

ST. GREGORY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
FEBRUARY 2, 2025

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING—FEBRUARY 2, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prayer of Dedication-----	3
Agenda-----	3
Membership in the Church -----	4
Minutes of the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting-----	4
Parish Data for 2024-----	7
Profiles of Vestry Candidates-----	7
Rector’s Report -----	9
Senior Warden’s Report -----	12
Ministry Reports	
Altar Guild-----	13
Bible Study -----	14
Buildings & Grounds-----	14
Christian Education -----	15
Food Bank & Feed My Lambs -----	17
Greeters -----	18
Men’s Fellowship-----	19
Music Ministry -----	19
Outreach Committee -----	20
Parish Life -----	21
Sharing Library -----	21
Stephen Ministry -----	22
Stewardship -----	22
Ushers-----	23
Financial Reports	
2024 Financial Report & 2025 Budget -----	24
2024 Financial Summary -----	26
Mission Statement Budget for 2025-----	27
Rector’s Discretionary Fund Summary for 2024-----	28
Rite at the Conclusion of Vestry Service-----	29
Commissioning of Vestry Members and Diocesan Convention Delegates-----	30

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Lord Jesus, we give you our hands to do your work. We give you our feet to go your way. We give you our tongues to speak your words. We give you our minds that you may think in us. We give you our spirit that you may pray in us. Above all, we give you our hearts that you may love in us your Father, and all humankind. We give you our whole selves that you may grow in us, so that it is you, Lord Jesus, who live and work and pray in us. **Amen.**

(Adapted from *St. Benedict's Prayer Book*)

AGENDA

- A. Call to Order
- B. Opening Prayer
- C. Approval of 2024 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes
- D. Elections:
 - 1. Vestry Class of 2025-2028 – Elect three members
Nominees = Carol Bernstein, Beth Eldon, Cheryl Rodi (profiles of nominees begin on page 7)
 - 2. Delegates to Diocesan Convention 2025 – Elect two delegates (remainder will be designated as alternates)
Candidates = Kimberly Bouzgueda, Beth Eldon, Holly Graham, Dana, Lindsay, Susan Mora, Alice O’Keefe, Sarah Spencer

Nominations from the Floor

Ballots are Cast
- E. Reports
 - 1. Rector’s Report -----The Rev. Michael Fincher
 - 2. Financial Summary & Budget----- Bob McRae
 - 3. Stewardship----- Holly Graham
 - 4. Other Reports/Comments
- F. Appointments
- G. Decommissioning of Outgoing Vestry Members
- H. Commissioning of New Vestry Members
- I. Adjournment

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH (A Summary of the Canons)

The National Canons address membership in the Church and the expectations the Church places on those members:

1. Members of the Church are those persons who have been baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with water, and whose baptism has been duly recorded in this Church. Adult members are those persons sixteen years of age and older.
2. All adult members of the Church are expected to be confirmed in the Church, or if they have been confirmed in another Christian Church by a Bishop in Apostolic Succession, to have been received into this Church.
3. All members are considered to be communicants of this Church who have received Holy Communion at least three times during the previous year in this Church.
4. All persons in this Church are expected to celebrate and keep the Lord's Day and participate in the Church's public worship.

Communicants in good standing are those who have:

1. Attended corporate worship on a regular basis in their Church unless they have been prevented from doing so for good cause;
2. Have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God.

MINUTES OF THE 2024 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING February 4, 2024

- A. Call to Order: 11:51 AM
- B. Opening Prayer
- C. Approval of the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes
Motion to approve the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting minutes: MSP Tamera Benedict/Dana Lindsay
- D. Elections
 1. Vestry Class of 2024-2027: Elect three members, 3-year term
 - a. Nominees: Caryn Cobb, Fred Cornett, Abby Koerkenmeier
Motion to close nominations and to elect nominees by acclamation MSP Tamera Benedict/Elizabeth Spencer
 2. Delegates to the 2024 Diocesan Convention: Elect three delegates plus alternates
 - a. Candidates: Beth Eldon, Holly Graham, Susan Mora, Elizabeth Spencer, and Sarah Spencer. No nominations from the floor.
 3. Tellers of the election: Tamera Benedict, Dana Lindsay
- E. Reports – written reports are provided in the Annual Meeting booklet. Additional information or items of particular note are:

1. Rector: Fr. Michael Fincher
 - a. Discussed issues surrounding parking lot reconstruction and significant cost overages.
 - b. Noted that we have two new sources of income for the parish: the cell tower, which will be completed soon; and the Maple Village School, which is using Rooms 8, 9, and 10.
2. Financial Summary & Budget: Tamera Benedict, Fr. Michael Fincher
 - a. The continued generosity of our parishioners resulted in a year-end surplus.
 - b. The budget for 2024 has an approximately \$33,000 increase in expenses over 2023. A sizeable portion of this is due to a commitment to increase expenses on our music program.
 - i. We are able to accommodate the additional expenses thanks to the new income streams of the cell tower and the Maple Village School.
 - ii. As a result, we are able to present a balanced budget for 2024.
 - c. The 2024 budget includes salary increases for all staff at or above the federal COLA of 3.2%.
 - d. The Church gives money to the diocese. As of 2024, all parishes are assessed a mandatory 12% of normal operating income. We have been giving at this level for several years, so this new requirement will not be an issue for us.
 - e. Bob McRae, our parish treasurer, noted that we are in need of an assistant treasurer to help out when he is unavailable.
3. Stewardship: Holly Graham, Fr. Michael
 - a. To date we have commitments for \$212,265 from 74 pledging units—lower than last year. However, based on previous giving trends, we anticipate a total pledge base of \$264,000.
 - b. If you have not yet returned your pledge card, please do so.
4. Other Reports
 - a. Bible Study
 - i. Jane Alt invited us to join our Bible Study. We always have a great time!
 - b. Building & Grounds
 - i. John Mora noted that it was a rough year for Buildings & Grounds. In addition the work on the parking lot, we had a lot of leaks in the roof due to heavy rains. Roofing expenses cost us nearly \$30,000.
 - c. Early Christian Education
 - i. Our Nursery program is growing, with a number of new families with small children.
 - ii. We have restarted our Sunday School program with a one-room schoolhouse model meeting in Room 7.
 - d. Episcopal Church Women (ECW)
 - i. Kathy Stein noted that all women in the parish are members of ECW and invited all women to attend meetings.
 - e. Food Bank and Feed My Lambs

