

Annual Report

2024



2024 Highlights

In 2024, SQPN continued its mission of exploring the intersection of faith and pop culture by extending the StarQuest brand across every show and platform, rebuilding the SQPN web site, expanding the program slate with the December launch of a new daily show, growing sponsorship of our shows, and announcing the network's first international pilgrimage in many years.

The most visible work of the year was the full rollout of the refreshed StarQuest logo. The new mark first appeared on the cover of the 2023 Annual Report. Throughout the spring of 2024, working with graphic artist Aaron Wood, we extended that visual identity across every show in the catalog, including cover art, episode artwork, web pages, YouTube channels, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Rumble. *Secrets of Movies and TV Shows* received its own coordinated logo treatment as part of the rollout. After two decades the network now presents a consistent and recognizable visual identity across every place a listener encounters our work.

In parallel with the brand rollout, we completed a full redesign of the SQPN web site. Designer Nancy Dorsner led the visual direction, with technical infrastructure upgrades by Jack Baruzzini. The new site launched in the summer with upgraded server capacity, a refreshed information architecture, and improved security through the addition of WordFence protection. Visitors now find a faster, cleaner, more navigable presence that better reflects the network we have become.

Programming continued to grow and to deepen. The most significant programming news of the year came in December with the launch of *Vatican II In A Year*, hosted by Fr. Matthew Schneider, LC. This daily program takes listeners through the documents of the Second Vatican Council across the course of a year, offering accessible commentary on one of the most important moments in the modern life of the Church. It is the first daily program in the StarQuest schedule, apart from *Praystation Portable*,

and it answers the call in the 2023 Annual Report to add programming on Church history.

Secrets of Sacred Art, which launched in 2023, completed its second season in the spring of 2024 and began its third season in the fall on a steady biweekly cadence. The show released a special Patron episode in December for the network's most committed supporters. *Secrets of Star Wars* passed its 200th episode. *Secrets of Doctor Who* celebrated its tenth anniversary. *Jimmy Akin's Mysterious World* passed 300 episodes in the main feed and climbed back into the top ten of the Documentary podcast chart on Apple Podcasts, reaching as high as number six during the year. *Secrets of Middle Earth* settled into a sustained two-episodes-per-month rhythm and prepared expanded coverage for the second season of *The Rings of Power*. *Secrets of Star Trek* welcomed new voices and moved through *Star Trek: Prodigy* into *Star Trek: Lower Decks*. *Secrets of Stargate* broadened its scope to include *Stargate Atlantis* alongside *SG-1*, with Jeff Haecker joining the regular panel.

Show sponsorship continued the steady, year-or-longer pattern described in the 2023 report. We welcomed Ascension Press and Exodus 90 as new sponsors, with Exodus 90 underwriting multiple shows across multiple seasons. Brian Grady of the Grady Group renewed his sponsorship for another year, and several new individual sponsors joined our supporters. We also began discussions with additional partners whose work is consistent with our mission.

Our community of donors and patrons sustained the work throughout the year. The 2023 Advent Giving Campaign exceeded the prior year's results, the 2024 Summer Giving Campaign supported the network through the traditional summer dip in giving, and the 2024 Advent Giving Campaign closed the year. A targeted Lenten campaign for *Praystation Portable* invited supporters of that prayer program to give directly toward its continued production. Patrons and one-time donors continued to join the StarQuest community throughout the year via Patreon, Stripe, and PayPal.

Distribution expanded in important ways. Video versions of *Jimmy Akin's Mysterious World*, *Secrets of Star Trek*, *Secrets of Stargate*, *Secrets of Sacred Art*,

and *Secrets of Doctor Who* are now available on Spotify as well as YouTube.

Praystation Portable was added to our YouTube presence as a dedicated podcast feed. Apple's introduction of automatic transcripts further improved discovery and accessibility for all our shows.

Oasis Studio 7 continues to provide video editing and animation work for *Jimmy Akin's Mysterious World*, and the network added and retained additional paid and volunteer editors throughout the year to support the wider production slate.

We invested in community engagement beyond the audio feed. The *Coming Next Month* graphics program continued to give patrons and social media followers a preview of each show's upcoming episodes. We produced new printed promotional materials for distribution at conventions and gatherings, and StarQuest had a visible presence at the online LegendFiction Catholic science fiction and fantasy convention, with several SQPN hosts participating in the StarQuest gathering room during the event.

The 2023 Annual Report noted that StarQuest was beginning to look at the idea of bringing back international pilgrimages led by SQPN personalities. In the fall of 2024 we delivered on that intention with the announcement of the StarQuest Italy Pilgrimage, scheduled for July 2025 in partnership with Trinity Tour Travels. The pilgrimage offers our community an opportunity to gather in person at the heart of the Catholic world, with a portion of each registration returning to support SQPN's work.

The network also refined its production infrastructure throughout the year. We upgraded core equipment, migrated to more cost-effective social media management with SocialPilot, and strengthened security across our systems. These improvements are not glamorous, but they make every other thing we do more sustainable.

