



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

ANNUAL Report

2025

Dear Friends,

This publication marks both familiar and new territory. In previous years, we produced **Seasons of the Spirit** magazines highlighting features on the life of St. Stephen's Church. More recently, we have also experimented with ministry reports, highlighting our ministries and the impact they have within and beyond our church walls—all thanks to the generosity of your active engagement and financial support.



This publication combines those features into an Annual Report. Following on the heels of our annual parish meeting in late February, this new annual publication aims to tell the stories of our life together over the past year – with ministry highlights, photos, and snapshots of data that again speak to the impact of our shared mission. Thanks to your support, we continue to grow in faith and depth and service, and I'm excited about the year ahead.

One thing I am less excited about, however, is bidding farewell to Sarah Bartenstein, who after more than 20 years as our director of communications has announced her plan to retire this fall. This will likely be the final magazine that she ushers to print at St. Stephen's, so I want to take the first of many opportunities to thank her for all the ways she has bound us together and helped us tell the story of our parish in so many publications and other vehicles over the years. She has made a tremendous impact herself, and we give thanks.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John D. Rohrs".

The Rev. John D. Rohrs, Rector



A new visual identity

One of the ways St. Stephen's Church carries out its mission to be a place of hospitality, healing, and hope, sharing the love of Christ, is through careful attention to communication within and beyond the parish.

In 2025, we adopted a new visual identity designed to convey that mission. Though we have used a traditional church seal as a visual identifier in the past, St. Stephen's Church had not previously had a logo. With the vestry's adoption of mission and vision statements and core values, we introduced a visual identity reflecting them. The logo suggests an inviting entrance into the life of this community, and the color palette reflects the striking colors in our distinctive baptismal font—the same palette being used on the website we launched in 2024. We have enjoyed using the new visual identity as well as the harmonizing “sub-brands” developed for our “front porch”



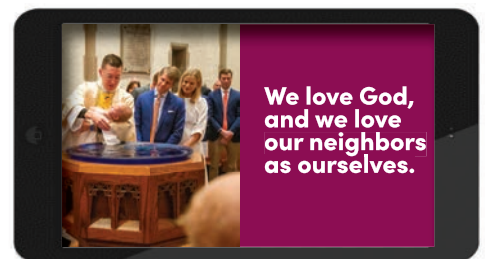
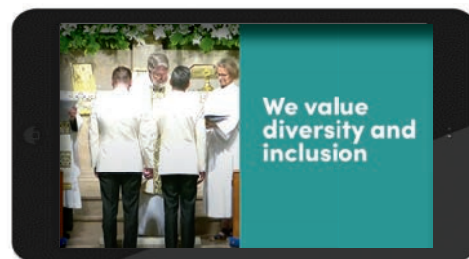
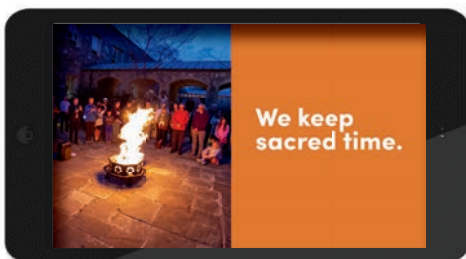
St. Stephen's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

The logo suggests an inviting entrance into the life of this community, and the color palette reflects the striking colors in our distinctive baptismal font.

ministries: May Fair House, the Farmers Market @ St. Stephen's, and the Café @ St. Stephen's. (We do not actually have them on tote bags as shown below, but perhaps we should!)

We continue using the traditional church seal honoring our history in specific ways: on letterhead, liturgical bulletins, the plaque in the church, and the sign at the corner of Three Chopt and Grove.

Speaking of signage, in the latter half of 2025 we began planning a signage project using the new graphics. The exterior signs were installed in time for Easter 2026. Much of the interior signage is now in place, with more to come. The indoor signage updates the locations of rooms and activities to reflect their current use. New digital signage is also on the way. All the signage is designed to help everyone, including visitors and newcomers, find their way, an important part of hospitality.



Digital signage displays St. Stephen's core values designed with typefaces and colors from our new visual identity.

