. Stephen's members took part in the Thanksgiving Angels project and we met our goal of 1500 boxes of corn muffin mix. Members also generously gave over \$2,000.00 towards the purchase of turkeys.

Volunteers are always welcome!

Joan Evans  
Chairperson

## Living Green

Living Green Recyclables are still getting readied and totes are brought to the side door for pick up by Casella each Tuesday morning.

The cardboard boxes which are emptied throughout the building and delivered to the basement catch-all room are cut to size by some volunteers and taken home by others when readied to be put out with the recyclables at home as scheduled.

Since the City of Pittsfield has assigned new totes for both recyclables and trash for all residents, and because the parish is closed on Mondays, we have had to make some adjustments to our processes for both totes and cardboard take home. I am grateful to all of the volunteers who are dedicated to this important work.

The weekly "tips" were published in the weekly email blast and printed in the Sunday bulletins thanks to our intrepid Office Administrator, Sarah Morrison, through August.

If you would like to help with this effort, please see me.

Volunteers for 2024 were:

Bill Morey	Joan Evans
Susan Wojtasik	Jeff Pringle
Roy Sutton	Mark Miller
Don Phipps	Dot Lambert
John Garinther	Brendan Dillon

Respectfully,  
Paula Morey

## Stewardship Committee

In 2024, your Stewardship Committee (Jim Alden, Wendy Coakley, Leah Luczynski, Bill O’Neill, Al Symonds and Suzanne White, as well as *ex officio* member Rev. Nina Pooley) chose *Walk in Love* as our theme for Stewardship Season.

This simple, yet powerful, call to action reminds us that our greatest gift in community is how we align and come together in purpose and mission. As we have seen time and time again at St. Stephen’s, when we walk in the same direction, we can do so many things!

We began our Stewardship Season in September with weekly *Walk in Love* reflections, distributed via the online newsletter:

- Sept. 25 - **Crossing Boundaries**
- Oct. 2 - **Paradox**
- Oct. 9 - **God Walks With Us**
- Oct. 16 - **Accompaniment**
- Oct. 23 - **Village**
- Oct. 30 - **Perseverance**
- Nov. 6 - **Receiving Love**
- Nov. 13 - **The Offertory**
- Nov. 20 - **Authenticity**

The Sunday Funday children played a key role in the Oct. 27 campaign kickoff, by distributing symbols of love to the parish to launch them on our walk together. *Walk in Love* pledge cards were distributed the following week, in person (with cookies!) and via mail to those members unable to attend.

Over the next several weeks, three members of the parish took to the lectern to share their thoughtful perspectives on what it means to *Walk in Love* and why making an ongoing commitment to the people and mission of St. Stephen’s is part of that journey. Whether you were in the pews or watching at home, it was a profound blessing to hear the heartfelt words expressed by:

- Jim Brennan (Nov. 3)
- Bill Frazier (Nov. 10)
- Brendan Dillon-Harmon (Nov. 17)

In addition, we launched a Stewardship Straight Talk series to answer the questions many of you have as you prayerfully consider whether (and how much) to pledge, delivered via the online newsletter (dates below) and in the printed Bulletin the following Sunday:

- Nov. 6 - **How do I make sure my pledge is spent on the areas I’m most interested in supporting?**
- Nov. 13 - **What exactly is pledging and in what ways does it benefit the parish vs. plate collections?**
- Nov. 20 - **We seem to be spending a lot of money on refreshing the building. Why is this a priority and how are we paying for that?**
- Nov. 27 - **What is the Rector’s Discretionary Fund used for?**

- Dec. 4 - **Are we taking full advantage of all the space we have to try to bring in more funds to support the church?**
- Dec. 11 - **How do I learn more about the ways I can contribute my time and talent?**

Continuing this commitment to transparency - and to underscore the critical role that advance pledging plays in the parish’s overall budgeting process - the Wardens, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer invited interested members to attend Budget Basics presentations after services on Nov. 17 and Dec. 15. These meetings provided an overview of St. Stephen’s budget to understand what our expenses are, what our projected revenues look like and where we’re headed in 2025 and beyond.

