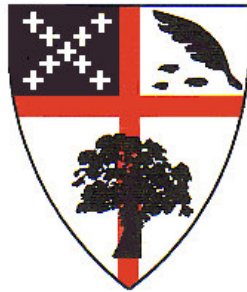


St. Stephen's in-the-Field Episcopal Church

Annual Report
To the Congregation

January 25, 2009



The core purpose of St. Stephen's in-the-Field Episcopal Church is to nurture an environment to grow personal and community relationships with God through Jesus Christ the Son of God,
in the Episcopal tradition.

Rector's State of the Parish Report

By The Rev. Ken Wratten

2008 was a whirlwind year for St. Stephen's. But then I don't remember any year that hasn't been a whirlwind since I came to you on July 7, 2002. We seem to be very skilled at having our time together filled with action and challenge. I enjoy this annual address as we pause to reflect on the highpoints of what we have accomplished, and to thank God for the blessing that it is to be the St. Stephen's Faith Family.

Here are some statistics for our worship services in 2008:

178 total Worship Services

108 celebrations of the Holy Eucharist

Total attendance for all services in 2008 of 4,956

Easter attendance of 169; Christmas Eve attendance of 156

Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) was 78

We baptized Chloe Moniz, Cali Delgado, and Thomas Edsberg.

We celebrated the marriage of Tim and Shelly Good.

We held the memorial services for Kathy Martinez Forino, and for Alice Merkel, Shelly Good's grandmother.

From the end of May through October we were on a dead run to complete preparation for the opening of our new parish preschool. We opened on October 8 after the City delayed us by one month in granting our occupancy permit.

We ended the 5 pm Contemporary Service in March 2007 because of dwindling attendance. But we learned a lot about Contemporary Worship, and we are now using Contemporary Worship music in our 10 am Family Sunday services every other month. The 5 pm liturgy is now used for Family Sundays.

We began the Divine Drama Bible study, which meets Tuesdays at 9 am and again at 7 pm. It has worked very well to provide this dual schedule for people who might not be able to make one class, but are able to attend the other.

We have completed work in renovating the 'sitting room' adjacent to the narthex. The work on this room was donated by the Steitz's, and is meant to provide parents a place to sit with their children *if they want to*, while still being able to enjoy the worship service.

We have our new oak altar, and love the way it brightens and enlarges our worship space. Members have donated funds to provide new Eucharistic chalices and patens, both silver and earthenware. Donations have funded a new Lectionary book and a new Gospel Book which support our change now to the Revised Common Lectionary for our Sunday readings.

Our new wooden storage shed was designed and built to provide extra storage for our new tables and chairs. A new double door was installed in the Parish Hall, making access easier to the new storage shed, and to our new playground.

We have continued our strong support for the Sudan, both for the Lost Boys who live in this area, but also for Peter Nyok's orphanage in Kenya, and for the education of Simon Thuc.

We welcomed our new deacon, Michael Ridgway. We provided support for Judi Sato as she approaches the end of her six year journey toward ordination to the Transitional Diaconate and the Priesthood. We began support for Jan Martin as she explores her call to ordained ministry.

We launched our Brick Project, and are now ready for installing the first phase of bricks.

Looking forward:

A \$20,000 grant has been awarded for the purchase of some new playground equipment and for a permanent labyrinth. A Labyrinth Guild will be formed in the next 30 days to begin preparation for a summer construction project. This is already funded.

We have staffed the preschool: Sue Nielsen (Head Teacher), Penny Greathurst and Monica Moniz (Assistant Teachers), and Judi Sato (Office Manager). The office is open 7 am to 6 pm. every weekday. We have 7 students, in 3 and 4 year old classes. We are now deciding if we can sign up enough students for a Summer Camp. We may have to wait until next summer. We expect at least 15 students in Fall 2009. We hope to have an afternoon preschool session soon. We are licensed for 20 students at any one time in the facility.

We will be financially cautious in 2009. The Finance Committee will meet once each month to review national and local financial trends, and to make financial recommendations to the vestry. We will carefully control expenses this year. In 2008 we exceeded budgeted expenses by \$3500. Necessary controls will be put in place to prevent that from happening again. One control will be that this year, NO REIMBURSEMENTS will be made unless the liaison for that ministry area approves the expense. So be sure to pre-approve an expense with the liaison if you have any doubts whether the purchase can be funded.

