

the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2025 | THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

Sunday formation resumes for children, youth, and parents today

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for children, youth Bible study for grades 6 through 12, and Many Parents, One Vine resume today at 10:10 a.m., all on the top floor of the parish house.

Sunday Forum continues series on art and architecture

SUNDAYS AT 10:10 A.M.

At St. Stephen's Church, we are immersed in beauty. Continuing today and next week in the Forum, we will see how our surroundings can draw us closer to God. Come to the Forum to consider how this visual beauty deepens our spiritual journey.

Today our distinguished panel of St. Stephen's parishioners—Tony Anthony, Charlie Caldwell, Scott Finn, Colleen Hewitt, and Jim Snowa—will continue their discussion from last Sunday about the Gothic style that characterizes our church building and adjoining parish house. Today they will focus on the power of stained-glass windows and wood carvings to enliven the worship space as well as our spiritual lives.

Next Sunday, January 19, our speakers will be members of St. Stephen's needlepoint guild, including two artists who designed and painted canvasses stitched by talented volunteers. Led by Marie Carter, this panel discussion will point out that some of our parishioners contributed Scripture verses and suggested church scenes for kneelers. You will also learn about the history of the needlework at the Communion rails and the current pew kneeler project.

The Forum schedule through April is posted at ststephensRVA.org/sunday-forum, along with videos of past forums.

Trailheads is back this evening with a focus on the 'Way of St. James'

7 P.M. IN THE CAFE

Trailheads is our Sunday evening formation offering for adults. It will resume this evening with a program on the Camino de Santiago. Gather with pilgrims who have walked the "Way of St. James" to share life-giving stories. The Camino is a network of walking routes throughout France and Spain that converge on the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain. This evening we invite pilgrims of the Camino from throughout Richmond to converge at St. Stephen's Church, making connections and sharing stories. Some stories will be shared for all to enjoy, others will be told in small table groups. This is open to everyone, most of all to those who have not experienced the Camino. More Trailheads offerings are described on the pages inside.

Director of outreach and engagement search underway

APPLICATIONS DUE FEBRUARY 1

We are grateful for the generous response to our annual giving campaign and excited that the results so far mean we are able to begin the process of seeking a director of outreach and engagement. St. Stephen's Church is a dynamic, innovative and diverse parish, with ministries extending far beyond our walls. As our vision statement puts it, "We gather at God's table to receive the bread of life, 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."

Do you know someone who could be a promising applicant for this position? Please send them to the employment page of our website for additional details. The page is linked in the footer (the purple section at the bottom of the landing page). Applications are due February 1.

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.





Thursday Bible study resumes this week

THURSDAYS, JANUARY 16-MAY 15 | 10 A.M.

For the winter/spring Thursday morning Bible study we will dive into the books of Genesis and Exodus. As we marvel at the ancient world, we will witness the origins of God's covenant with humanity and learn how to participate in God's covenantal life. No prior knowledge or experience is necessary; attendance at every session is not required to participate, and no registration is needed. We meet in Room 14 on the top floor of the parish house.



Wednesday evening programs begin this week

JANUARY 15 AND JANUARY 22 | 6:30 P.M.,

Come to a new Wednesday evening two-part series, "Seeing the World Through Spiritual Lenses."

On January 15 parishioner Kim Schmidt, a skilled and in-demand professional photographer, will present "Photography as a Tool for Creative Worship, Connection and Community." Kim has an impressive portfolio including work with various educational and nonprofit organizations. Her photographs encompass a variety of personal, cultural, and social situations. She is at home with notable public figures and with people on the streets facing basic life challenges. This visual storyteller captures images of daily struggle as well as change and the people who inspire it.

On January 22, Roman Williams will present "Seeing the Sacred through Interfaith Lenses." A few years ago, Roman led a project in interfaith relations that included Richmond, where he and others convened at St. Stephen's Church. Just a few weeks ago, *Sacred Snaps*, the co-authored book describing the project, appeared in print. Photovoice—of which Roman is founder—is a process that invites people to use their smartphone cameras to compose photos of their everyday lives, then share their stories with people from different religious, spiritual, and secular backgrounds. Through this process participants develop relationships across difference that build religious empathy and vision for the common good.

All are invited to these programs. Please come, and bring a camera (a camera phone is fine).



