

the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2025 | FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sunday formation for all ages

In the **Sunday Forum** today, we begin a three-part series, "Foundations of Faith in Troubled Times," beginning with our own clergy and continuing with two insightful guests. No registration is needed for the forum, which begins at 10:10 a.m. in the fellowship hall. Descriptions of each session in this series are on page 4.

Today is the first day for **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd** and **Many Parents, One Vine**. The **youth Sunday circles** continue in Room 4. All three offerings take place on the top floor of the parish house.

Today is the deadline to register for small groups

REGISTRATION OPEN THROUGH SEPTEMBER 21

Our menu of small group offerings for adults this fall includes Emmaus groups as well as special groups focusing on topics such as "Revelations in Literature and Liturgy"; the experience and spirituality of aging; learning about labyrinths as a spiritual tool; and a racial healing circle for those seeking to practice the work of racial justice in conversation with others. Registration opened September 2 and concludes today. Groups will run between the week of October 5 and the week of December 7, inclusive. No prior experience is necessary. Visit ststephensRVA.org/small-groups for additional details.

Responding to God's love at Connect and Serve

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

—Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC*

Connect and Serve is this church's year-round ministry fair. When you seek to learn about or get connected with small groups or communities within the church or explore ways to live your faith in ministries of service, either within or beyond the church, start by visiting the Connect and Serve webpage at ststephensRVA.org/connect-serve.

Wednesday evenings at St. Stephen's

Wednesday suppers have resumed in the fellowship hall, 5:45-6:30 p.m. (menus are at ststephensRVA.org/parish-suppers), and last Wednesday we began a three-week series titled "**Practices of Faith in a Turbulent World**" at 6:30 p.m. in Palmer Hall. In a time of division and political strife, remaining in touch in our faith can seem like an impossible task. Join St. Stephen's clergy as they reflect on practices which ground us in faith even and especially as we navigate socio-political turbulence. Together we will consider how to have an enemy, what prayer looks like in the midst of times such as these, and how to protect and cultivate joy as a means of resistance to that which would divide us. No prior experience necessary; all are welcome. Remaining sessions are:

- September 24: How to shield our joy (Cate Anthony)
- October 1: How to pray in turbulent times (led by the Rev. Will Stanley)

This Thursday: Fall Ministry Night, open to all

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 | 5:15 P.M.

About once per season in fall, winter, and spring, 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. Your RSVP helps us plan for enough seating and food. To sign up, visit ststephensRVA.org/ministry-nights.

TAKE THIS NEWSLETTER HOME TODAY!

Visiting? Newer to St. Stephen's?

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.





An invitation to the Episcopal Church starts October 5

SUNDAYS, OCTOBER 5 THROUGH NOVEMBER 16 | 7-7:50 P.M.

This series of seven seminars provides an entry or beginning point for those who are interested in learning more about the context, culture, history, beliefs, traditions and contemporary practices, and the possibilities of Christian life in the Episcopal Church and at St. Stephen's. All are welcome, whether you are newer here, a longtime participant or member, are from another faith or Christian tradition, or consider yourself spiritual-but-not-religious—all are invited to participate. "Invitation" also serves as preparation for those who wish to formally join the church in May when the bishop celebrates the rites of Reception and Confirmation. We will meet on Sunday evenings in the Café @ St. Stephen's. Scan the QR code to register.



Bible study of the Revelation to John begins this week

THURSDAYS, SEPTEMBER 25-NOVEMBER 20 | 10 A.M.

Join St. Stephen's clergy and other intrepid parishioners for our Thursday Bible Study beginning September 25 at 10 a.m. and continuing through November 20. This fall we will study the Revelation to John, the very last book of the Bible. Mysterious and intimidating, Revelation overflows with images and ideas that confound our modern sensibilities, including dragons, angels, and Armageddon! Together we will dive into John's Revelation, discovering what messages this story has for us today. No prior experience is required to participate. Questions? Contact the Rev. Cate Anthony, canthony@ststephensRVA.org.

You're invited to PRIDE events this Friday and Saturday

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

PRIDE Fest 2025 takes place the next day, **Saturday, September 27, noon to 6 p.m.** at Midtown Green, 2401 West Leigh Street. Episcopal churches—including St. Stephen's—will have a presence. Be sure to stop by the Episcopal Church table!

