

## ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SPOKANE PARISH PROFILE

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (<http://www.ststephens-spokane.com>) proclaims in its Mission Statement: "In response to God's love, we **Invite and Welcome, Gather in Worship, Grow in Faith**, and **Serve as Stewards of God's Creation.**" So what does this really mean? It means we are a community eager to worship God through sacrament and liturgy, to deepen our faith, and to serve others in need.

Founded in 1957, our beautiful and beloved church was built and created to provide people with the opportunity to come together in many ways. In addition to Saturday and Sunday services, our church family gathers for fellowship and outreach. From the summer Basketball Camp to our annual Wine Tasting and Auction, we invite members of the greater Spokane community to participate and to discover what a friendly, active, warm group we are. Our members serve food at Crosswalk and at the Holy Trinity Dinner Table, sew quilts for needy and recuperating children, donate toiletry items to women in shelters, maintain a recycling program . . . and much, much more.



To help prepare this profile we conducted an online survey of parishioners – the survey was also made available in paper format to those who requested it. The response rate was approximately 65%. We have 330 communicants, with an average weekly attendance of 143. As a parish we also discussed strengths, hopes, and challenges for the future at our annual meeting in February. Theologically, we tend to be progressive; operationally, we tend to be adaptable to new ways of doing things. St. Stephen's is a strong church, with an active congregation and involved leadership. We have a solid relationship with our diocese. The diocese has mutually supported past activities of St. Stephen's and we have many parishioners that are very involved at the diocesan level.

### GOALS

Four primary goals, listed in no particular order, have presented themselves through Vestry discussions and Search Committee research:

- To develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to invite and welcome new members of various demographics
- To build a strong, viable youth program that will involve youth in all phases of church life
- To provide high-quality educational opportunities for every age and stage of life
- To assist members in discerning their personal gifts and calls to ministry in service to others, especially those who feel broken by life circumstances

## **FUTURE CHALLENGES**

As we look to the future, we have identified some of the areas where we need to stretch ourselves, explore and focus our efforts.

- We hope to continue and strengthen our awareness of, and commitment to, “being green.” The Genesis Covenant was formally adopted at both the General Convention of the Episcopal Church and the Spokane Diocesan Convention. We will continue to learn how to Serve as Stewards of God’s Creation.
- The Vestry has begun exploring what it means to be a “mission focused” church. We hope to continue to stretch beyond our walls to serve God in the greater community. This includes both community outreach supported by the parish as well as mission work undertaken by individual parishioners.
- Communication is necessary for any organization to succeed and improve. We hope to refine and improve the methods we currently use to keep our congregation connected and informed.
- As part of our goal to further include youth in the life of the parish, we have a youth representative as a full member of the Vestry. The youth also participated in Easter services by providing very moving Prayers of the People.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

Our next rector should be a dynamic preacher and leader with a commitment to education, capable of connecting with and attracting youth and young families, while also ministering to the needs of an aging population, and be willing to collaborate closely with the laity. These requirements are listed in no particular order.

- **PREACHING**  
The capacity to inspire and connect people to God’s word was ranked on the survey as the most important critical ability for our next rector to bring to our parish family. Given the importance we place on gathering in worship, we need someone who is able to help us break open the Gospel and help reveal its relevance to us in today’s world, both as individuals and as the collective Body of Christ.
- **STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP**  
Our next rector should have leadership skills that will guide St. Stephen’s toward the realization of the various elements within our mission. He or she should guide us to welcome and invite young families and youth into our parish family. Also, he or she should exhibit sound administrative skills.
- **EDUCATION/FORMATION**  
The members of St. Stephen’s believe that an educated faith is a full faith. The parish is open to diverse methods of instruction.

