

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1645 Avenue D, Suite D
Billings, MT 59102

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT
2024

Rector.....	The Rev. Stephen Day
Parish Administrator.....	Laura Schillinger
Senior Warden.....	Lance Doerr
Junior Warden.....	Doris Gerstner
Treasurer.....	Doris Gerstner
Clerk of the Vestry	Mary Chandler

VESTRY

Through 2024.....	Mark Barnes Crystal Matthews
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Through 2025.....

Through 2026.....	Brian Norlin Mary Chandler Lance Doerr
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Agenda

- Opening Prayer
- Comments from Rector
- Senior Warden
- Junior Warden
- Treasurer's Report
- Budget
- Elections/Appointments:
 - Vestry
 - 2 terms expire with this meeting*
 - Wardens
 - Diocesan Convention Delegates (2 plus alt.)
(probably October 3 – 5, 2025 in Kalispell)
 - Bishop Fox representative
 - Audit Committee
- Other Business and Reports

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Annual Meeting for 2023

Sunday, January 21, 2024, 11:30 am

The Annual Meeting started at 11:35 am with an opening prayer by Father Stephen.

Father Stephen presented the Rector's Report (attached). There was discussion about future worship spaces. Junior Warden Doris Gerstner shared the tentative plan is to meet Ocee Johnson Chapel at St. John's United. Other options included Prescott Hall at the Rocky—the availability of this space is reevaluated annually and there is no office space. The formal plan is still being created and will be shared soon.

Father Stephen shared that a Service of Thanksgiving and Secularization of the building will be scheduled to happen before the closing date of February 9.

There was additional discussion about AA's ability to continue meeting in this space after the sale of the building. Thanks were given by AA to the church for advocating for them during the sale of the building.

Senior Warden Steve Gerstner reflected on the many transitions that St. Stephen's has been through over the years. He talked about the loss pain associated with the sale of the building and expressed hope for the parish's next chapter.

Junior Warden Doris Gerstner shared the Jr. Warden's Report. There was discussion about the sale of the building. The sale price was \$1.3 million. Our parish owns the building in trust to the diocese, and because we are continuing as a parish community, we will receive this money to sustain the community. The money from the sale of the church will be held and managed appropriately.

Treasurer Doris Gerstner shared the Treasurer's Report (Attached). The Diocesan Brokerage account number in the report is not accurate. We are waiting for the diocese to get back to us. Doris opened for questions and is open to discussing anything further. No questions were posed.

Treasurer Doris Gerstner presented the Continuing Resolution for Funding, in lieu of the budget. Changes will be made to the budget to include housing allowance after the sale of the building. Additionally, the vestry has approved moving Father Stephen from 0.5 time to 0.75. Motion made by Gerooge Kimmett seconded by Mark Barnes. Unanimously approved.

The women of the church met during the annual meeting. The money in the ECW account will be transferred to the St. Stephen's Saving's account. Motion made by Carol Pickard moved and seconded by Laura Schillinger. Unanimously approved.

The vestry elections were held. Lance Doerr has agreed to serve another term on Vestry. The vestry nominated Brian Norlin and Mary Chandler. The floor opened to additional nominations and none were made. A motion was made by Mark Barnes and Steve Gerstner. Unanimously approved.

Sr. Warden elections were held. Lance Doerr has agreed to serve as Sr. Warden. Motion was made by Geroge Kimmett and seconded by Steve Gerstner. Unanimously approved.

Doris will continue as Jr. Warden. Mary Chandler will take over as Clerk.

Diocesan Convention Delegates were established. Mary Chandler and Lance Doerr will attend as delegates.

The Bishop Fox representatives were established. Megan Schillinger and George Kimmet will continue in this role

The audit committee was established. George Kimmet and Patti Harcharik will conduct the audit this year.

Under other business and reports, Carol Pickard made a bid for people to consider joining the alter guild. All are welcome to serve in this role.

The annual meeting ended at 12:45.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Chandler, Clerk

Lance Doerr, Sr. Warden

Rectors Report for 2024

It has been quite a busy year for Saint Stephen's. About eighteen months ago, I began writing monthly reports to the vestry to simplify my reporting. This year I decided to allow technology to help me with my annual report. I submitted my prior twelve months of reports to ChatGPT and then asked it to summarize those twenty pages into something concise. So, below is a modified version of what it gave me. At the end you will find some of the more standard fare for annual rector's reports that I have added in.