Clergy renewal

In 2024, the vestry of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church approved a sabbatical policy for our clergy. In the Diocese of Virginia, it has become standard practice for the bishop's office to include sabbatical planning in letters of agreement for clergy. In fact, this is required for rectors and strongly encouraged for associates. Diocesan guidelines anticipate sabbatical leaves every five to seven years. St. Stephen's leaders surveyed additional dioceses and churches to better understand common practices and in 2024, the vestry approved a sabbatical policy for the clergy of St. Stephen's Church. This policy states that the rector and associates are eligible for a three-month paid sabbatical leave after six years of ministry in our parish. We stagger those leave times so that only one clergy member is on sabbatical at a given time. Likewise, sabbaticals are taken only during the summer, when the pace of parish life slows somewhat. There is a customary expectation, which is included in our policy, for the clergy person to remain in their role at St. Stephen's for at least one year after going on sabbatical.

Our first experience with this new policy came in 2025, when the Rev. Will Stanley, who was "off duty" from June 1 to September 1. The Rev. Cate Anthony will be on sabbatical during the same time frame in 2026.

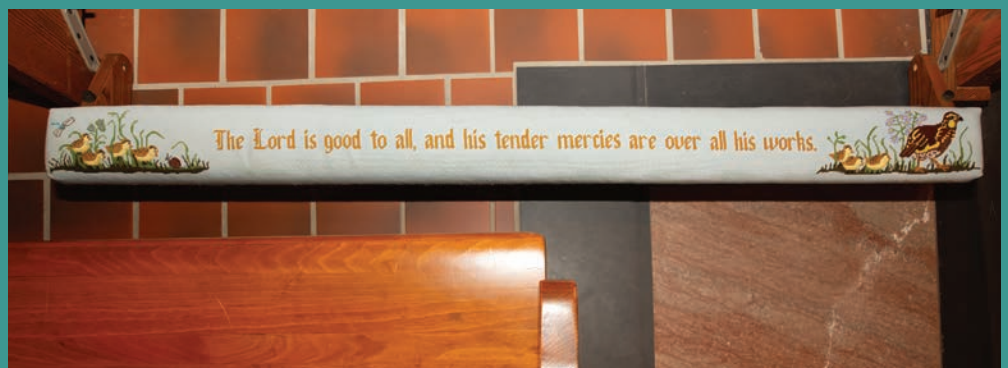


The Rev. Cate Anthony celebrates the Eucharist in Palmer Hall.

While many professions do not enjoy this type of sabbatical benefit, our leaders support and encourage clergy to recharge their batteries and renew their own spirits so that they can continue to care for others from a deep well of faith and health. Since this type of policy is common church-wide, having it in place here will help us attract and retain talented clergy in the years to come.

The work of many hands

St. Stephen's parishioners use skills and talents that benefit us all, including those who design and stitch exquisite needlepoint kneelers for the church, and others who knit, crochet or sew comforting prayer shawls and lap quilts as tangible expressions of care for those experiencing illness, grief, or loneliness. Icon writers gather for an annual workshop and weekly gatherings to practice this ancient way of praying with brushes and paint. Woodworkers tend to furnishings in our sacred spaces. Kitchen volunteers prepare food for purchase in the May Fair House, and assist our staff in preparing meals and receptions that enhance our community's life. Talented flower guild members devote time and energy to arranging flowers that add natural beauty to our liturgies. The altar guild takes great care in preparing and setting out the vessels and other items we use during the varied services that take place at St. Stephen's Church. We are grateful for these faithful expressions of love in our community in 2025.



Top left, icon writing; top right, bringing natural beauty to the church with fresh flowers; bottom: needlepoint kneeler.

New faces, new gifts

We were blessed by the arrival of several new staff members in 2025, each one bringing significant gifts to St. Stephen's.



Jennifer Bousquet is director of outreach and engagement. She works with Anna Jones, our food ministry coordinator and farmers market manager, as well as dedicated parishioners, to ensure that our outreach ministries deepen and expand, and bring in new participants from the parish. She works with the Rev.

John Jenkins to engage current and new parishioners in our community of faith.



The Rev. Judy Webb Davis is new to our staff but she is no stranger to St. Stephen's Church. She and her family were parishioners here before she entered the ordination process. Judy preaches, leads worship, and takes part in all the things clergy on our staff do, but her major focus is pastoral care.