Finally, on Ingathering Sunday, Nov. 24, we again called upon our eager Sunday Funday children to help us place our collective gifts on the altar. Two lucky pledgers’ names were drawn for a special thank-you gift honoring the *Walk in Love* legacy of retiring Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

Thanks to your generosity, as of January 31, 2025, we received 79 pledges for the upcoming church year totaling \$202,750. Here is a year-to-year comparison:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Number of pledges	83	79
Percentage of individuals increasing their pledge from prior year	31%	28%
Percentage of individuals decreasing their pledge from prior year	22%	20%
Total dollar amount pledged <i>Not including St. Stephen’s Table, Rector’s Discretionary Fund, etc.</i>	\$208,906	\$202,750

Messages of gratitude for your investment in the future of St. Stephen’s will be mailed out shortly. In the meantime, your Stewardship Committee thanks you for believing in the power of stewardship!

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Webster Coakley  
Stewardship Chair

## **Pastoral Care Ministry**

"Christians are called to be the heart and hands of Christ in the world. The mission of the Pastoral Care Ministry is the inclusion of shut-ins, the elderly and those who are ill, into the care and concerns of the parish."

## **Pastoral Care Team**

Please see the Rector's Report page 12.

## **Prayer Shawl Ministry**

Please see the Rector's Report page 12.

## Worship Ministry

"We will provide spiritual and practical nurture to enable those who serve to know God and make God known to others in our worship. We will accomplish this by encouraging, training, recruitment and communication, and by affirming the spirituality of this service."

### Worship at St Stephen's

The Rector, Music Director and Vestry members coordinate the committees, groups and individuals involved in our worship life.

In 2024 Sunday in-person worship was also livestreamed and Wednesday evening compline was held on Zoom. There were 3 Marriages, 4 Baptisms, 8 Confirmations and 9 Funerals. The following presents a comparison of number of services and attendance for the past five years:

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Holy Communion: Saturday & Sunday	79	81	52	58	77
Communion: Midweek	0	0	0	17	17
Communion: Private	18	5	6	5	20
Other Services and Private	62	61	54	11	0
Total Services	159	147	112	91	114
Total Attendance	In Person: 4,470 Online: 2,684 Total: 7,154	In Person: 4,240 Online: 2,377 Total: 6,617	In Person: 3,621 Online: 2,321 Total: 5,942	In Person 2,061 Online 4,231 Total: 6,894	8,017

## Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is a volunteer group of men and women that gather on weekends to prepare for the 5 PM Saturday & 10 AM Sunday Eucharists. The Altar Guild consists of five teams with ten active members that serve St. Stephens for one weekend every five weeks. Members also serve at special events and funerals that require Altar Guild coverage throughout the year. Open communication flows between the parish administrator, clergy, and the Altar Guild to keep things running smoothly.

Thank you to all our Altar Guild members for their faithful service to this important and needed ministry. We eagerly welcome anyone who wishes to join the Altar Guild. I am happy to provide workshops for active and new members, to attend a training or review of our Altar Guild weekly procedures for the changing church seasons throughout the year. New ideas are always welcome and encouraged.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marie Sutton, Altar Guild Coordinator

## Scheduling Ministry

### **Lectors/Eucharistic Ministers/Healing Prayer Ministers/Vestry Greeters**

Two Lectors and two eucharistic Ministers were scheduled for every Sunday service in 2024.

For the Saturday services, only one Lector and one Eucharistic Minister were scheduled; often, one person served both ministries.

So, we have begun to return to the routines we followed before the COVID pandemic.

Thanks to the 30 people who served during 2024.

Respectfully submitted,  
Don Phipps, Ministry Scheduler

## Director of Music

To the Congregation of St. Stephen's:

As I conclude my 13<sup>th</sup> year as the Director of Music at St. Stephen's, I am wondering what is going to happen to the music program. It appears that we are entering 2025 tightening our belts and trying to minimize spending in some program areas. The Parish Choir will be the main subject of this report, with some other details mentioned near the end.

First, I want to give thanks and appreciation to all of the singers past and present, who have spent their time and talent to provide the best music possible to praise God at St. Stephen's. The primary goal of the weekly rehearsals has been and will always be to focus on adding to the quality of the upcoming worship services. Over the years, fellowship and comradery have also been important to choir members. It is a fact that people who enjoy singing together, sound better. Though smaller in numbers, our current choir continues to do a nice job presenting anthems as well as leading the congregation in hymn-singing and service music. As always, we seek those who are able and willing to add their voices to our choir.

