

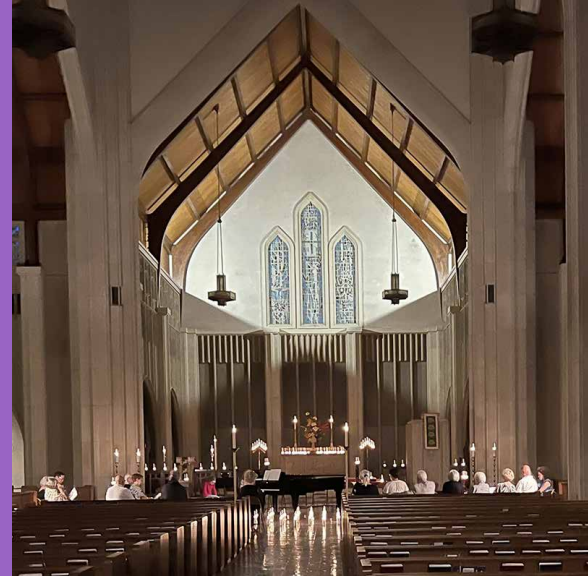


# St. Stephen Presbyterian Church

## Mission Study Report 2023

**St. Stephen Presbyterian Church**  
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# Introduction to the Mission Study Report



**A**s part of a church's transition from one pastoral leader to the next, Grace Presbytery requires its congregations to conduct a Mission Study. This report is the culmination of a nine-month discerning process and is prepared for the Session and congregation of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church (SSPC). The Mission Study Team (MST) listened to God's word as it was revealed through prayer, and the voices of our congregation and community. The MST considered it an honor to be given the responsibility of looking at who we are as a congregation, where we've been, and where we are going.

The MST wishes to express our heartfelt thanks to the SSPC Session; our Interim Pastor, Rev. Angie Mabry; our Presbytery COM liaison, Rev. Dr. Michael Waschevski; and our congregation and staff. We are grateful for their confidence, support, and patience as we wrote about our beloved church, reflecting the congregation and God's direction for our future.

We have grown as a team representing the congregation and have been diligent in our discernment. We pray that this document truly reflects the faithfulness of those who came before us, and the collective love and wisdom of today's members, as it gives a snapshot of our vision for our future. It is our sincere hope that this report helps the Pastor Nominating Committee and potential pastoral candidates imagine God's future of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church.

Whether you are new to the Presbyterian tradition or a lifelong member, you will find this study enriching and inspiring. Join us as we grow together in our love for God and our neighbors!

With gratitude,

St. Stephen Presbyterian Mission Study Team

Harriett Moore, *Moderator*  
Bill Curtis  
Jack Hunnicutt

Peggy Kennedy  
Sharon LeMond  
Morgan Polly

Jody Wasson (*until January 25 2023*)  
Rev. Angie Mabry, *Interim Pastor*

# Method



ur Mission Study Team utilized a variety of demographic resources, church statistics, past task force reports, Presbyterian references, and other online mission studies.

- Two congregational round table reflection discussions in October, 2022. Each MST member hosted a table with selected questions. The MST coordinated a prayer vigil prior to the roundtable reflections on October 23, 2022. The October 24 round table discussions were lively, and we received strong opinions and suggestions from the two well attended meetings ([See Appendix A, Congregational Round Table Responses](#)).
- We then used input from the round table discussions to help us create an online survey which opened in January, 2023 for two weeks. The survey was divided into specific parts to elaborate on background; participation; worship; health and safety; mission programs and outreach; stewardship; St. Stephen's mission; and the future of SSPC. The survey allowed for specific comments and had a total of 75 questions. All responses were anonymous. A paper version was available by request. The **173 responses** to the survey were very encouraging and thoughtful as well as providing important insight of the congregation's direction. We were amazed at the quality and quantity of responses and the time and effort the participants used in their written comments. When we began to write this report, we each wrote a section reflecting the data, opinions, and many voices from our congregation.
- We facilitated focus groups for the SSPC staff; the Sanctuary and Handbell choirs, and choral scholars; Deacons; Mission Committee; Worship Committee, Presbyterian Women; Youth group; Boy Scout leaders; and Day School Board and parents. We also met with community leaders and pastors. We read as a team *We Aren't Broke: Uncovering Hidden Resources for Mission and Ministry* by Mark Elsdon.

“Speak, Lord for your servant is listening.”

1 Samuel 3:10



# Who We Are



## St. Stephen Presbyterian Church Mission Statement

Celebrating God's love through liturgical worship, theological curiosity, mission, and an intentionally inclusive community.

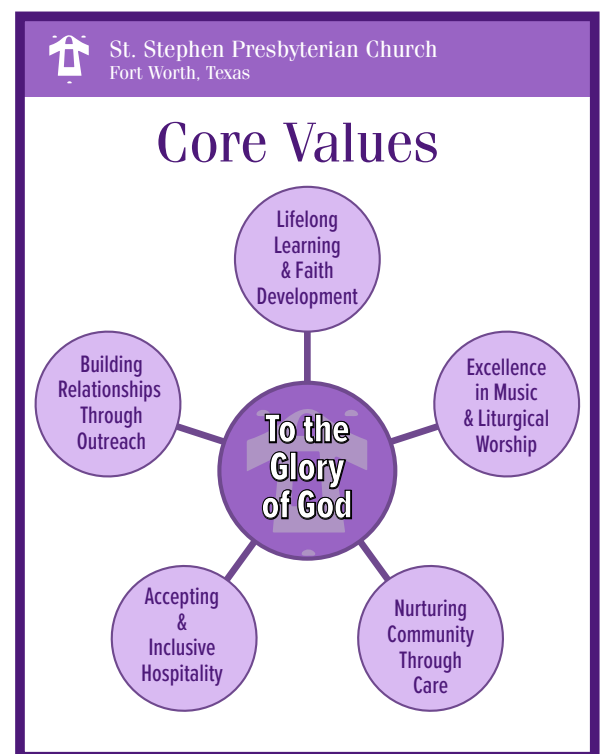
Think. Serve. Worship. Belong

## Vision Statement

Envisioning what our church, community, and world would look like if we lived fully into our mission statement supported by our core values.

St. Stephen will . . .

- › Meet everyone where they are and see them as Jesus does
- › Ensure that God's house is a nurturing, accepting place to worship and find fellowship in Jesus Christ
- › Visibly be a congregation that engages our community through music, mission and outreach
- › Grow disciples through education and faith development
- › Be open to receive and share God's promise of a just and loving society
- › Care for God's creation for this and future generations
- › Be a beacon of light on our hill



## Church History and State of Ministry

For over 139 years, St. Stephen Presbyterian Church has been a physical and spiritual presence in Fort Worth, Texas. Situated on a scenic 7.5-acre site overlooking Forest Park, the three-building church campus is located in an older, once residential neighborhood just a few blocks northeast of Texas Christian University and three miles south of downtown.



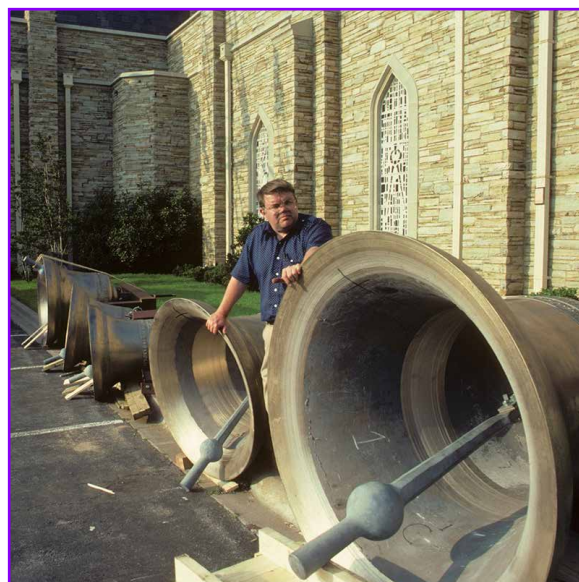
Rev. Dr. R. W. (Richard William)  
Jablonowski, Jr.

Organized by four elders of the First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth, St. Stephen was first known as Broadway Presbyterian Church because of its location on Broadway Avenue. Services began on May 11, 1884, in a modest wooden building.

In 1950, three buildings (one destroyed by fire) and seven ministers later, the church moved to its present location, under the leadership of then-new pastor, the Rev. Dr. R. W. (Richard William) Jablonowski, Jr. At the same time, Broadway's congregation changed its name to St. Stephen Presbyterian Church. By naming the congregation after one of the first deacons, St. Stephen established that its mission was to serve the community in the name of Jesus Christ. The church was to have an ethic of servanthood, care, compassion, and boldness in representing the gospel to the world—like Stephen himself. The cloak that symbolizes our church reminds us of the sacrifice of Stephen, the martyr.

The scout lodge was built first on the lower corner of the property. The move to our present location was finalized when construction of the Reimers Chapel (now Parish Hall) and half of the education building was completed. The balance of the two-story education building, offices, and chapel were added over the next three years. The sanctuary, based on a modified Gothic design in the plan of an exact Latin cross, seats more than 1,000 people and is attached to the education building by a cloister. Completed in 1969, it was designed in every detail to be a worship space worthy of dedication to the Glory of God. A peal of five bells sits atop the Tower. The casting was completed in 1981 and the bells were installed in 1982. Cast by Eijsbouts, Ltd., Bell Founders in Asten, Holland, the bells range in weight from 1,000 to almost 5,000 pounds. A 224-niche columbarium was added in 2001 and a meditative outdoor prayer garden and labyrinth were completed in the Fall of 2006.

Although our impressive hilltop campus remains to some a beacon in our community, our neighborhood has changed a great deal in the last decade. What was once a predominately residential area has redeveloped into a mixture of residential, student housing, and condominiums. Fort Worth has grown from a small town in 1884 of 15,000



Tower Bells Installation

people, to the 13th largest city in the country—a city of an estimated 935,476. Whereas some people refer to St. Stephen as “Fort God,” one city leader recently referred to the church as “a hidden gem.”



Rev. Dr. R. W. (Richard William)  
Jablonowski, Jr.

It's difficult to share St. Stephen's long history without talking more about Rev. Dr. Jablonowski, (known to parishioners as “Bill Jab”). He was Pastor and Head of Staff for 39 years. An ex-marine known for his wise, humorous, and somewhat crusty personality, he was a lawyer as well as a minister. Bill Jab was a charismatic, respected, and a commanding leader with an unwavering commitment to St. Stephen and the Presbyterian Church. He was tapped for major leadership positions locally and nationally within the Presbyterian Church USA.

Rev. Dr. Jablonowski was founder and president of the Tarrant Council on Alcoholism and a founder and president of the Tarrant County Medical Education and Research Foundation which assisted those with problems with addictions. Along with Rev. Bob Bohl of First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth and Rev. Dr. Warner Bailey of Ridglea Presbyterian Church, he was instrumental in spearheading a cooperative effort among Presbyterian churches in establishing the Presbyterian Night Shelter (PNS). In a few short years, PNS became one of the region's largest facilities providing food, shelter, and basic medical services for needy individuals and families and is now considered the most important homelessness provider in Tarrant County.

Rev. Dr. Jablonowski established a tradition of intellectually challenging sermons, liturgical worship, musical excellence, and community engagement that remain hallmarks of St. Stephen's ministry to this day. He retired in 1988 and died a few years later.



Rev. Patrick J. Willson



Rev. Dr. William F. Galbraith

As is often the case with churches that experience a long period under a single, dynamic pastor, the years immediately following Rev. Dr. Jablonowski's retirement were years marked by confusion, conflict, and a loss of membership, momentum, and direction. This period, described by one long-time member as “St. Stephen's walk through the wilderness” saw two interim pastors. However, the same member recalls with some amazement that the church stuck together and eventually emerged stronger because of the journey. Rev. Patrick J. Willson served as pastor from 1991—1995, and Rev. Dr. William F. Galbraith, III, 1997–2002. This period was observed by many as a true “new beginning” for St. Stephen. Under Galbraith's pastorship, membership began to grow; momentum for mission, fellowship, education, and youth increased tremendously; the associate pastor's position returned; and the church moved from a pastor-dependent to a pastor-partnering relationship.



Over his 18 years of ministry at St. Stephen, Rev. Dr. Fredrick (Fritz) Field Ritsch succeeded in developing a pool of congregational leaders that provide a strong foundation of leadership both for the Session and for other ministries of the church.

A second emphasis from Rev. Dr. Ritsch was on mission to the community. St. Stephen had been deeply involved in establishing the Presbyterian Night Shelter, Fort Worth's primary shelter for the homeless, but community engagement had become a secondary focus. Upon arriving, Rev. Dr. Ritsch rapidly engaged in community activities such as joining the Board of Trustees of the Night Shelter. He motivated the congregation to increase its commitment to community mission work such as Room in the Inn (homeless), Samaritan House (aids victims), Center for Transforming Lives (women-led single-parent impoverished families), and others. Under Rev. Dr. Ritsch's influence the congregation now takes leadership in serving these communities as evidenced by the 42,000+ sandwiches the congregation has prepared and delivered to the Night Shelter during and since the pandemic.

