

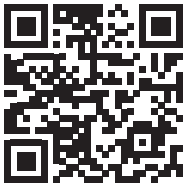
the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024 | THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

This morning: the Christmas Pageant

The annual Christmas pageant at St. Stephen's is a highlight of the season, and today is its 99th presentation. Taking place during the 11:15 a.m. service, the pageant features young people reading scripture while others wear costumes representing members of the Holy Family, angels, heralds, shepherds, the magi, and other figures from the stories of Jesus' birth. The costumed participants enter the church on rolling carts as the choir and congregation sing hymns and anthems. This year St. Stephen's youth will be joined by young children animals and stars in the concluding Nativity scene. Thank you to all who have made this observance possible, including many behind the scenes!

Help welcome worshipers to St. Stephen's for Christmas services



St. Stephen's Church will receive up to 2,000 worshipers over our five Christmas services. There are ample opportunities for you to serve on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day as a greeter or usher. This is a wonderful way to serve others by sharing the welcome and hospitality of Christ with all who come to worship.

Scan the QR code for basic information about the roles and next steps, and to submit times when you are available to serve. Thank you for all your support! If you have questions, please contact the Rev. John Jenkins, jjenkins@ststephensRVA.org.

Love in Action: annual giving campaign

Thank you to all who have helped us move closer to our goals of 875 pledges and \$2,750,000! As of Wednesday, we had received **709 pledges totaling \$2,592,574** including **60 pledges from Palmer Hall families**. If you have not submitted a pledge, please prayerfully consider how you can support our exciting plans for 2025 and make a generous commitment. Pick up a packet from a kiosk at any church entrance; or a pledge card found on tables throughout the parish house; or pledge online, ststephensRVA.org/campaign.

May Fair House holiday closing

Today is the last day to shop at the May Fair House (open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. today) until Tuesday, January 14, at 10 a.m. Be sure to stop in today!

Farmers market winter plans

SATURDAY | 9 A.M.-NOON (NO MARKET DECEMBER 28)

This coming Saturday, December 28, is the one Saturday our year-round farmers market is closed. The following Saturday, January 4, many of our vendors will move indoors to our fellowship hall (while some will choose to remain outdoors). This arrangement will be in effect for January, February, and March. Everyone will be back outside in April. Remember, our market is open rain or shine, year-round except the Saturday after Christmas. You can find fresh, local greens, root vegetables, squash, mushrooms, eggs, bread, meat, soups and stews, jewelry, and so much more, all winter long. And since our farmers harvest their crops (especially greens) just before the market, they will stay fresh much longer than grocery store produce. A reminder: no shopping or browsing before 9 a.m.—thank you!

Information about Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services is

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.





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Christmas services at St. Stephen's Church

Here's what you need to know about services offered this Tuesday and Wednesday.

- All services take place in the main church and will be livestreamed at ststephensRVA.org/watch-live.
- Overflow seating will be available in Palmer Hall and the fellowship hall; Palmer Hall offers a "soft space" where young children can move freely or sit on floor cushions (accompanied by a parent).
- Childcare is offered during services with an asterisk.*
- All Christmas Eve services are preceded by a half-hour of music.
- Each service includes a sermon or homily.
- Please plan for your family or group to arrive early; seat-saving is not permitted.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, CHRISTMAS EVE

2 p.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite Two*

Music includes traditional carols and other music led by St. Stephen's Choristers, members of St. Stephen's Choir, and a string quartet.

5 p.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite Two*

Music includes traditional carols and music led by St. Stephen's Choir and a string quartet.

8 p.m., Celtic Christmas Service with Communion

Music will be led by three cantors, violin, cello and oboe; they will perform selections from Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* during the musical prelude and will lead traditional carols and play seasonal instrumental music during the service.