Isaac Dyer is a barista in the Café @ St. Stephen's and a student at Virginia Commonwealth University studying philosophy, with a background in social sciences.



David Ellis is director of facilities and operations, taking care of our complex physical plant from routine maintenance to major repairs. He also supervises our excellent team of sextons as well as kitchen and café staff. David held a similar position at Christ Church in Glen Allen before joining us. His introduction to St. Stephen's Church came through the Compline service.

Ian Hayes, Randy Ransone, and Andrew Scully joined our sexton staff in 2025 and demonstrate every day how willing they are—like their colleagues Jack Hotchkiss and Rashawn Dover—to be of service. In such an active church, with events, meetings, and worship services happening every day, a farmers market, a café, two parish suppers a week, and more, we could not do all we do without this dedicated and responsive team.



Staff photos by Dillon Gwaltney



Madison Prather is our nursery coordinator, scheduling and supervising our childcare staff and helping parents feel confident about leaving their babies and toddlers with caring and skilled nursery workers while they attend a worship service or adult formation. Madison, who is pursuing a graduate degree in school counseling at

Virginia Commonwealth University, has several years' experience working with children in school and church settings.



Kathleen Wilson-Kennedy is our executive director of finance and administration and has been instrumental in integrating the new platforms we had only begun to use before she arrived, including Ministry Platform and eSpace. Our financial and administrative systems are complex, and Kathleen's skills and experience have helped move the staff forward in these areas.



While technically he didn't join our staff until early 2026, **Robert McCormick** was hired in 2025 as our new director of music, leading a team that includes associate director Diana Chou, St. Stephen's Choir director Chris Edwards, and bell choir director Paul Honaker. Robert is a nationally known organist and choir director with extensive experience as a church musician and concert performer, and he is excited to be working with St. Stephen's music staff, talented choirs and other musicians, and an outstanding music program.



Monica Vega and Heidi Schmidt, our two missionaries in Argentina, visited St. Stephen's—their sponsoring parish—during the Week of Compassion. Monica preached during morning services (pictured), while Heidi visited the Palmer Hall service to speak to children about the work they do among poor and marginalized people.

A robust music ministry



There are opportunities for all ages to be part of our music ministry, including St. Stephen's Choristers, the hymn choir, St. Stephen's Choir, Sanctuary (the Compline choir), handbell choir, and more.

The year 2025 was a season of transition with the departures of director of music Brent te Velde and Palmer Hall pianist David Kim, and the contributions of renowned choral conductor Jeffrey Riehl who stepped in on an interim basis to lead fall Compline services; and talented musicians Greg Vick, Donald Anderson, and Bill Roberts who filled in as needed. In the fall, with the help of a dedicated search committee, the Rev. John Rohrs, rector, joyfully called Robert McCormick to be our new director of music. We are excited to have Robert and his many gifts with us at St. Stephen's, and we look forward to his leadership of our music program in the years to come.

Ever growing in numbers and spirit, the **St. Stephen's Choir** led by Chris Edwards sang

a musically fulsome year of Sunday services and also presented Karl Jenkins' *Miserere: Songs of Mercy and Redemption* in conjunction with the choirs of St. James's and St. Paul's churches at the annual Three Choirs Festival in March at St. James's.

In addition to their regular music leadership in Palmer Hall and in the church, the **St. Stephen's Choristers**—our youngest singers—joined members of the St. Stephen's Choir to sing for the wedding of the Rev. Cate Anthony, our associate rector, and Mr. Emery Rivera in June. They also sang for the 100th staging of the Christmas Pageant at St. Stephen's in December.

Sanctuary led a musically rich schedule of weekly Compline services (8 p.m. Sundays) and presented a beautiful Winter Solstice Concert

featuring cellist Peter Greydanus and classical guitarist Andrew McEvoy as guest artists. Compline has enjoyed strong attendance, with numbers continuing to trend significantly upward, reaching 100 and above some Sundays.

Skillfully directed by Paul Honaker, the **Handbell Choir** continues to expand their ministry, which has been greatly enriched by the gift of a new, five-octave set of handbells made by the Malmark Company in Plumsteadville, Pennsylvania, one of the world's leading manufacturers of handbells and accessories. We are deeply grateful to Marshall and Beth Orr for their generous gift of these new bells which were dedicated in November, and we look forward to hearing the bells in many future services.