Rev. Dr. Ritsch quickly embraced St. Stephen's commitment to liturgical worship. His sermons were theologically strong. He strengthened St. Stephen's commitment to be intentionally inclusive and affirming, even when aware it could lead a few parishioners to seek different church homes.

Rev. Dr. Ritsch became actively involved in interfaith pastoral activities in Fort Worth. He initiated relationships with Congregation Bethel and Truevine Missionary Baptist Church. He joined in a study trip to the Holy Land that included 14 local rabbis and pastors. He actively participated in a Tarrant County interfaith network of clerical leaders. St. Stephen's increasing openness to other denominations has led to numerous individuals and families joining from other Christian denominations.

In summary, Rev. Dr. Ritsch left St. Stephen's congregation stronger in its church leadership, mission, and inclusiveness.

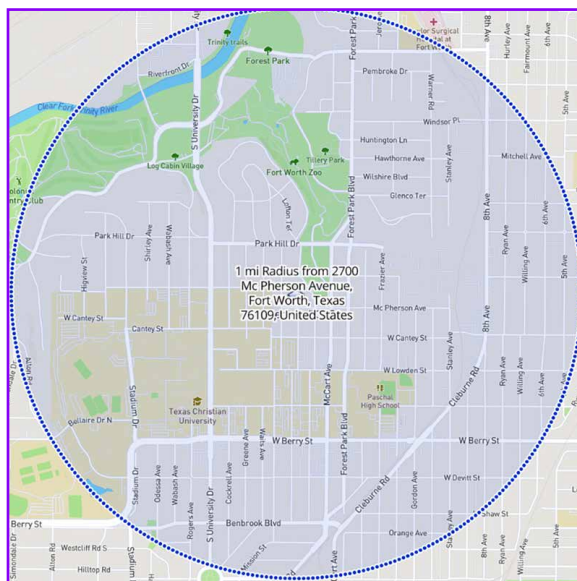


Rev. Dr. (Fritz) Field Ritsch



## Community Demographics

St. Stephen Presbyterian Church is located on a 7.5-acre site overlooking Forest Park in Fort Worth, Texas. The church is within walking distance to Texas Christian University whose enrollment is over 12,000 undergraduate and graduate students. On TCU's campus is Brite Divinity School, a seminary associated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The church is also close to Paschal High School, the oldest high school in the Fort Worth Independent School District. There are three non-Presbyterian denominational churches in close proximity to St. Stephen with whom relationships have been formed.



The neighborhood surrounding St. Stephen has changed over the years. Many homes on the streets bordering the church have been converted from family homes into privately owned off-campus student housing. The result of this shift has made St. Stephen a destination church in a neighborhood.

An Executive Insite Report was created for one mile around the church. This report shows little change in the age and racial-ethnic population in the coming decade. In 2022, the estimated average income per household was \$111,815 which is projected to increase 10% by 2027.

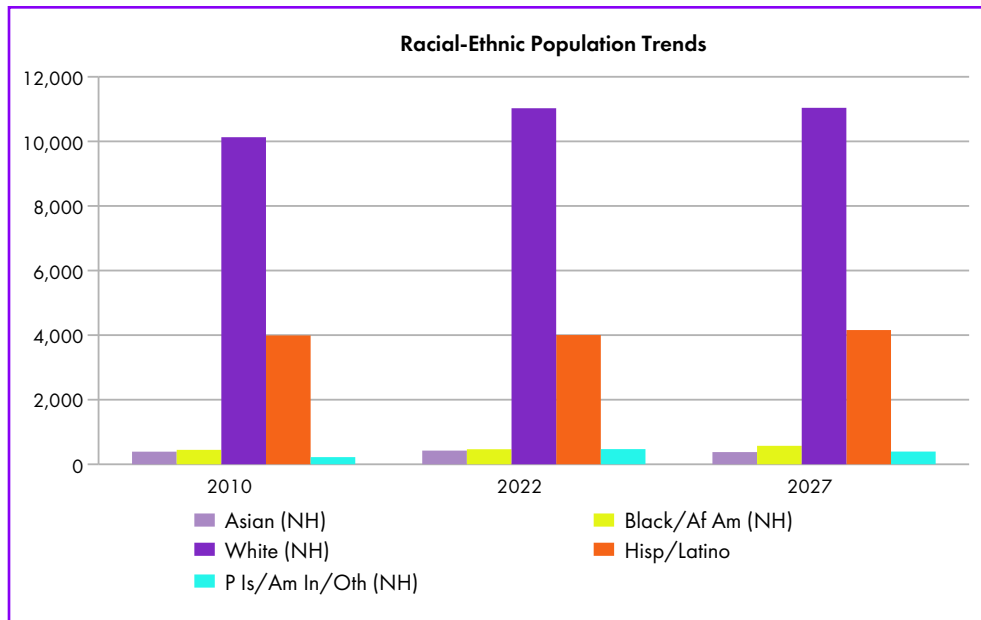


## Phase of Life

The Phase of Life analysis provides insight into the age distribution of a population across the different stages of life experience. It can reveal a community in transition.

Pay special attention to the color codes of the Change column (far right below). It will immediately indicate which phases are increasing or decreasing as a percentage of the population.

Phase of Life	2010	2022	2027	2032	2010%	2022%	2027%	2032%	Estimated 10 Year %pt Change 2022–2032
<b>Before Formal Schooling</b> Ages 0 to 4	751	1,155	1,047	900	4.9%	7.0%	6.3%	5.3%	-1.7%
<b>Required Formal Schooling</b> Ages 5 to 17	1,802	2,332	2,655	2,836	11.9%	14.2%	16.1%	16.7%	2.5%
<b>College/Career Starts</b> Ages 18 to 24	5,725	4,748	4,731	4,934	37.7%	29.0%	28.6%	29.1%	0.1%
<b>Singles &amp; Young Families</b> Ages 25 to 34	1,675	1,813	1,287	1,345	11.0%	11.1%	7.8%	7.9%	-3.1%
<b>Families &amp; Empty Nesters</b> Ages 35 to 54	2,939	3,247	3,595	3,580	19.4%	19.8%	21.7%	21.1%	1.3%
<b>Enrichment Years Sing/ Couples</b> Ages 55 to 64	1,282	1,363	1,279	1,252	8.4%	8.3%	7.7%	7.4%	-0.9%
<b>Retirement Opportunities</b> Age 65 and over	1,004	1,730	1,944	2,128	6.6%	10.6%	11.8%	12.5%	2.0%



The 2021 American Beliefs Study results show religious/spiritual programs received the highest “very important” ranking by participants in the one-mile radius around St. Stephen. [See Appendix B.](#)

## Our Congregation

According to our 2022 statistical report to Grace Presbytery, our church's membership was 468 active members with 268 women, 191 men and 9 non binary people. Sixteen percent have been members for 50 or more years, and 67% have joined in this century. Our racial composition is 437 White; 9 multi-racial; 13 Hispanic/Latino-a; 6 Black/African American/African; and 3 Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian. 272 are over 55 years of age; 145 are 26–55 years old, and 51 are 25 years old, or younger. We have a number of LGBTQ+ members, who are very active and provide considerable leadership to St. Stephen. At SSPC, we welcome all people: all genders, sexual orientations, races, abilities, nationalities, and ages.

We have an average of 122 people attending our 8:30 AM and 11 AM Sunday services in person. We stream our 11 AM service each week and average 45 views each week, but only receive a count of the number of views and not how long they watched or how many watched together. In 2019, we had an average of 166 congregants each Sunday.

COVID has had an impact on our church attendance. Like many others, we began livestreaming our service and offered in person services in 2020. Positive results of our livestreaming include: obtaining new members, and continuing to serve those who have moved from Texas but have continued their membership.

Formal Education is important; of our survey respondents 7% are in school K–12; 4% have an Associate's degree; 36% have Bachelor's degrees; 32% have Master's degrees; and 15% have Doctoral degrees. In the world of employment, of those completing our survey, 28% are employed full time, 7% are employed part time, 7% are self-employed, 45% are retired, 6% are homemakers, and 5% are students.

We consider ourselves to be members of a destination church since most of us do not live in the immediate neighborhood and drive past several churches to get here. From the survey regarding distance they live from the church, we know 55 respondents live 10 minutes or less from our church; 60 live 11–20 minutes away, 46 live 21–40 minutes away, 4 live more than 41 min away and 2 live out of Texas. ([See Appendix C](#)).

Something special is happening at SSPC that makes intentionally worshipping God together and working with the SSPC community important and worth the time and effort.

## Beliefs and Practices

We believe that God is sovereign over the universe and that our purpose is to glorify God in all that we say and do.

At our worship services, we most often recite the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed for our Affirmation of Faith. We also recite the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Brief Statement of Faith, and other Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted statements.

As members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we look to two books for guidance: the Bible and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The constitution is comprised of the *Book of Order* and the *Book of Confessions*.



In designing our sanctuary, which was completed in 1969, we intentionally chose architecture and symbolism in windows and appointments to constantly remind us that we are a people of the Book (the Bible), and that we have nearly two thousand years of history in which we have borne witness to our Lord.

“You are the light of the world,  
A city on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Matthew 5:14



Building the Sanctuary

In the early 20th century, the Presbyterian Church drafted the **Six Great Ends of the Church**. These appear in the *Book of Order* (F-1.0304). Our Session often states these at the beginning of our monthly Session meetings to remind us of our practices:

- › The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind
- › The shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God
- › The maintenance of divine worship
- › The preservation of the truth
- › The promotion of social righteousness
- › The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world

In 2020, we adopted the following **goal statements** for our church, and they are included in our **Manual of Operations**, a living document we practice and update:

- Maintain a welcoming environment for all that includes traditional worship with an emphasis on beautiful music, service to others and opportunities to learn more about God and God's kingdom.
- Explore and adopt effective ways to communicate our messages internally and externally to inform and engage current members and recruit and assimilate new members.
- Maintain and adapt our treasured buildings and grounds so that they serve our missional purpose and are accessible for all.
- Build and strengthen interpersonal relationships among our church family.
- Develop and refine leadership skills within the congregation, our officers, and staff.



SSPC Acolytes

## Strengths of SSPC

St. Stephen Presbyterian Church is known for its liturgical worship, inspiring music, reformed theology, embracing outreach, prominent location, and gothic architecture.

SSPC is also known as an intentionally inclusive and affirming congregation that invites all God's children in a welcoming fellowship.

Our 8:30 AM worship service provides weekly communion and our 11 am service includes a procession with youth acolytes, full choir and organ music, and strong sermons. Additionally, St. Stephen offers special worship services during the year. Our robust music program arranges Choral Compline, Evensong, and the Concerts at St. Stephen series. An annual Kirkin' of the Tartans worship service features bagpipes, drums, and a sword ceremony to bless family tartans. Twice a year, children and youth present the main aspects of the 11 am worship service on Youth Sundays and Children's Sundays. St. Stephen high school seniors deliver sermons each May. During Holy Week, St. Stephen hosts daily luncheon lectures, services for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. A vigil prior to Easter Sunday and a Paschal feast are also featured.

The church promotes lifelong learning through Sunday School classes, education programs, and the Jablonowski Lecture Series. The SSPC Day School is well-known and continually has a waiting list. St. Stephen has a strong commitment to its children and youth in a variety of Christian education and worship experiences. Additionally, Boy Scout Troop 17 meets weekly in their lodge, built in the 1950s.

The legacy of past generations is continued through the St. Stephen Endowment Fund. Within the endowment, the designated and non-designated funds exist for future needs and programs of St. Stephen. Raising awareness of this significant act of discipleship is the Legacy Program, which focuses on stewardship education and giving to the church through bequests. Additionally, St. Stephen

is conducting a three-year capital campaign. Enhancements to the sanctuary organ, building improvements, new church vans, and mission ventures will be completed over a five-year period.

Mission service is extremely important to our members. St. Stephen was a leader in developing the Presbyterian Night Shelter, Fort Worth's primary homeless shelter. The church partners with community organizations to host Room in the Inn, make sandwiches for the Presbyterian Night Shelter, sponsor Habitat for Humanity and provide a monthly dinner to the Samaritan House. The Deacons of St. Stephen nurture and care for the congregation.

The feeling of awe and majesty of God is present at St. Stephen. The sanctuary building was designed as a traditional cathedral in the form of a Latin cross. The garden labyrinth serves as a place for quiet reflection and prayer. Stained glass windows in the Sanctuary, Chapel, and Parish Hall represent the themes of Biblical revelation and the relevance of Christian history. St. Stephen has a columbarium, allowing for members to be at St. Stephen from baptism through the afterlife.

