

the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2024 | THE TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Love in Action: the annual giving campaign

Last Sunday we launched the annual giving campaign and presented exciting plans for our mission and ministry for 2025. The remarks by the Rev. John Rohrs, rector, and Robert Birdsey, Liz Kastelberg, and Bernie Monroe, our campaign co-chairs, as well as other parish leaders, are available at ststephensRVA.org/campaign. You can also see the video we premiered last Sunday. We have an ambitious goal for this campaign, and based on your generous response to last year's campaign, we believe it's attainable. Our hope is to add a Director of Outreach and Engagement to our staff, among other plans, and we are asking for your support.

We're grateful to the parish leaders and staff who have already made their financial commitments for 2025; **as of Wednesday, we had 91 pledges totaling \$603.832**. This initial group includes **100 percent participation by the vestry and clergy**.

If you are in our parish database, we have a packet containing a personalized letter, information about the campaign, a pledge card, and a reply envelope for you. If you did not pick yours up last Sunday, please pick it up today outside the large fellowship hall. (If you're not in our database, we also have a packet for you!) Help us save on postage. Tomorrow any packets not picked up will be mailed.

'God's American Purpose' series resumes today

OCTOBER, 27, NOVEMBER 3

The four-part series "God's American Purpose" led by the Rev. William Sachs continues today. Bill is joined by **Robert Wilson-Black** for a conversation about faith amid national conflict. We will use Parker Palmer's book, recently reissued, *Healing the Heart of Democracy*. Rob is a graduate of the University of Richmond with a PhD from the University of Chicago under adviser Martin Marty. Having served for a decade as CEO of Sojourners, then CEO of John Lewis' Faith & Politics Institute, he left to co-found the National Museum of American Religion.

Next Sunday, November 3, two days before national elections, several of our clergy will address the forum as a panel. Recalling the book, *Common Faith*, by John Dewey, we will consider how common purpose might arise from difference and division. We are a people of common prayer, to which all are welcome. We believe that "God's American Purpose" begins with common prayer, here at St. Stephen's and beyond.

All Saints' Day service

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1 | NOON

On All Saints' Day, a major day in the church calendar, we remember and celebrate the Communion of Saints, including all those whom we love but see no longer. We pray with special intention for those who have died in the past year. A service of Holy Eucharist is held at noon on November 1, and all are invited, not just those who are remembering someone who has died recently.

An introduction to the Episcopal Church

SUNDAYS THROUGH NOVEMBER 24 | 10:10 A.M. IN THE CAFÉ

This introductory class led by St. Stephen's clergy is ideal for those who wish to understand more about this church—our identity, origins, worship, beliefs, practices, and more—especially if you are newer or newly interested. This is excellent preparation if you are considering joining the church, but it also is a supportive place to seek answers to questions. Additional details about the class and about joining the church should you wish to do so (it's not required) are included in the registration form linked at ststephensRVA.org/adult-formation.

Are you new to St. Stephen's? Visiting?

We'd love to welcome you personally. It helps us get to know you better if you fill out a visitor card. If you prefer to do this digitally (or there's no visitor card near your seat), just scan the code and take it from there. If you take this news-letter home (we hope you will!) you can scan the code and complete the form later.





One body and one spirit: remembering who we are during election season

Many are anxious about the contentious climate of this year’s political campaign. In our “big tent” Episcopal church where people of varied political leanings worship, pray, sing, study, eat, and work together, we offer a variety of ways to remind us that we are all children of God, formed into one body and one spirit, and called into common mission together. In addition to the times of prayer noted below, the church is open weekdays (including Election Day), 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., for prayer.

SUNDAY FORUM SERIES

SUNDAYS | 10:10 A.M.

Bill Sachs’ four-part series, “God’s American Purpose,” will be followed with a panel on November 10 featuring several of our outreach partners as a kick-off to our Week of Compassion. See the entire line-up at ststephensRVA.org/sunday-forum.

TRAILHEADS: CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

SUNDAYS, OCTOBER 27, NOVEMBER 3 AND 10 | 7-7:45 P.M.

Today, next Sunday, and the Sunday following Election Day, the Rev. John Jenkins will hold contemplative prayer meetings open to all. We will hold Christ’s peace and pray for healing in the life of the nation and the world. All are welcome, and John will offer a brief overview for those who have no prior experience with contemplative prayer. The “sit” (prayer time) will continue for 20 minutes; participants may quietly depart at any time. A Zoom option will be available.