11 p.m., Traditional Christ Mass

Choral Eucharist: Rite One

St. Stephen's Choir and orchestra will perform selections from Part I of Handel's *Messiah* during the musical prelude. The choral Eucharist setting is by G.P. Palestrina (*Missa brevis*) and the choir will sing pieces by John Rutter and Healey Willan and lead traditional carols and hymns.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, CHRISTMAS DAY

10:30 a.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite Two

The Compline choir will lead carols and sing work by Eleanor Daley and David Willcocks.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, CHRISTMAS I

8 a.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite One

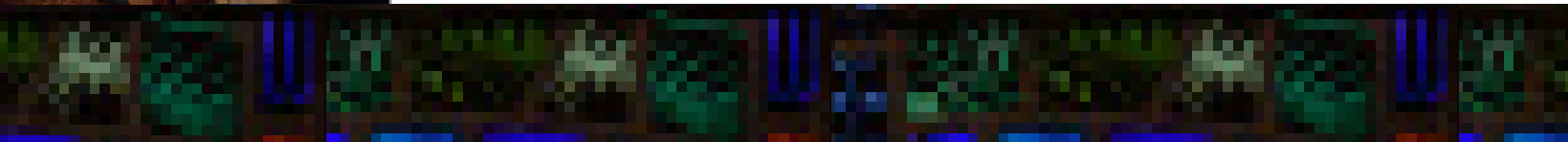
10 a.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite Two

5:30 p.m., Celtic Evensong and Communion

Note: no Sunday morning formation, Sunday Community Supper, or Compline

Holiday schedule notes

- There is no Sunday morning formation today or December 29; the Forum resumes January 5; other offerings return January 12.
- The parish office is closed Christmas Day, the day after Christmas, and New Year's Day.
- May Fair House closes at 1 p.m. today and re-opens Tuesday, January 14, at 10 a.m.
- The Café @ St. Stephen's will be closed December 25-29 and on January 1, 2025.
- Wednesday parish suppers have concluded for 2024 and resume January 15, 2025.
- The Sunday Community Supper will continue EXCEPT next Sunday, December 29.
- The Farmers Market @ St. Stephen's is closed the Saturday after Christmas Day, December 28. When the market reopens January 4, some vendors will be set up in the fellowship hall, and some will remain outdoors.
- When the parish office is closed, there is no weekday Morning Prayer service.



- A priest is on call for pastoral emergencies; call 804.288.2867 and follow the prompts.

Year-end gifts and payments

As we approach the end of the calendar year, please be aware that to be considered a 2024 donation for IRS purposes, donations must be received by the church (including gifts made online) or postmarked by December 31, 2024. Donations received after that date will be applied in 2025. We are referring to the year in which the potential tax deduction applies, but we can attribute your gifts to your annual pledge for the year you indicate, regardless of when it is received. The office will be open Friday, December 27, Monday, December 30, and for the final time for 2024 on Tuesday, December 31. Gifts made in offering plates through the December 29 Sunday services will be counted for 2024.

Do you fulfill your pledge with stock donations? We now use Schwab. Please ask your broker to contact Susan McNamara for Schwab account information: 804.288.2867 or smcnamara@ststephensRVA.org. Susan is also the person to contact with any questions about your pledge balance or your statements. Year-end statements will go out in January. Thank you for your gifts! (See the next announcement about our new phone system.)

New phone system for parish office

On December 30, we will install a new phone system. On that day there may be intermittent service issues. If you call the parish office and don't get through, please try again a little later.

Epiphany Lessons and Carols

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2025 | 6 P.M.

For the third year in a row, St. Stephen's Church will celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany with a service of lessons and carols followed by a parish supper and a chili cook-off. Similar to the beloved service of Christmas Lessons and Carols made famous by King's College, Cambridge, this candlelit service features choral and organ music for Epiphany, including anthems by Andrew Carter, Herbert Howells, Philip Stopford, Eric Whitacre, Alison Willis, and Jonathan Dove. Bring trimmings of your Christmas greenery to burn at the conclusion of the service.

Plan to join us for supper afterwards; a chili cook-off will raise funds for our music program. Please visit ststephensRVA.org/epiphany for links to RSVP for supper, and to sign up if you'll enter the chili cook-off.

Winter Ministry Night

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9 | 5:15-7:30 P.M.

A few times during the year, members of various standing committees of the vestry gather for supper, fellowship, and sharing about what is happening at St. Stephen's Church. This gathering time concludes with a simple worship service, after which individual committees may meet to discuss upcoming plans for

their area of ministry. **Everyone is welcome at Ministry Night, whether you are on one of the committees or not.** This is a great way to learn about the various ministries happening here, and how and where you might plug in.

The next Ministry Night is coming soon. If you plan to attend, please let us know so we'll know how much supper to prepare. A link to sign up, as well as information about the standing committees of the vestry and what each of them does, are available at ststephensRVA.org/ministry-nights.