## Staff and Leadership

SSPC has a very faithful, gifted, and hard-working staff.

- › The **Pastor** provides spiritual leadership, pastoral care, administrative oversight, and organizational direction to the SSPC staff and congregation. The Pastor serves as Moderator of the Session and Head of Staff. The Pastor leads worship services, Wednesday Bible Study, and Thursday morning prayers.
- › The **Organist & Director of Music Ministries** plans and coordinates the worship music and directs the Sanctuary Choir, handbell ensemble, and the Chorister Choir program. This position serves as artistic director of the Concerts at St. Stephen series, including organizing Choral Compline and Choral Evensong services.
- › The **Director of Christian Education** manages the spiritual education programs for the adults, youth, and children of SSPC. The Director of Christian Education plans outreach and special events, coordinates Sunday School, and leads the youth group.
- › The **Business Manager** focuses on the financial accounting for the church. This contracted position works with the Pastor, staff, Budget and Finance Committee, and Trustees.
- › The **Office Administrator** manages the church office, creates the bulletins and bi-weekly newsletter, and handles member and visitor requests. The Office Administrator coordinates meetings and controls the building calendar.
- › The **Facilities Supervisor** performs and oversees the maintenance and upkeep on a two-building church facility with associated equipment and six acres of grounds. This position prepares the sanctuary and education building to host multiple weekly church services and other associated meetings and activities.
- › The **Director of the SSPC Day School** oversees and guides the daily operations of the school and provides leadership to the school staff. This position works with the Church leadership to

ensure that children entrusted to the school will receive preparatory education in a loving, safe, and positive Christian learning environment.

- › The **Communications Coordinator** creates the marketing content for SSPC. This contracted position produces print media, website updates, and social media content.

## Congregational Leadership

St. Stephen Presbyterian Church is blessed to have very dedicated, talented, and committed members serving as church leaders.

St. Stephen's **Session** currently has 18 elders who meet and conduct church business on the fourth Tuesday of each month and at called meetings throughout the year. Elders serve three-year terms with a new class being elected annually by the Congregation.

Currently there are 10 Session Committees.

- |                       |              |                   |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| › Budget & Finance    | › Membership | › Property        |
| › Christian Education | › Mission    | › Worship & Music |
| › Communication       | › Nominating |                   |
| › Fellowship          | › Personnel  |                   |

The **Board of Deacons** of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church exists to serve our congregation and community, as instruments of God's grace and healing, they minister to their spiritual, physical, and emotional needs by presence, praying, listening, and rejoicing. They strive to fulfill their calling by caring for one another as Jesus Christ cares for us. St. Stephen currently has 12 elected members serving in rotating three-year terms. The Board of Deacons elect a Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Recording Secretary, and Representative to the Church-Wide Nominating Committee. Each officer serves for a one-year term.

The Board of Deacons accomplishes its tasks in a variety of ways that include:

- › Visiting the sick or bereaved at hospitals, care facilities, or at home
- › Providing food
- › Making telephone calls
- › Sending cards/emails
- › Serving communion
- › Ushering
- › Serving home communion



Deacons extend their ministry to the mission of the church by providing meals for Room In The Inn and Samaritan House.

The Board meets monthly, upon call of its Moderator, or when directed to meet by the Session. A joint meeting of the Session and the Board of Deacons is held at least annually to confer on matters of common interest, with the Moderator of the Session presiding.

The **Board of Trustees** has nine members, each serving a three-year-term. Board members are nominated by the Church-Wide Nominating committee and elected by the congregation in a regularly-constituted congregational meeting. The Pastor and Church Treasurer are ex-officio members of the Board. Many of the Trustees are ordained elders or deacons, and often simultaneously serve on committees of the Session. The Board of Trustees meets quarterly upon call of its President, or when directed to meet by the Session. They report to the congregation at the annual meeting.

The St. Stephen Corporation by-laws state that the Board of Trustees has fiduciary responsibility to manage the corporate civil matters of the Corporation and any ecclesiastical tasks or responsibilities delegated to the Board by the session. The fiduciary responsibility includes the receiving, holding, encumber, managing and transfer of real or personal property for the church. The Trustees have an investment policy statement regarding the management of the endowment that is reviewed regularly. The latest version was adopted in 2022.

## Community Leaders Conversations

### *Seeing St. Stephen Through the Eyes of Others*

To be better informed and to have a better understanding of and responsiveness to the neighborhoods, and social groupings in our area, we met with community leaders and pastors: Michael Crain, FW City Council, District 9; Jack Crane, Pastor of True Vine Missionary Baptist Church; Betsy Price, former FW mayor; and Estrus Tucker, a facilitator and independent Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion consultant. In respect of their times and schedules, the meetings with each of them were kept to one hour, at a time convenient to them.

In letters sent to each of them before their meeting, they were asked to be prepared to respond to such questions as:

- What do you see as the major issues of our community? What changes are taking place in Fort Worth that could/should affect the mission of the church?
- What evidence of struggle, despair, neglect, and alienation do you see?
- How are community institutions (and churches) responding to present problems and needs?
- What forms of church and services that a church could provide, are needed here that are not currently represented in its churches?

- From your perspective, what new opportunities are worth placing time, talents, or treasure?
- What conversations have you had on fellowship and reconciliation?
- When you see St. Stephen, what do you notice about it? Does it feel inviting? What did you know about it before today?

Each conversation was rich in thoughts and ideas for the church, many of which are reflected in this report. It is our hope that conversations with community leaders will become a regular part of our church life. [See Appendix D](#)

## Impressions of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church

Each of these leaders commented on the majestic buildings and the beautiful grounds and setting of the church. But two of them referred to it as a “A hidden gem.” Since it does not sit on a major thoroughfare and the demographics of the neighborhood have become quite complex in recent years, the church needs to work harder to let people know who they are. St. Stephen should be a safe place for needed, respectful conversations, able to listen to someone who is different—not to change who they are, but to have an enlightened opinion of where others are coming from.

Cannot be everything  
to everyone.  
You need to find your  
lane and **OWN** it.

## Possibilities for Outreach

One-and-a-half million people in Tarrant County don’t claim a church home, therefore the unmet need is enormous. Leaders noted that St. Stephen needed to engage more with TCU students, professors, and staff; young families, especially those with elementary and middle school age children; to newcomers—many of whom would fall into this unchurched category. Although St. Stephen is considered a destination church, it should continue to try find ways of connecting with its diverse neighborhood. One leader mentioned that they would like to see St. Stephen work with the Blue Zones Project\* which seemed like a natural fit.

SSPC is recognized as  
being forward thinking.  
Keep that up.

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\* [Blue Zones Project](#)® is a community well-being initiative that makes healthy choices easier in all the places we live, work, and play.

## Major Issues in Fort Worth

Fort Worth has become a very big city—a city of great opportunity, but also a city of disparities and inequity. Consider partnering with others on any of these city issues: education, affordable housing, transportation, public health (obesity, diabetes, mental), food insecurity, and safety and security. There is great need for funds to help create a good gun/violence prevention program.

Do not use “progressive,”  
say, “Be who you are,  
and you will be safe  
and listened to here.”

But Fort Worth can do it! These leaders recognized the accomplishments that the city along with churches and nonprofits have made possible. They cited St. Stephen’s efforts on the part of the Presbyterian Night Shelter and

Room In The Inn. They also talked about fairly new programs and groups and partnerships that have made a difference, such as: Las Vegas Trail Revitalization Project (LVTRise) and 4444 Quail Trail off River Oaks Boulevard.

## Things Churches Can Do

Church leaders (laity) can do what elected officials cannot do or will not do and they can hold leaders accountable. Churches can offer hope and be a pillar of truth and a safe space for the community. They can host Town Hall forums—there is nothing better than listening to those we have not listened to.

Leaders noted that they have witnessed what can be accomplished when churches band together with other churches and/or schools to do bigger things. Prison ministries are always needed as well as sending church vans into neighborhoods to deliver shots, etc.

We must continue to:

- 1) **Reach** our members, those within our walls,
- 2) **Teach** all we encounter,
- 3) **Preach** the Good News

## Education

The belief that churches need to reach out to young families through the schools, especially elementary and middle school was a consistent message from the community leaders. Churches should be a HUB for youth: give them ownership of programs by involving them in decisions, feed them, talk to them around the table.

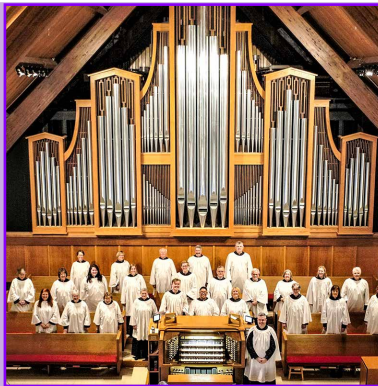
The pandemic has had such a negative impact on education. Schools, both children and teachers need support, and there are many single parent families with no support or time. COVID brought loss of education and social skills; mental health problems—students are quick to anger. Volunteers are especially needed as reading and ESL tutors. Teachers are overwhelmed. Churches could assist teachers, provide back to school supplies.

We need to invest  
in youth.

## Communication

Communication should hit all channels. Each of the community leaders admitted that communication is hard. It takes time and money, and it needs to communicate core values and mission. St. Stephen needs to use its park like setting to advantage. Accent on community should be huge! Have fall festivals and gatherings; must involve children and get millennials into the church.

St. Stephen needs to help a new pastor establish community relationships with churches and community leaders.





# Ministries and Programs



**T**hose who answered our survey said their participation is varied by interests of age groups. The overall folk who say they participate almost always is most apparent for worship (11 AM—52.23%, 8:30 AM—15.83%; committees (19.86%); Evensong/compline (18.12%); Fellowship (16.56%); Session (15.60); Ushers (13.70%); Room in the Inn (11.97%); Presbyterian Women (11.35); Deacons (10.14%); Mission (9.79%); and choirs (10.79). Overall participation is noted for outdoor events (25%) and VBS (10.79%). [See Appendix E](#) for the age clusters.

The important aspects about SSPC for those taking the survey: worship 90.68%, sanctuary 76.13%, music program 75.63%, mission 61.18%, congregational care 61.69%, K–12 Christian education 55.56%, and fellowship 50.98%. [See Appendix F](#) for the age clusters.

## Worship

A tradition of formal, liturgical worship is seen as a key strength and is one of the primary ways that we distinguish ourselves from other Presbyterian churches in the area. Members treasure the unique historical nature of our service. As a congregation, we value excellence in preaching and music combined with prayer, Bible readings, reflection, reverence, and worship of God. Two Sunday services are offered to meet individual needs and preferences. The early service, which began in 1994, introduced innovations in our worship, such as readers and communion by intinction. It is held in the west transept at 8:30 AM, is without choir, liturgically ordered, and offers a quieter, simpler format. Current attendance is 10–24 congregants. Communion is offered weekly.

The 11 AM service has its roots deep within the Reformed tradition and includes a procession with choir and acolytes, along with hymns, and anthems. The Lord's Supper is celebrated twelve times a year and during major Christian festivals. Godly Play lessons, provided by our Christian education leaders, are offered to children fifth grade and younger during the sermon throughout the academic year. The average weekly 11 AM service attendance was 98 in the Spring of 2022, and 97 in the Fall of 2021. Services such as Easter and Christmas normally have more than 275–297. St. Stephen's celebrated Kirkin' of the Tartans takes place in October and recognizes the Presbyterian Church's Scottish heritage. Attendance is commonly 226–250. The survey showed the top seven aspects of the worship service from 157 responses to be: sermon (89.81%), choral and instrumental (80.89%), prayer

(71.34%), readings from the Bible (70.06%), congregational singing (66.88%), sanctuary atmosphere (61.88%), communion (60.51%), and special services (55.41%).

During the pandemic, worship took on a different aspect. Immediately upon closing the buildings, an online weekly recorded service was developed, made available on YouTube. It was eagerly welcomed by the congregation who admitted it helped to have the church connection during isolation. Our staff became very creative and invited participants to read the scriptures from their homes, and over time small group choir members and handbell participants were added. Post COVID, the 11 AM service is now livestreamed each week and available through YouTube. Volunteers have been trained to operate the video equipment. Although in person worship is desired, the online service continues to be a necessary arm of our worship for those who are home bound and to reach potential new members. Out of 160 survey responses, 79.38% (127) have participated in an online service, while 20.63% (33) have not. In our changing world, it is expressed by our survey responses that we will always need an online element to reach out more and let others see who we are. It is believed that it would be more visually appealing if people would gather closer to the front of the sanctuary. Additionally, use less footage of the congregation and more of the windows, table, font, and other things that visually inspire.