Thanks also to our faithful Choir Librarian, Don Phipps. He keeps our music organized and ready for rehearsals and services.

Music at St. Stephen's has been an integral part of the worship service probably from the very beginning. When I first became acquainted with St. Stephen's around 1975, the Parish Choir was the primary instrument leading the music in the service and a few professional paid singers were provided with a very small honorarium to sing solos and help the choir learn their music. This model has been long-standing in many local churches as well as throughout the country.

In early November, the choir was surprised to learn that the honoraria for the section leaders would be cut from the 2025 budget. Together, our current section leaders Sarah Novak, Wavelyn Hine, Jeff Hine and Craig Smith, have devoted approximately 120 years of loyal service to our Parish Choir. Their leadership has been crucial to the overall success of the choir – as they assist other choral singers as needed. They also set a good Christian example to others. Their leadership has given everyone the opportunity to sing beautiful sacred music with confidence! Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!

The choir honoraria have been small tokens of appreciation, for rendering a special talent which has the potential to uplift the hearts and minds of the people who attend the worship service at St. Stephen's. Scriptures are read, and a Christian message is delivered from the pulpit. The purpose of the music is to enhance the awesome message that the Good News of the Gospel brings to all.

It is a fact, that very few churches in the Berkshires have a competent organist and/or a decent choir that sings consistently. I am aware of instances that instead of incorporating live music, some churches are playing CDs over their loudspeaker systems. Imagine walking into our beautiful sanctuary for Sunday worship and listening to canned music during the service.

Currently, the choir is doing their best to put on happy faces for rehearsals and worship services. However, in the face of these particular budget cuts, and other cuts that may come in the future, I notice that the morale in your choir has been affected. People are feeling unappreciated. This is a difficult situation for me personally. I sympathize with the choir, and I don't know how to help. Our feelings should not surprise people. For the time being at least, we are attempting to press on.

Here are some more items:



From mid-June through Labor Day, the following vocalists and instrumentalists offered musical selections, including St. Stephen's Handbell Ringers: Gwen Davis, alto; Jeff Hine, tenor, Wavelyn Hine, alto and percussion; Sarah Novak, soprano; Deborah Duff, piano.

In addition, Josie Ellis, one of our wardens, came up with the idea to have a "pop-up choir". So, on alternate Sundays from the end of June through Labor Day weekend, we invited the congregation to come up and stand around the sanctuary piano together to sing two hymns. Because people were standing in close proximity, rather than wide apart in the pews, the singing improved dramatically immediately. And, most worshippers who attended on a given Sunday, came up to the front to participate!

Speaking of the sanctuary piano, I have been noticing more and more over the past couple of years that keys are sticking. This problem causes the instrument to be unreliable. It turns out that the action in the piano needs to be replaced - the sooner the better. Every time we schedule a concert or have an important service, we need to contract the piano technician to come and "fiddle" with the keys. Since we cannot guarantee the condition of the piano for events, we are taking a fair amount of risk when we host outside groups that require the use of the piano for concerts. Once the action has been replaced, we will again have a reliable Steinway baby grand piano. It is fairly well known in the area that the combination of the acoustics and the architecture (stained glass windows, etc.) make for a desirable concert venue. The gorgeous Austin pipe organ along with the refurbished Steinway piano will be the icing on the cake.

St. Stephen's Handbell Ringers had a productive year. A focus area for us this year has been to learn how to ring the bells in different ways, depending on the sounds that each piece of music requires to produce the best music possible.