- i. Bill Eldon and Tamera Benedict both noted the generosity of our parishioners in funding our feeding programs. As a result, we are able to adequately fund both the Food Bank and Feed My Lambs.
 - f. Greeters
 - i. We are always in need of more greeters to welcome parishioners and newcomers. See Susan Mora if interested in helping.
 - g. Men's Fellowship
 - i. The Men's Fellowship has been meeting about every other month on Zoom to allow former parishioners in other parts of the country to join.
 - ii. Some of the St. Gregory's men have been regularly attending the second Saturday Breakfast with the men of St. Thomas.
 - h. Music
 - i. David York thanked the parish for making him feel welcomed and for their increased support of the music program.
 - ii. He noted that we are one of the few parishes around that still have a music series (Music at Four).
 - i. Outreach
 - i. Dana Lindsay thanked the congregation for their generosity in supporting our various outreach projects.
 - j. Sharing Library
 - i. Dave DeMent is working on reorganizing the library, trying to keep it up-to-date, and weeding out older books that people do not seem to be interested in.
 - k. Ushers
 - i. Malcolm Finney noted that we can always use more ushers, especially for the 8:00 service. Let him know if you are interested in helping.
- F. Appointments
 - 1. Holly Graham was appointed Senior Warden.
 - 2. Holly Graham will continue as Altar Guild Director.
 - 3. Malcolm Finney was appointed Head Usher.
- G. Decommissioning of Outgoing Vestry Members: Tamera Benedict, Dana Lindsay, and Leah Southwick
- H. Commissioning of New Leaders
 - 1. New Vestry Members: Caryn Cobb, Fred Cornett, and Abby Koerkenmeier
 - 2. Continuing Vestry Members: Holly Graham, Charlotte Nelson, Carol Roberts-Corb, Malcolm Finney, John Mora, and Elizabeth Spencer.
 - 3. Delegates to the Diocesan Convention: Beth Eldon, Holly Graham, and Susan Mora. Elizabeth Spencer and Sarah Spencer will serve as alternates.
- I. Adjournment: 12:15 PM

Motion to Adjourn: MSP Tamera Benedict/Holly Graham

Respectfully Submitted,
Sarah Spencer

PARISH DATA FOR 2024

Average Sunday Eucharist Attendance (In-person + Online)-----	109
Average Thursday Eucharist Attendance (In-person + Online) -----	9
Average Weekday Evening Prayer Attendance (Online) -----	13
Average Tuesday Centering Prayer Attendance (Online) -----	8
Average Thursday Bible Study Attendance -----	10
Easter Attendance (Great Vigil + Easter Day, In-person + Online) -----	239
Christmas Attendance (Christmas Eve + Christmas Day, In-person + Online)-----	175
 Baptisms-----	 3
Confirmations -----	0
Weddings-----	0
 Transfers into St. Gregory’s-----	 3
Other Additions to St. Gregory’s -----	7
Deaths-----	2
Transfers out of St. Gregory’s-----	3

PROFILES OF VESTRY CANDIDATES

Carol Inge Bernstein

Years at St. Gregory’s: 9 years

How have you been involved in St. Gregory’s congregation and your personal community?

In addition to attending 10:15 services, I began as a lector about 4 years ago and I’m currently serving as an LEM. I’m also a member of the Sunday School team.

What skills/gifts would you bring to the Vestry? Be sure to include personal and professional experience and expertise that you bring to the office.

As a former school administrator and college counselor, my superpower is patience and problem-solving. I’ve had the pleasure of working in Admissions at Whittier College, University of San Francisco, Stanford, and USC. Throughout the early part of my career, I worked as associate director/ dean and visited and counseled, interviewed, read applications, and made admission decisions impacting thousands of students around the globe.

In the early nineties, I was a member of the founding board of trustees for Westerly School of Long Beach (the only independent school in the city), and I later joined the staff as the Assistant Head of School. I’ve also worked for 20 years at Chadwick School in Palos Verdes as Assistant Head of the Upper School, Director of Admission and Financial Aid, and Director of College Counseling. I retired as Assistant Head of School for Enrollment Management at Rolling Hills Prep in 2021.

I love keeping busy and working for students and families on their college journeys. Currently, I work part-time as a college consultant for a national college counseling firm.

I enjoy family, cooking, reading, and exercise in my spare time, especially with Alvin and our dog, Spanky. Our grown children live close and we enjoy Sunday family dinners.

We've lived in our home for almost 30 years and have some of the best neighbors

Why do you want to be a member of the Vestry?

It's an honor to be nominated for the Vestry as St. Gregory's is a part of my heart. I've enjoyed getting involved in different aspects of the church and look forward to serving our community by learning even more and by sharing my gifts and energy in a meaningful way. The timing for this new commitment is just right.

Is there anything else you want to share with us?

I love to laugh and have fun while getting work done.

Beth Eldon

Years at St. Gregory's: 24 years

How have you been involved in St. Gregory's congregation and your personal community?

I sing in the choir, serve as a Lay Eucharistic Minister (LEM) and on altar guild, participate in Bible Study, and volunteer for Feed my Lambs. I had the privilege of being one of our parish's delegates to the diocesan convention in November.

What skills/gifts would you bring to the Vestry? Be sure to include personal and professional experience and expertise that you bring to the office.

Now that I'm retired (from being a biology professor at Cal State Long Beach), I have time to serve the congregation. Being a retired academic means that I love learning new things, asking questions, seeking answers, and solving problems.

Why do you want to be a member of the Vestry?

This faith community plays a big part in my life, so I'd like to support the work of our rector and staff as well as help share the responsibility for our governance and facilities. I am interested in exploring how we can better support the needs of our congregation and the greater community.

Cheryl Rodi

Years at St. Gregory's: 27 years

How have you been involved in St. Gregory's congregation and your personal community?

My husband and I joined St. Gregory on 7/1/1998.

During this time I served on: Greeters, Sunday School for K-1st grade, Librarian, Outreach, Vestry, Vestry Clerk, LEM and Altar Scheduling, Receiving Treasurer, Convention Delegate, Rector Search Committee, Supper Club, Centering Prayer, new to Bible Study.

What skills/gifts would you bring to the Vestry? Be sure to include personal and professional experience and expertise that you bring to the office.

My profession experience includes: management positions developing and deploying technology products for Hospitality and Financial Service industries (Customer interface, product testing, product support, Quality Assurance, Compliance both company internal and Government); bookkeeping and customer service for small grocery, stock broker, and public relations firm.

Education: BA History, MS Computer Science, MBA

Why do you want to be a member of the Vestry?

It has been interesting to experience the Church changing during the years I've been a member. We've been through some difficult times. I believe we are in another period of growth and would like to assist through participating on the Vestry.

RECTOR'S REPORT

When I prepare my annual report, I start by thinking back on the previous year, revisiting it in my mind, seeing what major events or activities jump out at me. I then look through my calendar to jog my memory about any other activities or events that were of particular significance in the life of the parish. Based on this, I attempt to distill it all down to a central theme that characterized the year, and then use that theme as a guide for my report.

When I went through that exercise this year, as I looked back at 2024, I was a bit dismayed that I pretty much came up empty. Not that we weren't busy. We most certainly had a busy and productive year. It's just that I was just not seeing anything by way of a theme for the year.

As I thought about this for a while, I realized that maybe that was actually a good thing. Particularly after the last five years. Without a doubt, 2020 was a year of chaos and living in the unknown, with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the shutdown in March of that year. A shutdown that continued into 2021, when we were finally able to reopen again, albeit with significant limitations and restrictions. Once we were able to return to in-person worship and activity, and with the easing of COVID restriction, 2022 was a year of rebuilding and reestablishing our ministries post-pandemic, with a true return to a more normal routine and schedule of activities. Then 2023, the first year in which we were truly "back to normal" (whatever that means), saw a repositioning and shifting in operations to meet our changing needs post-pandemic, including restarting of previously inactive ministries, such as our Christian education programs; and the reshaping of others, such as our music program.

