

the SPIRIT

Sunday, November 9, 2025 | St. Stephen's Day

Abound in Hope: the annual giving campaign

In the fifteenth chapter of his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul writes, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." St. Stephen's mission is to live as a community of hospitality, healing, and hope, sharing the love of Christ. We are drawn in each week for worship and fellowship; then the Holy Spirit sends us out in love and compassion. Through it all, in Paul's words, we abound in hope.

We are deeply grateful to the 289 households who, as of Wednesday, had made pledges totaling \$1,295,024. This includes 19 pledges from families who attend the Palmer Hall service. If you have not yet made a pledge, please prayerfully consider the ways that St. Stephen's Church helps you abound in hope, and what you can do to make it possible for this church to bring hope to others. Our goal: 850 pledges totaling \$3 million. Visit our website to watch the campaign video, ststephensRVA.org/annual-giving-campaign as well as individual testimonials. You can pledge online or use the pledge card from your packet. Extra cards are available on tables throughout the parish house. Thank you!

Giving boxes

Children can take part in our annual giving campaign! At Information Central (the table across from Palmer Hall) is a basket of simple white boxes that kids can fill with coins or bills to add to our offerings supporting outreach partners. We've been distributing these boxes during the Palmer Hall service, but children who attend a different service are most welcome to take and fill a box. You can decorate it if you wish. Please bring the box back to church on November 16 or 23.

Week of Compassion begins today; brochures available

For the second year, St. Stephen's Church is hosting a "Week of Compassion." It begins today with an observance of the feast day for our patron saint, Stephen (transferred from December 26). This 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.

Today Monica Vega, one of our missionaries in Argentina, is the guest preacher during the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services. Heidi Schmidt, our other missionary, will lead the "wondering" in the Palmer Hall service at 9 a.m.

The following announcements pertain to the Week of Compassion, and additional details about all service projects and other special offerings is available in **a brochure at Information Central**, and on our website, ststephensRVA.org/compassion.

Today's forum

Today's Sunday Forum will present a panel discussion at 10:10 a.m. in the fellowship hall; it's the first in a series titled "Living in Love: Being with One Another." Panelists are Heidi Schmidt and Monica Vega, St. Stephen's missionaries in Argentina; Deb Lawrence, the executive director of ReWork Richmond; Dani T., a ReWork member; and David Waidelich of FeedMore. Jennifer Bousquet, St. Stephen's director of outreach and engagement, will moderate the panel.

Sunday morning formation today

Children, youth, and parents are invited to take part in an intergenerational service activity at 10:10 this morning in Room 14. We will pack winter break backpacks for students at Fairfield Court Elementary School; make cards for homebound seniors of the parish, and cards to place in Thanksgiving boxes; and assemble pet kits for Atlantic Outreach Group. No sign-up is required.

**PLEASE TAKE THIS NEWSLETTER HOME TODAY AND REFER TO IT
THROUGHOUT THE WEEK.**

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.





Sign up to help make home repairs

Among the service opportunities during our “Week of Compassion” is a day of making home repairs to a house in Petersburg on Saturday, November 15. While several of the Week of Compassion activities have very limited space, we need 10 people to help with this project. This team will have a mix of folks with related skills and those who simply have willing hearts. Read more and sign up at ststephensRVA.org/compassion. If you have questions about any of the service opportunities, please contact Jennifer Bousquet, jbousquet@ststephensRVA.org.

Cate Anthony continues Wednesday evening series

NOVEMBER 5, 12, AND 19 | 6:30 P.M.

The Rev. Cate Anthony continues her Wednesday evening class following the mid-week parish supper. The focus of the first two sessions is *Incarnational Mission: Being With the World* by the Rev. Sam Wells, examining the foundations of the “Being With” ethos. On November 19, the class will reflect on Dr. Wells’ visit and lecture and imagine together how to live the theology of “Being With” in our lives today. No sign up is required for this class.

The Rev. Samuel Wells visits next Sunday and Monday

As part of the Week of Compassion, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Wells will visit St. Stephen’s Church next Sunday, November 16, and Monday, November 17. Dr. Wells is vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London’s Trafalgar Square, and a creator of the “Being With” approach we have used in small groups. Next Sunday, he will attend the Palmer Hall service at 9 a.m., speak in the Sunday Forum at 10:10 a.m., preach at the 11:15 a.m. service, and give the reflection during the 5:30 p.m. service of Celtic Evensong and Communion.