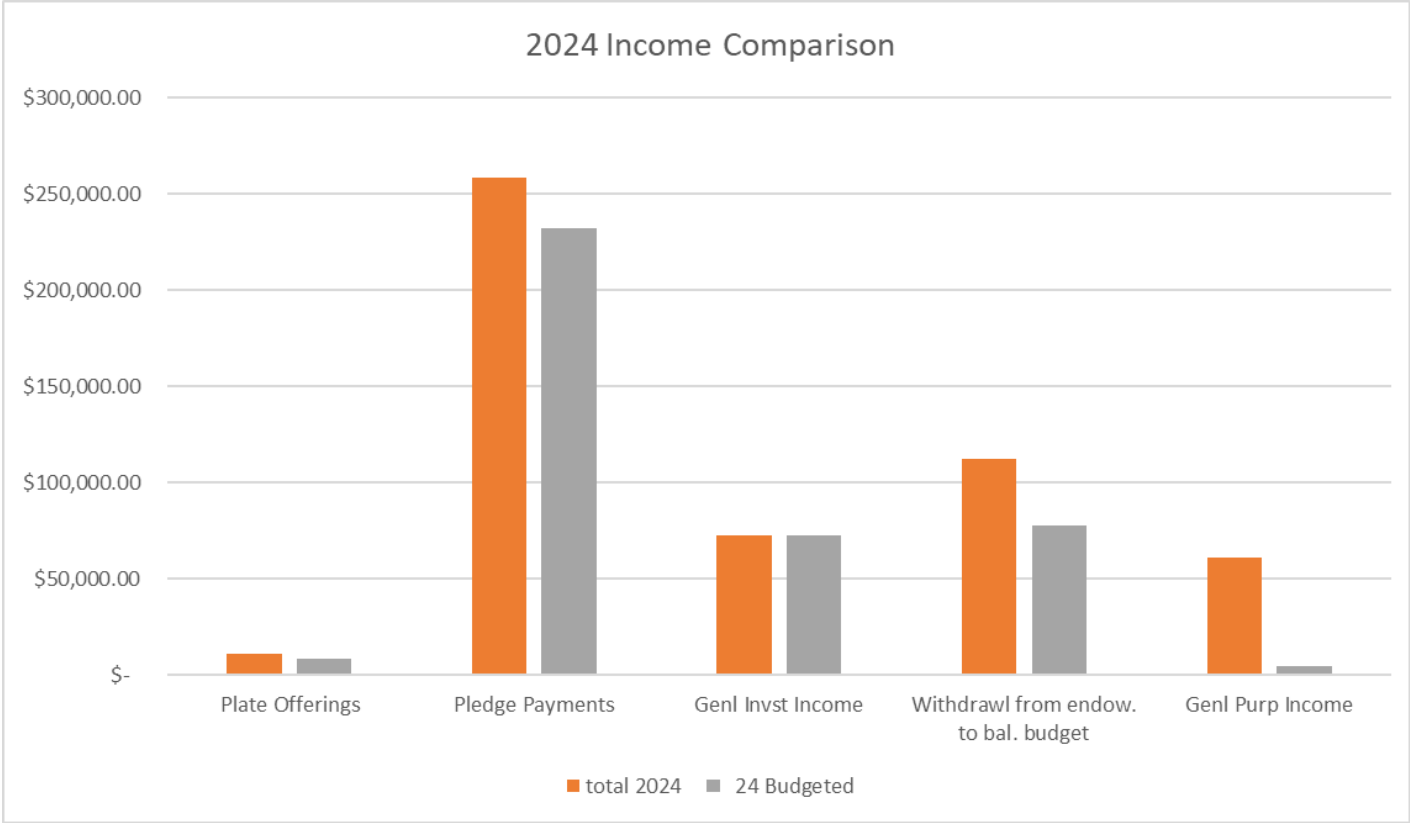
We are down a couple of ringers, but we continue to work to improve our playing, through hard practicing at rehearsals and individual practicing by the ringers at home. If there are people who have at least a rudimentary ability to read music, and would like to learn to play bells, please let me know.

The Berkshire Chapter of the American Guild of Organists sponsored an organ recital played by Daniel Minnick held on Saturday, April 27. This phenomenal performance was above and beyond any organ recital that I have ever heard in the Berkshires. His pedal-playing was incredible.

