

the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2026 | THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

New series begins in the forum today: 'Liturgy Unplugged'

Episcopalians are deeply connected to our shared worship. Much of our Episcopal formation takes place during worship, through the use of the Book of Common Prayer and other resources. In a new series beginning today, St. Stephen's clergy will take us on a deep dive into the shape and content of the Eucharistic service, discovering what our worship has to tell us about living in the world faithfully. Today in the first session in this series, the Rev. Cate Anthony will focus on "The Liturgy of the Word," examining the first half of the Eucharist. We'll consider the role of Scripture in worship as well as the origins and purpose of our wide variety of prayers, and explore the ways this aspect of our worship shapes our personal prayer and public witness as faithful Christians. Read about upcoming topics and speakers in this series at ststephensRVA.org/forum.

Shrove Tuesday: pancakes and palms

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday. "Shrove" is derived from "shrive" which refers to the absolution of sins following Confession—an appropriate practice in preparation for Lent. Traditionally, Christians would use up eggs, flour, butter and other foods in preparation for a Lenten fast, so traditional Shrove Tuesday fare includes pancakes. We'll serve ours in two seatings, one beginning at 5:30 p.m., and one at 6:30 p.m. Supper will also include scrambled eggs, sausage, vegetarian "sausage," potatoes, juice, and decaf coffee. It's helpful to our kitchen team to know how many people to expect; please complete a very simple RSVP linked at ststephensRVA.org/shrove-tuesday. The cost of supper is \$10 per person, with a family maximum of \$30. At 6:15 p.m., we will hold a brief service in the courtyard where we will burn palms from last year's Palm Sunday services. Please bring any palms you've saved to add to the fire.

Ash Wednesday is February 18

SERVICES AT 7:30 A.M., NOON, AND 7:30 P.M.

Ash Wednesday, which begins the reflective and penitential season of Lent, falls this year on February 18. The liturgy for the day is Holy Eucharist and the Imposition of Ashes, putting us in mind of things that are eternal, and those that are passing away. This year the evening service will begin at 7:30 p.m.—a change from recent practice—to allow people to get home from work and have supper, if they wish, before the service. The earlier services will be at 7:30 a.m. and noon as they have been in the past. No childcare is offered during these services. Recognizing that some families with young children might wish to take part in the Imposition of Ashes but may not be able to attend a mid-week service, the Palmer Hall service will incorporate this practice on Sunday, February 22, the First Sunday in Lent.

There is no Wonderful Wednesdays supper on Ash Wednesday, and many regular Wednesday offerings take a pause that week; check with your group to be sure.

Small groups registration is open!

REGISTRATION OPEN THROUGH FEBRUARY 22

St. Stephen's Church offers a variety of small groups for adults, including Emmaus groups, Being With groups, and focus groups. Sign-up is open through February 22 for upcoming groups which will meet beginning the week of March 8. Visit our website for information about the groups being offered, which ones require registration, and a link to sign up: ststephensRVA.org/small-groups.

Young adults monthly dinner is this Thursday

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12 | 6:30 P.M.

Each month, young adults from St. Stephen's Church gather at a local restaurant for fellowship, food, and fun. Friends are welcome! This month we'll meet at the Continental Westhampton on Grove Avenue just a few blocks east of the church. RSVPs are helpful so that we'll be sure to reserve enough space. RSVP at ststephensRVA.org/youngadults.

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.





Details about rescheduled events

The guest speaker we had hoped could be with us last weekend as part of our focus on contemplative spirituality and the gifts of our Celtic service, **Dr. Westina Matthews**, will now be with us in April. Dr. Matthews' workshop on contemplative practice in contemporary life will take place Saturday, April 18. She will speak in the Sunday Forum and preach at the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services on April 19.

The **portrait of the Rev. Gary Jones**, our eighth rector, will be on display before and after all services on Sunday, February 22.

Ladies Night Out, postponed from February 3 to April 28, is sold out, but a waiting list is available. Those with reservations for February 3 have been contacted directly about the change by Marilyn Kirkpatrick. Anyone who moves from the waiting list to a reserved seat will also hear directly from Marilyn.

Annual 'souper bowl' helps fill pantry shelves

Who will win the Super Bowl today? Vote for your team by placing cans of soup at the outreach table in front of your team, the Seattle Seahawks or the New England Patriots. Voting with multiple cans is encouraged and helps stock our pantry!

Outreach grant application available

The application process for outreach grants began January 15, and applications are due February 13. Are you are involved with a local organization that might like to apply for a grant? Point them to ststephensRVA.org/outreach/partnerships for details.