With all of that as a backdrop, as the context for where we were at the beginning of 2024, perhaps it was a good thing that 2024 was much more business-as-usual, with nothing major to define the year. After the craziness of the pandemic years and of how to reopen and return to normal, maybe it was about time that we had a pretty normal year in 2024.

Don't get me wrong. It's not that nothing happened at St. Gregory's in 2024. We were most certainly busy. We did some new things. And we made some rather significant changes in how

some of our ministries operate. If anything, the general tone of 2024 was one of expansion and reorientation. Expanding of some ministries and reorienting others to be more aligned with where we find ourselves post-pandemic.

In terms of expansion, several things come to mind. First and foremost was the expansion of church membership and attendance at Sunday worship. While many parishes and mission congregations in the Diocese of Los Angeles continue to struggle, with attendance still below pre-pandemic levels (and this applies not just to Episcopal congregations but to all denominations), we have seen an increase in attendance. In fact, our average Sunday attendance in 2024 was 109—pretty close to our pre-pandemic average attendance of 115 in 2019. Although, this has not yet translated into a commensurate increase on the financial front, with 2024 pledge income being about six percent below 2019 levels. But we are getting there, with committed pledges for 2025 being ten percent greater than last year's pledge income.

The increased Sunday attendance included the addition of several families with young children, which is such a delight to see! Because of this, attendance in our Nursery has increased. We have also had to modify our Sunday School program to accommodate some younger children, so that now we have two classes: one for grades 9 through 12 and one for kindergarten through grade 8.

Along with increased Sunday attendance is the continued expansion of our music program. In 2024 we saw an increase in choir membership and an expansion in the variety of special music offered at Sunday worship. We also saw an increase in Music at Four events, including the addition of such special services as the Epiphany Lessons & Carols and continuation of the Kirkin' of the Tartan Evensong service started in 2023. Attendance at Music at Four events and other special music programs greatly increased during 2024, as well.

Along with increased membership and attendance has come an expansion in our hospitality in the form of parish events. Up until 2024, the hospitality function and parish activities were split between the Episcopal Church Women (ECW) group and the Parish Life Committee. Each group was responsible for some events and some events were joint efforts. As we assessed the operations of parish ministries, we determined that it just was not efficient to have parish events and the hospitality function split between two groups. Early in 2024 we held a meeting with the ECW and Parish Life Committee to figure out how best to accommodate the hospitality needs of the parish. The ECW decided to go on hiatus and to merge with the Parish Life Committee. While still a work in progress, the overall hospitality functions and planning and implementation of parish events has become more efficient and better able to accommodate additional events.

So, in a nutshell, that is what we saw in 2024: a time of expansion in our programming in an attempt to meet the ever-evolving needs of our parish and its members. And we continue to look forward to finding other opportunities for expansion in 2025 and beyond.

While not affecting the parish (yet), 2024 did include some behind the scenes work on my part as I began planning and preparing for sabbatical in 2025. In the Episcopal Church, it is standard practice for clergy to take periodic times of sabbatical during which they do not engage in parish ministry and instead focus on rest, reflection, and renewal regarding the priest's

vocation. It is important to note this is not an extended vacation. It is a time to re-energize the priest's personal and professional lives and to provide the opportunity to reconnect with God in deeper and more meaningful ways. This typically involves the clergy person taking time to engage in activities that they enjoy and energize them, but for which there may not be adequate time or energy in the midst of the demands of regular parish ministry. The goal being that the time away will provide a renewed sense of mission and purpose in one's ministry as a parish priest.

Under the standard diocesan letter of agreement, clergy are eligible for up to twelve weeks of sabbatical leave, eligible to be taken after five years of service. I am way overdue, having now served St. Gregory's for eight years and three months. Of course, the pandemic had a little something to do with me not taking sabbatical when I should have.

Often times, sabbatical is combined with some vacation time. Conventional wisdom is to begin with vacation time, to provide a clear delineation between parish work and sabbatical time. And then, to take more vacation time following the sabbatical, as a transition back to parish ministry. That being the case, my last Sunday in the parish will be April 27th, the Sunday after Easter. I will then take one week of vacation starting Monday, April 28th. To completely get away from it all, I will be taking a five-day cruise to Mexico with my sister, brother-in-law, and some cousins. My sabbatical will officially begin on Monday, May 5th and go through Sunday, July 27th. I will then take two weeks of vacation, returning to the parish on Tuesday, August 12th.

The focus of my sabbatical will be reconnecting with my interest in monastic spirituality. Prior to becoming a priest, I enjoyed taking retreats at various monasteries and engaging in personal study of spirituality and theology. As a priest, I have not had the time—or rather, I have not made the time—to do those things as much as I would have liked. Given that general focus, I will begin my sabbatical with a week at the Monastery of Christ in the Desert in New Mexico—a Roman Catholic Benedictine monastery I have always wanted to visit. I will then be home for a few weeks before traveling to Scotland for about three weeks. The first week will be spent at the Abbey on Iona, an island off the coast of Scotland that is one of the centers of Celtic and monastic spiritualities in Scotland and is one of the oldest Christian religious centers in Western Europe, with a monastic presence dating to the sixth century. After my week on Iona, I will spend another couple of weeks touring Scotland, including a visit to the cathedral in Aberdeen where Samuel Seabury, the first bishop in the Episcopal Church, was consecrated. After I return home, I will be here for a few more weeks. I then would like to end my sabbatical at the Society of St. John the Evangelist, an Episcopal monastic community in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Although that is still up in the air as they have not yet released their calendar for July. If that does not work out, I have several other ideas of monastic communities for a final sabbatical retreat.

During my time away, you will be in good hands. Mother Sharon Sheffield, who recently ended her tenure at St. Thomas of Canterbury, will provide sabbatical coverage. During the time I am away, Mother Sharon will be at St. Gregory's roughly half-time, doing Sunday services, Thursday Eucharist, lead Bible Study, provide pastoral care, and cover basic administrative functions in coordination with our staff and the Vestry.

It is important to emphasize that this is not just my sabbatical. It is also a sabbatical for the parish. Just as this is a time for me to reconnect with and explore new activities which energize me in my spiritual and vocational life, so too is this a time for St. Gregory's to reconnect and explore new opportunities for your ongoing life and ministry. This is a time for the parish to play and try new things, to try new ways of being church. I know Mother Sharon has some ideas of how to facilitate that, including a book study that will explore monastic spirituality in everyday life—an interesting intersection with my own sabbatical theme, providing an opportunity for the parish to travel a parallel journey to my own.

The hope and the goal is that when we come back together in August, after each of us exploring those things which energize us in our lives and ministries, we will find new life and energy, and have a renewed sense of purpose, for what we do together in this place.

