

the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 2025 | TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Christmas memories: send us yours by this Friday, August 22

If you have been at St. Stephen's Church awhile, you have likely attended, or at least heard about, our annual Christmas pageant. Known most recently as "the youth pageant," we began last year to include young children in this pageant which takes place on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Whatever you call it, though,



this year we will celebrate a momentous anniversary: 100 stagings of this pageant! (Thanks to war and the recent pandemic, it has not run 100 years straight.) In preparation for this milestone, we are eager to hear from you. A planning group is gathering pageant memories from current and former members of our community to use as part of our celebration. Please share stories, photos, videos, or clippings, and pass the word to past participants who may not still be at St. Stephen's. Please complete the simple submission form (scan the QR code) **by August 22**.

Clergy news!
See page 3.

A way to support Fairfield Elementary School students

St. Stephen's outreach ministry collaborates with Communities in Schools to support students at Fairfield Court Elementary School, our longtime partner, in a variety of ways. Between now and September 7, we are collecting items for "oops" kits. Sometimes children have toilet accidents at school, or arrive at school wearing dirty clothes, both of which can make learning more challenging. "Oops" kits are for students who need a change of clothes during the school day so that they can return to class and focus on learning. Students who need the items will receive them from a trusted adult at the school.



We are collecting various sizes of new socks, underwear, and sweatpants. You can find details and suggestions by scanning the QR code. Signing up is not required; we welcome all donations. Please place your donations in the baskets near the outreach table by September 7. The outreach table is located near Palmer Hall, the elevator, and stairs.

Opportunities to serve at Fairfield Court Elementary School

Are you interested in becoming engaged with Richmond's East End community and making a difference in a young student's life? St. Stephen's Church partners with Fairfield Court Elementary School in two ways:

- Parishioners serve as tutors or mentors, working with small groups of students or one-on-one with the same student each week, for a total of one to two hours per week. Training and orientation are provided.
- Parishioners may register for Fairfield's special events roster. Throughout the year there are opportunities to engage with students and teachers for one-off activities requiring a few hours on a particular day, such as a teacher appreciation breakfast, a Halloween trunk or treat, etc.

Please contact Jennifer Bousquet at jbousquet@ststephensRVA.org to discuss your interest, or chat with parishioners who are currently involved at Fairfield Court after all services **next Sunday, August 24** at the outreach table in the hall near the stairs to the top floor of the parish house.

Another honor for our market

The Farmers Market @ St. Stephen's, founded in 2008, has once again received recognition from Richmonders. In Richmond magazine's annual "Best and Worst" issue, our market was one of three named as the best farmers markets in Richmond. Many thanks to the readers who voted for us!

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.





Come to this 'welcome back' event in family ministry

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 | 5-7 P.M.



Families with children and youth of all ages are invited to reconnect after the summer and have some fun together. We'll HAVE pizza from Fireside Pizza, treats from Jiji's Frozen Custard, and lawn games, outside the Three Chopt Road entrance to the church. The cost is \$15 per person with a maximum of \$50 for a family. There's no charge for those age 3 and under. Scan the QR code on the left for tickets.

Family ministry registration is open; calendars available

The family ministry team has been making plans for the coming program year and a registration form for 2025-26 is now available on our website. Also posted on the site are calendars for the coming year. Visit ststephensRVA.org/children-youth today!

We have openings for nursery assistants

The young children of St. Stephen's Church are vital members of our parish family. We celebrate their joy and energy, we recognize their gifts, and we strive to nourish their spiritual development in an environment of safety, comfort, and loving care. Nursery assistants work as a team to create this environment, which is their most important role. St. Stephen's nursery is a trusted space for parents to take their children age 4 and under while they attend worship or other church events.

We are seeking two new nursery assistants. Experience with children in educational, childcare, or church settings is preferred. After reading the responsibilities and guidelines found at ststephensRVA.org/employment, applicants should email a letter of interest and resume to the Rev. Abby Kocher, director of children's ministry, akocher@ststephensRVA.org.

Do you receive the family ministry newsletter?

Stay in the loop with family ministry by signing up to receive the family ministry email newsletter at <https://tinyurl.com/yc7c4usr> or scan the QR code on the right.