Each Thursday morning at 7 AM, 8–10 members gather in our chapel for prayer and reflection. The short service is followed by breakfast provided by participants. Thursday morning prayers has become an important part of spiritual development for those who participate. The early service, which began in 1994, has introduced innovations in our worship such as lay readers and communion by intinction.

In addition to our traditional services, there was genuine interest and thought that St. Stephen needed to consider some type of alternative service. (An alternative service may be less traditional, have acoustic music, be more contemporary, and would be designed to attract folks who might like a more casual worship service.) From 159 survey responses, 30.19% (36) thought we needed an alternative service of some kind. The same number said it was not needed, but 40.25% (36) are willing to consider a well thought out and researched plan.

Respondents strongly agreed that music, choral and instrumental, along with worship is a form of prayer and that by professing our shared faith musically provides witness to the way God wants us to live.

Special worship services integral to the life of our church include Advent Lessons and Carols, Christmas Eve services, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week services including Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil, All Saints Day (when we read the necrology),



Kirkin of the Tartans

## Music

The worship of the triune God is the center of our common life and our primary way of witness to the faith, hope and love we have in Jesus Christ. At St. Stephen Presbyterian Church, worship and music are inextricably intertwined with each other. A majority of the congregation expressed that music is an integral part of our worship and identity as a church. As a congregation, we treasure our distinctive approach to music in the same way we treasure our unique worship service. Our music is a draw for many, some mention it as a factor that attracted them to St. Stephen.

St. Stephen Presbyterian has been known for its excellence in music from the very beginning with Elza Cook, Minister of Music (1952–73) conducting seven graded choirs: Cherub, Bethlehem, Carol, Boy, Crusader, Chapel, and Sanctuary. He was followed by Peter Mark Scott, Minister of Music (1974–2014) who added youth and adult handbell choirs, and began the Special Music Series as well as Advent Lessons and Carols.

Jordan Smith has been our Organist and Director of Music Ministries since 2018. Many survey responses noted his excellence in music selections and magnificent organ preludes and postludes. His energy and creative style have enhanced the music program. The structure of the choirs has changed through the years to a Children's Choir, Sanctuary Choir, and St. Swithun Handbell Guild. The Sanctuary Choir currently has seven Choral Scholars from local universities. The choir has a rich tradition of sacred music, church standards, American anthems, and classical European musical repertoire.

A key strength to our music program is an emphasis on education and learning the importance of music in Christian worship. Our chorister program has resumed after taking a break throughout the pandemic and is open to young people in grades 4–8. The program follows the Royal School of Church Music curriculum, teaching church music and basic music training.

Our Concerts at St. Stephen vary from organ concerts to chamber musicians, choirs, and recitals of vocalists, violin, clarinet, and piano. All events in the series are free of charge and feature local artists as well as musicians and groups from across the country and around the world.

The music program is a vital ministry. In addition to Sunday morning worship, Taize and plainchant choral compline services are offered monthly with an optional lighted Labyrinth. Evensong is also provided on Sunday evenings once a month.



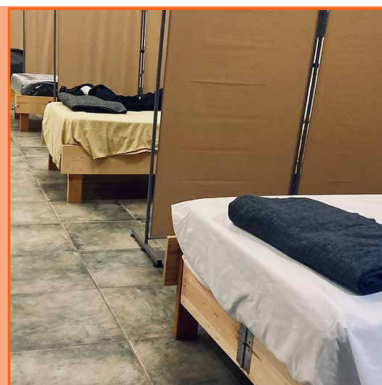


## Mission

Mission and Outreach to the community and beyond has long been a core value of St. Stephen and was mentioned frequently by members as an important calling for the church. Like our namesake, St. Stephen, our church is defined by our commitment to servanthood. According to the online survey, 72.73% of the congregation participate in mission activities. Of those, 86.49% volunteer time, 70.27% provide finances, 40.54% share their talents, 9.91% help in other ways. Respondents believe in the importance of offering mission projects and encouragement for our various age groups.

St. Stephen's Mission Ministry currently supports:

- **Sponsorship of Boy Scout Troop 17** (dating back to the 1920s) has long been important to our congregation along with the **St. Stephen Presbyterian Day School** (which began in the 1970s).
- **Presbyterian Night Shelter**—A founding member in 1984, St. Stephen has never wavered in its support of this non-profit which is now the largest provider of services to our county's residents who are experiencing homelessness. Pastors and communicants have served on boards and committees and volunteered in various capacities. PNS now has three components: emergency shelter (True Worth Place), housing assistance (Fire—Family and Individual Rapid Exit) and employment (Upspire).
  - ◆ Room in the Inn (RITI)—During the hottest and coldest months of the year, St. Stephen opens its doors to homeless men in our community every Tuesday night through Wednesday morning. Through our partnership with the PNS's True Worth Place, men are transported to the Parish Hall where we provide an air-conditioned (or heated in the winter) space for them to enjoy a restful evening, including two warm meals—and especially warm hospitality among St. Stephen members and friends. Volunteer opportunities include: preparing and serving dinner or breakfast, transporting our guests to and from our location, visiting with and hosting our guests, preparing their beds and supplies, and doing the laundry.
  - ◆ Once a month, the church prepares and delivers approximately 500 sack lunches to the Presbyterian Night Shelter to help feed their guests and staff. Volunteers may shop for the food, gather, and pack individual portions, fill the sacks, or deliver to the night shelter. Since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, we have provided over 43,000 sack lunches.







- ◆ Collection of water, sheets, towels, and clothing for men, women, and children is ongoing.
- ◆ Upspire's mission is to create employment that reduces or removes barriers that contribute to homelessness. St. Stephen supports this program by employing men and women for janitorial services at the church.

- **DRC Solutions to End Homelessness agency, (formerly the Day Resource Center)**—Our latest extension of service to the homeless in the community is through a coalition of private developers, City of Fort Worth, First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth, local foundations, and DRC Solutions. 4444 Quail Trails is a new apartment complex in west Fort Worth providing 48-unit apartments to previously unsheltered neighbors. DRC case managers guide the residents in obtaining social services and adapting to their new lives. **St. Stephen has been asked to collect essentials and to divide and distribute food donated by the Tarrant Area Food Bank on the First Friday of each month.**
- **Habitat for Humanity**—We provide funds and help build homes for families in need of decent and affordable housing.
- **Samaritan House Supper Club**—SSPC is part of a group of faith communities that provide home-cooked meals for the residents of Samaritan House. On the third Friday of each month, volunteers prepare and serve dinner to the residents, all of whom are affected by HIV/AIDS and need the housing and other services provided by Samaritan House.
- **South Central Alliance of Churches (SCAC)**—We help provide funding to support the ministry of the South Central Alliance—a coalition of congregations in the southwest quadrant of Fort Worth serving zip code neighborhoods 76104, 76109, and 76110. This ministry seeks to help meet emergency or one-time needs, assisting individuals and families past a single difficult situation (such as verifiable loss or change in income or a medical emergency) with the hope that this will result in enough stability for them to continue to manage their lives.

**Along with the above, members are invited to support special offerings during the year:**

- Providing school supplies for the Day School classrooms
- PC(USA) Special Offerings: 1) One Great Hour of Sharing which supports Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People and 2) The

Christmas Joy Offering which distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

- A Blood Drive for the community in October
- Angel Trees during the Christmas season benefitting both US Veterans and children at the Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services (PCHAS)
- SERRV International, a fair-trade non-profit—St. Stephen hosts an annual, international market during the Christmas season that returns the profits from the sale of art and handcrafts back to the artist and village.
- A Book Drive for Fort Worth Veterans Outpatient Clinic

Our children grow up in a culture of caring for others and are encouraged to participate in mission projects of the church. In their early years this is primarily administered through our Christian Education programs. (See [Christian Education](#)) By the time they are in the Youth Group they are going to the Presbyterian Night Shelter, serving dinner at Samaritan House, and shopping for gifts for the PCHAS Angel Tree & other group donations. Last Thanksgiving, they partnered with Methodist Justice Ministry to help families by building forts and play equipment, and cleaning-up yards.

Every January St. Stephen youth coordinate the Souper Bowl of Caring, collecting money after worship on Super Bowl Sunday which benefits the Tarrant Area Food Bank.

**SSPC Youth Mission Trip** is an especially memorable and much-anticipated mission service. Each summer our Youth travel to another community for a week to help a church with specific needs they have requested, such as repairs or additions to their facilities, and in addition usually offer Vacation Bible School for the community. Funds for this project are raised through a Garage Sale with items donated by church and community members and with extended childcare and activities offered to families with young children in the afternoons of our own Vacation Bible School. Many of our adults participate with our youth in these fund raisers, as well as accompany and work with the youth on the Mission Trip.



SSPC Day School

## Christian Education

St. Stephen is a congregation that values education. Sunday School classes for children, youth, and adults are offered each Sunday throughout the academic program year. Three adult classes are offered with an attendance of 30–40 people. Our Youth (4–8 participants) meet Sunday mornings before serving as acolytes for worship, and our children have 2–6 participants eager to learn Bible Stories using curriculum. Attendance pre-pandemic was higher. Survey responses stated it is time to interest

the parents in the religious education of their children; and it is disheartening that there are so few visible families at SSPC (noted that sports activities held on Sundays and the pace of family demands are distracting). Our Director of Christian Education (DCE) Beth Fultz, who began in 2005, offers sidewalk chalk Bible lessons to our children to entice them to return to Sunday School.

New youth confirmands are welcomed each year by professing their faith after attending classes. Youth communicants teach the class in conjunction with the DCE.

Additional activities from CE offered are Blessing of the Backpacks (as school begins); Sunday School kick off to begin the school year; Christmas on the Hill—crafts, food, and music on the lawn at Christmas, free to the community; Halloween Trunk or Treat sponsored by the youth—open to the community and families; Family Christmas Eve Service with children and youth narrating and acting the Christmas story; Easter egg hunt; Children's Sabbath—twice a year; Palm Sunday donkey led procession and picnic with games and crafts; Lenten family service on Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday.

**Amahl and the Night Visitors** sponsored by CE in conjuncture with the TCU "School of Opera, was presented in December, 2021. DCE Beth Fultz was the producer. Several of the Sanctuary Choir members participated and it is hoped to be repeated in 2023.

The Youth provide leadership for Youth Sunday (twice a year, with senior sermons in the Spring);



Christmas on the Hill

the church garage sale benefitting Youth mission trip; yearly the Youth and sponsors choose a summer Christian Education mission trip; and Vacation Bible School is offered yearly to the community (80–100 attend). We take great pride in our Youth. They meet Sunday nights for Youth Group, participate in worship, engage in mission activities, explore spiritual development and faith, and gather for social activities. They are a small-but-mighty group and very connected with each other and the church.

As part of its mission and outreach, SSPC offers a high-quality early childhood program for church members and the surrounding community, St. Stephen Presbyterian Day School (SSPDS). It serves children ages 5 months to Pre-K and operates on a regular school year calendar. Twice a week from 9:30 AM–2:30 PM, children gather in a safe, nurturing environment that promotes the physical,

social, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive development of young children. This summer, SSPDS is hosting its inaugural day camps, once in July and once in August.



Palm Sunday Picnic



Other adult education offerings include weekly zoom Bible study with the pastor (8–10 attending); Faith on Tap—monthly gathering with speakers and food and beverage; and Holy Week Luncheons and devotionals. Additionally, we are reworking our curriculum and welcoming process for visitors who are interested in learning more about the Presbyterian Church and potentially becoming members of St. Stephen.

## Presbyterian Women

All women of SSPC are members of Presbyterian Women, the women's organization of the Presbyterian Church, USA, an inclusive and caring community of women, committed to working toward God's promise of wholeness for all people.

### Purpose

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace, and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.

Our SSPC officers form the SSPC Women's Council of PW and meet monthly. **Morning Glories**, our day circle, meets monthly the morning of the second Tuesday of each month in the Eastminster Room for coffee, fellowship, and Bible study. **LOTE**, our evening circle, meets the third Monday of each month at members' homes for a potluck supper, fellowship, and Bible study. We use the current PCUSA curriculum for our study.



Decorating for Christmas



PW Morning Glories

Projects include:

- **Visitation:** Every Monday that flowers are donated to our Sunday services, this group meets to take the arrangements apart and make small arrangements of these flowers that have heard our lectionary, prayers, and hymns to carry to homebound members during the week, reminding them that our church family remembers and prays for them.
- **TLC:** This group prepares food for and hosts receptions following memorial services.
- **Knitting Guild:** This group knits and crochets lap robes, prayer shawls and throws for those in grief, ill, or recovering.