I started this report by talking about struggling to discern a theme for 2024. Well, in what I have laid out as the plan for this new year, it is pretty clear that the theme for 2025 is exploration. Exploring who we are, who we want to be, and how we are going to get there, through our shared sabbatical time and beyond.

I am excited about the possibilities of what this year will hold and how we might be energized and inspired to live more fully into who God is calling us to be, individually and as a parish.

Blessings,
Fr. Michael Fincher
Rector

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

During 2024, I have seen joy and relief come to the hearts and minds of St. Gregory's Parish. It can now be said that we are beyond the isolation of "pandemic worship." To meet people face-to-face in worship in our beautiful sanctuary once again is truly a gift. Worship remains available online for those who cannot attend church in-person. There is a heightened excitement in the air as we are able to converse face-to-face with each other and even give a hug to a friend. We have also welcomed several new members this year who have experienced this renewed spirit among us.

Fortunate we are to have our Director of Music, David York. He has brought new and traditional music to our Sunday celebrations. Also, he has been instrumental in building and rejuvenating our choir! He has brought in Section Leaders who enhance the quality of musical offerings.

Maintenance and upgrades of the lighting in the church have been accomplished this year. Trees have been trimmed, and the church campus has been maintained well.

Community groups continue to utilize our facilities which allows us to reach out to our surrounding community.

So vital to St. Gregory's is our Parish Life. A re-organization of Parish Life has enabled those who love to plan and set up for a party, organize dinners and fun activities, support Music at Four concerts, support coffee hours and much more, have more support now from a Parish Life "army" of volunteers who are willing and able to organize and support our parish social gatherings.

As for our shut-ins, we are now able to visit and offer our love and support for those who cannot attend church in person.

We as a Vestry, have continued to embrace and support all parish activities and those from the community using our campus. Also, we have utilized all of St. Gregory's resources rightly. We have organized an Audit Committee of St. Gregory's members to review our financial records.

During my term on the Vestry and as Sr. Warden this year, I have encouraged the building of good connections and have supported new members who have joined us this year. This opportunity has allowed me to make deeper connections myself. Some of those connections have taken place in our Vestry group this year as we have had to make some difficult decisions for the health of our St. Gregory's family.

Moving forward, it is my hope and prayer that the Vestry will continue to nurture the love of Christ at St. Gregory's and lead us into the next exciting chapter that beckons us.

I am deeply thankful for your love and support throughout my term as Sr. Warden.

With sincere love and gratitude,

Holly G. Graham
Senior Warden

MINISTRY REPORTS

ALTAR GUILD

St. Gregory's Altar Guild is responsible for beautifying and cleaning the church, and setting up for all church services, including decorating for holiday services, weddings, and funerals. We care for candles, arrange flowers, clean Communion vessels, care for vestments, and most importantly, assist Father Michael and visiting clergy. For Palm Sunday the guild folds and prepares palm crosses. All parishioners are welcome to assist us with this most enjoyable task.

The Guild is composed of four teams, each headed up by a Team Captain. Each team serves for a two-week period, then is "off" for six weeks. The rotation is smooth and we all work well together performing our duties.

Our operating funds come mostly through Christmas and Easter flower donations. These donations help fund the purchase of new linens, weekly sanctuary flowers, repairs, and service supplies. We are in need of weekly flower donations. The cost of a weekly arrangement is

\$125.00. If you would like to enhance our worship space by your donation, please speak to an Altar Guild member or Kevin Wood in the parish office.

As we move out of the pandemic, the Altar Guild has resumed our regular “team” rotations. It certainly has been a blessing to be working with a full complement of members. Always, as in the past, we welcome new members.

I must give a big thank you to all parishioners who have so generously donated their time in helping lift things that had to be lifted, cleaned things that had to be cleaned, and assisting us in any way to make our worship space more beautiful.

Respectfully submitted,
Holly Gerger Graham, Altar Guild Directress

BIBLE STUDY

Bible study meets in the Fireside Room each Thursday morning beginning at 11 AM. Fr. Micheal is our leader.

This is a devotional time of prayer and bible reading all wrapped up with in-depth discussions about the book we are studying. Underneath all of this “study” and discussion is a rich, warm, inviting fellowship. Our focus is on Jesus. The bible is our textbook. Bibles are available for your use, or you may bring your own.

Everyone is welcome, applauded, and spiritually fed. We are saving a seat for you. Please join us.

Respectfully submitted,
Thursday Morning Bible Study

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

The year 2024 continued to be a mixed year of small to large maintenance projects. It is always a challenge with a campus the size of St. Gregory’s to keep up with the maintenance that provides our congregation with a neat and functioning church. However, with the help of members of the church this task is made easier to handle. There is “Fix it Fred” (Cornett) who, among many other repairs, made repairs to one of our entrance gates as well and building a new cross to replace the one that broke in front of the church. There is also Bill Eldon who helped to power wash the grounds and Steve Cleantis who repaired the greeters’ desk. Remember this is our church so anyone who wishes to help on building and grounds, please make any vestry member aware of your interest. Below is a list of items and projects that were accomplished during 2024:

- New drain pipes were installed at the parking lot south wall to get rid of “Lake St. Gregory” when it rains.

- Additional repair of roof leaks which occurred after some heavy rains.
- Lighting in the church was a big issue this year. Four recessed lights and three spot lights were replaced. Also, three of the large pendent lights were researched and eventually repaired.
- After an insurance audit concerning the church roof, a recommendation to trim the trees on the Willow Street side of the campus was accomplished.
- Three toilets were completely replaced. One in the men's restroom and two in the women's restroom.
- The internet cable conduit that runs on top of the school and office roof was the target of someone who threw sections of it off the roof causing damage to several sections. The conduit was completely replaced and secured without disruptions.
- The church HAVC had several electrical issues during the summer. This prompted the vestry to implement a preventative maintenance program that will be performed twice a year by our HAVC contractor. The program will start in the month of January.
- Other minor projects consisted of replacing light covers and ceiling tiles in areas that were damaged by rain from roof leaks. Also, the replacement of light bulbs and power washing the grounds several times during the year.

Submitted by John Mora

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

2024 was another dynamic year for St. Gregory's Christian Education Program. We have new families joining St. Gregory's because we have a program for children.

We had a record breaking 9 children in Nursery for 2 Sundays in December 2024!!! It just shows when you have a program, people will come! We would like to thank the volunteers who stepped up to help, as that many kids needed an extra hand or two!

Dina Garcia remains as the full-time Nursery attendant, and she has been an absolute blessing to our children under 5! She is putting her Early Childhood Education skills to use with our little ones, interacting with them patiently and lovingly. We are lucky to have her. She is in the Nursery during both the 8am and 10:15am services. We are also blessed with our volunteers who help Dina tend to our littles. As we need 2 adults for youth protection protocols, our volunteer staff are a crucial part of the Nursery care. Thanks to Susan Mora, Kris Brooks, Elizabeth Spencer, Janet McCormick, Carol Roberts-Corb, Shirley DeMent, Abby Koerkenmeier, Pat Oddie, and Linda Elliot. If you would like to volunteer, we would love to include you; please contact Dana Lindsay or Tamera Benedict. With many hands, the work is lighter, with many volunteers none of us have to work more than one Sunday per month. Our volunteers are terrific at filling in for each other when needed and we are so blessed by their devotion to our children.

