

# the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 2025 | THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

## 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).

## Sunday Forum series on art and architecture focuses on needlepoint today

SUNDAYS AT 10:10 A.M.

At St. Stephen's Church, we are immersed in beauty. Continuing today 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 speakers are members of St. Stephen's needlepoint guild, including two artists who designed and painted canvasses stitched by talented volunteers. You will learn about the history of the needlework at the Communion rails and the current pew kneeler project from a panel led by Marie Carter.

The Forum schedule through April is posted at [ststephensRVA.org/sunday-forum](http://ststephensRVA.org/sunday-forum), along with videos of past forums.

## Trailheads series, 'Radical Optimism,' begins this evening

THROUGH MARCH 9 (EXCEPT FEBRUARY 23) | 7-7:50 P.M.

Trailheads, our Sunday evening adult formation offering, will begin a new series this 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 (referred to as the meta-crisis). This 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.

## Violinist Nicholas DiEugenio in concert this Friday

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](http://ststephensRVA.org/concerts). On the same page you'll find information about additional upcoming concerts and music events. There are also brochures available at Information Central listing these offerings.

### 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 newsletter home (we hope you will!) you can scan the code and complete the form later.





## 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 fellowship hall (please note this location is a change). 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.

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

## Parish office closed Monday

The parish office will be closed tomorrow in observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. The weekly food distributions (pantry/grocery store and fruit ministry) will take place on Tuesday this week. A reminder: when the parish office is closed, there is no Morning Prayer and the Café @ St. Stephen's is closed.

## Today's music

Music for today's services has been selected with tomorrow's observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day in mind. Read about these selections and their significance on our website, [ststephensRVA.org/music-notes](http://ststephensRVA.org/music-notes), or pick up a hard copy at Information Central.

## Thursday Bible study has resumed

THURSDAYS THROUGH MAY 15 | 10 A.M.

For the winter/spring Thursday morning Bible study we are diving into the books of Genesis and Exodus. As we marvel at the ancient world, we 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.

## Two-part Wednesday evening series concludes

JANUARY 22 | 6:30 P.M.

Part two of our Wednesday evening series, "Seeing the World Through Spiritual Lenses," will bring Roman Williams to St. Stephen's for "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. *Sacred Snaps*, the book describing the project (co-authored with Bill Sachs and Catherine Holtmann), has just been published. 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. Please come, and bring a camera (a smartphone camera is fine).

## Learn about CrossOver Healthcare Ministry

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29 | 6:30 P.M.

Do you know about CrossOver Healthcare Ministry? Hear Jackie Griggs of CrossOver 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



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. We'll be collecting toiletries for CrossOver and other local organizations that evening: toothpaste/brushes, soaps, shampoos, hygiene items.

## Deepening grace: Sacraments for children and parents

SUNDAYS, JANUARY 26, FEBRUARY 2, FEBRUARY 9 | 10:10 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 about the life of faith.

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](mailto:akocher@ststephensRVA.org).

## Annual giving and budget planning

Thank you to all who have made a financial commitment for 2025. The pledges we've received to date are encouraging and we've begun the search for a director of outreach and engagement—a major goal for 2025 which parishioners have said is important to them.

There are many other ministries and initiatives we hope to pursue this year. The vestry meets Tuesday, January 28 to adopt a budget for 2025, and will make decisions about those plans based on what we've received by that date. Knowing what to expect from pledging households is critical to the budget process and to planning for our common life. If you have not made a pledge for 2025, please prayerfully consider doing so this week.

Broad participation across the parish is a sign of the vitality of this community of faith, and an important demonstration of support for our ministries. Every pledge matters!

To make a pledge, visit [ststephensRVA.org/pledge](https://ststephensRVA.org/pledge), or use a pledge card and envelope (these are available at Information Central outside the parish office and at other tables throughout the parish house), or call 804.288.2867 and ask for Susan McNamara. Thank you!

## Offering envelopes

While many parishioners now make their pledge payments electronically, others prefer to write checks and place them in offering plates on Sundays, and many of those folks like to enclose their check in an envelope. Any envelope will do, as long as your name and contact information are printed on your check. If you prefer to use weekly envelopes created specifically for this purpose, a limited number of generic envelope packets are available now at Information Central, the large table outside the parish office. Be sure to write on the memo line of the check that it is meant to be applied to your annual pledge. If you have any questions, please contact Susan McNamara in the parish office by calling 804.288.2867 or sending her an email, [smcnamara@ststephensRVA.org](mailto:smcnamara@ststephensRVA.org).

## 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, and 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](https://ststephensRVA.org/vestry-nominees).

## 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. 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. You'll meet our clergy and staff, as well as others who are discovering St. Stephen's Church. And we'll 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](https://ststephensRVA.org/newcomer).





## May Fair House has re-opened after the holiday break

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. Proceeds from shop sales are used to fund grants to effective local outreach organizations. When you visit May Fair House, be sure to see the list of grants awarded for 2024 (also available at [ststephensRVA.org/WOSS](http://ststephensRVA.org/WOSS)).

## Where to find videos of services, sermons, and reflections

Because features 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, with filters to 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.



## Inclement weather information

When inclement weather and/or other factors (such as a water outage) affect activities at St. Stephen's Church, the church staff will keep you informed in the following ways:

- Via email (be sure you are subscribed to the **eSpirit**; you can scan the QR code to sign up)
- On our website at [ststephensRVA.org/weather](http://ststephensRVA.org/weather)
- On our Facebook page ([ststephensRVA](https://www.facebook.com/ststephensRVA))
- On the automated attendant greeting on the office phone (804.288.2867)



### What we don't do

We do not announce schedule adjustments through local TV and radio. If you see on a station's website, or on the "crawl" at the bottom of your TV screen, that "St. Stephen's" has cancelled services, for example, please remember that there is more than one St. Stephen's Church in the broadcast area, and this information will not have come from us.

### If the parish office is closed:

- There will be no service of weekday Morning Prayer, in person nor via livestream.
- No meetings or other activities will take place in our buildings.
- The Café and May Fair House will be closed.



# St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

6000 Grove Avenue | Richmond Virginia 23226  
804.288.2867 | [ststephensRVA.org](http://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*

