

the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2025 | THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Robert McCormick accepts appointment as St. Stephen's director of music

We are thrilled that Robert McCormick has accepted the Rev. John Rohrs' offer to become the new director of music at St. Stephen's Church! Robert is a nationally known organist and an acclaimed conductor of adult and children's choirs. He will join our staff January 26. Read about Robert on page 3.

Principles of the Christian life: faith, hope, and love are the focus of Sunday and Wednesday series

Two series—one in the Sunday Forum, the other on Wednesday evenings following our mid-week suppers—reflect this semester's theme for adult formation, "Principles of the Christian Life: Faith, Hope, and Love."

In the Sunday Forum we begin a series titled "Abounding in Hope," and today's session concerns "Hope at the local level." We find ourselves living in a tumultuous chapter of our nation's history. How does this tumult affect local organizations and communities, and where do those communities find hope even as they combat political and social turmoil? Join Sheila Herlihy Hennessee, Director of Faith Organizing at the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, and Jonathan Zur, CEO and President of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, for today's conversation. The forum takes place in the fellowship hall at 10:10 a.m.; no sign-up is needed. Read more about this series at ststephensRVA.org/sunday-forum.

The Wednesday series provides "Perspectives on grief." Last Wednesday, the Rev. John Jenkins led the first of two sessions called "Tending the Ache: the sacred work of grief." Whether current events or other influences have brought feelings of sadness and grief to the surface of your awareness, all people share a longing in the soul for healing. The question is, how? John Jenkins presents the key themes and frameworks developed in Francis Weller's *The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief*. There will be opportunities to share and for prayer. More about this series is at ststephensRVA.org/adults.

Welcome, Bishop Hollerith!

The Rt. Rev. Herman Hollerith IV, 10th Bishop of Southern Virginia, is celebrating the Holy Eucharist with our rector, the Rev. John D. Rohrs, at the 9 a.m. service. Bishop Hollerith is here to baptize his granddaughter, Katherine Lacey Hollerith. Bishop Hollerith is also the brother of the Very Rev. Randolph M. Hollerith, Dean of the Washington National Cathedral and a former member of the St. Stephen's staff. Welcome, Bishop Hollerith!

Indigenous Peoples Day

In recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day (Monday, October 13), today's services include several selections by indigenous voices, including the opening reading at our Celtic service and music in both morning and evening services. Additional information about hymns, pieces, and composers is available at Information Central. Or visit ststephensRVA.org/this-sunday for a link to the notes.

New offering: 'Sharing the love of Christ' open house

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 12:30-1:30, PALMER HALL CHAPEL

We come to St. Stephen's Church for different reasons and at different stages of life, yet all of us seek God's healing love, communion in Christ, renewal, and the treasure of community. St. Stephen's hospitality ministry invites you to an open house where we will showcase the wide range of ways and times when you can practice sharing the love of Christ in ministries of service. Our prayer is that you will discover an alignment between your life and the life of St. Stephen's, and that together we may share Christ's hospitality, healing, and hope with our neighbors and the community beyond. Come and see what is possible! To share comments or questions, please contact the Rev. John Jenkins, clergy liaison to the hospitality ministry, jjenkins@ststephensRVA.org.

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.





Visit with our new associate rector in the Café @ St. Stephen's

WEDNESDAYS IN OCTOBER | 9-10:30 A.M.

The Rev. Judy Webb Davis, our new associate rector for pastoral care, began her ministry with us September 29. Judy is looking forward to getting to know members of this community of faith and learning more about pastoral care at St. Stephen's Church. She will be in the Café @ St. Stephen's on Wednesday mornings in October from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Please stop in for a visit—no appointment necessary!

All Saints' Day service

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1 | 2 P.M.

On All Saints' Day, a major day in the church calendar, we remember and celebrate the Communion of Saints, including all those whom we love but see no longer. We pray with special intention for those who have died in the past year. A service of Holy Eucharist is held on November 1, and all are invited, not just those who are remembering someone who has died recently. (Please note that the service time is 2 p.m., later than usual, to begin after the conclusion of the Saturday farmers market.)