We had to pivot to 2 Sunday School Classes as 2 children from the Nursery transitioned to Kindergarten. It is a gift to see children we nurtured in the Nursery now begin their Sunday

School journey. Some of our middle schoolers transitioned to High School and we now have potential for a Youth Group! We had to move the classroom to the Youth Room off the Parish Hall to accommodate the two classes. Please feel free to stop by to see how we have transformed the space.

The Beginners (Kindergarten through 8th grade) meet from 10:15 to 11am in the Youth Room off the Parish Hall and have a lesson and a coloring page. We are hoping to expand the lesson to some simple Sunday School Hymns. Our average class size is two. With the expansion to two classes at two different times, we needed another volunteer pool to maintain youth protection protocols. Once again, St. Gregory's congregation stepped up and we would like to thank Phil & Valerie Bond, Carol Bernstein, and Caryn Cobb who rotate in each Sunday with Dana or Tamera. We do need a 5th Sunday Volunteer: you don't have to worry about teaching, we just need someone to be in with us and the children for their protection.

Please let one of us know if volunteering in Sunday School is something you would like to try. There's always room for one more!

The High School Sunday School is from 9:30am to 10:00am also, in the Youth Room off the Parish Hall, facilitated by Dana Lindsay and Tamera Benedict. The curriculum, provided by The Episcopal Church, follows the Sunday Gospel readings and Liturgical Calendar. We alternate this curriculum with a Bible study beginning in Genesis and working our way through the Bible, in the hopes by the time they graduate high school they will have a broad overview of what is in the Bible. We provide great opportunities for teaching how we can grow in Christ throughout the year. We have an average of three young people in attendance on Sundays. Dina has been kind enough to fill in if one of the teachers is absent to maintain 2 adult presence for Youth Protection.

Sunday School is every Sunday with the exception of the following dates:

- New Year's Day Holiday January 5, 2025
- Easter Sunday April 20, 2025 – everyone helping w the Easter Egg Hunt
- Mother's Day May 11
- Memorial Day May 26
- Father's Day June 15
- The Month of July
- Labor Day September 1
- Thanksgiving Week November 22-30 (no Sunday School November 23 & November 30)
- Christmas Week (no Sunday School Sunday, December 28)
- New Years Day January 4, 2026

We appreciate the support we have received from everyone as we see these programs grow, and watch our children grow in love for Christ and the church.

Thank you!

Respectfully submitted by Dana Lindsay and Tamera Benedict

FOOD BANK & FEED MY LAMBS

Our St. Gregory's Feeding Programs are funded by donations directly to the Feeding Program fund, not through parishioners' regular pledges or the church budget. We appreciate the congregation's enthusiastic support of these vital programs, both of cash and in-kind donations, so please consider St. Gregory's Feeding Programs when choosing charities to support. You can make donations by check, separate from your regular pledge, made out to St. Gregory's with "Feeding Programs" in the memo and through the online portal on the website or the QR code in the bulletin every week. Our fund continues to be very healthy thanks to generous donations from our congregants. The Outreach Committee continues exploring ways to apply these resources beyond the in-person services

In total this fund spent \$10,701.86 during 2024. This was for the food we provide as well as donations such as socks, belts, backpacks, and blankets.

Our **Food Bank** continues to serve the local community as one of the larger elements of our Outreach program. We have again received several generous donations of food from the East Long Beach Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and their Bishop's Pantry, as well as from other groups who use our facilities and expressed a desire to assist.

In 2024, we provided 683 bags of groceries during our monthly distributions, 56 more than in 2023, for an average of 57 bags per month. We have seen a continuous increase in the number of clients coming to us, especially toward the latter part of the year. We have continued our partnership with DAYS Long Beach; for over 50 years, DAYS Long Beach has supported low-income, under-served families in Long Beach. DAYS Long Beach supports achievement by providing children and families with opportunities to develop skills, apply concepts they have learned, and build positive relationships. We are now providing 35 bags of staples to DAYS each month. In addition to our monthly distribution on the third Wednesday of the month, bags are given out when needy individuals ask at the church office during the month. In late 2023, we purchased a large banner to place on the Willow Street lawn advertising the Food Bank, and it has resulted in dramatically increased participation.

Feed My Lambs has been generously supported by St. Gregory's parishioners since 2004, with monetary, clothing, and food donations. We have continued to feed an average of 120 people at our sister church, St. Luke's, in downtown Long Beach, on the first Saturday of every month. We provide coffee, hot chocolate, and pastries, as well as a sack lunch. Our guests are very happy with the food and fellowship provided and are always grateful and gracious. The lunch includes hard-boiled eggs, a baloney and cheese sandwich, a banana or fruit cup, bottle of water, chips, and homemade cookies from the congregation (we could use more of these, please!). We also provide a bowl of soup with crackers and a spoon. We include the condiments for all in the sack: packets of mayo, mustard, salt, pepper, Tapatio, and a napkin.

The week leading to the first Saturday of the month is a busy one. We shop for all the goods on Thursday evening. On Friday afternoon, the sandwiches are made, cookies are bagged, and lunches are packed. We load 12-15 totes into Tamera's van Saturday morning about 6:30am

and head down to prepare the soup and organize the distribution. We serve until about 9am and then return to St. Gregory's to tidy up and organize for the next month.

Our team is comprised of Diane Kela, Lurlie Edgecomb, Shirley Lyddon, Marina Tesla, Lea May, Freddie Ginder, Julia Robinson, Father Michael, Sean Wood, Rick Crowe, Charlotte Nelson, Beth and/or Bill Eldon, Kim Johnson, Susan Mora, Blair Carty, and Tamera Benedict. The congregation continues to bring hard-boiled eggs, 12-15 dozen; we could really use more volunteers for the egg boiling! As I stated before we need more homemade cookies, at least 500 per month! Eggs can be brought the week before the first Saturday of the month. Cookies can be brought any Sunday in a zip lock baggie to the kitchen marked Feed My Lambs (FML) and we can freeze them.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge our volunteers without whom we would not be able to participate in this significant work. Thank you all for your kind and generous support to these two very important Outreach Ministries.

John 21:17-18 tells us: "Jesus asked 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs. Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.'"

Submitted by Bill Eldon and Tamera Benedict

GREETERS

Hi everyone! Please consider joining our Greeting Ministry. You too can greet, whether you are the longest-standing member of St. Gregory's, or if you just joined us last week. This means that we need you, especially if you are available on the 4th Sunday of the month, or the occasional 5th Sundays of the month. Greeters' duties are saying "hello" or "goodbye" to everyone who enters or exits the church. This is a ministry that can be easily done, even if you are already in other church groups. Our impact in church stories is that we may be the first person that new members interacted with and who made a positive initial impression. Also, Greeters get to benefit from their service by being able to connect names with faces, often from passing out name tags to members, or relaying questions from congregants to connected personnel. Plus, being a Greeter does not require a large time commitment. Greeters start about 20 minutes before the start of the service on their scheduled day, and 10 to 15 minutes after that service, averaging one Sunday per month. Come join the Greeters by contacting Susan Mora at (310) 894-0731 or any other active Greeter. We welcome you!