On Monday, he will give an address at a community-wide event in the church at 6:30 p.m., speaking about the theology and practice of Being With as a faithful and countercultural response to this moment in the life of the church and our country. We will reflect on the importance of compassion, empathy, and connection as an antidote to polarization and enmity. This free event will be followed by a reception. No registration is required.

Ways to help those experiencing food insecurity

With so much attention focused on food insecurity this fall, we want to remind you of some ways to support our food ministry for those in need.

In recent weeks we have seen a 33 percent increase in the number of households seeking our assistance to feed their families. At the same time, the items available for us to purchase from FeedMore (central Virginia’s food bank) have been very limited. Fortunately, St. Stephen’s Church receives generous weekly donations of shelf-stable food from parishioners, and fresh and perishable food (produce, eggs, meat, and other items) from vendors at our farmers market. You truly make a difference. Thank you.

The best way to help us meet the increasing demand is to continue to donate food. What if everyone who came to church on Sunday brought just two cans? There is always a list of needed items in the weekly **eSpirit**, but if you forget the list, just remember that we always need hearty soups, canned beans, and cans or pouches of tuna. If you wish to do more, shop in bulk at a store like Aldi, BJ’s, or Costco. You can also order food online and have shelf-stable groceries shipped to church.

If you would like to give your time, on Wednesdays and Thursdays we need drivers mid-morning to deliver to those who cannot come to the pantry in person because they lack transportation, have a disability, or face other hurdles. Contact Anna Jones (ajones@ststephensrva.org) to volunteer or to ask for more information. And thank you for supporting this crucial ministry.

Diocesan convention news

The annual convention of the Diocese of Virginia took place Thursday, Friday, and Saturday in Fredericksburg. Representatives of the 173 churches of the diocese included our clergy delegates, the Rev. John Rohrs, the Rev. Will Stanley, the Rev. Cate Anthony, the Rev. Judy Davis, and the Rev. John Jenkins; and our lay delegates, Kathy Brock, Sarah Bartenstein, Bill Davis, Darrell Headrick, Lynn Ivey, Allen Jamerson, Nan O'Connell, Joan Putney, Whitney Robertson, and Meg Tucker. To read about the convention and watch video from the proceedings, scan the QR code or visit episcopalvirginia.org.



Vestry nomination process is underway

SUGGESTIONS DUE BY NOVEMBER 23

In the Episcopal Church, each parish elects a vestry, a board composed of parishioners who work with the rector. Six new vestry members are elected at each annual parish meeting so that the total vestry of 18 is continually rotating in new members to work with continuing ones. Prior to the annual meeting, parishioners are invited to submit names for consideration by a nominating committee. This committee is appointed by the vestry and consists of at-large members as well as the six members of the vestry who will complete their service with the next annual parish meeting.

The committee looks for a diversity of nominees: those of different ages, long-time members and newer ones, those who worship at different services, are involved in a range of ministries, and offer varied gifts, skills, and perspectives.

Visit ststephensRVA.org/vestry-nominations to read the criteria for vestry service, the timeline for the process, and how to suggest a parishioner (or offer yourself) to the committee.

Racial justice workshop offered by our diocese

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22 | 9 A.M.-2:30 P.M.

"I Will With God's Help: Equipping God's People for the Work of Racial Justice" is a workshop offered by the Diocese of Virginia's Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing. This offering will explore our racial history and participants will consider their own understanding of that history. There will be time for worship, reflection, prayer, conversation, and community. Lunch is included. The event will take place at All Saints Episcopal Church, 8787 River Road. To register, send an email to the Rev. David Curtis, dea-conjdc@gmail.com by November 19.

Our market is year-round!

SATURDAYS, 9 A.M.-NOON

The Farmers Market @ St. Stephen's features fresh produce from local farms, prepared foods, eggs, meat, poultry, seafood, art, and more. Help spread the word that **the market is open year-round**. The only time the market is not open is the Saturday after Christmas Day. Details: ststephensRVA.org/farmers-market.

Advent music program and holiday luncheon to be hosted by the Women of St. Stephen's

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2 AT 11 A.M. IN THE CHURCH

The Women of St. Stephen's invite you and your guests to their annual Advent program to hear pianist Michael Simpson and violinists Alana Carithers and Alyssa Evans. The concert is free.