Deepening Grace: Sacraments for Children and Parents

SUNDAYS, JANUARY 26, FEBRUARY 2, FEBRUARY 9 | 10:10-11:10 A.M.
CONCLUDING RETREAT FOR CHILDREN FEBRUARY 23

In a revised version of what has been called "Solemn Communion," this month we will begin a three-week concurrent study for parents and children on Sunday mornings called "Deepening Grace: Sacraments for Children and Parents." Beginning January 26 during the 10:10 a.m. formation hour, children in grades 1 through 3 will participate in this special study led by the Rev. Abby Kocher during their time in the atrium (the specially-prepared room where Catechesis of the Good Shepherd takes place).

During the same period on Sunday morning in Many Parents One Vine, our group for parents of children and youth, St. Stephen's clergy will explore the same themes related to Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist. In this model, families are invited into deeper conversation at home with one another about the life of faith as a Christian.

The dates are January 26, February 2, and February 9 from 10:10 to 11:10 a.m. A concluding retreat for the children will take place February 23 from noon to 3:30 p.m. If you have a child in grades 1-3 who would like to participate, contact Abby at akocher@ststephensrva.org.



An opening reception for a new art exhibit

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2025 | 6-8 P.M.

A new exhibit of paintings by local artists is coming to the Café @ St. Stephen's. Be sure to stop in to see them. A reception to celebrate the opening will take place this week, and everyone is invited. There will be food and drink (including non-alcoholic choices). All are welcome and no RSVP is needed.



Vestry slate announced

ANNUAL MEETING: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23 | 10:10 A.M.

At the 2025 annual parish meeting, we will vote on a slate of six parishioners to serve three-year terms on the vestry, to begin in February; we will also vote to confirm a seventh parishioner for a two-year term.

Last fall, the vestry appointed a nominating committee composed of outgoing vestry members and at-large members. This group received suggestions from you about people to consider for a slate, and they are pleased to present the following:

Molly Anderson
Jay Moore
Elizabeth Peay
Joan Putney
Andrew Robertson
Brandon Spalding

In 2024, the vestry appointed Katherine Farley to serve an unexpired term which concludes in 2027. Annual meeting participants will vote to affirm her for the remainder of this term.

Thank you to the nominating committee, those who submitted suggestions, and all who agreed to have their names put forward.

Visit our website for information about the slate, including photos, as well as the process we used, ststephensRVA.org/vestry-nominees.

May Fair House re-opens Tuesday

TUESDAY THROUGH FRIDAY | 10 A.M.-3 P.M.
SATURDAY, 9 A.M.-NOON | SUNDAY, 10 A.M.-1 P.M.

The May Fair House is a shop managed by the Women of St. Stephen's which features casseroles and other popular dishes prepared by volunteers in St. Stephen's kitchen using tried-and-true recipes. The shop also carries a variety of gifts, art, accessories, and more. The proceeds from shop sales are used to fund grants to effective local outreach organizations. The shop, which is staffed primarily by volunteers, has been on a holiday break but will re-open this Tuesday at 10 a.m.

When you visit May Fair House, be sure to see the list of grants awarded for 2024. The list is also available at ststephensRVA.org/WOSS.

'WOSS' brochures are here

New brochures listing the programs that the Women of St. Stephen's have planned for this winter and spring for the entire parish (and beyond) are available at Information Central, the large table outside the parish office.

Trailheads series begins next Sunday

JANUARY 19 TO MARCH 9 (EXCEPT FEBRUARY 23) | 7-7:50 P.M.

Trailheads, our Sunday evening adult formation offering, will begin a new series next Sunday evening, "Radical Optimism: Practical Spirituality in an Uncertain World."

Brother David Stendl-Rast, OSB, has said of *Radical Optimism* by Beatrice Bruteau, "The life of the whole world may depend on learning to dream radical and realistic dreams. At last, a book that offers solid metaphysical underpinnings for contemplation."

The book is about participating with God in the co-creation of reality—through prayer and action, particularly in the face of present uncertainties and (referred to as the meta-crisis). This book discussion group is open to all and will be facilitated by John Jenkins and occasionally by Cate Anthony. Read along or simply come and listen; all are welcome. No registration is required. We'll gather in Palmer Hall.

Are you new to this community of faith?