Come to a newcomer reception

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2 | 5:30-7 P.M.

A few times during the year, the rector, parish staff, and members of the hospitality committee host a reception especially for those who are new (or new-ish) 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, please come to the next reception. These gatherings are very informal. We serve appetizers, wine, beer, and non-alcoholic beverages. We hope to see you there! RSVP at ststephensRVA.org/getting-started.

Thomas Sheehan to give organ recital here

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7 | 7:30 P.M.

The Richmond Chapter of the American Guild of Organists will present Thomas Sheehan as part of its Organ Repertoire Recital Series at St. Stephen's Church. The director of music at Montreal's Christ Church Cathedral is the former cathedral organist and interim director of music at Washington National Cathedral. He has performed as an organist throughout the United States and in Canada and Europe, including recitals in Montreal, Reykjavík, and Toulouse. Don't miss this opportunity to hear him here on our Aeolian-Skinner organ. His program will include works by Rachel Laurin, Brenda Portman, Mark Miller, Takashi Sakai, Carson Cooman, and Timothy Tikker. The concert is free and open to the public.

Vigil at St. Paul's Church a week from tomorrow

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 | 6 P.M.

Please join those praying for our city, commonwealth, and country on the front steps at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 815 E. Grace Street. In this monthly service of prayer and praise, we witness to the suffering of the most vulnerable and powerless among us and lift up our lament, fear, and hope to God's redemptive and healing power. United as One Body, we make known the love and justice of Jesus of Nazareth for the poor, the oppressed, the sick, and the stranger. Contact Jennifer Bousquet, director of outreach and engagement, jbousquet@ststephensRVA.org, if you are interested in carpooling from St. Stephen's at 5:20 p.m.

Thank you for the backpacks and suitcases

Thanks to all who donated backpacks and suitcases for the Downtown Community Ministry at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Each Thursday, this ministry provides lunch and distributes clothing and toiletries to 150 people. The recipients of our donations were so grateful for them. While this "drive" has concluded, if you have used, sturdy backpacks or wheeled suitcases in good condition to donate at some point in the future, please contact Jennifer Bousquet, jbousquet@ststephensRVA.org.

Serving 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? We partner with Fairfield 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.

Questions: Jennifer Bousquet, jbousquet@ststephensRVA.org.

Upcoming speaker to focus on fall displays

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7 | 9:30 A.M. GATHERING, 10 A.M. PROGRAM
"Crafting Fall Beauty" is the theme for the October program hosted by the Women of St. Stephen's. Kate Vernon from the Arrangers Market, owned and operated by Kate and her mother Nancy Ross Hugo, will give a presentation on container gardening. Kate will demonstrate unique arrangements for fall decorating that are simple, sophisticated, practical, and celebrate nature. You may have seen the Arrangers Market at the May Fair House annual holiday bazaar (coming this year on November 4). No registration is needed for this program which will conclude with an auction of the arrangements created. This could be your lucky day! Also, pansies, kale, cabbage, and mums will be available for sale and proceeds support our grants and outreach.

Two opportunities for your pet to be blessed

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5 | 9 A.M. AND 3 P.M.

October 4 is the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Among the things for which Francis is remembered is a love for animals, and many churches offer a special service near his feast day where participants give particular thanks for their beloved pets, and if they wish, bring their animals to receive a blessing (and maybe a treat). As we've done for the past few years, St. Stephen's Church will offer two such opportunities, both on Sunday, October 5.

The 9 a.m. Palmer Hall service will be held outdoors October 5 (weather permitting) and will incorporate a pet blessing. You are invited to bring your pet or a stuffed animal to our service of Holy Eucharist on the lawn outside the Café @ St. Stephen's.

At 3 p.m. that afternoon, we'll have a service on the Three Chopt lawn with our traditional Blessing of the Animals liturgy which lasts about 30 minutes.

Observing the Season of Creation

During the ecumenical observance of a Season of Creation, we join other Christians around the world to celebrate in prayer and action our Gospel calling to protect the earth that God has entrusted to our care. The celebration of this season began in 1989 when Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I established September 1 as a Day of Prayer for Creation for the Orthodox Church. The World Council of Churches extended the celebration to October 4, the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi.