In spite of the financial controls, we will have movie nights, BBQs, small group studies, at least one bounce house event, terrific extended coffee hours, and possibly a new fellowship event or two that we are worked on.

There will be baptisms and marriages, fantastic music, new families who join our faith community, new adult study groups, growth in our current ministries and missions, and exploration into some new ones. We are beginning work to plan podcasting the sermons.

There is an exciting year ahead of us. Be sure to keep up to date through Sunday services, our wonderful website produced by Carol Pecora; our exciting newsletter edited by Tim Alton; and our informative Message Tree managed by Susie Good. May God bless St. Stephen's in the Field.

Deacon's Report

by The Rev. Dcn. Michael Ridgway

I come to St. Stephen's in the Field after formally entering the discernment process within the diocese of El Camino Real over five years ago. This journey initially took me from my home parish of St. Thomas in Sunnyvale to St. Edwards and back again to St. Thomas. I began the School for Deacons in the fall of 2004 on a part-time basis and then attended Fuller Seminary in Palo Alto in the spring of 2005. I began attending The School for Deacons in Berkeley full time in the fall of 2005 as my sense of call to the vocational diaconate gained clarity. This journey through the School for Deacons took me to CHAM (Community Homeless Alliance Ministry), a homeless shelter in downtown San Jose where I spent my first year in field education to St. Philip's Episcopal Church in the San Jose for an intern year under the supervision of the Rev. Silvestre Romero, Jr. After graduating in May of 2008, I did my CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) in the Santa Clara County Jail system where I functioned as a Jail chaplaincy intern. This last experience became a seminal one as I am still involved in ministry to the incarcerated and it is a core of my diaconal ministry expression.

I will be drawing on his experience as a youth minister when I, Margo Westfall and five St. Stephen's youth hit the slopes at the end of January. Anticipation for a good trip runs high as the date draws nearer as it is a great opportunity to fellowship with youth and other youth leaders in the Diocese of El Camino Real.

After joining St. Stephen's in the Field in November of this year, I have been getting to know my new faith family (and struggling to learn as many names as possible -- keep wearing those name tags!) and I am delighted to be working with Father Ken in my first parish assignment as a deacon. I look forward to learning more about the outreach ministries currently active at St. Stephen's, helping to support and celebrate them as well as introduce new avenues for servant ministry expression among its membership.

Senior Warden Year-end Report

by Tom Good

It has been a pleasure and honor to serve the congregation and Father Ken as your Senior Warden. The past year has been another tremendous year for this faith family in many ways. The accomplishments that have been achieved do not just happen because someone thinks they are a good idea. There needs to be energy and acceptance by the people to get behind the idea and implement the plan. As a

congregation you can be proud of what has been accomplished. I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone for your time, talents and treasure. First of all to the Vestry and their dedication and leadership, especially outgoing members Tony Pecora, Tim Good and Jan Martin. Tim filled out the remaining year of a 3 year term, and then was re-elected to serve 3 more years. Special thanks to Logan Zintsmaster for his endless hours of keeping us on track with our finances and his putting systems in place that have organized our accounting practices, along with running a very successful Stewardship program. Many thanks to Julie Zintsmaster for her hours of time in leading the transition of our facility for the preschool. The following is a list of many of the unsung and behind the scenes people, who without their gifts of time and talent we would not be the thriving congregation that we are.

Tim Alton – Newsletter

Amy Corbus – Coffee Hour Organization

Dan and Sherrie Hughes- Weekly Bulletin

Sherrie Hughes – cards, the Epiphany cake

Sandi Redder – Pastoral Care

Susie Good – E-mail/Phone Tree, Prayer Chain, Pastoral Care flowers

Janet Thorsrud – cakes!