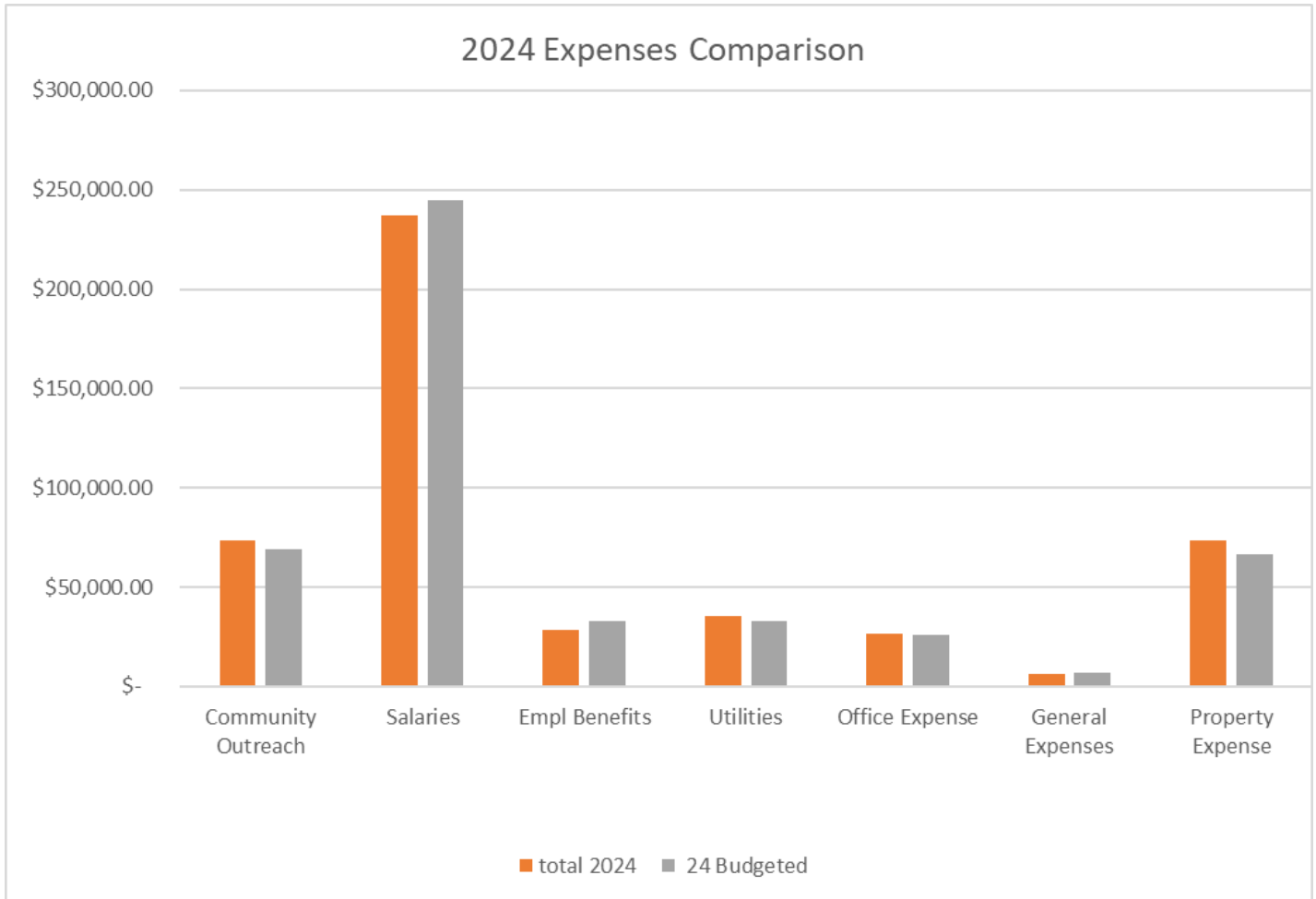
In June, the members of the Berkshire Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (AGO), voted to merge with the Springfield Chapter of the AGO. We adopted a more inclusive name – the Western Massachusetts Chapter of the AGO. I was asked to join the Executive Board and am trying my best to accomplish the various tasks that are requested of me. I do think that this merger was a wise choice for the organists in our area. (Remember what I said earlier in this report concerning the shortage of organists.)

Respectfully submitted,  
Joy Herzig Mullen  
Director of Music

# 2024 INCOME



# 2024 EXPENSES



## NOTES

Salaries—there will be a Cost of Living increase (as advised by the Diocese) of 5% in 2025.