- **YOUTH**  
Like most churches St. Stephen's has a significant number of members over 65 years old. However, children and young people are a high priority as is a desire to attract and include younger individuals and families.
- **PASTORAL CARE**  
Even as the parish seeks to attract younger families and new parishioners, it is imperative to recognize the contributions made by our active adult population and to attend to the needs of the church's aging parishioners.
- **THE LAITY**  
The laity at St. Stephen's does the heavy lifting, for example, facilitating many aspects of worship services, organizing social gatherings, and taking care of grounds beautification and maintenance, that keeps our parish strong. This continuing strength is a credit to our senior warden, junior warden, lay staff, lay ministers, and all who serve in the church. Our next rector will need to work well in partnership with the laity.

## **INVITE AND WELCOME**

St. Stephen's has opportunities for parishioners to form meaningful relationships both within and outside the church:

- Annual meeting in February
- Birthday/Anniversary Brunch Bunch
- Women's Sunny Sundays
- Sew & Sow making items for hospital patients
- Landscape Committee creating beautiful space around the church
- Glastonbury Society for men
- Women In Ministry
- St. Martha's Altar Guild

We have developed an invitational brochure for the church. The Vestry plans to work on a new parish data base that will include, in addition to addresses and phone numbers, information about parishioners' businesses and personal interests.

## **GATHER IN WORSHIP**



### **MUSIC**

Music is a vital part of our worship. The music ministry at St. Stephen's focuses on combining our love of the Anglican traditional hymns with sacred music set in more contemporary styles. Choir anthems include classical, traditional, and modern

sacred music; all prepared and presented to glorify God. Our choir sings regularly at the Sunday service. Professional vocalists serve as soloists, cantors, and as choir section leaders. Besides those who sing, our music ministry welcomes instrumentalists, including organ, piano, guitars, percussion, woodwinds, strings and brass. Adults and youth are encouraged to be part of the music team.

#### **PASTORAL CARE**

St. Stephen's currently has one deacon and one postulant, who, with the priest attend to the pastoral needs of members who are homebound, ill, hospitalized, or in nursing homes. Eucharistic Visitors take communion to parishioners who are unable to attend. The Intercessory Prayer Candle rotates weekly through the families of the congregation.

#### **ST LUKE'S MINISTRY**

Once a month, a lay ministry team takes Morning Prayer to residents at Spokane Washington State Veterans Nursing Home. This ministry team offers scripture, music, and prayer to the residents and staff of the facility.

### **GROW IN FAITH**

We offer Sunday School, adult education, Cursillo, and book club. We are looking forward to strengthening and expanding these programs.

Our Youth Program Coordinator and a newly formed committee are exploring ways of revamping our Sunday School programs to better involve members of the parish in the education of our youngest members.

### **SERVE AS STEWARDS OF GOD'S CREATION**

St. Stephen's is an active and giving parish which is involved with numerous outreach programs and opportunities for parishioners to form meaningful relationships within and outside of the church.

We hold a four-day Basketball Camp for children ages 5-12 for a minimal fee. The camp is open to all children regardless of race, religion or gender. Great lessons on the fundamentals of basketball as well as sportsmanship, teamwork and living a healthy lifestyle are learned. This marks the tenth year for this successful program.

At the Annual Wine Tasting Fundraiser and Auction, local wineries share their wine and the members of the church provide wonderful food and auction items. People, throughout Spokane, look forward to this annual party. Proceeds help to fund community outreach activities.

"Holy Trinity Dinner Table" is a ministry in which several Spokane parishes assist Holy Trinity as they serve a weekly family-style meal to the families of the West Central

neighborhood, a very low income area of Spokane.

Parishioners walk and donate money towards, the Spokane CROP Hunger Walk, collecting over \$2000 each year for area hunger programs.

Another successful program is the Kinderchor which formed in 2003 as the South Hill Children's Chorus. It was created to provide a high quality choral experience accessible to all children in Spokane ages 8-11. Performances are enjoyed not only by St. Stephen's members, but by many groups throughout the community.

The young members of St. Stephen's baked and sold pretzels to raise money to support the work of Heifer International.

A "Giving Garden" was recently planted to raise fresh produce to share with area shelters, food kitchens, and other service providers.

St. Stephen's also has numerous outreach programs that benefit the community and allow parishioners to be involved in serving others.