Carol Pecora – Website design and maintenance

Philip Ong – Logan's assistant/Check writer

Brooke Westfall and Melissa Epps – Nursery Care

Wanda Bryan – Cursillo & ECW Liaison

Betty Duncan – Preschool and Office Administration

Judi Sato – Preschool and Office Administration

Helen Dudley – For years of Prayer Shawl knitting

Altar Guild – Edy Unthank, Janet Thorsrud, Laura Lewis, Susie Good, Laurie Watson,
Barbara Gray, Nancy McGuinness, and Susan Zaballos

Mowing Team – Marshall Lewis, Lars Samson, Robert Young, Trygve Thorsrud

Counters – Tim Alton, Nigel Cooper, Andy Lief, Judi Sato, Sharon Wardman, Sandi
Redder, and Tom Good

Thank you to all the Musicians, Altar Servers, Greeters and Ushers, and Sunday School teachers who are too numerous to mention individually, but who are obviously an integral part of every Worship Service at St. Stephen's. We are extremely grateful to everyone who is so giving of their time talent and treasure to help make St. Stephen's the open and loving community that it is. Also, many thanks to Father Ken for his leadership in guiding us in our individual journeys in walks with Christ.

Tom Good

Senior Warden – 2008

Junior Warden

By Julie Zintsmaster

It has been an honor to serve as Jr. Warden for 2008. As a member of the Executive Committee, I met with Senior Warden Tom Good and Father Ken on a regular basis to set the agendas for Vestry meetings and discuss important issues as they came up. We had a very productive and spirit-filled year in 2008.

Probably our greatest accomplishment was the opening of our St. Stephen's Parish Preschool! In May of this year, we found out that St. Stephen's School in San Jose was closing. This was a school that had its beginning as a preschool at St. Stephen's in-the-Field in 1978. Over the years, it had outgrown the church facility, moved to its own location and expanded to serve students in kindergarten through 8th grade. Unfortunately, in spite of our efforts to remain connected to the school, by the time it closed it had no affiliation with our parish.

Seeing the opportunity to fill a need in South San Jose, we quickly went to work to on a dream that we have had for a number of years to provide an Episcopal preschool for 3 and 4 year old children 5 days a week in our parish hall. With a tremendous effort on the part of almost everyone at St. Stephen's, a loan from the National Episcopal Church and other grants and donations, we were able to open the preschool doors on October 8, 2008, with a beautifully appointed classroom, a new play yard, a storage shed, a director/teacher, 2 teacher's aides and 5 children.

Thanks to Director Sue Nielsen, Teacher's Aides Monica Moniz and Penny Greathurst, Office Manager Judi Sato, and Head Master Father Ken Wratten, St. Stephen's Parish Preschool is thriving. Its presence has improved our facility, and has made us be more efficient with our use of space and storage. In addition, having the children and school personnel on site 5 days a week has added a vitality to St. Stephen's in-the-Field that is priceless.

Thank you to everyone who cleaned and sorted and painted and built to make the preschool possible. It's just another example of the enormous faith, commitment, love and generosity of the St. Stephen's family.

As I said in my opening sentence, it has been an honor to serve as Jr. Warden for 2008 and it is a pleasure to look back over the year and see all that we accomplished.

Membership

By Julie Zintsmaster, Vestry Liaison

"Welcome to St. Stephen's – we are honored by your presence and glad that you are here to worship with us this morning," are words that Father Ken often uses on Sunday morning to begin the 10 am worship service. And we definitely want everyone who has honored us by their presence to feel welcome and acknowledged. Of course, our hope is that those who are looking for a church family will find what they are looking for at St.

Stephen's and want to eventually become members. This is the focus of Membership, which could also be called evangelism.

This past year, we formally welcomed 7 new families or individuals to St. Stephen's at two New Member Sundays – one in May and one in October. Prior to each New Member Sunday, Father Ken led a membership orientation class. Each of the two New Member Sundays included a welcome liturgy at the 10am worship service followed by a potluck brunch. In November, we welcomed The Reverend Deacon Michael Ridgway and his wife Kari. By the end of the year, we had 4 more families who had just started to attend Sunday services and are ready to go through the formal membership process in early 2009. It is wonderful to have so many new people joining our church family.

New members welcomed in 2008:

May 2008 -- Maria Gavin, and Mike Conway

October 2008 – Donna Yamamura, Doreen Senior, Dottie Remson, Mike Sloan, and Lisa Thornburg and sons Joseph and Thomas Edsberg.

It is interesting to consider that everything we do at St. Stephen's has an impact on membership – the facilities that we have, the programs and events that we offer, the worship experience that we provide, the friendliness of the greeters and other members of the congregation, how we communicate, opportunities for personal growth, assistance for those in need, the services that we provide to our community. The more we do, the better we will serve the needs of our community and the more people will want to be part of what we do and grow with us in Christ's love.