- **Birthday Card Ministry:** Meeting in the afternoons of the first and third Tuesdays of each month, this group creates, addresses, and sends birthday cards to each of our church members, reminding them that each is a valued member of our church family.
- **Fellowship of the Least Coin:** Each circle meeting collects coins that symbolize prayer, justice, and reconciliation. This donation used for grants for special projects is sent annually to Women of Grace Presbytery.
- **Samaritan House:** Once a year we take our turn to provide dinner for these residents. (see Mission for an explanation).

From our Focus Group discussion, we determined that we are concerned about our dwindling numbers of active women and lack of young women joining us. We would like to offer different programs on Saturday or Sunday afternoons so more women could join us and we could get to know each other better. We hope to once again attend Presbytery women events, as well as have more interaction with other women's groups.

## Fellowship

The survey responses indicated a hunger for being together in fellowship through social gatherings, speakers, dinners for eight, potluck dinners, intergenerational service projects, and other avenues of togetherness to cement friendships and sense of community. Fellowship sponsors the Kirkin of the Tartan luncheon, Ash Wednesday dinner, Good Friday luncheon, Fourth Friday book club, and various fellowship activities. After the isolation of COVID, folks are eager to have more activities as evidenced by the recent high attendance of the book review on March 20, sponsored by the Friday Book Club. Our campus is such a beautiful asset, offering appealing fellowship activities outdoors would be a way for all to see who we are and what we are doing.



Book Club speaker presented his book, *Texas State Parks: The First Hundred Years, 1923-2023*

“O taste and see that the Lord is good.”

Psalm 34:8



## Health, Safety and Wellness

St. Stephen considers health and safety to be a priority. The Parish Nurse and the Assistant Parish Nurse have gone through extensive training to continually provide information and programs to congregants. These include sponsoring an annual blood drive, offering “Stop the Bleed” and CPR classes, and writing health updates in the Sentinel newsletter and Sunday bulletin insert. There are now “Stop the Bleed” kits located throughout the sanctuary and education building.

St. Stephen is privileged to have an official with the Tarrant County Public Health Authority as an active member. The advice provided by this doctor proved invaluable as St. Stephen navigated the COVID pandemic and she continues to regularly consult with staff and Session on health issues.

We have seriously responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, requesting people to wear masks while on our property during the first year of the pandemic. We have offered COVID inoculations on our campus. With 58% of us over 55 years of age and in the high-risk category, we have been cautious and intentional in our response. Some of our members remain reluctant to rejoin in person worship services, even though we designate our west transept exclusively for folks wearing masks and socially distancing.

St. Stephen stays vigilant on security issues. On Sunday mornings, a police officer is in the Sanctuary building while the Property Committee monitors the security cameras showing the church and grounds. Police officers are on-site during Vacation Bible School and other large outdoor activities. Additionally, the Parish Nurse has scheduled an active shooter training session. These actions contributed to the survey respondents overwhelmingly saying they felt safe when participating in church events.

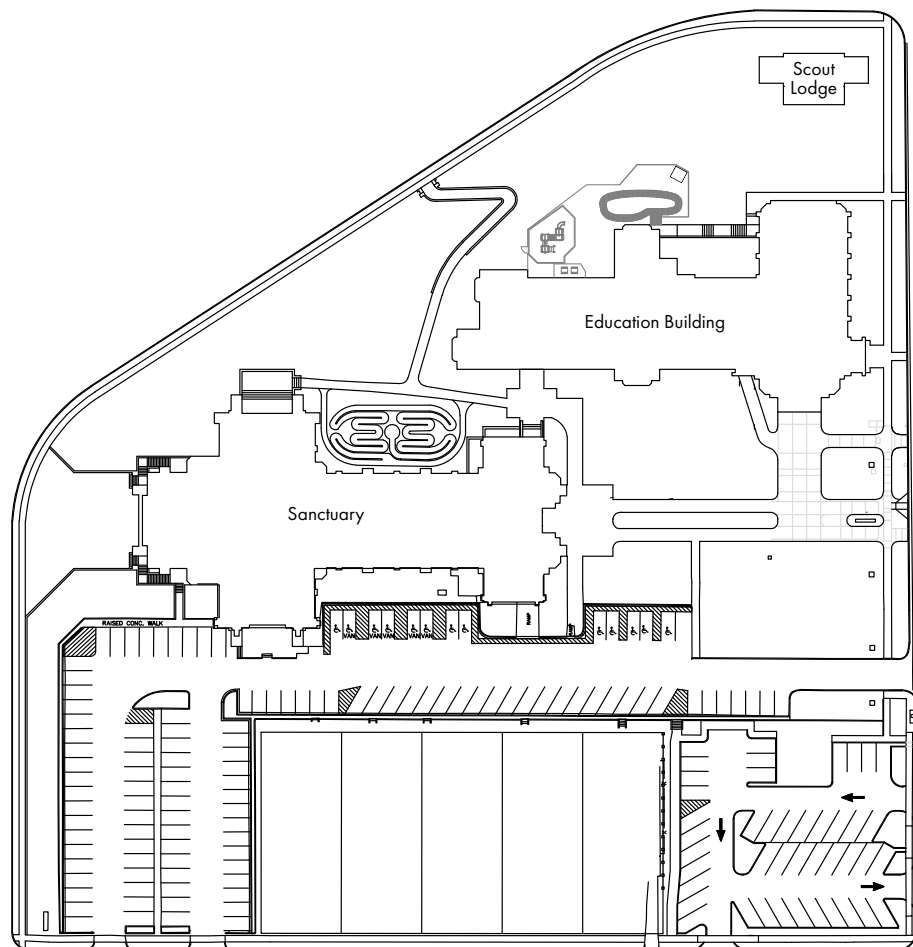


CPR class

# Facilities



**S**t. Stephen Presbyterian Church was formally organized in 1884 as Broadway Presbyterian Church, was originally located near downtown Fort Worth, Texas. In 1950, the congregation moved to the present location some five blocks east of the campus of Texas Christian University, at which time the name was changed to St. Stephen Presbyterian Church. There are two floors of unfinished undercroft space beneath the sanctuary.



Occupying a commanding position atop a rocky escarpment, the present sanctuary building, completed in 1969, realizes the vision of this congregation for a house of worship expressive of an infinite and eternal God. The sanctuary seats over 1,000 people. The building was designed by Albert S. Komatsu of Fort Worth. It is constructed of native variegated limestone accented with white cast stone. It is of modified Gothic design and cruciform in shape.

Outside, a massive battlement-style tower soars 150 feet above the surrounding landscape. Inside, this tower rises 100 feet above the floor of the crossing. A peal of five bells sits atop the tower. Cast in Holland by the Eijsbouts Foundry, this peal weighs over 12,000 pounds.

To exploit the changing light in this grand architectural setting, stained glass windows were designed, fabricated and installed by Gabriel Loire of Chartres, France. A comprehensive, fully illustrated hard-back book is available in our church office and in our library.

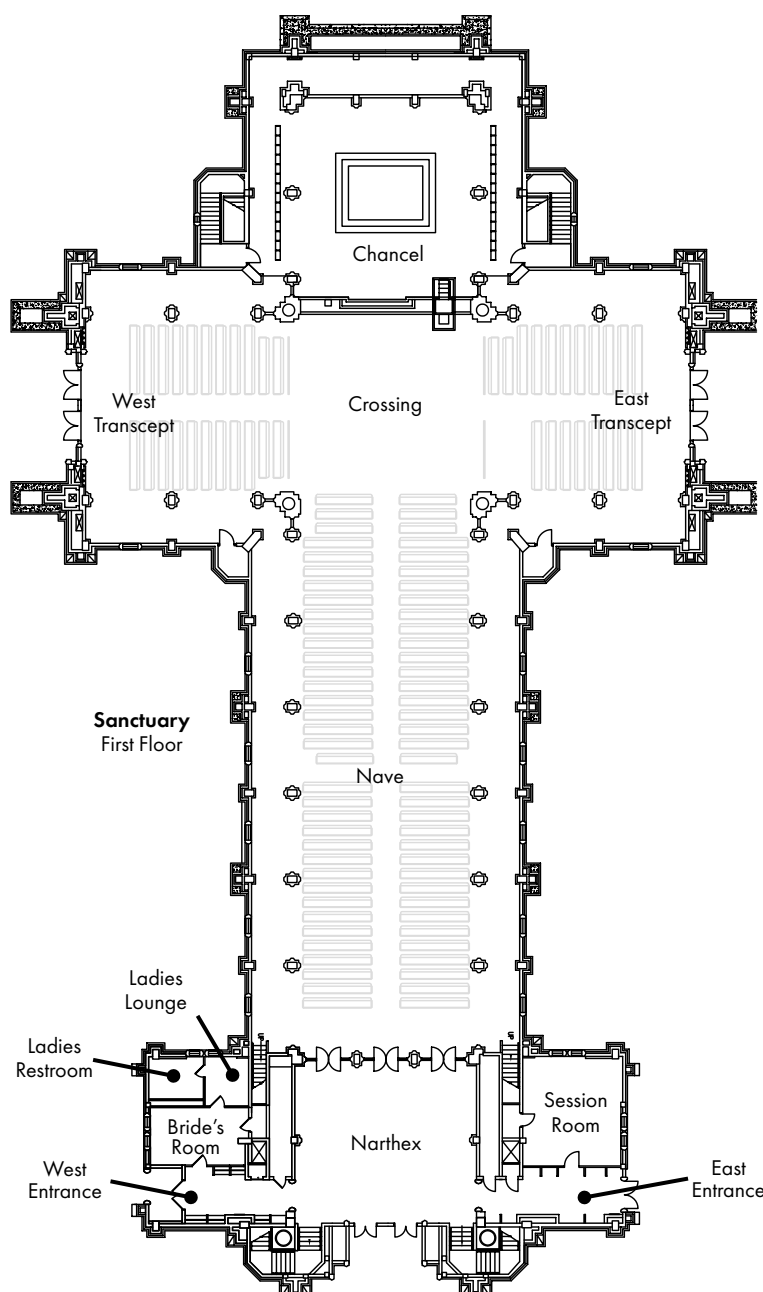
Hard surfaces have been used inside the sanctuary to insure a favorable acoustical environment resulting in reverberation time of almost four seconds.

The building and appointments are reflective of the high-church form of worship favored by this congregation. Great importance is placed on expressing Christian history and doctrine through varied aural and visual art forms continuing a long tradition of commissioning artists and artisan craftspeople to create new expressions of this faith.

A 224-niche columbarium is located in east and west transepts. This was added in 2001.

## The Organ

The Sanctuary Pipe Organ is widely recognized as one of the finest instruments in North Texas. Originally built by the Moller firm in 1971, the organ was rebuilt and enlarged in 1993 by Dan Garland to better support the needs of the church and to replace pipework suffering from metal fatigue. The main organ is located in a gallery at the rear of the nave. An antiphonal division of the organ is located in the chancel, 200 feet from the gallery organ.



Currently, the organ is undergoing another upgrade which will bring its technology into the 21st century. Included in this monumental project is a new console to replace the 1971 console, and new control system to replace the 1993 technology. Additionally, we are fortunate to have been the benefactor of several ranks of vintage pipework, carefully selected, cleaned, and re-voiced for St. Stephen. These additions will allow the organ to become more complete and will dramatically increase the versatility of what we can do with music in worship. Additionally, this project will help the Organist & Director of music cut down on valuable practice time by providing a much more user-friendly console and control system. Once completed in the fall of 2023, the Sanctuary Pipe Organ will have a new console, 96 ranks, and nearly 6,000 pipes—all to support our music and worship for the glory of God!

## Education Building

Initially only the south end of the education building was built containing the Reimers Chapel, the kitchen, restrooms and two classrooms. The second floor had balcony seating, a small office and three classrooms.

Several years later the north end of this building was added providing a beautiful small chapel, the church offices, the Eastminster room and a few classrooms. The second floor has our library, the Northminster room, three offices, a large choir rehearsal room and 6 classrooms.

A basement in the education building contains areas for youth gathering and a pool table. The capital campaign will add showers and washing/drying machine.

A modern security/fire alarm system independently monitors the sanctuary and education building.

## Grounds

The main grounds have a formal design laid out in the 1970s. There are various areas that are being cared for by volunteers, who give freely of their time and resources to exhibit the kingdom of God through nature. Plants at the sanctuary entrances reflect the seasons of the year.

Located between the sanctuary and education building is a labyrinth and meditative prayer garden, which were completed in 2006.