During 2024 we also marked an important transition. Fr. Cory Sticha stepped down as SQPN Chaplain after his bishop graciously released him to enter service as a chaplain in the United States Air Force. Fr. Cory served the network faithfully for many years as Chaplain and as a panelist and host on several of our shows. We are grateful for his ministry to StarQuest, and we are grateful for his service to our country. Fr.

Jason Tyler succeeded him as Chaplain, and we are blessed to have him with us.
Please keep both priests in your prayers.

Future Planning

The strategic plan developed in January 2016 by the board and officers of SQPN continues to move forward. SQPN has been adjusting its strategic plan to ensure we continue to fulfill our mission.

Mission Statement/Purpose

SQPN's mission is to respond to the Catholic Church's call to use new media for evangelization and catechesis, education and formation. Pope St. John Paul II reiterated this call in his January 2005 Apostolic Letter, *The Rapid Development*, and encouraged Catholics to spread the Gospel using the latest in communications technology. SQPN fulfills this mission by creating audio and video productions that provide commentary and entertaining discussion on a variety of topics related to popular cultures and current trends in society.

Building a Foundation for the Future

1. Our monthly email newsletter will keep our community involved and engaged with the latest news from SQPN and all of our productions.
2. We will use all of our social media platforms to connect with our audiences and to encounter new listeners, with renewed attention to short-form video on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube where engagement is strongest.
3. We will continue to feature a strong slate of regular programming, and we will look for new shows and new talent to attract new audiences and diversify our offerings. We will continue to focus on our core competency of audio podcasting while expanding our video productions where it makes sense. The launch of Vatican II In A Year in December 2024 opens a new daily format for the network, and we will study how that program performs as we consider further expansion.
4. As we build our programming schedule, we will look for funding from new and current donors to support our efforts at producing quality and consistent shows. In addition to giving campaigns, SQPN will look at other opportunities for funding our work that are consistent with our mission, including continued growth of the show sponsorship model that has worked well for Jimmy Akin's *Mysterious World* and is now extending to additional shows.

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5. Cognizant of the need for financial resources to continue our apostolate, we will continue to reach out to listeners to grow the number of donors, especially those who will commit to a monthly pledge as we improve our offerings and begin new initiatives.
 6. We will execute the StarQuest Italy Pilgrimage in July 2025 in partnership with Trinity Tour Travels, both as a meaningful experience for the SQPN community and as a financially responsible undertaking for the network. We will also continue to study the idea of smaller, informal regional gatherings and meetups to bring our community together locally.

We will continue to invest in the production capacity of the network, including equipment refreshes as needed, expanded editor capacity, and improvements to the systems that allow our hosts to participate in our programs from anywhere in the world.

Chief Executive Officer's Note

The financial report on the following pages reflects the resources entrusted to SQPN by our supporters, our community of listeners and viewers. They have been most loyal and dedicated to the mission of SQPN over the years of our existence, and 2024 was no exception.

In the 2023 CEO note I reported that we had nearly reached our goal of restoring the buffer of savings that SQPN had built up through the 2010s and that had been diluted as we rebuilt the network for the 2020s. We reached that goal in early 2024, and the buffer continued to do its quiet work throughout the year. It cushions us against the ordinary fluctuations of an audience-supported apostolate, and it gives us the freedom to invest when the right opportunity arises. In 2024 it allowed us to commission a refreshed StarQuest visual identity across every show in our catalog, to rebuild our web site on stronger and more secure infrastructure, and to invest in production equipment that improves the daily work of producing our programs. We keep first and foremost that our mission is to proclaim the kingdom of God through the exploration of the intersection of faith and pop culture.

The most encouraging programming development of the year was the December launch of Vatican II In A Year with Fr. Matthew Schneider, LC. The 2023 report identified Church history as a topic area we wanted to explore, and Vatican II In A Year answers that intention directly. It is also our first daily program, and the fact that it came together in partnership with a respected Catholic communicator outside our existing host roster is itself a sign that StarQuest's reputation continues to grow in the wider Catholic media community.

The visual and digital refresh of the network was a major effort of the year, and the result is a brand and a web presence worthy of the work our shows put out every week. I am grateful to Aaron Wood for his work on the logo, to Nancy Dorsner for the new web site design, and to Jack Baruzzini for the technical work that made the launch possible.

We continue to see encouraging signs in sponsorship. The arrival of Ascension Press and Exodus 90 as sponsors, the renewal of the Grady Group, and the early conversations with additional partners suggest that our model of mission-consistent sponsorship has room to grow. I am committed to extending this model beyond Jimmy Akin's Mysterious World so that more of our shows can be partially underwritten in this way.

The 2023 CEO note also identified international pilgrimages as an idea we were beginning to look at. In 2024 we moved that idea into action with the announcement of the StarQuest Italy Pilgrimage in partnership with Trinity Tour Travels, scheduled for July 2025. Planning and registration are underway.