Annual meeting and vestry slate

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22 | 10:10 A.M.

At the upcoming parish meeting, we will vote on a slate of parishioners to serve three-year terms on the vestry. A vestry-appointed nominating committee composed of outgoing vestry members and at-large members received suggestions from you about people to consider, and they are pleased to present the following slate: **James Driscoll, Meg Eckman, Wortie Ferrell, Darrell Headrick, Chip Jamerson, and Katie Webb**. Thank you to the committee, those who made suggestions, and those who agreed to have their names put forward. Information and photos: ststephensRVA.org/vestry-nominees.

The meeting will also include reports from parish leaders and a new video. Please note that extended child care will be available for children through grade 5 to allow parents to attend.

Participate in a family ministry discernment process

The family ministry guild is a group of St. Stephen's parishioners who work with church staff to plan and lead ministries for children, youth, and parents. The guild has commissioned a discernment process concerning formation for those in these groups at St. Stephen's Church. Through a prayerful process, we seek to discover the shape, purpose, and priorities of the breadth of family ministries at this moment in the life of the parish.

The discernment group will engage a broad array of parishioners through a variety of means including facilitated focus groups for both children's and youth ministries and a survey. Using the information gathered and working with an outside consultant, the guild and staff will adapt formation offerings for children and youth, integrating what we learn to respond meaningfully to the needs of contemporary families. All are welcome to participate and we especially invite parents of children from birth to age 18 to join us for one of these important conversations. We also welcome other adults who have served as volunteers in children's or youth ministry. Scan the QR code to sign up. Questions: the Rev. Cate Anthony, canthony@ststephensRVA.org.



Help us cross the finish line

To all who have made a pledge to support the mission and ministry of St. Stephen's Church in 2026: thanks to you, we are so close to our goals! If you have not made a pledge for this year, yours could be the one to help us cross the finish line. We are more than 99 percent of the way to our dollar goal of \$3 million—just \$18,482 away. With 810 pledges received, we need just 40 more to reach the goal of 850. Pick up a pledge card at Information Central or visit ststephensRVA.org/pledge.

Orientation, welcome to St. Stephen's Church

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11 | 6:30-7:30 P.M.

To help newcomers find their way at St. Stephen's Church and make meaningful connections, we offer a simple orientation with helpful handouts and resources so you can quickly align your interests and needs with the life, worship, service, fellowship, and spiritual formation we offer, as well as understand how we share information and who is available to offer support and guidance. The Rev. John Jenkins and Jennifer Bousquet, director of outreach and engagement, will lead it in the Café @ St. Stephen's. No sign-up is needed.

Invitation to the Episcopal Church

WEDNESDAYS AT 6:30 P.M., FEBRUARY 25 THROUGH APRIL 15

Invitation to the Episcopal Church is a series for those who are newer here or those who are familiar yet newly curious. This introductory class is ideal for those who wish to meet others and explore more about the Episcopal Church; topics include our unique identity and perspective, origins, worship, beliefs, practices, and more. This is excellent preparation if you are considering becoming an Episcopalian through the Rite of Confirmation or Reception; reaffirming your faith; or, if you are an adult who has not been baptized, this is preparation for that sacrament. Most of all, this is a supportive place to ask questions big and small. It will be co-led by the Rev. Will Stanley and the Rev. John Jenkins in our café. Scan the QR code to register.



Sunday morning for parents

10:10 A.M. IN ROOM 14

Many Parents, One Vine is a weekly formation group for parents offering mutual support and fellowship as we reflect on the challenges and blessings of parenting faithfully in the modern age. This spring, we are engaging in Bible study on the Gospel for the day and using it as a springboard for conversations about life, parenting, and faith. No prior experience is required. Questions: the Rev. Cate Anthony, canthony@ststephensRVA.org.

Interested in being in our handbell choir?

St. Stephen's handbell choir rings at Sunday services several times during the year, and is blessed to have an excellent set of new Malmark handbells. We have an opening for someone with two years or more of musical experience and the ability to read notes. Contact Paul Honaker, director, at bell-choir@ststephensRVA.org or call 804.288.2867 to leave a message.

