ST. STEPHEN'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

2023 Ministry Reports

JANUARY 21, 2024

ST. STEPHENS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
2750 Cardinal Dr. Sierra Vista, AZ 85635

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RECTOR'S REPORT FOR 2023

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Sierra Vista

State of the Church: January 21, 2024

Good morning and welcome to our annual meeting of 2024 and a brief look back at the past year 2023 and a look forward into what we hope for in the new year.

A quick review of the past year and what we as a church experienced:

First, a big thank you to all of you who have been very generous with their time, talents, and finances. As a smaller congregation, we have a strong spirit and desire to live out God's will for us and our community: feeling called to love and serve.

Outreach local

We shared our love and service with several different places that experienced needs this past year.

At the end of May, an arsonist set fire to **St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Douglas** and to the First Presbyterian Church Douglas. Our Bishop Reddall and Vicar Rev. John Caleb Collins quickly went to the site of the fires and provided pastoral comfort and assurances to the congregation. The Diocese asked for donations to help St. Stephen's congregation to be able to continue to meet and worship together. The Methodist church on the same block opened their doors to the two destroyed churches so that they would have a place to worship while the investigation and reconstruction got underway. We donated $2105.00 for St. Stephen's Douglas for those needs.

In June, we participated in a **Cochise County-wide food drive** to help stock the food pantries around the county with items to help people facing food insecurity due to higher grocery prices.

In July, we completed a **school supply drive** to support two elementary schools in Double Adobe and McNeal. Thanks to your generous donations, we were able to help those two schools in the more rural area of Cochise County with items to help students be successful at the start of the school year.

During the early summer we discovered that the **local animal shelter** was collecting aluminum cans and pull tabs to help support the needs of the animals and their care. We offered to collect your cans and drop them off at the shelter to show our support for their work with pets and animals in our community. Thank you for continuing to drop off your cans in our collection bins for the shelter.

Outreach national

Sadly, in August, another fire, this one a wildfire, erupted on the island of **Maui** destroying the town of Lahaina and the Episcopal church there. We responded with another donation of funds totaling $2112.00 from you to the Episcopal Relief and Development organization to assist with helping the people of Lahaina following that devastating fire.

In September, we wanted to recognize our **first responders** with notes of gratitude for the work and dedication they show our community as an echo of the first responders who rushed into buildings in New York and Washington DC and to the field in Pennsylvania on September 11th 2001. We asked you to sign and include messages of thanks in cards that we delivered to community fire and police stations in Sierra Vista.

We gave out blue **United Thank Offering (UTO) boxes** in late October for a November ingathering of change that we then tallied up and sent a check to UTO from our church for $591.51

In November and December, we participated in the community **"Coats for Kids"** coat drive by placing new or gently used coats in the big box on our porch. We have done this several years now and thank you for your contributions to the coat drive to help kids stay warm around the county.

Our last outreach effort of the year for Christmas was to fill a **GO-Bag for Foster Care Placements** (a canvas or duffle bag with boys and girls items in age ranges from newborn to 18 years old). We filled 19 bags with pajamas/nightgowns, underwear, socks, a change of clothes, a blanket, a toy or coloring/drawing or writing materials, and some hygiene items (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, washcloth, wet wipes,etc…). These bags were then taken to the Department of Child Services in Sierra Vista for the social workers to use when they need to place a child in foster care in an emergency situation. Thanks to you, these boys and girls will have a bag of items that shows someone was thinking about them during a very emotional and difficult time. The staff at DCS was very happy to have our donations of these bags.

Throughout the year, our **Groceries 4U program** helps people in our community with Better Bucks that can be used to purchase food, hygiene, or clothing needs at grocery stores, restaurants, and at Goodwill. This past year we gave out approximately $2710.00 in Better Bucks to 61 individuals and 27 family units.

From your gratitude giving to the **Rector's Discretionary**, we were able to help numerous people with utility bills, rent assistance, hotel rooms, gas money, and some unanticipated home repairs assistance.

Facility renovations

We continue to also **offer our facilities** to 12-Step group meetings such as AA, NA, and OA. We also welcome the Thunder Mountain Bridge Club for their card games three times a week. And lastly, we have a continuing space sharing agreement with New Testament Christian Church during our week.