Michael is well known at St. Stephen's Church and throughout the community. He served as our associate director of music for many years, conducting our choirs, playing the organ, and planning and leading music for our Celtic service. We continue to use his compositions in our services. Alana and Alyssa frequently play for the Celtic service and other services and concerts.

A luncheon will follow the program in the fellowship hall. The donation for lunch, payable at the door, is \$15. Please sign up in advance using the sign-up sheet outside the May Fair House door near the lounge. Guests are most welcome (please include them in your sign-up to ensure we prepare enough food).

Christkindlmarket supports local artists, craftspeople, small businesses

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3 | 4:30 TO 7:30 P.M.

The Christkindlmarket sponsored by the Farmers Market @ St. Stephen's is a festive holiday craft market featuring dozens of vendors, Christmas carolers, warm beverages, and food trucks. This annual event is modeled after Christmas markets that take place in Europe. It will be set up in the fellowship hall and courtyard, with food trucks located near the Café @ St. Stephen's. Bring your friends for some festive holiday shopping after work. (Please note that there will be no Wonderful Wednesday supper that evening.)

Please wear a nametag

St. Stephen's Church is a large parish and we like to be able to call one another by name. And happily, we are always welcoming new people. So please wear a nametag whenever you are here. If you've never had one (or you've misplaced yours), please request a nametag at the table near the entrance to the parish house. Temporary sticky-back nametags are available for you to use in the meantime.

Is your info accessible to other parishioners?

When we launched the online portal for our membership database earlier this year, each person's record was set to "opt out" of sharing information through the online parish directory. If you would like parishioners to be able to find you in the directory, be sure to log on and make your details accessible by changing this default. You can tailor your profile to make some things visible and others private, such as your email address, phone, street address, etc. Instructions are at ststephensRVA.org/ministry-platform and in a flyer at Information Central. Rest assured that this password-protected directory is not available to the public. Questions: call 804.288.2867.

More announcements on page 4



Gobble, gobble—it's turkey time!

Later this month, St. Stephen's Church will provide the ingredients for Thanksgiving meals to 230 families at Anna Julia Cooper School, Fairfield Court Elementary School, and UP RVA, some of our partners in the East End. There are several ways to participate in this beloved ministry:

You and your family may pick up a box today and fill it with the ingredients for a Thanksgiving dinner (pick up the shopping list with your box, or save the one below). Turkeys are provided separately. If you would like to decorate the box, please do! Boxes are available at the outreach table. **Please return your filled box by Sunday, November 23 at 8 p.m.** When you commit to filling a box, please provide your name and contact info on the supplied sign-up sheet at the outreach table.

If you prefer to make a financial donation, you may sponsor a meal for \$35. Make checks payable to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church with "turkey box" on the memo line.

You may help pack additional boxes on Monday, November 24 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. This is a great opportunity for both teens and adults.

You can help deliver the boxes to Anna Julia Cooper, UP RVA, and Fairfield Court Elementary School on Tuesday, November 25 at 9 a.m.

To volunteer to pack additional boxes or make deliveries, scan the QR code. If you have questions, please contact Anna Jones at ajones@ststephensRVA.org or 804.288.2867. Thank you for your generosity and support!

THANKSGIVING BOX INGREDIENTS:

- Fresh potatoes (4-5 large or 7-8 small)
- Fresh sweet potatoes (4-5 large or 7-8 small)
- Fresh onions (2 large or 3 small)
- 2 cans green beans
- 2 cans fruit (can be cranberry sauce)
- 1 package stuffing mix
- Boxed dessert mix (or a pie crust and filling)



For your calendar

We are entering the time of year when special services and events abound. Here are some dates to be aware of.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23 Filled Thanksgiving boxes due

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26 No Wednesday supper or evening activities

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27 Thanksgiving Day service, 10:30 a.m. (parish office closed)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28 Parish office closed

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29 Farmers Market **is open**, 9 a.m.-noon

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30 Advent I; Regular worship schedule, but morning formation is an all-ages Advent Fair, 10:10 a.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21 100th Christmas pageant during the 11:15 a.m. service



St. Stephen's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

A community of hospitality, healing, and hope, sharing the

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