2024 Deficit—We had budgeted for a deficit of \$112,380. Our actual deficit was \$77,721.

2025 Deficit—We are budgeting for a deficit of \$84,436.

# TREASURER'S REPORT

# ANNUAL MEETING FEB 2025

## BALANCE SHEET

December 31, 2024

### Assets

CASH1	
100300 Checking Account	13,325.87
100440 Rector Discretionary Checking	6,142.41
SAVINGS ACCOUNT	
100400 Sav Acct- General/Beattie Savings Account	3,371.22
101030 Sav Acct - Alexander Carney Library	1,573.41
101240 Sav Acct - Youth Group Fund	11,429.85
101440 Sav Acct - Memorial Fund	5,000.00
101640 Sav Acct - St. Stephen's Table	34,357.43
101650 Sav Acct - Kitchen Renovation	2,001.17
101740 Sav Acct - Music Department	11,666.64
101840 Community Outreach Grants	315.58
102030 Sav Acct - Education Fnd	30,265.00
102340 Sav Acct - Sabbatical Fund	2,004.58
102430 Sav Acct - St. Francis Shelter Fund	398.94
Total SAVINGS ACCOUNT	102,383.82
Total CASH1	121,852.10
INVESTMENTS	
110100 Trustee - Endowment Fund	559,508.21
110200 Trustee - Real Estate Fund	108,012.54
110300 Trustee - Dillon Memorial Fund	42,938.67
110400 Trustee - Nickerson Fund	41,993.94
110500 Trustee - Spaulding Fund	189,952.75
110600 Trustee - Centennial Fund	43,133.72
110700 Trustee - Lucia Campbell Fund	752.34
110800 Trustee - Plunkett Fund	3,808.90
110900 Trustee - Marsha Humphries Real Es.	63,377.22
111000 Trustee - Bailey Trust	4,255.06
111100 Trustee - Gravitt Endowed Pledge	66,040.29
111200 Trustee - M. Peek & E. Bell Real Es	251,391.39
Total INVESTMENTS	1,375,165.03
OTHER ASSETS	
113000 Berkshire Housing Loan	3,000.00
116500 Centennial Fund Bond	1,215.20
Total OTHER ASSETS	4,215.20
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,501,232.33</b>

# TREASURER'S REPORT

# ANNUAL MEETING FEB 2025

## BALANCE SHEET (con't)

December 31, 2024

### Liabilities & Net Assets

#### Liabilities

200200 PrePaid Pledges	8,900.00
208000 PrePaid Rent	1,600.00

<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>10,500.00</b>
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#### Net Assets

330100 Endowment Funds	1,375,165.03
340440 Rector's Discretionary Fund	7,928.91
390000 Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	93,080.53

#### Designated/Restricted Funds

300400 Beattie/Gen Sav Fund	3,048.95
301030 Alex Carney Library Fund	1,573.41
301240 Youth Fund	11,429.85
301440 Memorial Fund	5,000.00
301640 St. Stephen's Table Fund	34,357.43
301740 Music Department Fund	11,666.64
301840 Community Outreach Grants	315.58
302030 Education Fund	30,265.00
302340 Sabbatical Fund	2,004.58
302430 St. Francis Shelter Fund	338.94
304000 New Sign Fund	(3,515.75)

<b>Total Designated/Restricted Funds</b>	<b>96,544.63</b>
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#### Capital Funds

301650 Kitchen Renovation Fund	2,001.17
350100 Stained Glass Windows	(37,121.52)
350200 HVAC	(8,800.00)
350300 Third Capital Project	(37,051.49)
359500 Computer Upgrades	(8,658.40)

<b>Total Capital Funds</b>	<b>(89,630.24)</b>
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#### Transmittals

360010 United Thank Offering	600.00
360030 Donation to Rect. Discr. Fund	1,508.33
360070 Laundry Love	722.27
360080 Community Programs	597.67

<b>Total Transmittals</b>	<b>3,428.27</b>
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#### Other Funds

313000 Berkshire Housing Fund	3,000.00
316500 Centennial Bond Fund	1,215.20

<b>Total Other Funds</b>	<b>4,215.20</b>
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<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>1,490,732.33</b>
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<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,501,232.33</b>
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SAVINGS ACCOUNTS - AS OF 12/31/2024

**EDUCATION** \$ 30,265

**BEATTIE** \$ 3,371

**MEMORIAL** \$ 5,000

**MUSIC** \$ 11,667

**YOUTH** \$ 11,430

**INDIVIDUAL FUNDS**

Alex Carney Library	\$1,573		
St. Stephen's Table	\$34,3457	\$	40,336
St. Francis Shelter Fund	\$ 399		
TSA/Sabbatical Fund	\$2,005		
Kitchen Renovation	\$2,001		