A CASE FOR LOVE

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28 | 6 P.M.

Tomorrow evening we will show the documentary “A Case for Love,” based on the teaching of the Most Rev. Michael Curry, the 27th presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church. In a time of national chaos and lack of unity, a film crew travels the United States searching for people living their lives selflessly. The team interviews random people on the street and well-known figures to learn where they’ve witnessed unselfish love, and where they’ve noticed its absence. The screening is free and we’ll serve popcorn and lemonade. Sign-up is requested.



THE WEEK OF COMPASSION

NOVEMBER 9-17

The Week of Compassion will embody our unity in Christ, and our call to live our faith in service to one another. Our models include St. Stephen himself, who as the first deacon set an example of servant ministry for the church from its earliest days. We will observe his feast day November 10 (transferred from December 26), and take part in acts of service from November 9 through 16, and focus on outreach and service in the Sunday Forum on November 10 and November 17 with presentations by our outreach partners. Additional details about the specific opportunities to serve the wider community are at ststephensRVA.org/week-of-compassion.

SACRAMENTAL CITIZENSHIP

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13 | 6:30-7:30 P.M.

The Sacramental Citizenship class with the Rev. Cate Anthony is already underway, but the session on November 13 will be open to all, even if you did not join the ongoing class. The focus November 13 will be post-election guidance for civil discourse and living compassionately in divided political times, as well as a time for prayer.

TRAILHEADS: POST-ELECTION CONVERSATIONS

SUNDAYS, NOVEMBER 17 AND 24 | 7-7:50 P.M.

Billy Peebles, a St. Stephen’s parishioner who has taught American history as well as religion in middle school and high school for some 40 years, will present a two-part series, “What History teaches us about honest and thoughtful engagement during polarizing times.” He will draw on edifying examples of past leaders who sought to steer us through contentious and complex times and issues. We’ll discuss how we might consider applying their examples to navigating the divisiveness that affects us today. No sign-up is needed.

Vestry nomination process begins

SUGGESTIONS DUE BY NOVEMBER 17

In the Episcopal Church, an elected body called a vestry tends to the temporal matters of the church in cooperation with the rector. Six new vestry members are elected at an annual parish meeting so that the total vestry (ours numbers 18) is continually rotating in new members to work with continuing ones. Prior to the annual meeting, parishioners are invited to submit names for consideration by a nominating committee. This committee is appointed by the vestry and consists of at-large members as well as the six members of the vestry who will complete their service with the next annual parish meeting. The nominating committee co-chairs this year are Brenda McDowell and Andy Luke.

The committee will be looking for a diversity of nominees, including men and women of different ages, those who have been at St. Stephen's a long time and those who are newer to this community, those who worship at different services on Sunday, those who are involved in different ministries, those who would bring different gifts, skills, and perspectives to the vestry.

The way to suggest a parishioner for the nominating committee to consider is to complete a form on our website. You'll also find other information the same page, including criteria for vestry members and other details: ststephensRVA.org/vestry-nominations.

Saints Singers are here today

We are delighted to welcome back the Saints Singers as our guest choir for the 11:15 service today. The Saints Singers are an auditioned mixed choir comprising some of the best singers from St. Catherine's and St. Christopher's upper schools. The ensemble rehearses one evening a week and performs a wide variety of choral works ranging from the Renaissance to the present day, mostly unaccompanied. Annabelle Mills and Greg Vick are co-directors of the choir.

May Fair House holiday bazaar coming soon!

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5 | 10 A.M.-5 P.M.

The May Fair House, the food and gift shop managed by the Women of St. Stephen's which raises funds for community grants, will hold its annual holiday bazaar in just over a week. After you vote on November 5, shop seasonal merchandise and our famous frozen casseroles and other treats. There will be a tasting table where you can sample products.

An exciting array of guest vendors includes M.E. Designs (embroidered items); Arranger's Market (flowers and flower arranging tools); Heartfelt (felted items); Lori Daniel Rowland (local artist focusing on texture and color); Tibby Buis (local craftsper-son); Classy Accessories (custom monogramming and baby gifts); One Little World (handmade Fair Trade products); and Laura Talley Designs (handcrafted jewelry and accessories). You can also order fresh magnolia wreaths from Saunders Brothers Nursery.

Pastoral announcements

St. Stephen's is a large church and it can be easy to miss important information about fellow parishioners. If you would like to receive an email notice when a parishioner dies, as well as periodic summaries of births and marriages, please scan the QR code to sign up.