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

A few times during the year, the rector and other members of the parish staff host a reception especially for those who are new to this community of faith. And the definition of "new" is completely up to you. If you've recently joined St. Stephen's Church, or you have visited but have not yet decided whether this will become your church home, you are invited to come to the next reception on January 30.

At these informal gatherings, we enjoy conversation, appetizers, wine, and non-alcoholic beverages. The receptions are an opportunity for you to meet our clergy and staff, as well as others who are discovering St. Stephen's Church—and for everyone to get to know more about you.

Come for as long as you wish. And if this reception doesn't work with your schedule, don't worry—we'll have another one later in the year. If you plan to attend, please complete the RSVP at ststephensRVA.org/newcomer.

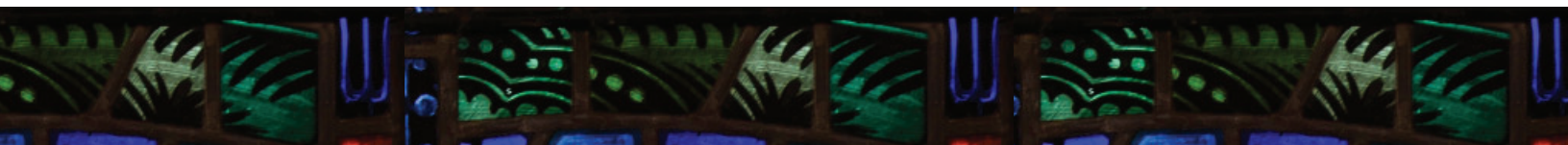
Learn about CrossOver Healthcare Ministry

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29 | 6 P.M.

Do you know about CrossOver Healthcare Ministry? Come to a program later this month where Jackie Griggs of CrossOver will speak about this Richmond nonprofit organization providing healthcare to uninsured people and those on Medicaid. Jackie is Director of Resource Development and Communications for this local ministry which has received grants and volunteer support from St. Stephen's Church and the the grants program of the May Fair House and the Women of St. Stephen's over the years. No registration is needed for this free event hosted by the Women of St. Stephen's. (Please note that this is a Wednesday evening program, not the usual Tuesday morning program.)

Wednesday suppers back this week

Wonderful Wednesdays suppers have been on a break since mid-December. They will be back this Wednesday, **January 15, from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m.** in the fellowship hall. We post the menus for Wednesday and Sunday suppers on our website at ststephensRVA.org/menus.





Belvedere Concert Series presents violinist Nicholas DiEugenio here

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24 | 7 P.M. FOLLOWED BY RECEPTION

Nicholas DiEugenio performs the monumental sonatas and partitas of Johann Sebastian Bach on baroque violin in an upcoming Belvedere Concert Series program to be held at St. Stephen's Church. In demand as a soloist, chamber musician, and ensemble leader, Nicholas creates powerful shared experiences in music ranging from early baroque to contemporary commissions. More information about Nicholas, this event, and how to purchase tickets, is available at ststephensRVA.org/concerts. On the same page of our site, you'll find information about additional upcoming concerts and music events. There are also brochures available at Information Central listing these offerings.

Living hospitality: sharing the love of Christ

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9 | 12:30 TO 3 P.M | REGISTER BY FEBRUARY 6

St. Stephen's centers hospitality in our common life, proclaiming in our mission statement that "[we are] a community of hospitality, healing, and hope, sharing the love of Christ." This new workshop is open to all people and will take place in the Café @ St. Stephen's. Participants will:

- ground their vision and understanding of hospitality in Holy Scripture;
- work both independently and in small groups to connect with new insights;
- develop simple ways to live and share the love of Christ through the practice of hospitality throughout your life.



**REGISTER BY
FEBRUARY 6**

Attendance throughout the program is a registration requirement. A soup and sandwich lunch is provided by St. Stephen's hospitality ministry.

Where to find videos of past services and forums

Because aspects of our current website are presented differently than they were on our previous site, we are sometimes asked where to find videos of past livestreamed services. Worship videos, sermons, and reflections are all catalogued on the same page. Filters at the top of the page help you find what you're looking for. From the main menu on our website, select the Worship and Music tab. Under that tab select "Worship Video Archive." Also: we provide links in the **eSpirit** each week to the past Sunday's sermon, reflection, and Forum.



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

6000 Grove Avenue | Richmond Virginia 23226

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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