In addition to loving and serving our neighbors in Sierra Vista, around the County, in Douglas, in Maui, and across the nation, we also gave our church some love and service with **several facility upgrades**…

After old tile removal

New flooring installed

New floors and carpet, new LED parking lot lights, resurfaced parking lot, and new gutters on both buildings. We upgraded our wi-fi routers, fixed a broken air conditioner unit, and took care of termites under the Ed Building.

We were blessed also to receive some special donations this year that were much appreciated including: The digital organ from a Jewish Temple in the Phoenix area, some new LED lights in the ED Bldg, new decorations in the Parish Hall for Fellowship time, and a load of gravel for the retention pond wall next to the parking lot.

Church Activities: We had a fun year this year with cookouts, potlucks, dinners our at restaurants, movie nights, sing-alongs, book studies, Education for Ministry, Bible Study, yard cleanup days, and our first ever Trunk or Treat!

Final goodbyes

We celebrate all of these things as happy and fulfilling events in the life of our church, but this past year has also had its moments of sadness as we said goodbye to several people who left us to enter their eternal lives…

- Margaret, daughter of Andy Anderson
- Sam, Son of Doris Millard
- Bill, gentleman friend of Doris Millard
- Danny, friend of Sandra Calhoun
- Maryhelen Henthorn, newly returned member of St. Stephen's
- Phyllis Fortenberry, long-time member of St. Stephen's
- Tim Ash, Jr, son of Tim and Deb Ash and former member of St. Stephen's
- May Sowards, mother of Mark Sowards and grandmother of Nick Sowards
- Marshall Murray, member of the AA group that meets here daily.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Financial

Financially we are holding steady. Your vestry voted this year to improve our stewardship of some restricted funds that are in our care. We researched and decided to invest some money to earn interest and protect these funds for future generations of the church. The Wilder Endowment and the Columbarium Fund were invested in October with The Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF) through State Street Investment Solutions. We also placed the "Emergency Fund" which was granted to us through the Diocese during the pandemic into three certificates of deposit (CDs) locally with Edward Jones investing.

Our stewardship campaign came close to a balanced draft budget this year, being off only by about $1000.00. Here are the basic categories used to create the budget: (show summary and accounts pages)

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church 2024 Summary of Annual Budget:

Income					
	4000000	Unrestricted			
		4100101	Pledges	$106,516.00	(as of 12-31-23)
		4100104	Non-pledge Giving	$16,500.00	Est. conservative potential
		4100105	Facility Use	$7,080.00	2024 estimate
		4300000	Interest Income	$0.00	
		4300199	Mission Share Rebate	$1,500.00	
	Total Unrestricted Income			**$131,596.00**	

Expenses
Salaries for all staff - $87,324.40
(Rector, Deacon, Parish Admin, Sexton, Accompanist, Bookkeeper)

Facilities expenses - $18,140.50
(Utilities, insurance)

Office Expenses - $3,610.00
(printer supplies, internet, phone, mail, etc)

Worship & Christian Ed Expenses - $1,200.00

Mission Share to Diocese - $22,239.73
(16.9% of operating/unrestricted income)

Total Expenses = $132,514.63

Income – Expenses =
$131,596.00 – $132,514.63 = $918.63 Possible Deficit or Shortfall

Bank Account and Investment Balances as of Dec 31 2023:
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Bank and Investment Accounts:

National Bank of Arizona (NBAZ) Business Checking - $72,260.34
NBAZ Business Savings Account, Bldg Maintenance - $26,360.52

State Street Investments - ECF (Wilder Endowment) - $ 33,545.55
(initial investment October 2023 $30,500)
State Street Investments – ECF (Columbarium Fund) - $ 10,998.46
(initial investment October 2023 $10,000)

Edward Jones CD Investments (emergency fund)***:

Certificates of Deposit		Maturity Date	Maturity Value
Value^	Rate of Return*		
Citizens Bk Na Providence RI 5.40%		5/15/2024	10,000.00
10,008.40	0.80%		
Comerica Bk Dallas Tex 5.45%		8/16/2024	10,000.00
10,021.00	0.95%		
Morgan Stanley Bk N A Salt 5.40%		5/15/2025	10,000.00
10,048.40	1.33%		

***Upon maturity each CD will have earned $540, $545, and $540 respectively. The church can then deposit the interest in an Edward Jones account until a total of $10,000 is reached for the creation of a new CD for investment. The church, alternatively, can take the investment interest and/or principal cash as part of the church income to be applied to church operating expenses.