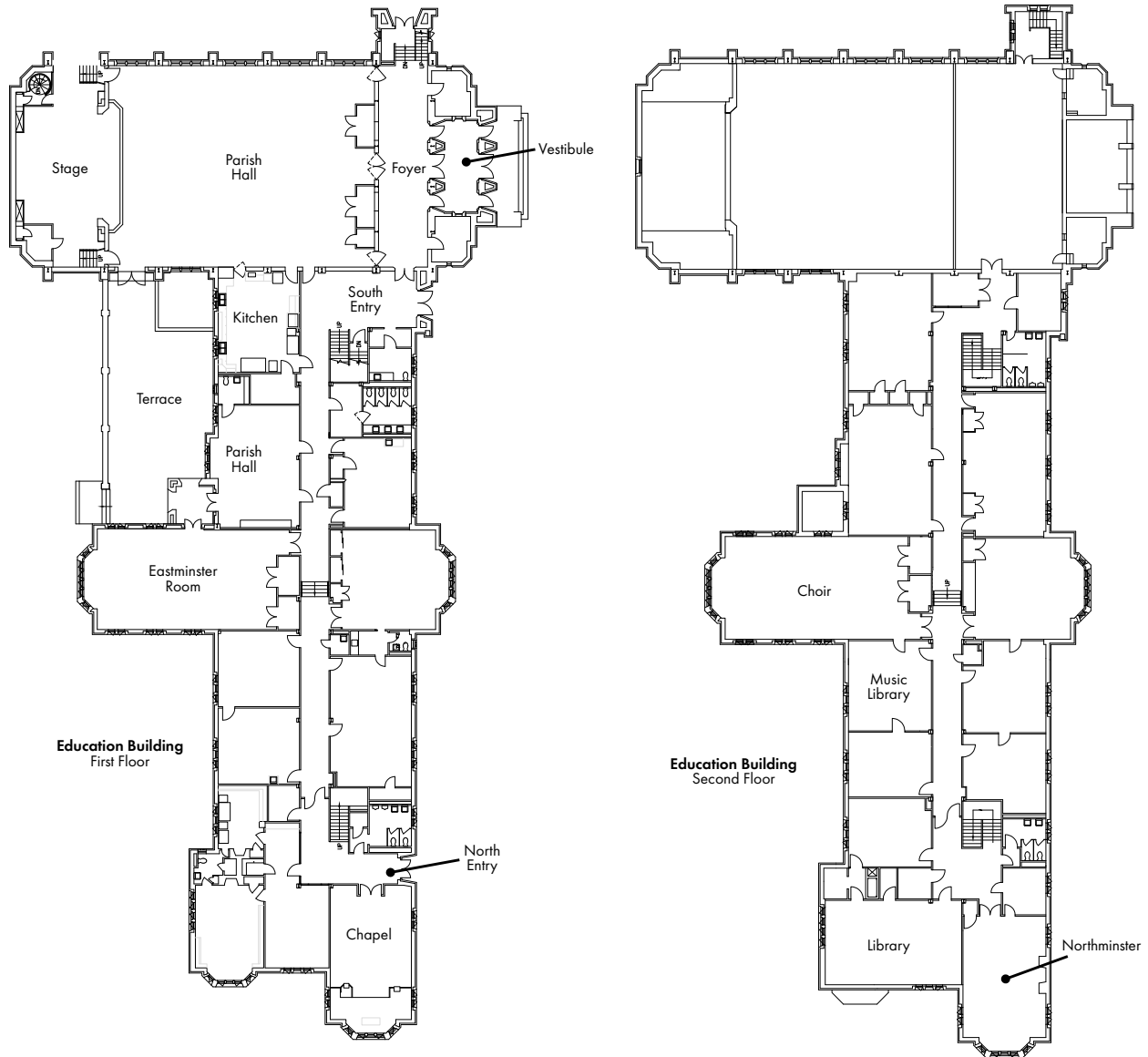
The most recent initiative is an area in the upper parking lot at McPherson and Lubbock, where volunteers are creating a garden with plants of the Bible that can be grown in Fort Worth.

The history of the grounds is rich with stories of those who have made contributions in honor or memory of others.

An underground tunnel connects sanctuary and education building.

## Scout Lodge

A small scout lodge is located on the southeast corner of our campus. This has been used by Troop 17 for well over 50 years.



## Parking Lots

Our recently resurfaced parking lots provide 144 parking spaces plus an additional 14 identified handicap spaces.



# Church Finances



## Budget and Finance Committee

This committee's purpose is to establish the annual budget, determine the distribution of the church's benevolences, and other offerings for Christian purposes and provide full information to the congregation of its decisions in such matters. Meaningful financial statements are generated by this committee and distributed to appropriate parties, including our congregation and Presbytery. The following table shows General Fund Budget comparison for the years 2018 through the first part of 2023.

St. Stephen Presbyterian Church Budget Comparison 2018-2023												
REVENUE	2018 Actual	2018 Budget	2019 Actual	2019 Budget	2020 Actual	2020 Budget	2021 Actual	2021 Budget	2022 Actual	2022 Budget	Jan-Apr 2023 Actual	2023 Annual Budget
Congregational Giving	675,761.44	625,664.00	682,193.75	685,628.00	677,424.98	717,946.00	691,977.09	728,642.00	671,994.38	720,238.00	264,492.90	816,129.00
Building Use	37,250.10	14,000.00	22,595.00	14,000.00	4,580.00	14,000.00	15,040.10	12,200.00	29,152.00	26,900.00	12,550.00	22,200.00
Trust Fund Distributions	109,405.74	110,800.00	112,563.00	110,800.00	115,663.00	116,668.00	127,728.73	116,668.00	131,276.51	128,402.00	43,280.00	128,402.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>822,417.28</b>	<b>750,464.00</b>	<b>817,351.75</b>	<b>810,428.00</b>	<b>797,667.98</b>	<b>848,614.00</b>	<b>834,745.92</b>	<b>857,510.00</b>	<b>832,422.89</b>	<b>875,540.00</b>	<b>320,322.90</b>	<b>966,731.00</b>
EXPENDITURES												
10 Administrative Expenses	80,262.59	86,500.00	81,185.62	82,500.00	90,318.81	88,180.04	95,107.17	93,780.00	104,442.35	92,780.00	35,058.80	95,000.04
11 Property Expense	155,323.58	146,200.00	172,245.53	181,850.00	152,071.86	185,100.00	180,613.61	184,880.00	193,033.48	186,542.00	48,816.88	190,125.62
12 Personnel Expense	446,779.94	469,464.35	476,449.38	476,833.00	511,207.34	484,413.96	511,636.22	479,830.00	534,523.25	500,318.00	188,759.04	582,076.00
20 Christian Education Expense	11,577.63	10,700.00	10,998.10	11,000.00	11,200.04	14,000.00	11,992.15	12,600.00	12,134.18	12,600.00	305.23	12,600.00
50 Worship Expense	22,966.79	22,000.00	29,177.44	22,000.00	36,090.87	38,720.04	30,824.60	31,670.00	38,562.85	37,550.00	4,876.22	41,364.34
31 Mission Expense	6,551.46	7,000.00	7,000.82	7,000.00	11,690.77	12,000.00	17,136.82	18,000.00	16,701.28	18,000.00	450.11	18,000.00
99 Other Expense	7,921.24	8,600.00	20,059.63	22,000.00	17,350.47	26,200.00	34,065.12	36,750.00	4,183.45	27,750.00	239.44	27,565.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>731,383.23</b>	<b>750,464.35</b>	<b>797,116.52</b>	<b>803,183.00</b>	<b>829,930.16</b>	<b>848,614.04</b>	<b>881,375.69</b>	<b>857,510.00</b>	<b>903,580.84</b>	<b>875,540.00</b>	<b>278,505.72</b>	<b>966,731.00</b>
<b>NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>91,034.05</b>	<b>-0.35</b>	<b>20,235.23</b>	<b>7,245.00</b>	<b>-32,262.18</b>	<b>-0.04</b>	<b>-46,629.77</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-71,157.95</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>41,817.18</b>	<b>0.00</b>
OTHER INCOME												
Net Income for Intern/Associate	-400.00		400.00									
Net Investment Results	-4,557.63		24,940.13		26,223.03		59,918.58		-24,848.61		8,554.92	
<b>NET OTHER INCOME</b>	<b>-4,957.63</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>25,340.13</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>26,223.03</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>59,918.58</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-24,848.61</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>8,554.92</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>NET EXCESS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>86,076.42</b>	<b>-0.35</b>	<b>45,575.36</b>	<b>7,245.00</b>	<b>-6,039.15</b>	<b>-0.04</b>	<b>13,288.81</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-96,006.56</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>50,372.10</b>	<b>0.00</b>
ENDING CASH BALANCE												
Simmons Bank	159,369.39		130,585.21		228,434.86		275,662.18		173,794.87		147,927.66	
Texas Presbyterian Foundation	84,854.67		112,698.50		142,817.18		77,934.81		63,233.70		71,788.62	
	<b>244,224.06</b>		<b>243,283.71</b>		<b>371,252.04</b>		<b>353,596.99</b>		<b>237,028.57</b>		<b>219,716.28</b>	

## Church Treasurer

The treasurer is elected annually by the Session and his or her work shall be supervised by the session. The treasurer is responsible for maintaining church financial records and preparation of periodic church financial statements. The treasurer shall also act as for the church on corporate resolutions and notes of indebtedness as approved by the Session and act in an advisory capacity to her Board of Trustees.

## Endowment

The main endowment funds are 18 separate trusts held in mutual funds and a money market account with Omega Securities, a financial management firm. John Dickens, a partner in the firm, meets with trustees several times a year to review the portfolio and consult regarding the investment policy. The investment goals are to protect and grow the endowment and as much as possible generate a predictable amount of income.

As of 1/31/2023 the market value of the endowment funds \$5,272,463.95 and the dividend income from 2/01/2022 to 1/31/2023 was \$122,036.02. The Trustees contributed \$300,000 to the Capital campaign in 2022 and distributed over \$127,000 to the General Fund.

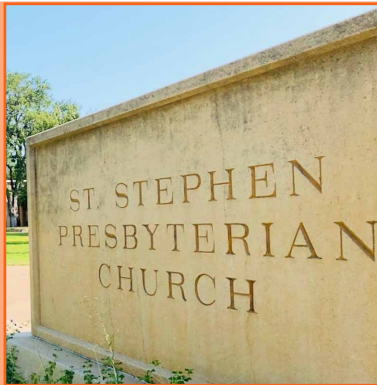
## Capital Campaign

Our church is in the second year of a five-year campaign to provide funding for specific enhancements to our church. The specific funded projects are listed in the Facility section of this report. Work is progressing well on our organ, and our two new vans should arrive soon.

Total Gifts and pledges as of March 31	\$1,254,921
Pledges PAID as of March 31, 2023	\$652,737
Contributions by the church and trust funds	\$602,284
Significant enhancements to our organ	\$780,000
New solid-state console	
13 new ranks in Chancel organ chambers	
Removal of one rank from the Gallery organ	
Relocation of this rank to the Chancel Organ	

## Priorities of Capital Campaign

- › Day school security doors
- › Domestic water line replacement
- › Addition of ADA restroom in sanctuary
- › Washer and dryer and showers in basement of the education building
- › Automatic door opener for east door of sanctuary
- › Renovation of ladies' room in sanctuary building
- › Renovation of ladies' room in education building
- › Accessibility ramp to sanctuary



# Stewardship



## General Fund Stewardship Subcommittee:

Primary task is to manage the obtaining pledge commitments from our membership

- › Obtain the following year's budget request from each committee
- › Review budget requests with committee chairs
- › Draft Asking Budget and present to session for review
- › Present Asking Budget to members at congregational meeting
- › Make brief summary of committees' requests and chair's contact info for stewards
- › Solicit volunteers to become Visiting Stewards
- › Assign members to be visited by each Visiting Steward
- › Stewards arrange a personal visit with their members to:
  - A. Discuss joys and concerns the member has with SSPC. This gives each pledging unit the opportunity to express their thoughts about SSPC. The joys and concerns are listed by the steward and passed on to the pastor or other appropriate committees.
  - B. After discussing joys and concerns review the asking budget and answer questions
  - C. Obtain a pledge from the member, try to obtain pledge card at this initial meeting.
  - D. Follow up with pledging units until all pledge cards have been received

The Moderator of this Subcommittee shall be a present or past member of the Session. Additionally, co-opted members may be sought as needed.

# Challenges



## Transition

SSPC faces challenges involving a transitional time of an aging congregation, the conclusion of an 18-year pastorate, and a society returning from the COVID-19 pandemic. St. Stephen must be innovative to sustain formal worship treasured by the congregation, while increasing the focus on spirituality, spiritual formation, and ethical learning and engagement.

## Membership

We are challenged to attract young people and families. SSPC should expand its focus on building relationships and offer additional opportunities for people to connect. Society today seems to be more passionate about service, mission, and social justice than about denominational membership.

## Social

SSPC was a leader in inclusiveness in the PC (USA) decades ago, and this is still core to our ministry. Some congregants, however, feel that we overuse the phrase “intentionally inclusive.” Being attracted to formal worship, some parishioners hold conservative values in a church that is moderate to liberal in its social attitudes. Seventy responders from the survey stated they are uncomfortable with politics from the pulpit. Therefore, another challenge is ensuring that St. Stephen provides a safe space where all can express their views and ask difficult questions, while knowing that they are accepted and loved by their fellow parishioners.