One way that we use to help visitors feel comfortable on Sunday mornings is to wear nametags. This past year we upgraded our nametag board in the Narthex, where the nametags stay orderly and dry.

In May 2008, a team of St. Stephen's ministry leaders attended *The Magnetic Church* conference sponsored by the diocese and led by Andrew Weeks at St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Saratoga. We came away with new ideas and materials to help us be more welcoming and to learn how to effectively follow through with visitors and those who are looking for a church community. Many of the strategies that we learned about we already do, but there are also many that we could still discuss and implement. It was a very worthwhile conference.

Thank you to Father Ken, our teams of shepherds/greeters, those who hosted a Sunday coffee hour, our altar guild members, Sunday servers, voice choir, bell choir, praise band, Players 4 Christ, Sunday School teachers, nursery care providers, bible study leaders, and event planners and workers. All of these ministries contributed to making St. Stephen's a good place to be, to learn and to grow. They were all a part of our membership/evangelism efforts. God has blessed us richly and we must pass our blessings on to others, enriching their lives and thereby our own.

WORSHIP & MUSIC ANNUAL REPORT

by Jan Martin

What a wonderful, worshipful year this “year of wonder” has been at St. Stephen’s. We began 2008 with the special Epiphany prayer service and dinner and party. We celebrated Eucharist and sang and played amazing music for our new Bishop in February. We moved into Lent and sent our Alleluias away until Easter when they majestically appeared on the wall.

Easter and Pentecost brought performances by the bell and voice choirs that truly enlivened our experience of our risen Lord. Players for Christ continually provided music for Family Sundays and throughout the summer, allowing for opportunities to sing some old gospel songs and for the children to join in the fun.

We celebrated and recognized all our acolytes in June and sent two of them off to college. In September, we commissioned new ministers (over 40 people) and had a ministry faire to showcase all of the ministries in which St. Stephen’s is involved.

In October, the Praise Band regrouped and is providing music for Family Sundays every other month, with Players for Christ on alternate months. The voice choir is pleased to welcome Marie to its ranks and the bell choir welcomes Taylor and Lisa. Players for Christ is joined by Melissa and Julie, and the Praise Band is thrilled to have Susie join them.

At the end of November we were able to welcome Rev. Dcn. Michael Ridgway as our deacon to assist Fr. Ken and to bring a deaconal ministry to us. This brings us to our Posada celebration and then Lessons and Carols—an amazing morning of scripture and music performed for so many of the talented adult and youth musicians in our community. Christmas brought more music and spirit-filled celebration and, then, we returned to Epiphany with another beautiful Evensong service.

Truly, this has been a “year of wonder” for advancing our worship and music programs and in celebrating the presence of our Lord in our lives, both individually and as a community. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you as a vestry member and specifically as the worship and music liaison for 2008.

Parish Life & Fellowship

by Rod Sato

St. Stephens Parish is alive and well as a witness of this last year’s active fellowship in many areas and ways. Being my first year as liaison this was a somewhat new experience for me, and so I appreciate and want to thank all St. Stephen’s parishioners

and Fr, Ken for your energetic help & spirit in continuing to make our fellowship joyous and meaningful.

Also a special thanks to Ken Redder for taking many of the pictures of our events and organizing them in the SSITF photo album.

A look at 2008 Parish Life events and activities:

- Coffee Hosts - Thank you Amy Corbus for coordinating Host sign up.
- Epiphany Party – Thank you Sherry Hughes for the Epiphany cake
- Sweetheart Breakfast – Thank you Men (great looking cooks and voices).
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper – Thank you Men and Youth
- Lenten 'Chocolat' night – Sato's one-time event
- Rogation / Earth day – Thank you Ruth Wratten for the mud pie full of worms, and to the youth for planting flowers by the young oak tree.
- Movie Night with Fr.Jerry Drino (as part of outreach) – Thank you Pecora family.
- Easter brunch & egg hunt – Thank you Carol Pecora, Youth Group, Frances Steitz, and many helpers.
- New Member brunch – Thank you Julie and Logan Zintsmaster
- Sunday School BBQ picnic – Thank you Carol Pecora, Candace Jones, and all who helped decorate, setup, cleanup, grilled, made cotton candy, snow cones, painted faces, and served.
- Spring & Fall Faire – Thank you Andy Lief for providing good sounding music, and keeping musicians and vocalists in line.
- Parish campout – Thank you Ruth and Andy Lief for hosting.
- Baptismal celebration – Thank you Janet Thorsrud for preparing the cake (Jamie Killion, Randolph Delgado and some 30+ friends and relatives celebrated the Baptism of their child Cali)
- Harvest In-Gathering – Thank you Janet Thorsrud for Michael Ridgway's deacon cake, and all who helped setup and cleanup.
- Fall Kick-Off BBQ - Thank you everyone for a very fun and joyous fellowship.
- Hanging of the Greens – Thank you Andy Lief, Larry Lee, and the Youth group.
- La Posada – Thank you Judi Sato and Sunday School children for the Piñata, and to Carol Pecora, Candace Jones, Karen Cuffie, the Youth, Sherrie Hughes for the cake, and of course St Nicholas.
- Christmas Pageant – Carol Pecora, Candace Jones, Karen Cuffie, and the Youth Group.
- Wednesday night (no-host) get together for craft-making & sewing, and often with goodies. - Thank you Ladies.

Buildings and Grounds

by Marshall Lewis

Updates

Mowing teams have been the primary ongoing activity during the year. In 2008 the team consisted of weekly rotations that included Robert Young, Jack Baird, Trygve Thorsrud, Lars Samson and Marshall Lewis. Outgoing participants are Tim & Tom Good. Our mowing team is in need of at least one new participant to round out the weekly rotation.

In 2008, we had two significant large disposal events which improved the appearance of the parking lot areas significantly. One, in March, allowed us to dispose of accumulated tree, brush and yard waste in the parking lot near the container storage unit. It was an accumulation of waste from several work days and tree trimmings. The second, in approximately October, allowed us to clean up debris consisting of yard waste, construction debris, and misc. accumulated waste from work days and construction of the storage shed for our pre-school. The work Crew for this effort included 3 at risk juveniles that worked for about 6 hours. An additional result was to finally clear a corner of the parking lot where remnants of a landscaping job had been dumped without permission sometime in 2007. In both cases a debris box rental was used and filled to capacity.

For the benefit of the grounds, and in support of Lost Boys of the Sudan, we were able to hire the services of Peter Nyok to perform grounds work twice during the year. Peter was able to devote detailed attention to the beds facing the parking lot and the area of the chain link fence facing the field. He cleaned and weeded them and removed the overgrowth of berry vines, significantly improving their appearance.

Late in the year one of our two remaining small storage sheds was emptied to make room for storage of collected clothing to support Jim Glancey's drive to provide warm clothing for the homeless.

Future Plans/Needs

New Mowing team members are needed. Ideally 3 more. This would allow us to have a steady rotation of teams that would only need to mow once every month. A typical mowing team spends about an hour once a month. We would also benefit from having an additional team of 2 or so that could devote time to the flowers and flower beds about once a month. All applicants will be considered!

The large lawn/field area grass is in poor condition with large bare patches and large weed areas. This appears to be mostly because of a lack of sprinkler coverage. Current discussion is to reduce the existing lawn area of the field so that it does not extend beyond the young Oak tree and cap that portion of the sprinkler system to provide better water coverage of the remaining lawn.

Finally, the Oleander bushes on the north parking lot fence are an overgrown eyesore. They will need to be taken down and disposed of. The estimates so far have been too high for our budget.

Due to the current economy there is more competition for work and we should seek to get an updated bid this year

Outreach

by Tim Good

Outreach is alive and well in our St. Stephen's community. For our church family, 'Outreach' is something that encompasses our entire lives as we take our mission out into the world around us, and that is made easier and made possible by the work we do as a Parish. Some of the more specific causes that are heavily supported by the community are:

Food for the Poor – A simple but effective charity that serves Third-World communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Food ForThe Poor raises funds and provides direct relief assistance to the poor, usually by purchasing specifically requested materials and distributing them through the churches and charity organizations already operating in areas of need. In this way, the organization serves the poor with dignity and ensures the most appropriate use of donors' funds. The easiest and most direct way to contribute to Food for the Poor is by using the jug found in the back of the church.

This is emptied periodically throughout the year and the money is sent directly through Food for the Poor.