**AVAILABLE TOTAL** — \$ 102,068

**SUMMARY**

**Revenues and Expenses through December 31, 2024**

**Revenues**

Operating Budget	\$	<b>477,489</b>
Actual Operating Income	\$	<b>480,523</b>

Non-Operating (Transfers and other Unbudgeted ) <i>includes \$3,409 in grant money for stained glass repair, Special donation to St. Stephen’s Table and Endowment withdrawal for capital projects</i>	\$	<b>194,199</b>
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Pledge Income (Plate Offerings and Pledge Payments)		
Budgeted Pledges	\$	<b>240,400</b>
Actual Pledges	\$	<b>269,332</b>

**Expenses**

Operating Budget	\$	<b>477,489</b>
Actual Operating Expenses	\$	<b>480,523</b>

Non-Operating (Transfers and other Unbudgeted) <i>includes expenses for stained glass repair, building refresh, And computer system upgrades</i>	\$	<b>188,438</b>
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# TREASURER'S REPORT

# ANNUAL MEETING 2024

## NON-OPERATING 2024

Accounts	2024 Actual
<b>Revenues</b>	
Schedule G-Sp Offrngs/Transfer	
490740 Memorial Flowers	150.00
490840 Christmas Flowers	735.00
490940 Easter Flowers	495.00
Total Schedule G-Sp Offrngs/Transfer	1,380.00
Other Revenues	
600400 Beattie Fund Receipts	13,586.54
601030 Carney Library Donations	150.00
601240 Youth Fund Donations	2,259.00
601440 Memorial Fund Donations	5,000.00
601640 St. Stephen's Table Dons	29,000.00
601740 Music Fund Income	4,015.00
602030 Education Fund Donations	3,600.00
640440 Rect. Discr. Fund Dons	1,380.70
Transmittals	
660010 UTO Donations	250.00
660030 Transmit to RDF	8,586.99
660070 Laundry Love Donations	1,640.26
660080 CommProgsDonations	2,188.16
Total Transmittals	12,665.41
Capital Fund Revenues	
650100 Grants for SGW	3,408.89
650300 3rd Capital Proj. Donations	35,526.86
Total Capital Fund Revenues	38,935.75
Total Other Revenues	110,592.40
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 111,972.40</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Schedule G-Spec Offering/Trans	
590740 Memorial Flowers (1)	172.46
590840 Christmas Flowers (1)	378.00
590940 Easter Flowers (1)	496.95
591040 Rector's Discretionary Fund (1)	1,578.83
592440 Special Donations (1)	(429.75)
592940 Music Fund Expense	(1,007.18)
Total Schedule G-Spec Offering/Trans	1,189.31



Transfer/Savings Accounts		
599940 Other Sp. Offrngs/Transfers	0.00	
Total Transfer/Savings Accounts		0.00
Other Expenses		
700400 Beattie/Gen Sav Fund Expenditures	30,370.64	
701240 Youth Fund Expenditures	2,179.00	
701440 Memorial Fund Expenditures	9,836.16	
701740 Music Dept. Expenditures	1,800.00	
701840 Community Outreach Grants Payout	230.40	
Transmittal Payouts		
760030 Rector's Discr Fund Sent out	8,891.66	
760070 Laundry Love Paid Out	1,086.99	
760080 Comm Programs Payouts	2,102.94	
Total Transmittal Payouts	12,081.59	
Capital Fund Expenses		
704000 New Sign Expenditures	505.98	
705950 Upgrade Computer system	8,658.40	
750100 Stained Glass Windows	40,530.39	
750200 HVAC Expenditures	8,800.00	
750300 3rd Capital Proj. Expenditures	72,578.35	
Total Capital Fund Expenses	131,073.12	
Total Other Expenses	187,570.91	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 188,760.22</b>	