At St. Stephen's we have traditionally focused our observance on a Sunday near the Feast of St. Francis (October 5 this year) with Blessing of the Animals services (see previous announcement) and thematic elements in our Sunday services throughout October. Learn more at ststephensRVA.org/creation-care.

Visit our year-round farmers market

SATURDAYS, 8 A.M.-NOON (9-NOON BEGINNING OCTOBER 4)

The autumnal equinox is tomorrow, and you've no doubt noticed that even before Daylight Saving Time ends, the days are growing shorter. As it does each fall, the Farmers Market @ St. Stephen's will **shift its opening time to 9 a.m. the first Saturday in October**—that's a week from this coming Saturday. The good news is that the market continues to feature an abundance of fresh produce from local farmers, as well as prepared foods and beverages, baked goods, meat, poultry, seafood, flowers, and original work by talented artisans. Remember that **the market is open year-round**, and help spread the word (people are always surprised!). The market accepts SNAP benefits and Virginia Fresh Match. Visit ststephensRVA.org/farmers-market for details.

A reminder: the Compline service is back

Our sung Compline service is back after a summer hiatus. 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. Visit ststephensRVA.org/compline for repertoire and an order of service.



Sunday Forum focus: Foundations of faith in troubled times

SUNDAYS, SEPTEMBER 21 AND 28, OCTOBER 5 | 10:10 A.M.

TODAY: KEEPING OUR FAITH ALIVE

St. Stephen's clergy will begin this series with a panel conversation about the theological roots of our personal faith. What theology, scripture, or other facet of faith do we return to as a bolster to our spirits in troubled times? Participants will have a chance to reflect on the roots of their own faith and share ruminations with fellow parishioners.

SEPTEMBER 28 : PROMOTING PEACE AND THE CHURCH'S MISSION

A year ago, we welcomed the Very Rev. Richard Sewell to our Sunday Forum by video. Dean of St. George's College, Jerusalem, a priest of the Church of England, and a residentiary canon of St. George's Cathedral, Dean Sewell brought us insights about conflict in the Middle East from the perspective of faith. Given the presence of our church's ministries in that region, the war in Gaza is seen from a different perspective. Next Sunday, again by video, Dean Sewell returns to the forum to extend the central question: as Christians, what can we do to promote peace? In conversation with John Rohrs and Bill Sachs, the dean will sharpen our thinking about the church's mission. Join the forum and deepen your sense of faith in community amid conflict.

OCTOBER 5: RELIGIOUS FAITH AND MODERN AMERICAN LIFE

Few people have the perspective on religious faith and American life now that the Rev. Peter Marty has cultivated. At a time of division and suspicion of difference, he maintains an informed balance, guided by his faith and commitment to Christian mission. Editor and publisher of *The Christian Century*, a leading mainstream publication, Marty models balance and empathy. On October 5, he will preach at the 9:00 and 11:15 a.m. services in addition to speaking in the Forum. This Lutheran pastor who has led large parishes has a special interest in churches like ours.

Database login is live; be sure to check on your profile

The portal allowing parishioners to log into their database profile is now available! Instruction sheets are available at Information Central (just outside the parish office) and on our website, ststephensRVA.org/ministry-platform.

This online portal also serves as our parish directory. We will no longer print directories. Be sure your profile reflects which information you wish to share with other parishioners—phone, mobile phone, email address, etc.—and rest assured that this password-protected directory is not available to the general public.

If you have questions, please call the parish office at 804.288.2867.

May Fair House has resumed regular hours

May Fair House, a food and gift shop run by the Women of St. Stephen's on our campus, provides fellowship for volunteers, pleasant shopping for customers, delicious food prepared by May Fair House cooks, and funds for local organizations addressing human need. The shop's regular hours have resumed after a the summer schedule: Tuesday through Friday: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; Saturday: 9 a.m.-noon; Sunday: 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; closed Mondays and when the parish office is closed (holiday, weather, etc.).



St. Stephen's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

A community of hospitality, healing, and hope, sharing the love of Christ.

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