Homeless Support – This local outreach ministry is made possible through the generosity and spirit of Jim Glancey. Especially throughout the winter months Jim delivers clothing that have been donated by the church membership. He along with support from other members takes the clothes down and hand delivers them to the homeless. This is something that makes a tangible and immediate impact in our community.

Prayer Shawls – These prayer shawls are made by our membership and then blessed with a cross added to the corner. They are then sent to members outside of our immediate family who are sick, grieving or otherwise in need of comfort. These shawls have made an impact far beyond our own reach.

Lost Boys of the Sudan – Throughout the year our community generously donates some of our resources to supporting the Lost Boys of the Sudan in various ways. Monetarily, spiritually and through our networks in terms of finding work for the Lost Boys living here in the San Jose area. In addition the membership has generously provided donations to support in the tuition for the children of Marc Atem in Sudan. St. Stephen's is also a strong supporter of Peter Nyok's African Crafts, the proceeds of which go to support education and support.

An exciting development that is just getting started and will continue through 2009 will be the ministry of Deacon Michael Ridgway, and his Outreach ministries. As Deacon he will be bringing us new opportunities, including but not limited to his work and draw to prison ministries.

Christian Education

by Anthony Francis

In 2008 Saint Stephen's in the Field's Christian Education activities supported adults, children, and indirectly through the preschool, the community. These efforts are healthy and self-governing: the Sunday School and Nursery are progressing well thanks to the leadership of Carol Pecora, Candace Jones, and Ruth Lief, along with many teachers and volunteers. Similarly the Divine Drama bible study has been progressing well thanks to the leadership of Judi Sato. The preschool, while independent of the Christian Education program, is nevertheless the best example of our church's commitment to extending Christ's ministry to our community.

I took over Christian Education Liaison responsibilities last year and discussed with Father Ken the goals, which included continuing the Sunday School, starting a new Adult Ed program, and starting a series of lectures at the church. Saint Stephen's in the Field accomplished the first two of these in 2008; the third we deferred as work on the preschool consumed the rest of our bandwidth. I met with Carol, Candace, Ruth and Judi occasionally and by email, but we encountered no major issues.

Sunday School: At the end of the 2007-8 Sunday School year, we had Recognition Sunday, where we gave out gifts to students and teachers and held a picnic. The Summer Session had no Sunday School but instead focused on crafts. At the start of the 2008-9 Sunday School year, we divided the children into age groups slightly differently: Pre-K and Kindergarten, 1st-3rd, and 4th-8th, along with a nursery. We had to order new educational materials and recruit additional teachers, assistants and nursery sitters. One problem we found is that the number of students on any given Sunday is highly variable and this sometimes makes it harder on the teachers. We did not have any suggested solutions to this problem, but convincing many more families to come to Saint Stephens would fix it.

Adult Education: 24 people signed up for Judi Sato's Divine Drama Bible Study course, about equally divided between AM and PM sessions. Fr. Ken has added the site to our web page and noted that all are welcome; we hope this will be a channel for evangelism. We have found that offering the class at two different times is important to be able to serve everyone who is interested. We will want to do some more advertising in January for the second part if anyone would like to start up.

Other Issues: One thing I found as liaison is that Christian Education is always being affected by and affecting other groups. For example, the preschool logistics team helped address outstanding concerns about tables that were stored in the Sunday

School space. As another example, our youth group was interested in potential activities for the Sunday School students, and my neighbor, a Christian Educator, gave us a long list of activities which our youth group has begun to implement. I also encountered some information about Second Harvest Food Bank which I passed on to our Outreach group. A lesson I've learned as Christian Education liaison is that Jesus will not be contained.

Communications

by Tony Pecora

Over the last year we have made great progress in St Stephen's Communications programs. We continued to build on the effort and improve our communication programs to bring our church body the news, events, information, and schedules necessary to keep everyone informed, up-to-date, and allow our church body to function effectively and efficiently. We use a monthly newsletter, an email communication system, and a church web-site to keep our congregation informed. We also have made an effort this year to get the St Stephens' name out and make it visible to our local community. We have done this by buying ads in the yellow pages, our local community papers, and buying keywords in internet advertising programs targeted to users of the internet in our community. Here is a summary of some of our 2008 initiatives and a look to the future at what our additional areas of focus will be in 2009:

One of our most important communications programs is our monthly newsletter which is organized and edited by Tim Alton. Tim does a great job of organizing and publishing the newsletter each month. I invite everyone in our congregation to submit articles to share news, inspiration, and perspectives with the rest of the community. Our thanks to Tim for his great contribution in this area!