## **PARISH FACILITIES AND GOVERNANCE**

St Stephen's is located in a residential neighborhood on Spokane's South Hill. A three-year expansion and renovation project has resulted in an attractive entry into the church to accompany the breathtaking view of Latah Creek. In addition to the nave, the main floor houses the church offices, restrooms, library, parish hall, and a large kitchen. New additions off the Narthex include a small chapel and an elevator. On the lower level there is a multipurpose room and storage areas. Classrooms on the lower level provide a home for our nursery and Sunday School. Central Montessori School rents space during the week. The Columbarium in the Chapel of the Resurrection is located on the lower level.

The parish has budgeted for a full-time rector. One deacon and one postulant serve the parish. Current part-time paid staff include an administrative assistant, youth program coordinator, music director, and sexton. St. Stephen's is governed by a nine person rotating vestry.

St. Stephen's operating budget is \$260,000 and currently includes 120 pledging units. We owe \$488,000 on renovation and expansion projects with current pledges of \$130,000 toward the balance.

St. Stephen's welcomes outside non-profit groups who can make use of the facility. Community groups who regularly use the facilities include Alcoholics Anonymous, scouts, and a bridge-players group.

## PARISH HISTORY

St. Stephen's began in 1957 when a second congregation on Spokane's South Hill was founded. In 1959 the parish hall was built on land purchased with the help of gifts and grants. Services were held there until 1967, when the main sanctuary, a circular church of an award-winning design, was built. Our first vicar, the Rev. Kenneth Snyder, was succeeded by two more priests over a seven-year period. The Rev. John Hay was called in 1968 and served as rector until his retirement in 1990. During his tenure the narthex was enclosed and a lower-level Columbarium and memorial chapel added. Beginning in 1988, the church embarked on an extensive building project to construct a connection between the church and the parish hall as well as a large kitchen, library and offices.

From the early years the ministry of all the baptized was an important priority with the formation of Stephen Ministers, Lay Eucharistic Ministers and Support Circles. During this time one deacon became a priest and a former curate was called as rector in another church and in 2009 was elected the Bishop of Minnesota.

In 1991, the Rev. Robert Dunn became rector following Fr. Hay's retirement. The next several years were ones of consolidation and strengthening of lay leadership. Fr. Dunn chose to return to the Diocese of Olympia in 1997. The next 18 months was a period of lay and interim priest leadership while the parish redefined itself and completed a search process.

In September 1998, the Rev. John Shepard came from South Dakota to become our next rector. With Fr. John's leadership, we significantly expanded our activities in outreach, education, different worship experiences, and diocesan connections. Fr. John also encouraged strong and broad lay leadership and special ministries.

In the early part of the 2000's, more attention was given to upgrading the facilities of the church. This led to a new heating plant and planning for a major building renovation and expansion in order to facilitate the church's mission of invitation, welcome, and outreach. After a multi-year effort starting in 2005, two construction phases and a highly successful capital campaign to pay for most of the work, the project was completed in early 2009. Key elements are a greatly enhanced sanctuary, a new chapel, central air conditioning, an elevator, expanded narthex, office and lower level storage space. Over the past decade, our congregation size has remained fairly stable averaging 350.

On August 24, 2009, the St. Stephen's family suffered a tragic loss with the sudden death of Fr. Shepard at age 65. His legacy includes a strong lay leadership which has been fully involved in continuing our mission and ministries.

In November 2009, the Rev. Canon Kristi Philip was selected by the Vestry to be our interim priest. We are blessed to have her skills and experience in transition activities. She and our senior warden of two years work very closely with the staff and lay leadership.

## **DIOCESAN HISTORY**

The Diocese of Spokane was established in 1964 after 72 years as a missionary district and 38 years as the Episcopal Church in the Washington and Oregon Territories. It consists of 41 congregations in eastern Washington and northern Idaho. The Diocese also includes Camp Cross, a three-season camp for youth, adults, and families on Lake Coeur d'Alene.