For new or returning Anna Julia Cooper School volunteers

AUGUST 19 OR OCTOBER 16

Volunteers for Anna Julia Cooper School, both new and returning, should attend a training session this month or in October. You will review important logistics and hear from members of the student support team about how to show up well for the students. Dates are August 19, 12:30-1:30 p.m., or October 16, 1-2 p.m. RSVP to Ashley Raggi, raggia@ajcschool.org.

Café @ St. Stephen's will require cards for payment

Beginning Tuesday, September 2, when you visit the Café @ St. Stephen's, please be prepared to pay with a credit or debit card. We will no longer be accepting cash. This is already the practice in the May Fair House and streamlines our accounting, especially since we often do not have two employees available to count cash at the end of a shift. Thanks for your cooperation!

Compline resumes September 7 with an interim director for Sanctuary

St. Stephen's Church is grateful to be able to provide a sung Compline service on Sundays at 8 p.m. The mixed *a cappella* ensemble known as Sanctuary offers this exquisite half-hour service in our candlelit church as light incense wafts through the nave. After Sanctuary's regular summer break, we had planned to resume Compline this month. With the departure of our director of music, who was also the conductor of Sanctuary, we're postponing that return until September 7, when we will welcome Jeffrey Riehl as interim director of Sanctuary. Dr. Riehl is associate professor of music and director of choral activities at the University of Richmond, where he has taught since 1995, and is director of music at Second Presbyterian Church. He was artistic director and conductor of the James River Singers from 2000 to 2012. Our Compline choir will be in expert hands! St. Stephen's Church is committed to this service, an important part of our worship and music ministry which is appreciated not only by parishioners but by the surrounding community.



News about our clergy team

We are delighted to announce that the Rev. John Rohrs, in coordination with St. Stephen's vestry and the bishop's office, has called the Rev. **Judy Webb Davis** to join the clergy staff as associate rector for pastoral care, beginning October 1. Judy has most recently served in successive interim ministry roles at St. Mark's, Richmond; St. John's, Tappahannock; and Grace Church, Kilmarnock. Prior to that, Judy served as rector of Emmanuel, Brook Hill and as assistant rector at All Saints', Richmond.

Judy is no stranger to St. Stephen's Church. She and her husband, Doug Davis, first visited nearly 30 years ago. As a parishioner, Judy was involved as a facilitator in the Disciples of Christ in Community (DOCC) program and was instrumental in establishing the healing prayer ministry that has become a fixture at our weekly Celtic service. After a period of discernment, she was sponsored for ordination from St. Stephen's and earned her Master in Divinity degree from Virginia Theological Seminary in 2014.

While she has experience and skills in many areas, Judy's passion is pastoral ministry and she particularly enjoys empowering parishioners to share in that work of compassion and care. She will serve as a point person and coordinator of our various pastoral care ministries at St. Stephen's, and will assist in the leadership of worship, preaching, teaching, and other activities alongside the rest of our clergy team. She will work a three-quarters' time schedule, to preserve a slice of time for her family.

Judy's arrival corresponds to a planned and pending shift in the pastoral role of the Rev. Dr. **William L. Sachs**, whose relationship to St. Stephen's goes back further still. After nearly four decades of ordained ministry serving at St. Stephen's and in other parishes and roles, Bill plans to reduce his hours significantly and alter his role beginning January 1, 2026. Thankfully, Bill will continue to hang his shingle here as historian-in-residence, honoring both his academic passion and his long and vital ministry in the life of this parish. Beginning in January, Bill will not keep standard office hours, nor will he be as regular a presence at the altar or in the pulpit. But he will still occasionally serve and preach on Sundays, and he will continue to teach periodic formation classes and assist as he is able with funerals and weddings and other special services. This reduction in role and hours will give Bill more time to complete several writing projects that are underway, and give him more time to travel and spend time with his fiancée, Melinda Fitzgerald, as they enjoy this new chapter of life together.

We are so grateful for Bill's many years of ministry here, and for the impact he has had on so many – and will continue to have! One of the lives Bill has touched along the way is Judy's, as they used to ride the train together to and from Virginia Theological Seminary while she prepared for ordained ministry. It is fitting that their lives and ministries intersect again at this time, and all the better that Bill will continue to share with Judy in the ministry of our clergy team. Thanks be to God!