Overall themes for the year:

1. Relocation and Transitions:

- The congregation relocated its worship space and offices early in the year.
- Efforts included clearing the previous location, organizing materials, and adapting to the new space at St. John's.

2. Community Engagement:

- Strong emphasis on staying connected with members, including outreach to those struggling with changes.
- Introduction of programs like Sunday School and plans for more adult Bible study and spiritual formation activities.

3. Worship Adjustments:

- Services continued in new settings, requiring logistical changes like setting up signs and carrying materials weekly.
- Encouragement for congregational involvement in altar preparation and service planning due to a dwindling Altar Guild.

4. Mission and Vision:

- Calls to redefine the church's purpose, shifting from maintenance to mission-oriented actions.
- Outreach programs discussed included refugee resettlement efforts and expanding community involvement.

5. Church Administration:

- Updates on organizational aspects such as parish directories, financial decisions, and equipment improvements (e.g., streaming setup).
- Stewardship campaigns and plans for vestry roles were addressed.

6. Special Initiatives:

- Continued integration into broader Episcopal Church efforts, including refugee resettlement, anti-racism training, and diocesan legislation.
- Participation in the General Convention and discussions on the wider Church's direction.

7. Challenges:

- Addressing the small size of the Altar Guild and balancing financial stewardship with mission expansion.
- Adapting to worship logistics in a non-dedicated space.

Significant Monthly Highlights:

- February: Closing on the previous property and organizing new office spaces.
- March: Bishop visitation and focus on future worship organization and mission-driven goals.
- April-May: Successful Holy Week attendance; developing the parish directory and upgrading streaming capabilities.
- June-July: Participation in General Convention, which included important discussions on Church governance and future direction.
- August-September: Refugee resettlement programs and successful columbarium reorganization.
- October-November: Start of Sunday School and the screening of "The Philadelphia Eleven" documentary.
- December: Christmas services at the new location and plans for stewardship campaigns.

The reports reflect a dynamic year of adaptation, growth, and renewed focus on community, service, and spiritual formation.

Over the course of 2024, we celebrated Holy Eucharist on 49 Sundays. On three occasions we had Morning Prayer on Sundays (once while I was at General Convention, during diocesan convention, and on the First Sunday after Christmas). We also had a service of secularization and the standard holy days (Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday). At Easter we had 53 worshipers and between Christmas Eve and Day, we had 60 worshipers. Our average online viewership for the year was 25 and the in-person ASA was 20. Both our online views and in-person attendance increased over 2023.

At the beginning of 2024 we had to say goodbye to the longtime director of our Altar Guild, Carol Pickard. She retired from that vital role after long service. Jamie Barnes also took a pause from serving on the Guild. Many thanks to Carol Moore and Sally Walton for their continued service. I have tried to pick up the slack.

Many thanks also to our devoted readers during 2024. Doris Gerstner and George Kimmet read and also lead Morning Prayer. Additionally, we were blessed with the service of Brian Norlin, Kerrie Sheets, and Carol Pickard.

In service to the wider Church, during 2024 I continued to serve on the Camp Commission for Camp Marshall. At the Diocesan Convention in Helena, I was elected to serve on the Standing

Committee of the Diocese, which will run for three years. Also, I served as a deputy to General Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

Many thanks to our dedicated lay employees. Sean continues to be a blessing to Saint Stephen's. He is a talented and wise musician, and a warm and caring presence. Laura... is a stellar parish administrator who gives all that she can. I want to also thank our wonderful vestry for their continued service and dedication. In particular, I want to thank Doris Gerstner for her hard and dedicated work around the sale of our real estate and the handling of all of our "stuff." She went way beyond "above and beyond." She is an incalculable asset. Along with Doris, I must also thank Lance Doerr for his wisdom and service as Senior Warden.

Respectfully submitted,
Father Stephen C. Day

Bishop Fox Company Report

The Bishop Fox Company was established originally with the goal of creating a third Episcopal Church in the Billings area. Eventually, it was decided that the funds raised for this goal would be used for other purposes. During 2020, the board of Bishop Fox spent a lot of time discussing what the mission and priorities of the Corporation should be. The board eventually came to an agreement that it was important for the Corporation to be a perpetual entity that would engage in philanthropic work in our region. The board also agreed to a new vision and mission statement.