Future

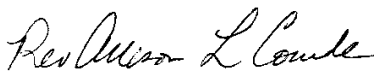
As we look to this coming year 2024:

- St. Stephen's will be doing maintenance on the sign by the road and driveway entrance and getting estimates on some landscaping for the front corner of the church property.
- We will continue to love and serve our neighbors near and far away as needs are identified.
- We look forward to Sherry Simon returning in April after her internship and completing her Deacon formation with her ordination in January 2025.
- We also wait expectantly for news of Deacon Keith Saare's anticipated ordination date for the priesthood.

- We continue to pray for and actively invite any who are seeking to grow in the knowledge and love of God and Christ to enter our doors and join with us in worship and becoming more and more each day the persons that God intends us to be.

Thank you again to all of you who make St. Stephen's a warm, friendly, caring spiritual home. You are the expression of God's hope and peace and love to so many. May God continue to bless you and your families in the coming year.

With gratitude and love,



The Reverend Allison Cornell
Rector, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Sierra Vista, AZ

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT FOR YEAR 2023

In retrospect, the two years I have served as Senior Warden have flown by quickly and I look forward to the next two years. In this last year 2023, the St. Stephen's clergy, staff, Jr. Warden, and Vestry transition from COVID impact toward the 'new normal' and its challenges associated with church life, as well looking into the future.

With the assistance parish members, we made improvements to our facility infrastructure, new floor in our space, replacement of gutters on main building/education center, replacement of organ with an electronic one and upgrade of internal WIFI system. Further details in Jr Warden's report,

The hard work of Ann, Roth Treasurer, has helped improve Rector's and Vestry visibility and understanding of St. Stephen' finances. We changed "St Stephen's" bank accounts from Wells Fargo to National Bank of Arizona, made a leap-into investment certificates and funds, which improves rate of return (interest earned) for primarily restricted funds while still allowing Vestry oversight. Ann continues her great work with a few remaining challenges associated monthly financial reports making it easier for Rector and Vestry to better understand and visualize current financial position based approved calendar year budget allowing planning and execution of potential adjustments. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation St. Stephen's members for their generosity and support, which has allowed the Vestry to develop a functional and realistic budget. At the time members have also stepped to provide donations for a various projects undertaken to improve St Stephen's infrastructure projects or mission activities, and this is greatly appreciated. Ann's report goes into further detail.

I would appreciate, if parish members would take some time and a step back and to reflect on a couple of issues by providing your thoughts or concerns to Vestry members -- what are our parishioners' needs, how best can we reach out to our neighbors, and what new ministries should we offer. Your feedback is important BUT also necessary for improvement to occur within St Stephen's parish life and its mission. Improvement within parish activities does not occur in a vacuum as it does require involvement and participation of all members. Your thoughts, participation, and are appreciated to achieve success.

I feel confident that St. Stephen's will continue to grow and thrive. Thanks to each and every one of you for all you do I am very enthusiastic about 2024 and what lies ahead for our parish! But, we can and must do more.

Very respectfully
- Jeff Speer-

JUNIOR WARDEN REPORT FOR YEAR 2023

During 2023, the following significant activities occurred to maintain or improve St. Stephen's grounds and facilities:

- Parking lot resurfaced and repainted
- Parking lot incandescent lights replaced with LEDs and serviced
- Church linoleum tile and carpet floor replaced with high durability composite material
- Church and office building rain gutters replaced and upgraded to a higher capacity to prevent overflow and obstruction of the drainage
- Air conditioning to educational/office building repaired
- Wifi network upgraded for better coverage and to facilitate transmission of worship services via internet
- Contracted with local landscaper to trim or remove shrubbery and foliage
- Contracted for repair of drip irrigation
- Conducted two congregational work days for general grounds maintenance
- Replaced pipe organ

Volunteers continue contributing to keeping the facilities tidy and the grounds mowed and trimmed. Thanks.