Participate in PRIDE events next month

PRIDE Fest 2025 takes place **Saturday, September 27, noon to 6 p.m.** at Midrown Green, 2401 West Leigh Street. Episcopal churches—including St. Stephen's—will have a presence. Jennifer Bousquet, our director of outreach and engagement, will be at the Episcopal churches tent and welcomes your participation by signing up for a two-hour shift. Contact her at jbousquet@stephensRVA.org.

St. Stephen's parishioners are also invited to attend the annual Pride Eucharist, which will take place this year at Grace & Holy Trinity Episcopal Church near the Altria Theater and Monroe Park. The service, hosted by Grace & Holy Trinity and the Pace Center, takes place **Friday, September 26 at 6 p.m.** St. Stephen's clergy will be present.

Dogwood Preschool is hiring

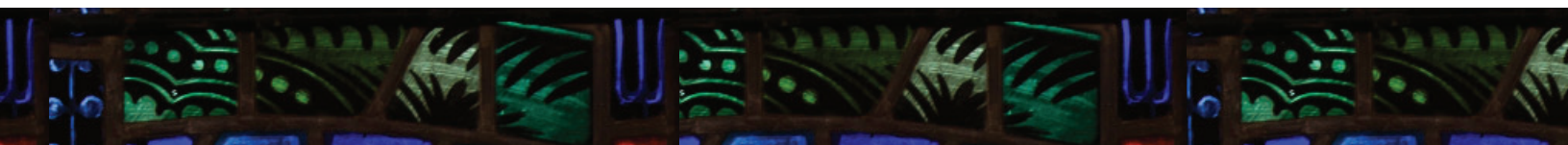
Dogwood Preschool at St. Stephen's Church is hiring an assistant teacher. The preschool serves children from 16 months old to 5 years-plus with a half-day program to nurture children's creativity and self-confidence using a dynamic, age-appropriate curriculum and small classes. If you are interested in joining the Dogwood team, please call or email Elizabeth Sykes, 804.665.4902, programdirector@dogwoodpreschool.org.

Women of St. Stephen's host opening event

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 | 5-7 P.M.

The Women of St. Stephen's provide programs from September through May for all members of the parish (and beyond) featuring fellowship, learning, formation, and service to one another and the community. The group will have its first gathering for 2025-26 even before our regular Sunday schedule kicks in, so be sure to note this date on your calendar. In the fellowship hall you can visit tables to learn about the varied ways to be involved in the ministries of the Women of St. Stephen's. While the organization is led by women of this parish, their offerings are for everyone, regardless of gender or church membership. You will also be able to visit the May Fair House, the shop run by the Women of St. Stephen's, and if you think you may be interested in joining a cook team for the shop, you can tour the church kitchen to learn more.

In addition, Mahjong instructor Mitty Songer will be on hand to introduce this game which originated in Asia and has become very popular in Western countries. You may have seen the game in popular films like "The Joy Luck Club" and "Crazy Rich Asians," and wondered how it was played. Come for laughter, learning and a touch of friendly competition! No registration is needed for this informal, free event, which will also offer refreshments.





Here comes fall!

Even as we enjoy the last weeks of summer, we are getting excited about a new program year. Here are some dates to note:

AUGUST 31: Last Sunday for summer worship schedule

SEPTEMBER 1: Labor Day, office and buildings closed

SEPTEMBER 2: Office re-opens

SEPTEMBER 2: Café @ St. Stephen's goes "cards only" (no cash)

SEPTEMBER 4: Opening event for the Women of St. Stephen's, 5-7 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 7: Regular worship schedule resumes; "soft space" moves back to Palmer Hall

8 a.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite One

9 a.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite Two in main church*

9 a.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite Two in Palmer Hall*

10:10-11 a.m., Rally Day gathering in Fellowship Hall with refreshments and information about "Connect and Serve" opportunities; open house in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd atria

11:15 a.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite Two*

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

6:30 p.m., Sunday Community Supper

8 p.m., Compline

*Child care available during services with asterisk

SEPTEMBER 9: May Fair House resumes regular hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.;

Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon; Sunday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 10: Wonderful Wednesdays suppers resume, 5:45-6:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 14: Sunday Forum and youth Bible study resume; gathering/orientation for all who plan to serve in Palmer Hall (children and adults)

SEPTEMBER 21: Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and Many Parents One Vine resume

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

6000 Grove Avenue | Richmond, Virginia 23226 | 804.288.2867

ststephensRVA.org | staff emails are at ststephensRVA.org/staff

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.