- VISION is to seek and serve Christ in all persons and strive for justice and peace among all peoples through the Episcopal Church in the Eastern region of Montana, the Diocese of Montana and the wider world.
- MISSION is to be a faithful steward of the resources entrusted to us in the Name of Christ who is our center and cornerstone.
- GOAL is to provide fair and objective discernment in the granting of funds requested through the lens of Christ and teachings of Jesus.
- OBJECTIVE is to partner with parishes, the diocese and various non-profit community agencies in service to their specific mission and ministries.

During 2024, Saint Stephen's was ably represented by George Kimmet, Doris Gerstner, Brian Norlin, Carol Moore, Megan Schillinger, and Father Stephen. Additionally, George served as president, Doris as treasurer, and Father Stephen as secretary.

On June 6, Bishop Fox met to consider grant applications for the year. Grants approved went for:

- \$13,000 to Emmanuel, Miles City and Ascension, Forsyth to help defray cost of clergy coverage
- \$18,000 to United Campus Ministry (UCM) for their continued great work on the campus of Montana State University – Billings
- \$4,200 to St. Luke's for their continued ministry with Tumbleweeds and runaway teens
- \$1,800 to St. Luke's for their new ministry working with helping to resettle refugees in Billings in partnership with Lutheran Family Services of the Rocky Mountains

The Board also approved an extra \$15,000 for assistance to help resettle a refugee family to California who needed access to specialized medical care not available in Montana. The funds will be administered through a deacon's discretionary fund at St. Luke's.

Bishop Fox's RBC assets as of November 30, 2024, totaled \$1,646,448.12. The change in asset value for the year is \$293,581.28 (increase) for the year.

At the end of 2024, Doris Gerstner stepped down as treasurer of Bishop Fox and as a member of the board. She has been a stalwart presence on that board for many, many years and will be missed. We will be seeking a new member for the board at the annual meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Father Stephen (on behalf of the other members of Bishop Fox from Saint Stephen's)

St. Stephen's 2024
Annual Meeting Treasurer's Report

1		1/1/2024	12/31/2024	
2	Checking Account Balance	1,779.07	1,580.59	
3	Income Report	2024 Actual		
4	Contributions	28,961.00		
5	Loose Plate Income	884.00		
6	Special Offering Income	1,990.00		
7	Building Use Income	600.00		
8	Altar Guild Income	6.00		
9	Other Income	2,833.00		
10	Total Operating Receipts	35,274.00		
11	Transfer from Savings	108,540.45		
12	Grant from Bishop Fox, assess.	2,389.00		
13	Total Operating Income	146,203.45		
14				
15	Expense Report		2024 Actual	Percentage of Actual/Total
16	Payroll Expenses		79,727.73	55%
17	Rector, Salary, Housing Allowance			
17	Med/Dent, Pension	59,604.53		
18	Secretary	10,106.00		
19	Musician	6,275.00		
20	Church Cleaner	1,540.00		
21	Supply Priest	200.00		
22	Payroll Taxes, Worker's Comp, Unemployment	2,002.20		
23	Utility Expenses		6,510.11	4%
24	Operating Expenses		29,389.34	20%
25	Building Expenses	2,047.65		
26	Storage Rental	3,121.80		
27	Office Lease	6,362.91		
28	Worship Lease	8,625.00		
29	Office Expenses	6,980.88		
30	Other Expenses	2,251.10		
31	Property/Dir Insur. Taxes & Lic.		2,106.75	1%
32	Diocesan Assessment		28,668.00	20%
33	Total Operating Expenses		146,401.93	
34	Income - Expenses	2024 Actual		
35	Income minus Expenses	(198.48)		
36				