The bulletin for this service will include the names of those under the care of St. Stephen's who have died since All Saints' Day 2024. If you wish to include the name of a loved one who has died in the past year but who may not be known to the parish staff, please contact Kitty Ball, kball@ststephensRVA.org or 804.288.2867, **by Monday, October 27.**

Please keep your pledge current

The leaders of St. Stephen's Church, and all who rely on our ministries, are deeply grateful for your generous support, which comprises 87 percent of the amount needed to fund our budget. We'll begin our annual giving campaign for 2026 next Sunday, but 2025 is not over yet! Soon our finance office will send third-quarter statements to all who have made financial gifts in 2025. Please review your statement and do all you can keep your pledge payments current. The church's expenses continue year-round, and regular pledge payments help us pay bills on time. If you have already fulfilled your pledge for 2025, thank you! If not, remember that gifts must be received by December 31, 2025 to be included on your 2025 tax return. If you have questions about your statement, contact Susan McNamara at smcnamara@ststephensRVA.org or 804.288.2867. Thank you!

Prayers for expectant parents

If you are expecting a baby, our clergy and pastoral care team would like to hold you in prayer and follow along this journey with you. Expectant parents may also be included in the parish prayer list printed each Sunday if they wish.

We also offer support for parents who experience a loss through miscarriage or other complications during pregnancy.

Whatever your circumstances, please let us know how we can support you; be in touch with Abby Kocher, director of children's ministry, akocher@ststephensRVA.org.

A diaper drive for grant recipient Little Hands

The Women of St. Stephen's invite you to contribute to a diaper drive for Little Hands Virginia, a recipient of grant funds from the Women of St. Stephen's and the May Fair House. Little Hands collects and distributes infant and toddler essentials to families in need. We'll collect diapers (sizes NB-4) and baby wipes through **October 19**. You may bring them to the indoor entrance to May Fair House near the Lounge.

Responding to God's love through Connect and Serve

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 ststephensRVA.org/connect-serve.

Robert McCormick to join St. Stephen's staff as director of music

We are thrilled to announce that Robert McCormick has agreed to become the new director of music at St. Stephen's Church! Robert is a nationally known organist and an acclaimed conductor of adult and children's choirs. He has led large-scale music programs at several Episcopal churches, programs which have grown in both numbers and spirit.

During a recent visit to St. Stephen's, Robert led rehearsals of the choristers, St. Stephen's Choir, and Sanctuary, our Compline choir. He also met with parish staff and members of the search committee. Throughout the whirlwind visit, Robert demonstrated an infectious energy and an outgoing personality, balanced by a genuine curiosity and thoughtfulness about what makes our music ministry unique. He had admired the strength and diversity of our music program from afar, and he is excited about being part of a collaborative team that brings that music to life.

Robert has more than 25 years' experience as a church musician. He serves as director of music at Church of the Good Shepherd in Rosemont, Pennsylvania, where his husband, the Rev. Kyle Babin, is rector. Previously, Robert was organist and choirmaster at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Philadelphia; director of music at St. Paul's Parish, K Street in Washington, D.C.; organist and director of music at St. Mary the Virgin in New York City; and assistant organist at Trinity Church, Princeton. He is sought after as a concert organist, workshop leader, choral clinician, and teacher of organ improvisation. Robert graduated from Westminster Choir College *summa cum laude*.

"I am overjoyed to have been appointed as St. Stephen's new director of music," he says. "I wasn't looking for a new position just yet, thinking any such move would be a few years down the road. Yet when I saw the St. Stephen's job posting, a church I had visited before and have known of for years, something told me I ought to apply."

Of his visit to St. Stephen's, he said, "Everyone was so warm, welcoming, friendly, and committed, and I realized that it would be an enormous privilege to join such a strong and inspiring community. I very much look forward to taking my place among you and to share in your vibrant and broad array of worship, formation for all ages, and ministry."

Since the program year is already underway we will need to wait a bit for Robert's arrival as he finishes the fall in his current post and puts an interim plan in place for his departure. His first day with us will be Monday, January 26. Robert says that his husband Kyle plans to join him in Richmond with their cocker spaniel, Beau, a short time after Robert moves here.

We are fortunate to have Diana Chou and Chris Edwards tending beautifully to our music ministry, with talented organists filling in as needed. We are also blessed to have Jeff Riehl scheduled to continue leading Compline through the fall, and to have Paul Honaker continuing as our handbell choir director.