Pete Criscuolo, Jr. Warden

Submitted 11 Jan 2024

TREASURER'S 2023 REPORT

The year 2023 showed some changes in the financial picture at St. Stephen's. Budgets are "made of straw" when you are guessing at income. Expenses can usually be estimated. Pledges are a guideline for the majority of operating funds. Non-pledge giving is a "guestimate" – and your Vestry has chosen to estimate roughly half of what has been given over the last couple of years for that. In spite of all the guessing, we made our budget for the year.

Because we moved our accounts to National Bank of Arizona last year, we were able to track the kind of income the Restricted Funds were getting in Savings accounts. Not much!! One of those Savings Accounts was designated funds for Building Maintenance, for which we also have a Line Item in the budget that holds funds in the Checking Account. Thanks to the generosity of many people, we were able to spend responsibly on this church for some desirable upgrades. We had the flooring and carpets replaced in the sanctuary. We had the paving lot resurfaced. We got new LED lights in the parking lot. We got new gutters on the buildings. In 2024 we are working to upgrade our sign out front, and hopefully to do some landscaping.

Restricted funds which are set aside for specific church ministries were invested in order to preserve the capital and earn better interest than the bank could give us. Late in the fall, we moved the Wilder Endowment and the Columbarium account, plus enough to "round up", into the hands of the Episcopal Church Foundation. In two months, the Columbarium account has earned nearly $1000, and the Wilder account has earned $3,000. The Emergency Funds loaned to us by the Diocese to keep St. Stephen's alive during the Covid pandemic needed to be potentially available for repayment, so that money was given to Edward Jones for CD's that are staggered in their maturation dates. The three CD's have already earned over $105 in one month. The money entrusted to us is safe and earning.

This church has been amazingly generous to people in need both inside and outside our locale. We have sent funds over $2,000 to help St. Stephen's, Douglas rebuild their burnt church. We have sent about $2,000 to Maui after the horrible fire there. We have continued to give groceries to our food banks, school supplies for children, coats for kids during this cold weather, overnight bags for foster children. Your generosity enabled all of that and more.

Know that by blessing this Church and blessing the people of our County and our World, that you yourselves are the blessing. May St. Stephen's remain a place of open doors, open minds, and open hearts.

Anne Roth

St. Stephen's Treasurer

Deacon Annual Report for 2023

Our Community Connection Ministry (formerly called Outreach) has been busy since last year this time. They have collected school supplies for the Cochise County School Superintendent's office to be distributed to elementary schools in Mc Neal and Double Adobe. An ongoing collection of clean crushed aluminum cans is being delivered to the local animal shelter to help them purchase animal food and other necessities. Another collection was done for items to fill clothing, toiletries and books/games in "go bags" for children being taken out of their homes by the Social Services staff for a variety of reasons. Usually, the children are picked up without any of their own possessions and these bags will help clothe and comfort them until they are placed in safe places. The Community Action group sponsored by the Salvation Army also requested and we supplied canned goods to help restock food pantries in the area.

My special thanks to all on the vestry who were given names of folks in our parish registry to keep in touch with them. Especially when someone has been not seen for unknown reasons for a couple of weeks. The vestry calls to see if there is something we can do to help them and reassure them we care about them.

Monthly, I have attended the Pastors' Lunch with Rev. Allison. It is a wonderful time to visit with other clergy in our Sierra Vista area and catch up on each other's ministries. I have also attended an early morning breakfast once a month at the Canyon Vista Medical Ctr. It is a learning experience since they always have interesting guest speakers together with a chance to meet some of the chaplain volunteers at the Medical Center. Eventually, I hope to be able to volunteer there myself.

Its always a pleasure to take communion to those in our congregation who are unable to attend church. Rev. Allison does a lot of that also, but I try to relieve her by seeing those who do not ask specifically for her to visit.

During the month of August, 2023, I attended a class for Spiritual Direction at Adlynrood Conference and Retreat Center in Massachusetts. It was the first of three sections and I am hoping to complete the course this coming summer. I have already used much of what was taught and look forward to increasing it to the point of earning a degree.

I have, for the most part, recovered from the knee replacement last winter, but still have times of unsteadiness. It is a little annoying to be "wobbling" down the aisle during services and with the help of some physical training it should go away in time.

Looking forward to doing some training of much needed Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors and Altar Guild. Anyone interested in know learning one or more ministry leader positions, please feel free to call me anytime.

Reverand Deacon Dottie Gutwein