Many congregants indicate a desire to offer more services to our community, but not spread ourselves too thin. One leader in the community advised that we find our path and stay on it.



“For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.”

**Isaiah 43:19**

## Facilities

According to some responses, since our sanctuary was modeled in the tradition of many European cathedrals, it is sometimes imposing to those who do not understand the history and symbolism it was intentionally chosen to convey. At the same time, many congregants feel the sanctuary offers a safe space apart from the problems of their world where they can experience the awe and majesty of God. We will be challenged to share the symbolism of our sanctuary and meld its powerful spiritual effect with a service that addresses spiritual yearnings.

We are further challenged to explore new uses for St. Stephen’s other facilities such as the Parish Hall, chapel, Eastminster room, the undercroft, outdoor spaces, and outdoor labyrinth to support transition and growth.

Since our church was built before the Americans with Disabilities Act, it presents numerous accessibility challenges. Some of these mobility impediments are being addressed in the current capital campaign, but others remain to be addressed in the future. Maintenance of the aging facilities is expensive, so issues are prioritized and addressed as the budget allows.

## Stewardship

Another challenge to St. Stephen is attracting pledges that can sustain a budget necessary to support its mission and ministry, staffing, and buildings and grounds. We need to further explain the importance of budgets and pledging. We are challenged to nurture a sense of belonging to St. Stephen, of being committed to its ministries, and of honoring generous giving of time, talents, and treasure.

## Communication

We are challenged to make better use of our website, technology audio visuals, and social media to communicate our unique attributes, mission work and involvement in other civic activities. St. Stephen’s expansion of its online presence began during the pandemic, but we have much to learn and improve.

At SSPC, we recognize that within every challenge are opportunities for growth.

# Discoveries



## Ministry to the Congregation

The following possible undertakings were suggested by members of St. Stephen's congregation and visitors. They represent opportunities, but leave a plan of action for the future.

- › Offer young adult fellowship activities and expand mission work
- › Explore ways to add additional alternative services to our two Sunday services and become more aware of changing spiritual needs
- › Host fellowship 'get-togethers' and other social networking opportunities, such as creating men's fellowship opportunities, expand lunch and learn speaker events, organize women's retreat, establish home groups, and revitalize Saint's Alive
- › Track SSPC action plans monthly in Session meetings, increasing transparency to our congregation
- › Offering more fellowship, Involve newcomers in an adult class or group of some kind within the first six weeks after becoming regular worship attendees. Include them in a committee as soon as possible—they may have good ideas from other churches
- › Expand outreach and services to senior members; offering transportation to members from retirement communities (especially evening activities); purchase a golf cart for the disabled; add a hearing loop system that directly transmits to the personal hearing devices; and improve accessibility to all buildings

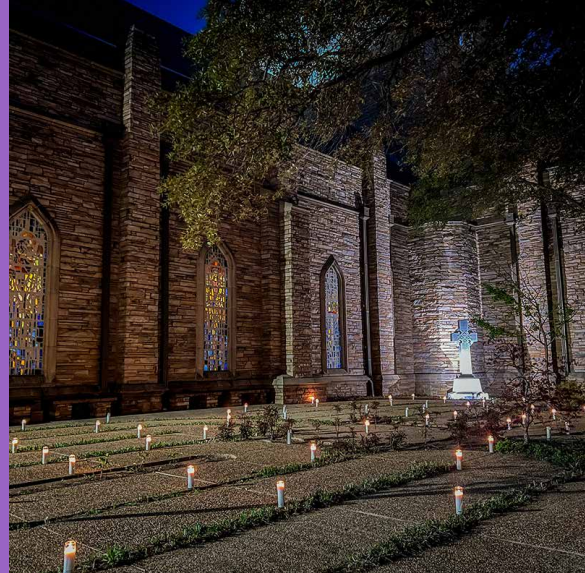
## Ministry to the Community

- Expand messaging of love and inclusivity to all within the community
- Engage with local schools to improve educational and social attainment, offer tutoring/study halls to use our Wi-Fi
- Connect with TCU students to reduce their depression, loneliness, and stress
- Visibly participate in community events

## Community Awareness and Marketing

- Use social media to expand awareness of SSPC
- Redesign the website more inviting, current, and easier to navigate
- Make grounds available for neighborhood and community events, and outside groups
- Light the tower of our building at night

# Our Next Pastor



**T**o help guide St. Stephen to the future God is calling it to pursue, our new pastor should be an engaging leader who is committed to formal worship and intellectual theological discourse. Our new pastor should not be afraid to ask tough questions, help us think through difficult issues, challenge us, and maintain confidentiality. The following attributes represent the skills desired for our next pastor.

## Confidence in the Pulpit

Our new pastor should be able to deliver strong, theologically rich sermons. Compelling oratorical skills are needed to engage our congregants. Sermons should be relevant, inspirational, thoughtful, and grounded in scripture. All theological and political beliefs of our congregation should be welcomed and respected.

## Theological Depth

Theological knowledge that can draw insights from scripture and relate them to contemporary lives is important for our new pastor. St. Stephen has a tradition of biblical exploration. We seek explanation of the conditions surrounding biblical events and the context within which the scriptures were written. This commitment to rigorous theological learning pervades education of all ages.

## Congregational Engagement

Our new pastor shall engage congregants to build a bond of fellowship and pastoral care. This will continue our friendly, open, and caring culture. Our new pastor should be able to minister to the span



of generations and encourage people to relate faith to their daily lives. Additionally, our new pastor should participate in membership activities such as visitor follow-ups, new member classes, and community outreach.

## Community Outreach

Our new pastor should be willing to connect with community organizations to further St. Stephen's commitment to mission. By engaging with interfaith groups and the nearby churches, the spiritual community will be united in carrying forth God's work.

## Collaborate with Leadership

Our new pastor shall collaborate with the leadership of St. Stephen in pursuing the church's mission and values. In collaboration with the Session, strategic objectives for the future of St. Stephen will be defined and accomplished.

## Church Administration

Administrative and communication skills are necessary to manage a professional staff of eight and an almost \$1,000,000 budget. Our new pastor must be confident in assuming and delegating responsibility. The staff should be able to fulfill their individual responsibilities independently with modest supervision. As a team, they work in a participatory, collaborative manner that continues to deliver the religious experience of St. Stephen.



# Mission Study Appendices

# A. Congregational Round Table Responses

We asked the following questions at our round table discussions:

**What do we mean when we say “inclusive and affirming?” In what ways can we improve that?**

We are good about our intentions, but the result is not necessarily there. We tend to focus on one main group rather than the inclusion of all communities and beliefs; inclusion means all and we sometimes alienate the portion of the congregation that don’t agree with political agendas creating the opposite of inclusion-isolation. Intentionally means we are making efforts to connect, engage with people and accept their preferences with kindness. This is not the case in all areas. Our doors are always open—recruiting people because of orientation has never been our goal and it implies we label people. We are known to be inclusive; be careful not to overuse the term as it makes some people uncomfortable. We are open to all people, specifically without regard to race and/or gender. We can improve that by being open to one another and listening actively.

**What makes St. Stephen Presbyterian unique?**

Friendly, welcoming, inclusive of all; liturgical, traditional worship (no screens), with youth participation; mission efforts; extraordinary music ministry with guest musicians in worship, concert series, evensong, compline, our choir; our buildings and architecture with meaningful, stained-glass windows, our green spaces, labyrinth, meditation spot; Christmas on the hill; proximity to TCU; day school; Kirkin of the Tartans; and our history.

**What is allowing these programs to flourish?**

Quality music leader; staff; outreach mission—Room in the Inn, PNS sandwiches, youth mission trips, VBS, card ministry, Christmas tree outreach, Deacon’s ministries, TCU game day parking; faith on tap, zoom Bible studies.

**What do you yearn for at SSPC?**

Better understand God and God’s plan for us, build on the past while looking to the future. More people to know the gift St. Stephen has to offer, standing room only, more people to share the responsibility. A long-range plan for our building based on mission-more outreach to Hispanic community, TCU, others in need, offer tutoring, cancer support group, keep RITI, PNS lunches PCHAS Christmas gifts and Veteran’s support.

- Need to improve service, can be uninspiring, no band and praise worship, keep the traditional services as is, add an alternative service on a different day (form a group to study this), services need a time limit—11 AM has no end!
- More diverse population: racial/ethnic/ages/young families/youth.
- Outside lighting of the church in the evenings, looks like a “dark fortress,” lights might give it lift or heart, people could become aware of us, solar alternatives for lighting, light around migration patterns, light the great window.
- More social gatherings, people are craving this after the pandemic, dinners for 8, casual group of women for social fellowship, retreat for women, game night, potluck dinners, men’s fellowship, breakfast group, establish home groups, spiritual therapy, Saints Alive revived, life changing group, grief therapy.
- A new, balanced pastor who can recognize our strengths and can build on them while putting future goals to the forefront. A strong pastor who has pastoral, administrative and preaching gifts.
- Adopt a budget we can work with without asking for additional support, publish financial statements, scale back or find creative ways to manage our budget.

As we emerge from the pandemic, we are called to explore and think about faith formation for the coming years. What do you believe God is calling us to be in the next 3–5 years?

- Provide a place of quiet, peace, and hope, a hub for openness and activity for ministries, a loving destination spot for those seeking a cure to the country’s divisiveness, a place the community can interact.
- Attract new members in the face of declining church attendance nationwide, we cannot sit and wait for folks to come to us—this may mean making changes to our physical buildings to reflect the needs, update website.
- Be more visible in the community bearing SSPC’s name, reach the broader community.
- Continue online presence. Be more open, communicate better.
- From Pew Research, 30 % of people say they are not religious. Religious meaning accepting the beliefs and traditions of an established group; and spiritual meaning reaching one’s own set of values and beliefs. How would you describe the new spiritual and religious climate of our times and how do we reach out to what they are seeking?
- People equating religious to political extremes and that association prevents from attending, conflicts of being stretched thin (jobs, kids, travel, sports, need time at home), confused if they watch the news, people don’t like being judged, country is divided, negative and intolerant-victim of our times.
- We need to appeal to the “works” of Jesus, balance in life, sincerity-not hypocrisy, no judgment, be a community that feels truly inclusive and affirming, acceptance of the beliefs of people, show love and grace, and offer opportunities for casual conversations.



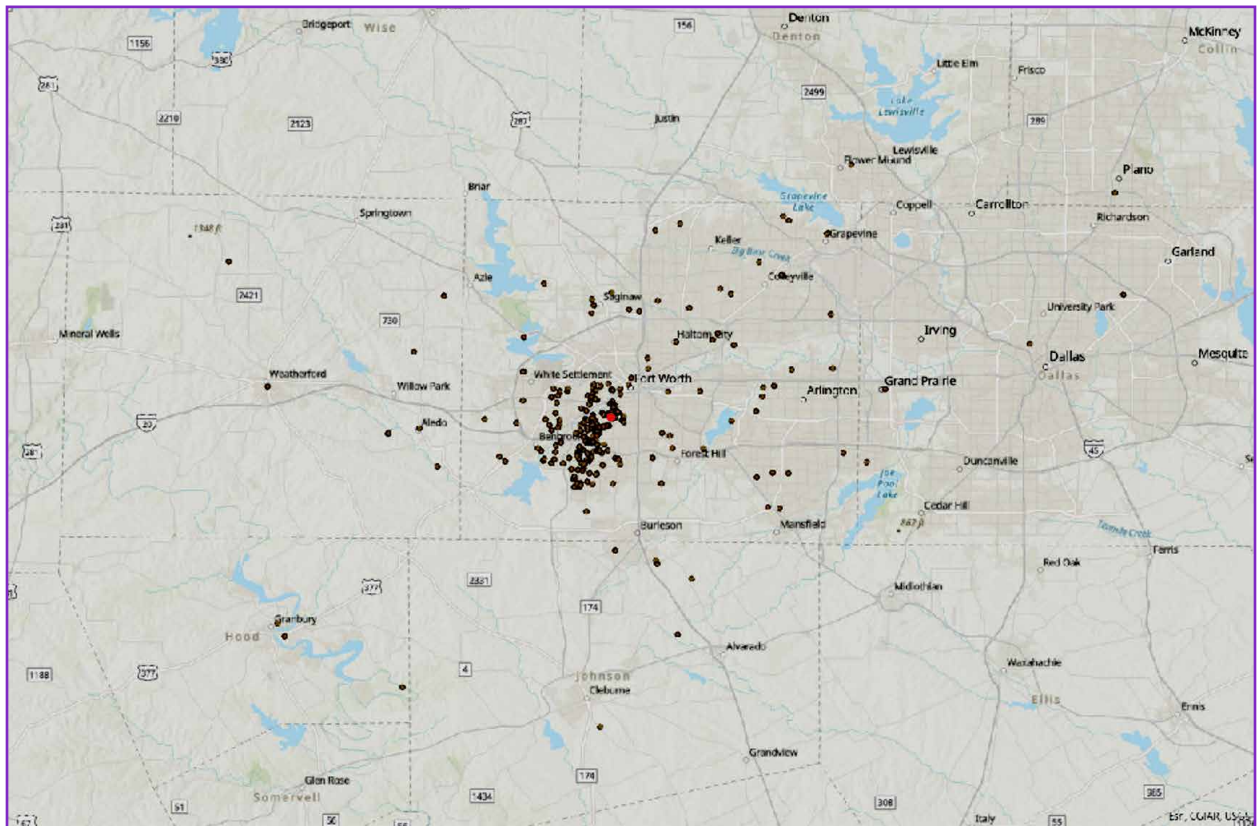
## B. Religious Program or Ministry Preferences