Submitted by Susan Mora

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Men's Fellowship in 2024 continued with its core of individuals continued to hold Zoom meetings. This has helped to keep us in contact with several members living in other areas of the country who still have a strong connection to St. Gregory's. For 2024, we need to provide a large thank you to the Fellowship Members who voted to release some of the groups funds to fully replace three poorly functioning toilets in the church. Men of St. Gregory's also continue to share fellowship with members of St. Thomas of Canterbury when we meet the second Saturday of each month for breakfast at Denny's in Lakewood. This meeting is open to every man of St. Gregory's, and we enjoy anyone who would like to attend.

Submitted by John Mora

MUSIC MINISTRY

CHOIR & SECTION LEADERS

Choir members devote many hours each month in rehearsal to prepare for Sunday worship and special services. Their faithfulness and dedication to providing quality musical leadership is valued. The choir continues to grow, with 22 regular members and several additional seasonal singers:

Soprano: Sally Curry, Barbara Garrett, Holly Graham, Fran Luebben-Morgan, Lindee McTigue, Alice O'Keefe, Anita Perreten, Ellen Ramsdell, Brianna Zucker*

Alto: Sharon Burgess, Beth Eldon, Andrea Hilliard*, Lisa Klig, Jan Rosson, Lizz Spencer

Tenor: Ken Craig, Casey Ramsdell, Richard Ullrich, Dylan Wicks*

Bass: Bill Eldon, Don Hilliard, Michael Martin, Ray Rosson, Jordan Tickner*

We are fortunate to have talented choir section leaders who support the choir volunteers, offer solos and serve as cantors and instrumentalists. The four singers: Brianna Zucker, Andrea Hilliard, Dylan Wicks, and Jordan Tickner, are funded through the church budget and gifts to Friends of Music.

MUSIC AT FOUR

The Music at Four concert series was a tremendous success this year, offering a variety of exciting events each month. Highlights included performances by The Newfangled Four, Laos Chamber Music, pianist Yuki Yokota, Bridge Creek Band, and music for brass and organ. The average concert attendance for the season was 78. Over \$18,600 was donated in support of the music program.

Special thanks to Diane Kela and her crew for wonderful receptions each month and to Cheryl Rodi and others for ushering and providing a warm welcome to guests. The monthly concert series is offered as a gift to the community, while introducing St. Gregory's to those who may

be searching for a church home. Your financial gifts support this important ministry. **We appreciate your generosity!**

SPECIAL EVENTS

In June the St. Gregory's Brass made its debut with 10 players. The group has played several times since. The South Coast Brass enhanced the Easter and Christmas services.

St. Gregory's Choir presented an Epiphany Service of Lessons and Carols, Pentecost Evensong, Mozart Mass on All Saints' Sunday, and the popular Kirkin' of the Tartan Evensong service with Dr. Hanan Yaqub conducting. December special events included a service of Lessons and Carols for Advent and a Christmas concert on the theme "An International Christmas Celebration."

INSTRUMENTS

The music fund enabled us to purchase a Kawai grand piano for the church sanctuary.

It's a privilege and pleasure to serve as Music Director at St. Gregory's. I've appreciated the strong support of the congregation and clergy throughout the year. Thank you.

David York

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

We began the year by donating \$1,000 of our surplus funds to the Long Beach Rescue Mission for their education program. For the first time, we organized both Men's and Women's Months this year with great success donating clothes, toiletries, and a little bit of everything to the Long Beach Rescue Mission, St. Luke's, and Lydia House. We ordered and created a semi-permanent banner and created business cards for our Food Bank distribution. Our annual backpack drive yielded 30 filled backpacks and \$1,000 for the children of Long Beach and the Rescue Mission. To our Animal Shelter Drive, we added the Long Beach Multi-Service Center to help provide food for our unhoused siblings' pets. Through the shelter, many of our larger donations, such as cat condos and carriers, went to foster families. We wrapped up our year with \$3,200 worth of gift card donations for families served by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health.

As always, through the generosity of our parish, we continue to be blessed to bless.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Lindsay, Outreach Committee Chair

PARISH LIFE

The Parish Life's mission is to contribute to the vitality and growth of the church community through caring attention to all social events and parishioners who attend the events. These events provide social opportunities to make friends and deepen relationships.

Parish Life is responsible for helping to organize and to assist any parish group or ministry in their projects or activities. Some of the major events this year included the following:

- Annual Meeting / Lunch
- Easter Sunday / Flower Cross
- Mass in The Grass and Parish Picnic
- Music at Four receptions
- Annual Christmas Dinner
- Hospitality / Coffee Hours (when needed)

We started our year with a meeting asking for volunteers and we were blessed to have over 27 people sign up to help with different needs for Parish Life. Thank you to everyone who signed up, your help was much needed and greatly appreciated. We are hoping to see an increase in volunteers this year. Many hands make light work.

A big thank you to Diane Kela and her kitchen team, without whom none this would be possible.

Respectfully submitted by
Elizabeth Spencer

SHARING LIBRARY

The sharing library was reopened this year. For those who are not familiar with the library it is located in the conference room in Francis Hall. The concept is to share with others books that you have recently enjoyed reading. If you have read a book you enjoyed and do not want to keep, bring it in to the library and it will be put on the shelves. The library contains primarily modern fiction with small sections on religions, history, biography, and non-fiction. The fiction has been sorted into a few sub-sections: police procedurals; crime, adventure and mysteries; historical fiction; sci-fi/fantasy; and general fiction. All fiction is alphabetized by author within these sub-sections, and all books are more recent than the year 2003. Older books and duplicates are removed from the shelves and given to St. Luke's to offer to the homeless they serve with their shower and feeding programs. Please do not bring in older fiction just because you want to clear your shelves.

Using the library is simple, anytime you're in the hall just go into the conference room, turn on the lights if they're not already on, and browse. When you see something you like take it home and read it, then either return it at leisure, or if you really love it, keep it.

Unfortunately, there does not seem to be many people using this service which brings into question its future viability.

David De Ment

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry is continuing its work taking care of those who are in need. Our caregivers are sharing the love of Christ and spending time with people who are experiencing rough times in their lives. We offer an ear to listen, and prayers to ease stress and pain plus giving comfort.

We are still looking into refreshing our skills and learning some new subjects for our continued education.