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"I am so grateful to the members of the committee that helped host visits and navigate this process," said the Rev. John Rohrs, "and of course I am grateful to Diana and Chris, Jeff and Paul for their faithful and dedicated leadership during these months of transition. Most of all, I am grateful to Robert for taking this leap and joining us at St. Stephen's. Robert is enormously talented as an organist and conductor, and even more than that he is a person of deep faith, collegiality, and sincerity. His references all spoke so movingly about the impact he has had on their lives and on the congregations they served together. I look forward to sharing in ministry with him for years to come."

Week of Compassion begins November 9

For the second year, St. Stephen's Church will have a "Week of Compassion." On Sunday, November 9, we will observe the feast day for our patron saint, Stephen (transferred from December 26). The week will emphasize our connection to one another as we follow the example of St. Stephen, the Christian church's first deacon, through acts of service. We will have several guest speakers, including our missionaries in Argentina, Heidi Schmidt and Monica Vega, as well as the Rev. Dr. Sam Wells, the vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London. Details are at **ststephensRVA.org/week-of-compassion**. Many of the service opportunities require advance sign-up and have limited space; log on soon!

Stay in the loop about outreach ministry

Jennifer Bousquet, our director of outreach and engagement, and Anna Jones, the manager of our food ministry and farmers market, are preparing a new monthly outreach e-newsletter. Stay up to date on what's happening with our outreach partners and learn about ways to be involved. To receive this free newsletter, scan the QR code to subscribe. As with all our email newsletters, you may unsubscribe at any time, and we will never give your information to any outside party. Sign up now to make sure you don't miss the first issue which will come out later this month.



Consider serving at Peter Paul

One of St. Stephen's longest-standing East End partnerships is with Peter Paul (formerly known as the Peter Paul Development Center). Its mission is to support the residents of Richmond's East End community and educate its children, equipping them to serve as positive contributors to their family, community, and society. In Peter Paul's after-school program, St. Stephen's parishioners serve as homework tutors, reading or math buddies, or classroom assistants. Other opportunities include working in the garden, helping with food distribution, or assisting with special projects. If you are interested, please contact Daiyonna Tretina at **dtretina@peterpaulrva.org**, or Jennifer Bousquet at **jbousquet@ststephensRVA.org** or 804.288.2867.



Please check your database profile

The portal for parishioners to use to log into their database profile is available, and instructions are available at Information Central (just outside the parish office) and at ststephensRVA.org/ministry-platform. The online portal also serves as our **parish directory**. 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 804.288.2867.



A new archbishop of Canterbury

The Rt. Rev. and Rt. Hon. Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London, has been chosen as the next archbishop of Canterbury, becoming the first woman to serve in the historic leadership role for both the Church of England and the worldwide Anglican Communion. The archbishop of Canterbury, as the most senior bishop in the Church of England, is seen as an “instrument of communion” among the 42 autonomous, interdependent provinces that make up the 85-million-member Anglican Communion, all of which, including the Episcopal Church, have historic ties with the Church of England. Bishop Mullally’s nomination was approved by King Charles III, a largely ceremonial step in a process overseen by the Church of England, though her selection followed months of deliberation by the Crown Nominations Commission with input from Anglicans around the world. The selection now must be ratified by the College of Canons of Canterbury Cathedral later this year and confirmed at a ceremony in January, after which she will take office. You can read more about Bishop Mullally’s appointment by scanning the QR code.



May Fair House is open today!

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. Did you know that the shop is open on Sunday mornings? Regular hours are Tuesday through Friday: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; Saturday: 9 a.m.-noon; Sunday: 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; it’s closed Mondays and whenever the parish office is closed.



Hours have shifted for our year-round market

SATURDAYS, 9-NOON

The Farmers Market @ St. Stephen’s has made its annual shift to a 9 a.m. opening time through the spring. The market features fresh produce from local farmers, prepared foods and beverages, eggs, meat, poultry, seafood, flowers, and original work by talented artisans. Help us spread the word that **the market is open year-round** (people are always surprised). The market accepts SNAP and Virginia Fresh Match. More details: ststephensRVA.org/farmers-market.



Snack donations for the Palmer Hall service

Following the Palmer Hall service, our 9 a.m. liturgy designed with families with young children in mind, we like to provide snacks for the group in the Palmer Hall Annex. We are collecting snacks to share and request donations of pre-packaged, single-serving items in the church office. We also welcome gluten-free and allergy-free items.



St. Stephen's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

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

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