	Study Area		US Average	
	Modestly Important	Very Important	Modestly Important	Very Important
Personal Growth	34.1%	8.5%	34.9%	8.4%
Addiction support groups	26.9%	8.0%	27.9%	7.4%
Health/weight loss programs	26.5%	4.8%	27.4%	4.7%
Membership and leadership training	34.0%	6.4%	34.3%	6.9%
Opportunities to develop personal relationships	48.0%	16.8%	48.8%	17.1%
Practical training seminars (money management, computer skills, etc.)	35.3%	6.4%	36.4%	6.0%
Family Support and Intervention Services	32.6%	9.2%	33.6%	9.2%
Daycare/After-School Programs	22.0%	5.7%	20.9%	5.6%
Crisis support groups	38.3%	11.8%	40.6%	10.2%
Family oriented activities	38.1%	13.9%	40.9%	15.7%
Marriage enrichment	31.5%	7.9%	33.4%	8.4%
Parenting development	26.9%	6.8%	26.5%	6.5%
Personal/family counseling	38.6%	9.2%	39.2%	8.6%
Community Involvement and Advocacy Programs	42.1%	12.5%	43.3%	11.5%
Adult social activities	49.4%	12.0%	52.6%	11.6%
Involvement in social causes	45.4%	14.7%	46.2%	12.7%
Mission trips and global outreach	28.2%	7.6%	30.8%	7.7%
Opportunities for volunteering in the community	49.5%	14.8%	49.5%	14.6%
Social justice advocacy work	38.0%	13.4%	37.5%	10.9%
Community Activities or Cultural Programs	38.0%	10.2%	40.2%	10.3%
Cultural programs (music, drama, art)	41.9%	10.3%	43.8%	8.9%
Holiday programs/activities	47.7%	13.6%	50.5%	14.9%
Seniors/retiree activities	42.0%	11.0%	45.0%	13.8%
Singles or college-age groups	25.3%	7.1%	25.6%	6.3%
Size of church congregation	36.2%	6.8%	40.8%	6.8%

	Study Area		US Average	
	Modestly Important	Very Important	Modestly Important	Very Important
Small groups (i.e., life groups, personal interest groups)	45.7%	11.1%	46.7%	10.7%
Youth social activities	27.0%	11.4%	28.9%	10.8%
Religious/Spiritual Programs	33.3%	17.2%	36.4%	20.0%
Bible or Scripture study/prayer groups	27.8%	12.4%	32.3%	14.9%
Celebration of sacraments	30.4%	14.9%	32.3%	21.2%
Contemporary worship experiences	36.8%	10.5%	40.3%	11.1%
Online or virtual worship experiences	34.6%	9.7%	36.8%	11.1%
Quality sermons	32.8%	28.5%	36.3%	33.3%
Religious education for children	25.1%	14.4%	27.5%	17.1%
Spiritual discussion groups	35.0%	11.0%	38.9%	11.1%
Traditional worship experiences	35.9%	17.6%	39.1%	24.3%
Warm and friendly encounters	41.0%	36.0%	44.1%	35.8%

Sources: US Census Bureau, Synergos Technologies Inc., Experian, The American Beliefs Study

## C. Area Map of Congregation



This map illustrates that St. Stephen is a destination church whose congregants are dispersed throughout the Fort Worth/Dallas area.

## D. Community Leader Responses

### Impressions of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church

- › When I am here, I feel seen, individually, and collectively.
- › The places where people feel comfortable is a short list, but St. Stephen is on that list.
- › St. Stephen Church's visibility is limited (like a lot of other churches). Not on major street.
- › Beautiful grounds and setting. Take advantage of them.
- › Great day school
- › Need to find our expertise and where we want to play.
- › "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid."
- › St. Stephen individuals need to follow the agenda of the city council and show up and speak up—get engaged—Communicate with FW Council people—Michael Crane and Ann Beck.
- › Complex demographics of this neighborhood: Hispanic population; duplexes and quads are rapidly coming in; TCU does not have enough housing; good real estate investment capturing TCU—many apartments and young people; McMansions are increasing; many Hispanics around Berry and east of McCart. In general, Hispanics want to be left alone, uncertain where to put their trust, and traditionally don't vote.
- › Help new pastor start establishing community relationships with churches around us; schools we serve; city council persons; TCU; Lauren King with Tarrant County Homeless Coalition; Mary-Margaret Lemons with Fort Worth Housing Solutions

### Possibilities for Outreach

- › Outreach is a means by which St. Stephen can increase its awareness and attention to those it is called to reach/serve.
- › Capture what surrounds us—outreach is needed in this neighborhood that is demographically changing (single family to multi-person; some parts are moderate to low income, and others very wealthy; several races; lots of young students)
- › Hispanic outreach is critical in the neighborhood.
- › How do we reach TCU?
- › Reach out to newcomers—current growth in far north FW, Southwest and West: Walsh Ranch will have 38,000 new rooftops; Chisolm Trail 42,000



- FW Convention Bureau—Visit Fort Worth, Becky Fetty—Downtown FW, Inc, New Neighborhoods—Mitch Whitten, Tarrant County Pride, Prison ministries: meet the people where they are; help them find jobs –Cornerstone Existence Program; Go meet with those released (Paul and Philemon Programs). Gideon 300 Daughters of Sarah on zoom with 75–80 women
- Go where the people are and show the love of Jesus in a practical way

## Major issues and needs in Fort Worth

Consider partnering with any of these city issues:

- FWISD outreach/liaison—Cynthia Rincon
- Currently JPS treats illegal immigrants only in the emergency room
- Texas Health Resources is expanding the community clinics because of demand
- City has more homeless than Houston. With eviction notice moratorium is lifted, there will be more demand. There have been days when 50 eviction notices go through. Recession is here. Food, goods, and rents have gone up
- Camp Bowie has a big homeless population that you don't hear about
- In some respects, Homelessness is not as big a problem in FW as it used to be. FW offers wrap-around services for women and children; FW Housing Authority provides permanent housing and wrap-around support with MHMR counseling; Tarrant Harvest provides vouchers; FWISD provides job counseling; City code manager oversees public housing; county oversees pandemic
- CCPD (crime control and prevention district receives ½% on sales tax) for police cars, 90 new police officers, Neighborhood Police Officers know the streets and communities—SSPC's NPO liaison—K15: Robert McClellan
- Samaritan House is looking for more beds and sites for more homes
- Cited the old Monnig's store and Quail Trail where there is a Tarrant Area Food Bank (TAFB) delivery food program
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds are being used in housing, but government can't solve all the problems
- City realized problems and blasted them out: infestation abatement; brought new managers to bring up to code; food insecurity with no funds to buy—West Aid Grocery was established; After school care—Westside YMCA, Las Vegas Trail Revitalization Project (LVTRise), Head Start, Big Brothers and Big Sisters

## Education

- Teachers are overwhelmed. They need parent and community engagement, tutoring in ESL programs. Read FW and Reading Partners—several SSPC volunteers
- Hispanic outreach critical in SSPC neighborhood
- Childcare is expensive—0–6 year old's need more than babysitter

- Pete Geren working for help with Western Hills Elem (100% turnover every 2 years)
- Sid Richardson Foundation believes the school board should focus on kids

## Things Churches Can Do

- We need People Work—not Paper Work
- Work with Blue Zones Project, Town Hall forums—there’s nothing better than listening to those we haven’t listened to
- Help FW grow; be an inclusive presence; have neighborhood parties; University Methodist has afternoon food and tutoring
- Churches that ban together can do bigger things.
- FW needs churches to do: one million people now live in FW and two million in Tarrant County. We are a BIG city with BIG city problems.
- Need to invest in the services and make sure they know what is important to us; churches have a holistic outlook in the city.
- Help a new pastor start establishing community relationships with churches around us;
  - ◆ Russell Peterman—University Christian
  - ◆ Rabbi Andrew Bloom—Avashalom
  - ◆ Rabbi Zimmerman—new at Beth El and—Rabbi Micklenberger
  - ◆ Brooks Harrington UMC—homeless outreach; Ted Brewster
  - ◆ Jack Crane—Truevine Missionary Baptist
  - ◆ Bishop Bernard Spears—First Saint John Cathedral
  - ◆ Rev. Bruce Datcher—LGBTQ Brighter Outlook, Inc.
  - ◆ Haltom City has a strong Asian church.
  - ◆ Northside Baptist is large Hispanic; Gethsemane Presbyterian small Hispanic;
  - ◆ Jaime Hernandez—Street Mission
  - ◆ Rev. Dr. Michael Miller—Dean of Brite Divinity School
- Religious communities should educate our own; be a beacon of the community.
- We should be “midwives” of the community—offer a place after school until 7–8; ask the kids what they want to do with their lives.
- Invite them to worship WITH us—feed them, pray for them; be ON FIRE for them! Be inviting.
- How do we fill in for missing fathers? Power of 1; examples, mentors.
- Churches can adopt families and say, “We are here to help.” The Las Vegas Trail project is not completed. They have Afghanis, Ethiopians, and folks from the West Coast.

## Communication

- Need to communicate our core method/mission.
- There are too many non-factual news sources.
- *Fort Worth Star Telegram* still has some good reporting.
- *Fort Worth Report* is doing good job as nonprofit newspaper under leadership of Wes Turner.
- Need to hold the press accountable.
- Google “Pop Ups”—powerful engagement approach.

## E. Survey Participation at SSPC

(173 responses)

	AGE GROUPS					
	Under 26	26-45	46-56	56-65	65-75	Over 75
Worship 8:30 AM		1		5	2	13
Worship 11 AM	5	2	9	13	24	26
Online worship					2	3
Sunday School	3		2		9	7
Thurs. prayers		1	1	1	2	8
Bible Study			1	2	7	5
Evensong	1	1	3	6	9	5
Concerts, etc		1	1	1	11	4
Fellowship		4	1	3	8	9
Outdoor events	5	5	4	5	11	6
Room/Inn			1	7	5	3
Day School		4	3			
Mission				4	5	4
Faith on Tap		1		2	2	
Youth group	5	1				
Child/youth choirs		1				
acolytes	5	1				
VBS	5	2	1	1	1	2
Youth mission	5		1	1	1	1
Adult Choir		1		4	6	1
Handbell choir		2		2	5	1
Pres Women				1	6	9
Session		2	2	7	4	6
Deacons				3	4	5
Trustees				1		5
Committees		2	5	8	9	7
Visitation			1		2	
Property			1			1
Ushers			1	5		8
Docents					1	1
Book Club					7	6
Boy Scouts						2



## F. Important Aspects of SSPC According to the Survey

(173 responses)

	AGE GROUPS					
	Under 26	26-45	46-56	56-65	65-75	Over 75
Worship	6	8	19	28	40	41
Music	6	6	9	23	38	36
CE	5	8	14	15	23	20
Adult Ed	2	3	4	14	22	23
Fellowship	3	8	9	14	22	22
Focused groups		4	1	3	14	16
Sanctuary	4	6	12	25	33	35
Mission	6	5	7	17	28	27
Cong. Care	3	6	7	21	28	28
6-12 youth	4	7	9	13	20	16
5th and younger	4	7	9	11	20	16
Day School	2	4	3		10	12



“For I know the plans  
I have for you, declares the Lord,  
plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future.”

**Jeremiah 29:11**

As we conclude our Mission Study, we want to thank God for His guidance and grace throughout this process. We also want to thank all the members of our church who participated in the surveys, interviews, and discussions that helped us discern our vision and goals for the future. We hope that this Mission Study helps you to understand our vision, values and goals as a congregation, and that it has inspired you to join us in fulfilling our mission: to love God, love people and make disciples. May God bless you and keep you as we seek to follow Him and His will for our church. Amen.

**St. Stephen Presbyterian Mission Study Team, 2023**



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