New art exhibit coming in January

A new exhibit of pieces by local artists is coming to the Café @ St. Stephen's in January. You can meet the artists at an opening reception Thursday, January 19, 6 to 8 p.m., in the café. We'll have light snacks, non-alcoholic beverages, and wine. These are the featured artists.

Wanda Ferguson taught art in middle school for 30 years. Now retired, she takes photos and paints with acrylics. She loves the outdoors and paints *plein air* or her photos.

Anne Wrinn has been painting for over 25 years using alkyd paint. She is primarily a *plein air* painter, and she's often in the VMFA Sculpture Garden. She also does occasional abstracts. Anne is a graduate of Wesleyan University and VCU.

Cat Slusser has worked in the fields of anthropology, archaeology, and historic preservation. She has gone back to painting, one of her earliest passions: painting, hiking, and horses, all reflected in animal and landscape paintings in acrylic.

Margaret Porter Daniel is a retired art teacher and a clinical herbalist. She is fascinated by the energy of plants as they relate to people and animals and considers materia medica when creating her art. Margaret is a multi-media artist using acrylic paint, ink, silk screen and thread.

Catherine Carter has over 30 years of experience in providing art instruction to students from elementary to high school. She works in acrylic, watercolor, and oils with a focus on nature.

We are deeply grateful to Susan Dull and Missy Goode for their faithful service and expertise as coordinators of the art ministry. Susan and Missy have decided to step back from these roles. Both are talented artists themselves; you can see their work in the gallery next to the fellowship hall, and in the May Fair House.

If you have questions about St. Stephen's art ministry, please contact Robin Raver, rraver@ststephensRVA.org.

Newcomer reception

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30 | 5:30-7 P.M.

Are you new (or new-ish) to St. Stephen's Church? If you've recently joined, or you're deciding whether to join this community of faith, please plan to attend a reception where you can meet our staff, clergy, members of our hospitality committee, and others who are new to St. Stephen's. RSVP at



Parish Staff

To reach a staff member, call 804.288.2867 or send an email using the initial and name provided in parentheses, with [@ststephensRVA.org](mailto:ststephensRVA.org).

- Betsy Anderson, *May Fair House Manager*
 The Rev. Cate Anthony (canthony), *Associate Rector*
 Kitty Ball (kball), *Office Coordinator*
 Sarah R. Bartenstein (sbartenstein), *Director of Communication*
 Larry Bidwell (lbidwell), *Facilities Manager*
 Omar Catedral (ocatedral), *Sexton*
 Diana Chou (dchou), *Associate Director of Music*
 Matt Depaolis (mdepaolis), *May Fair House Cooking Coordinator*
 Rayshawn Dover (rdover), *Sexton*
 Chris Edwards (cedwards), *Director, St. Stephen's Choir*
 Mary Feldman (mfeldman), *Executive Assistant to the Rector and Vicar*
 Dillon Gwaltney (dgwaltney), *Communications Associate/Video Producer*
 Claire Hackley (chackley), *Parish Suppers Coordinator*
 Caroline Harris (charris), *Youth Ministry Coordinator*
 Ian Hayes, *Barista*
 Chris Holman (cholman), *Sexton*
 Jack Hotchkiss (jhotchkiss), *Sexton*
 The Rev. John Jenkins (jjenkins), *Associate Rector*
 Anna F. Jones (ajones), *Farmers Market Manager and Outreach Ministry*
 Wondell Kareem (wkareem), *Sexton*
 The Rev. Abby Kocher (akocher), *Director of Children's Ministry*
 Susan McNamara (smcnamara), *Finance and Administrative Assistant*
 Robin Raver (rraver), *Café Manager*
 The Rev. John D. Rohrs (jrohrr), *Rector*
 Thatch Rudolph, *Barista*
 The Rev. William L. Sachs (bsachs), *Associate Rector*
 Fred Staley (fstaley), *Executive Director of Church Operations*
 The Rev. William S. Stanley (wstanley), *Vicar*
 Brent te Velde (btevelde), *Director of Music*
- Our Missionaries in Argentina:* Heidi Schmidt, Monica Vega
- Dogwood Preschool*
 Kate Batten, *Executive Director*; Elizabeth Sykes, *Program Director*

Parish office
804.288.2867
May Fair House
804.282.3004
Café @ St. Stephen's
804.288.3318
Dogwood Preschool
804.665.4902

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