

Report from St. Stephen the Martyr, Monte Vista, Colorado to the
137th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Colorado
October 9-11, 2025

We keep our focus on our mission: We are a welcoming congregation striving to seek and serve all persons, proclaiming the good news. The congregation of St. Stephen the Martyr, Monte Vista, Colorado.

Fr. Doug Neel, as our partnership vicar, has been with us until Easter 2025 when he left to move to Italy. Since then we have had a supply priest for the first Sunday of June, July, August and September: Mother Kathy Boeschstein was with us June 1st and September 7th. Mother Cynthia Gill was with us July 6th and August 3rd.

The events that highlight our activities through the year include the following:

1. Our Lay Pastoral Leader, Diane Parker, leads our congregation in the service of Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament on the 3rd Sunday and the other Sundays of the month we celebrate using the service of Morning Prayer. Our congregation is actively involved in all services, whether setting up, reading lessons, preparing and reading a sermon, and maintenance of the buildings and grounds.

2. It has become a tradition for us to accept the invitation from Little Shepherd in the Hills, Crestone, to celebrate Eucharist with them, followed by potluck. This year the service was September 21st. St. Stephen's does not have a service on the day, but we are invited to participate in the service at Crestone. The celebrant for the service is the priest from Salida.

3. Another tradition for us is a service and brunch held the first Sunday in September each year at Masonic Park in South Fork. This is great time for fellowship for all who attended.

4. We are actively involved with The Monte Vista Community Food Pantry, which is housed in the parish hall extension. Leila Hirtler, a member of St. Stephen's, does an excellent job as Director of the Pantry. Members of our congregation are also actively involved as

volunteers. Elizabeth Shank has been on the Board for many years serving as secretary. This is a community pantry that serves the Rio Grande County.

We are a small but vibrant congregation here in Monte Vista, caring for each other even though we are scattered physically by distance.

Report submitted by Elizabeth Shank,
St. Stephen the Martyr Bishop's Warden.