Respectfully submitted by
Elizabeth Spencer, Stephen Ministries Co-Leader

STEWARDSHIP

The stewardship campaign for 2024 had the theme of “Walk In Love” and the campaign ran from Sunday, October 6th through Sunday, November 17th. An initial welcome letter along with an invitation and pledge card from the Committee Chairperson were sent out. Each Sunday during the campaign, parishioners shared their reflections on how the theme of “Walk in Love” has been reflected in their lives and ministries at St. Gregory’s. Our stewardship speakers were Susan Mora, Cheryl Rodi, Hans Laursen, Alice O’Keefe, Jane Alt, and Dana Lindsay. The pledges we received were then blessed on the last day of the campaign.

To date, we have received 80 pledges, with total commitments of \$263,462. We are thankful to all who have given so generously as we make our way out of the pandemic. Of all pledges received, 32 were the same as last year, 28 increased, 16 decreased, and we had 14 new pledges. Pledge numbers and envelopes have been assigned and made available to our parishioners. End of year statements have also been mailed out.

It has been a blessing to have been the Stewardship Chair this year. Thank you for being a part of our “Walk in Love” Campaign.

Respectfully submitted,
Holly Gergen Graham, Stewardship Chair

USHERS

The primary responsibilities of ushers are welcoming, seating, and guiding and coordinating the movement of the congregation during a church service.

Teams of ushers serve at every regular service (ideally 2 ushers per team for 8:00 AM services and 3 – 4 ushers per team at 10:15 AM services). We currently have four teams of ushers with each team typically serving once a month at regular services. Ushers also serve at funerals, weddings, and other special services (Holy Week, Easter Vigil, Christmas, etc.) during the year.

Malcolm Finney is the Vestry member that coordinates usher activities and responsibilities and assigns new ushers to teams. Adults and older youth are encouraged to be part of this important Ministry of Hospitality to the congregation. Training is provided for new ushers by team leads during one of the services to which that team is assigned. Please contact Malcolm Finney or any usher if you are interested in this ministry.

I want to take this opportunity to offer sincere thanks and appreciation to all the current ushers for their dedicative service to our congregation in 2024 and look forward to their continued service in 2025.

Malcolm Finney
Ushers Coordinator

FINANCIAL REPORTS

2024 FINANCIAL REPORT & 2025 BUDGET

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
Operating Costs	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024	2025
Rector	74,666	82,133	82,133	88,704	88,704	90,922
Associate Priest	0	0	0	0	0	6,000
Supply Priest	856	2,520	1,293	2,200	1,293	1,896
Parish Administrator	14,961	15,600	14,758	13,628	13,628	14,124
Music Director	23,311	23,751	23,766	30,880	30,880	31,625
Nursery Care	0	0	3,015	3,360	3,112	3,153
Pensions	15,635	17,527	17,169	17,193	17,598	18,546
Social Security & Medicare	8,670	9,802	10,277	10,789	11,641	12,399
Total Salary & Wages	138,099	151,332	152,410	166,754	166,971	178,663
Administration						
Office Supplies & Expenses	2,441	2,692	1,933	2,500	4,142	4,350
Telephone	1,935	2,495	2,943	2,200	3,025	2,963
Postage	1,039	723	624	600	837	500
Computer & Internet Fees	2,908	2,867	2,471	3,000	2,811	3,380
Leased Equipment & Copier	10,396	12,407	13,537	14,500	12,362	13,000
ADP Payroll, ASC, Audit	6,899	6,502	7,065	6,500	1,895	2,000
VANCO Expenses	627	688	675	680	758	775
Rector's Business Expense	406	1,021	556	2,100	568	2,100
Rector's Auto	313	370	1,146	1,500	1,176	1,500
Total Administration	28,038	29,765	30,949	33,580	27,576	30,568
Insurance						
Property & Liability	15,908	16,166	21,094	17,500	19,003	21,875
Rector Insurance	11,239	11,922	12,513	13,128	12,173	12,809
Administrator Insurance	3,909	4,171	2,874	2,830	2,807	3,220
Worker's Comp	700	426	341	600	347	840
Total Insurance	31,756	32,685	36,822	34,058	34,330	38,744
Worship & Parish Life						
Worship/Altar Supplies	1,498	1,973	3,140	2,700	1,318	2,700
Music	5,440	7,675	9,155	22,250	21,507	22,250
Parish Life & Picnic	2,453	3,773	3,547	3,000	3,995	3,000
Stewardship Programs	223	0	0	0	0	0
Vestry Retreat	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Worship & Parish Life	12,679	13,421	15,843	27,950	26,820	27,950

	Actual 2021	Actual 2022	Actual 2023	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
Christian Education						
Youth Christian Education	0	52	0	0	0	0
Adult Christian Education	30	60	452	0	0	0
Rector's Professional Devel	4,628	1,960	763	1,500	583	1,500
Total Christian Education	4,658	2,072	1,214	1,500	583	1,500
Maintenance & Utilities						
Maintenance	12,206	8,779	27,733	20,000	33,778	20,000
Contract Services	14,950	19,199	18,408	18,500	21,604	18,500
LA County Assessments	3,497	2,615	2,917	3,000	5,083	3,000
Utilities	18,577	24,888	25,126	26,200	27,676	29,000
Total Maintenance & Utilities	49,229	55,481	74,183	67,700	88,141	70,500
Outreach						
Rector's Discretionary Fund	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800
Total Outreach	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800
Diocesan Pledge	36,240	40,212	40,907	41,692	38,217	42,643
Major Facility Repairs	5,000	2,553	90,249	0	0	0
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	303,473	329,321	444,377	375,034	384,438	392,368
TOTAL INCOME	343,757	347,486	355,357	375,050	369,830	392,368

2025 budget was approved by the Vestry on January 15, 2025

2024 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Operating Costs

Coming into 2024 the Vestry approved an operating budget with projected expenses of \$375,034. The actual expenses for 2024 were \$384,438, \$9,404 above the budgeted amount. Some of the factors that negatively impacted our operating costs in 2024 were:

- We had several maintenance issues that occurred during the year, including repairs to the roof, plumbing, electrical and HVAC systems. These repairs totaled \$13,778 above the \$20,000 budgeted for maintenance in 2024.
- Costs for pest control, landscaping and janitorial services increased during the year result in our Contract Services exceeding the \$18,500 budget by \$3,104.
- County and City fees and taxes were \$2,083 more than projected for the year.
- We had an increase in our Property Insurance premium in the 4th quarter.

On the positive side we had several budget items come in below our projections, including:

- The Rector's expenses (Business & Auto) were below budget by \$1,856.
- The Vestry approved transitioning from an external financial review to an internal review which resulted in an \$4,500 budget savings.
- We replaced the office copier during the year which resulted in a \$2,138 budget reduction in our copying expenses.

Income

The combination of pledge income, weekly plate offerings and income from third-party usage of our facilities totaled \$369,830. This was \$5,220 below the \$375,050 we had budgeted for 2024. The following is a breakdown of the sources of our 2024 income vs our 2024 budget amounts:

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Pledge Income	\$238,297	\$264,00
Plate collections	47,173	42,000
Other (Facility Rentals)	49,137	34,000
Christmas & Easter Giving	4,172	3,000
School & Cell Tower Income	30,834	31,800
Vanco Offset Fees	<u>215</u>	<u>250</u>
	\$369,830	\$375,050

MISSION STATEMENT BUDGET FOR 2025

2025 Mission Budget

Our estimated income for 2025 is \$392,368. This is based on actual income from 2024 and the results of our 2025 pledge campaign. The budget approved by the Vestry at the January, 2025 meeting projects a balanced budget for 2025. The operating expenses are projected to be \$392,368 which is equal to our projected income.

