



*And Mary said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior..."*
Luke 1:46-47, NRSV

Dear St. Stephen's Family,

This year has been extraordinary for St. Stephen's. We supported our Rector and his family during a well-deserved sabbatical, giving them time to refresh and renew. In their absence, both familiar and new lay leaders stepped forward to sustain our parish family, continue our worship, and explore new ways to serve. We welcomed our Rector back with joy and gratitude, and our parish remains vibrant and strong.

St. Stephen's has served this community since 1840—a legacy of faith and commitment that continues today. While many churches face challenges, St. Stephen's remains steadfast in its mission. Here's something often overlooked: nearly half of our annual budget comes from parishioners who are no longer with us. Ella Cummings, who passed away in 1944, still gives through a beneficiary trust. Joe and Dora Walker, who died in the 1980s, continue to support our work through their legacy gift. These faithful members cared deeply for this parish in their time. How do we honor their generosity? By giving what we can to sustain the parish's work now.

As we look ahead to 2026, we invite you to prayerfully consider your pledge. A pledge card is enclosed. We understand that each household must balance many obligations, yet we hope St. Stephen's remains an important part of your planning. Your pledge helps us budget responsibly and honoring that pledge allows us to fund our mission. Our books are always open, and you will find no extravagance - only faithful stewardship. We long to do more and will do so when we have the means.

Please join us in continuing this legacy by returning a completed 2026 pledge card by November 30. Make a generous pledge as part of your place in the life of St. Stephen's—as members, worshippers, supporters, servants, and advocates. We are deeply grateful for all you have done, whether you have been with us for decades or just a short time. Together, we have come through a challenging year with vigor and success. Help us grow and thrive in 2026.

With gratitude and hope,

Diann McKee
Treasurer