Susie Good has continued to do a spectacular job of working with Father Ken to get informational email announcements out to our congregation and friends. They do a great job of publishing to our congregation via email everything from announcements to prayer chain requests to schedules. Thanks to Susie and Ken for keeping us informed and up to date with timely information!

We added a major dimension to our communications efforts this year when Carol Pecora agreed to upgrade, update, and maintain our St Stephens' web site. Not only are our congregation members able to find detailed information on church programs and current operations, but they are often able to find a recent sermon that they may have missed or an administrative form that they need to fill out. Beyond adding this utility for our congregation, the web site also provides a means for people to find us who are looking for a great place to come to church, a great place to be a part of God's family, or a great place to bring their pre-school children for day school. I thank Carol for agreeing to take on this initiative this year, for sharing her talents with us, and for the great work she did with Father Ken to build us a really compelling web site.

As we embark on 2009, we have lots more fun things to do!

Besides making our monthly newsletters and email notifications ever more compelling and robust, Carol is already working on plans to add important new features to the St Stephens' web site. She will be working with Ken, Anthony Francis, and other enthusiasts on these improvements. Some of the new features may include: a) updating the web-site with a simple content management system that will enable Father Ken and Tim Alton to very easily upload the latest sermon or newsletter; b) adding pod-casting so that people can download in an audio file a sermon or bible study session that they may have missed; c) adding a blogging capability to the web site so that when emails are sent out to our members, they can also be added to the web site so that members have a place to search all historical emailed information: d) and adding an RSS capability that will enable members to receive automatic updates when new information has been posted to our web site.

We are also going to continue to expand our search engine advertising program by buying keywords on search engines so that folks in our community who are using the internet to search for things that we can provide can easily find St Stephens.

Lastly, we will explore adding a New Member Feedback Program to our communications activities. We will work with our Membership Liaison and team to roll this program out. The intent is to create a simple survey that we are deliberate about using to collect information and feedback from our new members to understand how they found out about us and how we can improve our offerings for new families and individuals who are seeking a place for worship. This information helps us to make sure we can be found by others and that we are meeting our new members needs.

Submitted Respectfully by Tony Pecora

Financial Liaison Report

by Ron Jones

This is has been good year for St. Stephen's in-the-Field financially.

Budget

Total Budgeted Income for 2008 was planned to be \$176,130 actual was \$173,824.19.

Total Budgeted Expenses for 2008 was planned to be \$176,781 actual was \$186,645.05.

For 2009, we have budgeted for income and expenses around \$180,000.

Pledge Drive for 2009

We had a successful pledge drive for 2009 given the state of the economy.

A fundraising goal for the pledge drive was set for \$143,000 and over \$141,200 was pledged for 2009.

There was an increase in the number of families pledging for 2009 to 54.

There were 109 letters sent out for the pledge drive to attendees and friends of the St. Stephen's.

Of that total it was felt that about 60 to 65 would potentially pledge. Therefore, 54 families pledging out of a potential of 60 is a very good percentage.

Past Fair Share Payments

Congratulations! The past fair share payments have now been paid in full to the diocese.

The additional \$4,400 a year that has been paid for the past several years will no longer be necessary.

Other Revenue

The Golf Tournament was again a success and continues to be an important part of anticipated income for the St. Stephen's, raising over \$12,000 of our \$176,130 total budget.

St. Stephen's continues to receive income from the use of the church by AA and Music Together.

Grants Won

St. Stephen's won a \$20,000 grant from Domestic Ministry Partnership (an Episcopal group that funds innovative church development ideas) for the creation of a labyrinth and for new playground equipment that will be funded and invested in 2009.

St. Stephen's Parish Pre-School

The St. Stephen's Parish Pre-School was established in the fall of 2008 with the help of a \$30,000 loan from CBF and fundraising efforts of the congregation of St. Stephen's. The school got a late start for the year but is enjoyed by 7 students as of the end of 2008. The goal is for at least 15 students to attend in the fall of 2009, with any additional revenue contributing to the profitable operation of the school and enhancement to the grounds of the church and school.