It continues to be our goal to have adequate income on a yearly basis to fund all of the operating expenses included in the budget. As in prior years we are including fees from third-party usage of our facilities to help achieve this goal.

The following are highlights of the 2024 Mission Budget:

- Budget assumes 2.5% cost of living salary increases for 2025.
- All outreach programs will continue to be funded outside of the Mission Budget.
- The Diocesan Pledge is set at 12% of our 2023 standard operating income. The 12% of standard operating income is the minimum requirement that the Diocese has set for all of its functioning parishes.

Cash Balances

Cash balances at year end 2024 totaled \$552,223 of which \$402,646 is invested in the Diocesan Investment Trust. The balance of the cash is in the Operating and Savings Accounts at F & M Bank.

RECTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND SUMMARY FOR 2024

The Canons of the Church allow for the establishment of a fund separate from the Parish General Fund accounts, for purposes of providing financial assistance to parishioners and others who are in need. This fund, the Rector's Discretionary Fund, to which the Rector is sole signer, and which is solely under the control of the Rector, is set-up to provide for complete confidentiality of the recipients.

The Parish budget provides the Rector's Discretionary Fund with \$150 per month as a form of outreach ministry. Additional income is provided by parishioners and others who donate to the Fund periodically. Honoraria from weddings and memorial services may also be deposited in the Fund as the Rector so chooses. Following is a summary of the Fund's receipts and disbursements (by category only) for 2024.

Clergy Discretionary Fund

As of December 31, 2024

Balance as of December 31, 2023	850.96
Receipts	
Parish Contributions	1,800.00
Contributions from Individuals	1,493.15
Honoraria	1,150.00
Other (Administrative)	120.00
Total Receipts	4,563.15
Disbursements	
Assistance	
General Assistance	(1,850.00)
Housing	(1,872.00)
Utilities	(1,258.40)
Other	0.00
Total Assistance	(4,980.40)
Charitable Organizations	0.00
Administrative Expenses	(20.00)
Total Disbursements	(5,000.40)
Excess (deficit) receipts over disbursements	(437.25)
Balance as of December 31, 2024	413.71

Prepared by the Rev. Michael Fincher, Rector

RITE AT THE CONCLUSION OF VESTRY SERVICE

Rector: Holly, Charlotte, and Carol, you were called by the people of God, to serve them as a member of the Vestry of this parish. You answered their call. You have been faithful in attendance at meetings. You have been a responsible steward of the congregation's resources. You have considered our future course and your views have informed our planning. You have led by example, especially in attendance at worship and in sharing your time, talent, and treasure with Christ's church. Now, others must step forward to take your place among the leaders of this congregation. As you leave the Vestry, we thank you for your service, saying with Jesus, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." We offer you our prayers and our support as you move on in the service of our Lord, Jesus Christ. And we ask you to reaffirm your commitment to this parish as a fitting capstone to the duty you have so faithfully discharged.

Holly, Charlotte, and Carol, do you reaffirm your commitment as a member of this congregation?

Member: I do.

Rector: Will you seek new ways to serve Christ in his church?

Member: I will, with God's help.

Rector: Will you continue to support the work of this parish with your time, talent, and treasure?

Member: I will, with God's help.

Rector: Will you refrain from meddling, and offer advice and counsel to the next Vestry only when asked?

Member: I will, with God's help.

Rector: Will you reject gossip and backbiting about your successors, and respect the integrity of their efforts?

Member: I will, with God's help.

Rector: Will you respect the confidentiality of the new Vestry's deliberations, and be content to learn about such matters when the rest of the parish does?

Member: I will, with God's help.

Rector: Will you trust the Spirit to work through our newly elected leaders to guide this parish and all its members in their life and work?

Member: I will, with God's help.

Rector: Will you continue to pray for this parish, its members, its clergy, and its Vestry?

Member: I will, with God's help.

Rector: O God, who sent your Son to show us that the last shall be first and that the one who would be greatest must be the least, help your servants Holly, Charlotte, and Carol, who have been faithful members of the Vestry of this parish, find new ways to exercise ministry and leadership in your church. Help them to keep the promises made here today before. Grant that they, free from the burdens of this office, might discover anew the joy of our Christian faith. Inspire them to be supportive of and helpful to those who take their place on the Vestry. And grant that they, along with all good and faithful stewards within your kingdom, may enter into your joy, in this life and in the life hereafter. Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

All: **Amen.**

COMMISSIONING OF VESTRY MEMBERS AND DIOCESAN CONVENTION DELEGATES

Sr. Warden: On behalf of St. Gregory's Parish, I present: Malcolm Finney, John Mora, and Elizabeth Spencer, Caryn Cobb, Fred Cornett, and Abby Koerkenmeier, continuing in their terms as members of the Vestry; _____, as newly elected members of the Vestry; and _____, as delegates to Diocesan Convention.

Rector: Have these leaders been elected by the congregation in accordance with the bylaws of our congregation?

Sr. Warden: They have.

Rector (to the new leaders):

Do you commit yourselves to carry out the responsibilities of the office to which you have been appointed?

Leaders: I do.

Rector: Do you reaffirm your commitment to follow Christ and to serve this congregation in his name?

Leaders: I do.

Rector (to the congregation):

Will you do all in your power to support these leaders with your prayers, your honest yet gracious communication with them, and your willingness to help them carry out Christ's ministry in this church?

People: **We will.**

Rector: In the name of this congregation I commission you for this work, and pledge you our prayers, encouragement, and support. May the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen you, that in this, and in all things, you may do God's will in the service of the kingdom of Christ. **Amen.**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, look with favor upon these persons who have now reaffirmed their commitment to follow Christ and to serve in his name. Give them courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world, and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



ST. GREGORY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

6201 E. WILLOW STREET, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90815
562-420-1311 WWW.STGREGORYSCHURCH.COM

WELCOME TO ST. GREGORY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH!

St. Gregory's is a warm and caring community of families and singles, young and old, committed to sharing the good news that Jesus is the Lord of all life. We are an Episcopal Church, having members from all backgrounds and religious traditions, many of us had no church involvement before coming here. We want to offer to you the same welcome and friendship that were extended to us when we came to St. Gregory's.

ST. GREGORY'S MISSION STATEMENT

God has called us into Christian community and gifted us for ministry:

- To worship and glorify God
- To transform faith into action
- To share the love of Jesus Christ

The Right Reverend John Harvey Taylor
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles

The Reverend Michael K. Fincher, Rector
rector@stgregoryschurch.com

David York, Music Director & Organist
york1635@aol.com

Kevin Wood, Parish Administrator
info@stgregoryschurch.com

Parish Office Hours: 9:00am-12:00pm, Tuesday – Friday