Looking forward to 2025, our priorities are clear. We will continue to grow the audience and the giving base. We will study the early performance of Vatican II In A Year and consider what additional programming opportunities present themselves. We will execute the Italy Pilgrimage with the care it deserves. We will continue to look at expanding the network's production capacity so that we do not have a single point of failure for any of the shows. And we will continue the conversation about how best to bring the StarQuest community together in person, whether through a retreat, a regional gathering, or another format that fits both our resources and our audience.

The overall situation of SQPN, Inc. at the close of 2024 is good. The network produces more shows, in more formats, on more platforms, to more listeners, with stronger infrastructure and a clearer brand identity than it had a year ago. We look forward to continuing that work in 2025 in service of our mission.

Financials

Balance Sheet

US-GAAP

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS	DEC 31, 2024
Cash	\$213,248
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$213,248

FIXED ASSETS	DEC 31, 2024
Computer Software and Equipment	\$8,510
TOTAL NET FIXED ASSETS	\$221,758

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

LIABILITIES	Q4
Current Liabilities	\$0
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$0

EQUITY	Q4
Total Equity	\$221,758
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$221,758

Income Statement

US-GAAP

INCOME

FISCAL YEAR END 12/31	2024
Donations	\$265,740
Unrelated Online Commissions	\$1,010
Interest	\$0
Other Income	\$617
TOTAL INCOME	\$267,367

EXPENSES

	2024
Wages	\$151,875
Insurance	\$38,206
Internet Services	\$7,687
Podcast Production	\$30,076
Contractors, Consultants, Professional Services	\$9,452
Travel and Meeting Expenses	\$0
Computer Expense	\$1,889
PR/Marketing/Communications	\$1,430
Fees	\$941
Office Supplies	\$512
Postage & Delivery	\$472
Taxes	\$11,618
Donor Incentives	\$527
Utilities	\$2,348
Depreciation	\$907
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$257,940
	2024
Net Ordinary Income	\$9,427
NET INCOME	\$9,427

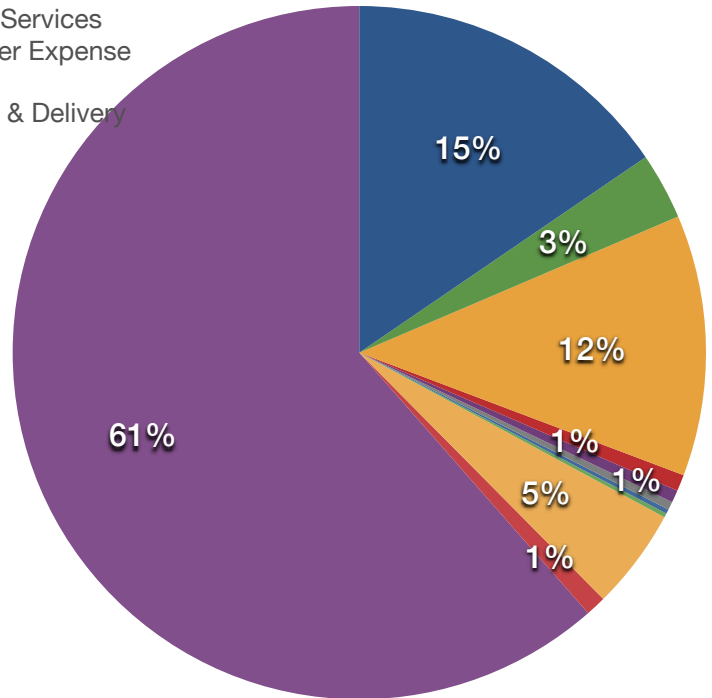
ESTIMATED MONTHLY INCOME	
Donations	\$22,145
Sales Commission Revenue	\$84
Total Monthly Income, estimated	\$22,229

ESTIMATED MONTHLY EXPENSES	
Salaries & Contractors	\$16,628
Online Services & Hosting	\$641
Office Supplies & Postage	\$82
Fees & Taxes	\$1,047
Total Monthly Expenses, estimated	\$18,397
Total Monthly Surplus/(Deficit) (Recurring expenses don't include one-time expenses)	\$3,832

Expense Breakdown

- Insurance
- Podcast Production
- PR/Marketing/Communications
- Office Supplies
- Taxes
- Wages

- Internet Services
- Computer Expense
- Fees
- Postage & Delivery
- Utilities



Monthly Operational Expenses include personnel; web site hosting; podcast hosting on a content distribution network; software services; and marketing services.

Statement of Cash Flows

US-GAAP

CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

FISCAL YEAR END 12/31	2024
Net Income	-\$3,661
NET CASH PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES	-\$3,661

CASH AND EQUIVALENTS, END OF YEAR

	2024
Net Increase (Decrease) in Cash and Equivalents	\$5,484
Cash and Equivalents, Beginning of Year	\$207,764
CASH AND EQUIVALENTS, END OF YEAR	\$213,248

Officers and Directors

(For 2024)

Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director	Domenico Bettinelli, Jr.
Chief Financial Officer	Linda Little
Director	Fr. George C. Hines
Director	Steve Nelson
Director	Jimmy Akin
Chaplain (outgoing)	Fr. Cory Sticha
Chaplain (incoming)	Fr. Jason Tyler