Take part in the Prayers of the People

The "Prayers of the People" are a key part of corporate worship each Sunday. At St. Stephen's Church, they take a variety of forms throughout the church year and across different worship services: our traditional 8 a.m. service, the Palmer Hall service, the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services, and the Celtic service. Consistent threads involve our prayers for the life of our world, nation, and community, including the hard realities of suffering and death. Finding ways to offer prayers that honor both the universality and the particularity of our human experience is a constant opportunity and challenge. If you've worshipped with us over the past few weeks, you may have noticed that we no longer pray by name for certain groups of people or places of conflict, suffering, and loss. Rather, we are inviting each person gathered to join in: specifically, for "those people and places we name now, either silently or aloud." We have made this shift to allow for the fullness of our community's experience—the truths on our hearts—to be offered in prayer, in all their diversity. So when we say the Prayers of the People today, please join us.

Pastoral care workshop offered

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 9 A.M.-NOON

St. Stephen's pastoral care community includes ministries that focus on the care and needs of our church family using a variety of gifts. Some parishioners craft quilts or prayer shawls, or prepare delicious meals. With the support of our clergy, some walk with a peer through a particular life challenge. Others gather in prayer for our community, sending cards, making calls and visits and taking Communion to those who are not able to be with us during Sunday services. The Daughters of the King pray for those who wish their requests to remain confidential.

All strive to answer the call of the apostle Paul in his first letter to the church in Corinth: "Now there are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are a variety of services and there are a variety of activities but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyoneAll these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses."

Later this month, a pastoral care workshop will provide an opportunity for those involved in our pastoral care ministry to gather, and for anyone with a gift for caring for our community to join in. Scan the QR code to let us know to expect you.



Paige Trivett to be ordained

On March 7 at 10:30 a.m., the Rt. Rev. Gayle E. Harris, assistant bishop of Virginia, will ordain Paige Trivett to the Sacred Order of Deacons, along with John Hager, Joshua House, and Emily Rutledge. The service takes place at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church in McLean, and a livestream will be available on St. Dunstan's website, stdunstans.net. Paige served as our summer seminarian last year. All are invited to the service, and are asked to keep these servants in your prayers.



Belvedere Series brings groundbreaking string quartet here

FRIDAY, MARCH 6 | 7 P.M.

The Belvedere Series welcomes the groundbreaking string quartet OWLS for an evening of bold, style-defying chamber music which will be held at St. Stephen's Church. Performing in their signature inverted quartet formation—two cellos, viola, and violin—OWLS has rapidly become one of the most sought-after ensembles in the nation, celebrated for their sonic daring and technical brilliance. Featuring two members of the famed Kronos Quartet, OWLS offers a program spanning centuries, weaving together new works, original arrangements, and reimagined classics. Tickets are \$40 in advance or \$50 at the door. Visit belvedere-series.org for tickets and details.



St. James's Church presents WomanKind

APRIL 24-26

The women of St. James's, Richmond, invite you to a transformative, two-day conference dedicated to exploring themes of faith and the vital roles of women in the church and broader society. The 2026 WomanKind conference, "One Body," will feature internationally recognized author, activist, and speaker Lisa Sharon Harper as keynote speaker. Ms. Harper will guide participants in exploring what it means to be One Body and how we can pursue God's intent for wholeness in all relationships. Since its inception in 2004, the WomanKind conference has provided a space for women to find inspiration, theological depth, and practical guidance on issues of faith, leadership, and their evolving roles in the world. This is a popular event, so be sure to register soon! More details are at stjamesrva.org/womankind.



Today's reception hosts

Thank you to the EpiscoPals for hosting the reception after today's 11:15 a.m. service. This group of retired parishioners offers support in a number of areas. They have cleaned and refurbished wood in the church, provided support in the front office, and provided snacks and lunch to the staff, to name just a few of their contributions. For information on the group, contact Chip Tompkins. To volunteer to host a Sunday reception, send an email to Marilyn Kirkpatrick using the Women of St. Stephen's email address, woss@ststephensRVA.org.



Share your gifts; discover new connections

When the Spirit of God stirs you to seek new connections in fellowship, or growth in Christian formation groups, or ministries that serve the world or the church, two resources are available to you. Everything St. Stephen's Church offers is open to all people year-round through the Connect and Serve web page (accessible from the top menu on St. Stephen's home page, ststephensRVA.org) which offers helpful information about the full breadth of ministries, fellowship, and formation offerings. You'll find a form where you may request more information or declare your interest in enrolling in a ministry. Jennifer Bousquet, St. Stephen's director of outreach and engagement, and the Rev. John Jenkins, associate rector, wholeheartedly welcome and invite a personal conversation to explore new possibilities and next steps; schedule a time by emailing one of them (jbousquet or jjenkins@ststephensRVA.org) or calling 804.288.2867.



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