St. Stephen's 2024
Annual Meeting Treasurer's Report

37	Other Checking & Savings Account Balances				
38		Beg. Balance	Income	Expenses	Ending Balance
39	Savings Account				
40	Library Fund	383.72	0.00	(383.72)	0.00
41	Interest	36.45	93.94	(120.97)	9.42
42	Discretionary Donation	11,247.50	0.00	0.00	11,247.50
43	Vickers Grant	2,072.26	0.00	(2,072.26)	0.00
44	Hail Damage Insurance	1,507.90	0.00	(1,507.90)	0.00
45	ECW	7,267.51	0.00	(6,115.15)	1,152.36
46	Building Sale, net	0.00	1,100,000.00	(64,000.00)	1,036,000.00
47	Memoral Fund	0.00	22,677.52	0.00	22,677.52
48	Diocesan Brokerage Account				
49	Library Endowment	3,894.67	332.11	(4,226.78)	0.00
50	Discretionary Endowment	9,953.04	7,570.35	0.00	17,523.39
51	Memorial Window	14,713.19	1,494.48	(16,207.67)	0.00
52	Greer and Scholarship Fund	14,713.19	1,494.48	(16,207.67)	0.00
53	Discretionary Fund	179.42	229.00	(100.00)	308.42
54	Memorial Fund	22,502.52	175.00	(22,677.52)	0.00
55					
56	1/1/2024 Asset Value	90,250.44			
57	12/31/2024 Asset Value	1,090,499.20			

St. Stephen's
2024 Building Sale

	Income	Expenses
Building Sale	1,137,339.65	
Estate Sale	2,359.45	
Moving/New Office		5,820.60
Estate Sale/Clean Out Exp.		4,338.05
Columbarium Transfer		25,200.00
Building Sale proceeds used for operating expenses in 2024		68,340.45
Total	1,139,699.10	103,699.10
Balance 12/31/24	1,036,000.00	

St. Stephen's
2025 Budget

		2024	2025	2025
	Beg. Balance: \$1,580.59	Actual	Budget	Budget Monthly
1	PLEDGES	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	NON PLEDGES	28,961.00	0.00	0.00
3	LOOSE PLATE	884.00	0.00	0.00
4	SPECIAL OFFERING	1,990.00	0.00	0.00
5	BUILDING USE INCOME	600.00	0.00	0.00
6	ALTAR GUILD	6.00	0.00	0.00
7	OTHER	2,833.00	0.00	0.00
8	OPERATING RECEIPTS	35,274.00	0.00	0.00
9	TRANSFER FROM SAVINGS	108,540.45	0.00	0.00
10	GRANT FR BISHOP FOX FOR ASSESS	2,389.00	0.00	0.00
11	TOTAL INCOME	146,203.45	0.00	0.00
12				
13	EXPENSES, PAYROLL			
14	RECTOR SALARY/HOUSING ALLOW.	38,960.34	42,756.00	3,563.00
15	RECTOR PENSION	7,444.19	7,692.00	641.00
16	RECTOR MED/DENTAL	13,200.00	13,848.00	1,154.00
17	SECRETARIAL SERVICE	10,106.00	13,200.00	1,100.00
18	MUSIC	6,275.00	9,120.00	760.00
19	CHURCH CLEANERS	1,540.00	0.00	0.00
20	SUPPLY PRIEST	200.00	0.00	0.00
21	PAYROLL TAXES/WC/UI	2,002.20	2,400.00	200.00
22	EXPENSES, UTILITIES			
23	GAS	1,735.63	0.00	0.00
24	ELECTRICITY	974.61	0.00	0.00
25	WATER/SEWER	371.20	0.00	0.00
26	TELEPHONE/INTERNET	3,428.67	3,000.00	250.00
27	EXPENSES, OPERATING			
28	BUILDING MAINT.	2,047.65	0.00	0.00
29	STORAGE RENTAL	3,121.80	1,800.00	150.00
30	OFFICE LEASE	6,362.91	6,108.00	509.00
31	WORSHIP LEASE	8,625.00	9,000.00	750.00
32	DIOCESAN CONVENTION	472.80	804.00	67.00
33	MUSIC	165.25	168.00	14.00
34	ALTAR GUILD	543.00	240.00	20.00
35	FELLOWSHIP	0.00	300.00	25.00
36	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	121.95	132.00	11.00
37	RECTOR'S EXPENSE	948.10	1,020.00	85.00
38	OFFICE EXPENSES	6,980.88	3,000.00	250.00
39	INSURANCE	2,106.75	2,220.00	185.00
40	ASSESSMENT	28,668.00	27,660.00	2,305.00
41	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	146,401.93	144,468.00	12,039.00