The Rt. Rev. James E. Waggoner, Jr., was consecrated the 8th Bishop of the Diocese of Spokane in October, 2000. During his Episcopate, he has established a Foundation to solicit and shelter endowment funds for the support of the Episcopate, for Church Growth and Development, and for Camp Cross. He has also empowered teams to visit every congregation to develop seven Mission Imperatives to guide the work of the Diocese.

The diocesan budget is approximately \$1,000,000, and is funded through a 22% assessment on church operating incomes as well as investment distributions and other sources.

The missional work of the Diocese is governed by diocesan Council, divided into four committee areas: Formation for Ministry, Mission Strategy, Social Justice and Outreach, and Administration and Finance. Property and investment issues are under the purview of the Directors of the Corporations. Much of the current energy in the diocese is focused toward expanding its Missional outreach.

More information on the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, including a map, is available on their website: <http://www.spokanediocese.org>.

## **SPOKANE**

Information about Spokane, Washington, can readily be found with an Internet connection and a web browser (<http://www.visitspokane.com/>, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spokane, Washington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spokane,_Washington)).

What cannot be so easily found, however, are some of the reasons parishioners love Spokane, including

- Take a short drive in any direction out of Spokane and you can find a lake, or mountains, or a beautiful prairie.
- The Spokane River and falls running through town and through beautiful Riverfront Park. (<http://spokaneriverfrontpark.com>)
- There is an abundance of recreation for all four seasons.

- There are five ski areas that are less than two hours away. (<http://ski49n.com>, <http://schweitzer.com>, <http://lookoutmountain.com>, <http://silvermt.com>, <http://mtspokane.com>)
- You can generally get from one side of town to the other in less than half an hour.
- Spokane has an excellent public school system. (<http://spokanepublicschools.org>)
- Spokane has two community colleges, Spokane Community College (<http://scc.spokane.edu>) and Spokane Falls Community College (<http://spokanefalls.edu>). We have four universities, two based in Spokane, Gonzaga University (<http://gonzaga.edu>) and Whitworth University (<http://whitworth.edu>) and two with satellite campuses in Spokane, Eastern Washington University (<http://ewu.edu>) and Washington State University (<http://wsu.edu>)
- We have good access to quality healthcare. (<http://providence.org/spokane>, <http://deaconessmc.org>, <http://rockwoodclinic.com>, <http://chas.org>)
- The feeling of a small town with big city entertainment. (<http://bestofbroadwayspokane.com>)
- Spokane Civic Theatre is one of the oldest national award-winning community theatres in the U.S. (<http://spokanecivictheatre.com>)
- The excellent Spokane Symphony is one of the few in the nation running in the black. (<http://spokanesymphony.org>)
- The Museum of Arts and Culture (<http://northwestmuseum.org>)
- Mobius Children's Museum and Science Center (<http://www.mobiusspokane.org/>)
- Wineries (<http://spokanewineries.net>)
- Greenbluff, fresh fruits and vegetables and seasonal activities for the whole family. (<http://greenbluffgrowers.com>)
- Large, signature events – Bloomsday (<http://bloomsdayrun.org>), Armed Forces Torchlight Parade (<http://spokanelilacfestival.org>) and Hoopfest (<http://spokanehoopfest.net>).
- The fabulous Spokane Veteran's Memorial Arena is home to the Spokane Chiefs hockey team (<http://spokanechiefs.com>) and the Spokane Shock arena football team (<http://spokaneshock.com>). Avista Field is home to the Spokane Indians (<http://minorleaguebaseball.com>), while the Spokane Spiders play soccer at Joe Albi Stadium (<http://www.spokanespiders.com/>).

## CLOSING

We are blessed to have a strong parish family, and we are hopeful for what the future will bring as we live out our mission to **Invite and Welcome, Gather in Worship, Grow in Faith**, and **Serve as Stewards of God's Creation**. We pray that God will lead us through our search process and guide us as we select a rector who will lovingly continue the relationships we hold so dear and who will nurture the vision we have for St. Stephen's in the years to come.