While these emails will be limited to announcing deaths, marriages, and births of members of the parish, our weekly spoken prayers and printed prayer list will continue to include friends and loved ones of parishioners who request those prayers.

Do you have a camera to donate?

Varina High School is one of the most under-resourced schools in the Richmond area. The Rev. Whitney Edwards, who serves at Varina Episcopal Church and is known to many in this parish, has offered the people of St. Stephen's an opportunity to support the school. Students working on the Varina year-book with their teacher are hampered by a lack of cameras and camera equipment. Do you have any such items to donate? They would be grateful for new cameras (such as Canon Rebel T7 DSLRs) or any lightly used DSLR cameras capable of high-quality photography. Accessories such as tripods, battery chargers, SD cards and SD card adaptors are also needed. If you have any of these items to donate, please bring them to the church office (during office hours only, please) and we will arrange for pick-up. Thank you!

Program to focus on the Battle of the Bulge

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12 | 6 P.M. GATHER; 6:30 P.M. PROGRAM
Jim Triesler, director of education for the Virginia War Memorial, will speak at St. Stephen's during a program for the whole parish hosted by the Women of St. Stephen's. After speaking here last year, there were numerous requests for him to return, and this time his topic is the Battle of the Bulge. The Virginia War Memorial preserves the stories of those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and honors all veterans and active-duty military. No registration is needed for this free program.

Thursday morning Bible study continues

THROUGH OCTOBER 31; NOVEMBER 14 AND 21;
DECEMBER 5 AND 12 | 10 A.M.

Join St. Stephen's clergy and other parishioners for this study focusing on the Letter to the Hebrews. While Hebrews was traditionally viewed as one of the Pauline Epistles, modern scholarship has thrown this enigmatic letter into a more mysterious light regarding authorship and context. In any case, Hebrews contains a rich message regarding the significance of Jesus' life and death. This study aims to help us reflect on each of the letter's distinctive claims, to understand the context in which they were originally presented, and to reflect on the application of their understanding to Christian life today. No registration is needed for this group; it meets in Room 14.



Supporting those affected by Hurricanes Helene and Milton

We continue to pray for all those affected by the historic storms devastating so many communities in recent weeks. You can offer financial support for clean-up, restoration, and other needs by sending a donation to Episcopal Relief and Development. ERD works directly with dioceses, churches, and communities in affected areas to ensure that people receive the kinds of support they need most. It's preferable to send your donation to ERD rather than bringing it to the church office.

Donate at episcopalrelief.org or mail a check to: Episcopal Relief & Development, P.O. Box 3006, Harlan, Iowa, 51593-0024.

Art at St. Stephen's Church

NOVEMBER 1-DECEMBER 31

Beginning November 1, the gallery adjacent to the large fellowship hall will feature work by Missy Goode and Susan Dull, both of whom have been members of St. Stephen's Church since childhood. Missy is an oil painter who captures the people, places, and objects she sees in everyday life. Susan is a painter who believes that her work is best described by the saying, "Color gets all the credit while value does all the work." She tries to create beautiful negative shapes in her paintings, saying, "How you apply the paint is as important as where you place it. I look for the color in the light and dark." We look forward to seeing work by these two talented parishioners soon.

Please remember to wear a nametag

In this large church, it can be a challenge to learn one another's names, and we're welcoming new people all the time. Nametags are an important way to include everyone, so please remember to wear yours when you are here. You may store your nametag on one of the racks near the entrance off the parking lot into the parish house if you wish. And if you need a nametag, please sign up for one at the same parish house entrance.

We are grateful to the EpiscoPals for their work on re-organizing our nametag area over the past couple of weeks. EpiscoPals are retired parishioners who provide support in many different areas of parish life. If you'd like to join them, be in touch with Chip Tompkins, or call the parish office.



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

6000 Grove Avenue | Richmond Virginia 23226
804.288.2867 | ststephensRVA.org

OUR MISSION

Defining who we are and what we do

We are a community of hospitality, healing, and hope, sharing the love of Christ.

OUR VISION

Conveying our hopes and imagination

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." We gather at God's table to receive that bread and then we go out in love to share it with others, setting tables of hospitality, healing, and hope. Together, we aspire to a world where everyone has a seat at the banquet and all are fed.

OUR CORE VALUES

Our core values and characteristics are described on our website under the "About" tab. They're also available in a printed form at Information Central.

—adopted by St. Stephen's Vestry, July 23, 2024