# TREASURER'S REPORT

# ANNUAL MEETING 2024

## BUDGET 2025

2025 Budget - Operating Accounts	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2025 Proposed Budget	2025 Budget vs. 2024 Actual
<b>Revenues</b>					
Total Schedule A-Plate Offerings	\$ 6,600	\$ 8,200	\$ 11,228	\$ 9,040	\$ (2,188)
Total Schedule B - Pledge Payments	\$ 257,100	\$ 232,200	\$ 258,104	\$ 240,500	\$ (17,604)
4050.00 Withdrawal from Endowment	\$ 104,353	\$ 112,379	\$ 75,950	\$ 84,436	\$ 8,486
Total Schedule C-Genl Invst Income	\$ 174,791	\$ 184,939	\$ 148,455	\$ 157,363	\$ 8,908
Total Schedule D - Genl Purp Income	\$ 42,150	\$ 52,150	\$ 62,735	\$ 59,170	\$ (3,565)
<b>TOTAL BUDGETED RECEIPTS (Operating)</b>	<b>\$ 480,641</b>	<b>\$ 477,489</b>	<b>\$ 480,522</b>	<b>\$ 466,073</b>	<b>\$ (14,449)</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$ 480,641</b>	<b>\$ 477,489</b>	<b>\$ 480,522</b>	<b>\$ 466,073</b>	<b>\$ (14,449)</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
Total Schedule H-Community Outreach	\$ 63,942	\$ 68,942	\$ 73,331	\$ 79,557	\$ 6,226
Total Schedule I - Salaries	\$ 236,961	\$ 244,892	\$ 236,908	\$ 235,097	\$ (1,810)
Total Schedule J - Empl Benefits	\$ 32,266	\$ 32,581	\$ 28,646	\$ 9,798	\$ (18,848)
Total Schedule K-Utilities	\$ 32,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 32,782	\$ 34,500	\$ 1,718
Total Schedule L - Office Expense	\$ 15,500	\$ 12,750	\$ 13,848	\$ 15,620	\$ 1,772
Total Schedule M-Christian Ed	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,300	\$ 2,132	\$ 2,300	\$ 168
Total Schedule N-Expense Reimbursement	\$ 1,700	\$ 2,200	\$ 1,704	\$ 1,700	\$ (4)
Total Schedule O - Telephone	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,700	\$ 2,594	\$ 2,600	\$ 6
Total Schedule P-Altar Supplies	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,640	\$ 1,100	\$ (540)
Total Schedule Q - Music Expenses	\$ 12,250	\$ 7,250	\$ 7,295	\$ 1,000	\$ (6,295)
Total Schedule R - General Expenses	\$ 7,000	\$ 6,600	\$ 6,102	\$ 3,500	\$ (2,602)
Total Schedule S-Property Expense	\$ 72,922	\$ 66,342	\$ 73,540	\$ 79,300	\$ 5,760
<b>TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENSES (Operating)</b>	<b>\$ 480,641</b>	<b>\$ 477,657</b>	<b>\$ 480,522</b>	<b>\$ 466,072</b>	<b>\$ (14,450)</b>
Total Expenses	\$ 480,641	\$ 477,657	\$ 480,522	\$ 466,072	\$ (14,450)
<b>BUDGETED Net Total (Operating)</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ (168)</b>	<b>\$ (0)</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>4050.00 (From Above) Withdrawal from Endowment Fund</b>					
	\$ 104,353	\$ 112,379	\$ 75,950	\$ 84,436	\$ 8,486

## Treasurer's Farewell

It has truly been an honor and a privilege to serve the people of St. Stephen's as your treasurer. Thank you for placing your trust in me for this very important role.

Sharing my experience and knowledge along with working hand in hand with our wonderful vestry and finance team has been a pleasure and I have gained a great deal of knowledge regarding the importance of faithful stewardship. I have also seen the significance of the generous support of parishioners like you.

As I am preparing to step down, I know that I am leaving our finances in the very best hands with our new treasurer Christopher Perry and continuing assistant treasurer William O'Neill.

With gratitude and blessings,

Suzanne White

***St. Stephen's Parish  
67 East Street  
Pittsfield, Massachusetts***

**OUR MISSION** is to be the heart and hands of Christ: nourishing people, transforming lives.

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**e-mail: [mail@ststephenspittsfield.org](mailto:mail@ststephenspittsfield.org)      ~      [www.ststephenspittsfield.org](http://www.ststephenspittsfield.org)**