Improvements At St. Stephen's in-the-Field During 2008

Donations from the congregation were invested in the following for St. Stephen's: new altar, new Eucharistic vessels, renovation of the sitting room off the narthex, & renovation of the cross above the altar.

Donations from the congregation and a loan were used to install a new fire alarm system in the Parish Hall, construct a new wooden storage shed, install new double doors in the Parish Hall, purchase a new hot water heater, and to extend the patio expansion between Parish Hall and new shed.

Fundraising

Brick Project for the narthex has raised \$8K so far in 2008. Funds were raised and donated for the Sudanese.

Stewardship Report for 2008

by Logan Zintsmaster

The 2009 Pledge Drive was based on the vision that Bishop Mary articulated for our Diocese – “We Wonder, We Believe, We Create.” It was noted that like all visions, it presents a framework that can be used to define actions that will turn the vision into real accomplishments. The recent St. Stephen’s Paris Preschool opening embodied all three aspects of that vision.

But to **accomplish** the vision, we noted that needed the stewardship of time, treasure, and talent from our congregation. These three elements of stewardship are the essence of God’s gifts to us. Our theme for the 2009 pledge drive, “Building on God’s Gifts,” recognized this connection between **vision** and **accomplishment** through the use of one of God’s Gifts: Treasure. This theme was a logical follow-on from last year’s theme of “Building a Stone Wall of Support.”

As part of the Stewardship Display, pledges were represented as pieces in a picture puzzle that, when complete, showed the various accomplishments and activities from 2008. The Pledge goal was \$143,000 and pledges of \$141,240 were received. The average pledge was \$50.31 with 54 families submitting a pledge.

Financial Report for 2008

by Logan Zintsmaster

Summary

In 2008, St. Stephen’s in the Field did not break even as will be explained, below. A summary of 2008 Income and Expenses is shown in the table below.

	Actual	Budget	Difference	%
Income	\$ 173,370.82	\$ 176,130.00	\$ -2,759.18	- 2%
Expense	\$ 179,827.60	\$ 176,281.12	\$ -3,546.48	- 2%
Net	\$ -6,456.78	N/A	N/A	- 3.7%

Looking at 2008 pledges, \$136,000 was pledged and \$128,395 was received. This represents a 94% pledge fulfillment rate. In light of the economic conditions encountered in the later part of the year this is an excellent performance. Contributions from new members and other regular attendees helped mitigate the income shortfalls.

Fund raising activities for 2008 were successful. The two Craft Fairs raised a net of \$3,260. The Golf Tournament raised a net \$13,434.

On the expense side, there were unplanned expenses that carried over from the previous year plus several items exceeded their budgeted expense levels. These

include \$1,340 in mileage (carry over) costs, \$935 for the Golf Tournament, , \$668 for insurance costs, \$574 for water, and \$453 from the Parish Status celebration (carry over). The Vestry has taken these items into consideration in preparing the budget for 2009 by adjusting budget amounts and establishing a mechanism to provide for mitigation of these types of expenses.

A top level Income Statement and Balance Sheet are show on the following pages.

Challenges

The challenge for 2009 is to be proactive in anticipating and mitigating problems that may occur as a result of economic conditions during the year. The Finance Committee meetings that had been held on a quarterly basis have now been rescheduled to be held monthly.

Other

St. Stephen's completed its payment of the Fair Share arrears. Meeting this commitment was part of St. Stephen's achieving parish status and the final payment was made in December 2008. This has removed a \$4,400 expense item from the operating budget.

2009 Budget for St. Stephen's in-the-Field

by Logan Zintsmaster

The pledge commitment of \$141,240 was used to build a budget for 2009. Income projections were based on actual experience in 2008 with extraordinary items excluded. Projected income for 2009 is \$179,940 compared to a 2008 actual income of \$173,498. This increase is due to the success of the Stewardship drive.

In building the expense side of the budget, the Finance Committee used 2008 expenses as a guide and looked for opportunities to control expenses while we face a challenging year. The clergy expenses were increased to provide a salary increase for the Rector and to account for increases in insurance costs. A Contingency fund was established to provide a reserve for unexpected events. Total expenses for 2008 are projected at \$180,415. The resulting budget shows a small overrun but it can be easily accommodated within the Contingency Reserve.