Caring for one another

Pastoral care at St. Stephen's Church takes many forms and is carried out by parishioners, staff, and clergy: preparing meals for those who have suffered a loss or welcomed a new baby. . . knitters and quilters making prayer shawls and lap quilts to provide comfort. . . members of the Daughters of the King offering confidential prayer for any who request it. . . lay eucharistic visitors taking Communion to those who cannot receive it at church because of illness, age, or infirmity. . . pastoral care teams sending cards, making visits and phone calls to let parishioners know they are remembered and valued . . . healing prayer ministers at the Celtic service who pray with those who desire it.

Most recently, we have been working on a peer resource network which connects people going through a challenge or a difficult situation to others who can offer particular support because they have experienced something similar.

In addition to these ongoing efforts, in 2025 our seminarian intern Paige Trivett completed a pastoral resource guide for our clergy and lay pastoral teams to use and share.

The importance of these ministries at St. Stephen's Church is reflected in the arrival of the Rev. Judy Webb Davis in 2025 whom the Rev. John Rohrs called as associate rector with a special focus on pastoral care (though all our clergy continue to provide it). Judy works with all those in our pastoral care ministries with staff member Mary Feldman and parishioner Nan O'Connell to create community and fellowship within the pastoral care community, to encourage support for one another, and to enrich those ministries.

Lay Eucharistic Visitors receive bread and wine during a Sunday service from which they are sent forth to give Communion to those who cannot be at church in person. Marty Easton (at right) is one of these visitors. (Below) Volunteers knit or crochet prayer shawls and enjoy fellowship.





Youth have volunteered in various ministries, welcoming people to the farmers market on Saturday mornings, serving dinner on Sunday evenings, working with young children at the Advent fair, providing music during worship and at the Agape meal on Maundy Thursday, and in other ways.

Those in grades 9 and above prepared for the Rite of Confirmation throughout the 2024-25 program year, and were confirmed during the visit of the Rt. Rev. Gayle Harris, assistant bishop, on Sunday, May 16, 2025.

Youth at St. Stephen's Church

Young people at St. Stephen's are engaged in the life of St. Stephen's in a variety of ways. In 2025 many served as acolytes during Sunday morning services as well as special services such as Maundy Thursday, the Easter Vigil, Easter Day, the Christmas pageant, Christmas Eve, and other occasions. More experienced acolytes work with newer ones to train them. Young people read Scripture and the Prayers of the People during services.



In the summer of 2025, a group of high school students traveled to Asheville, N.C., where, in partnership with Youth Mission Co, they engaged in service projects addressing homelessness, poverty, and food insecurity, and took part in worship, evening programs, and community building. This experience gives young people insight into social justice issues while offering opportunities for personal and spiritual growth. A similar trip is planned for the summer of 2026 in Charleston, S.C.

Top: Confirmation 2025;
left: summer mission trip

We ♥ Dogwood Preschool

We are grateful to be the home of Dogwood Preschool, where:

- **100** children were enrolled in 2025-26, ages 6 months to 5 years;
- **10** families, **3** staff members, **2** substitutes, and **4** board members (in addition to the rector and the vestry liaison) are St. Stephen's parishioners;
- the class size is **9 to 15** children, depending on age;
- the school awarded need-based scholarships to everyone who applied (a total of more than \$14,000);
- the oldest children enjoy music class in Palmer Hall and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in the atrium each week;
- The church and the school have signed a new lease for a **6-year** term!

And we are thrilled to have partnered with Dogwood to refurbish our playground in 2025!





Senior high youth fill costumed roles and serve as readers in the annual pageant.

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever:

St. Stephen's young people stage the 100th pageant

On December 21, 2025, young people of St. Stephen's Church presented the annual Christmas pageant—but not just any Christmas pageant. It was the 100th presentation of this cherished service.

The pageant is an annual tradition for St. Stephen's, led by youth in grades 6-12 during the 11:15 a.m. service on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Costumed youth stage multiple scenes depicting the story of Jesus' birth. As young people read scripture from the lectern, each scene moves through the center aisle of the church on a rolling cart. In addition to these roles

filled by older youth, middle school students push the carts down the aisle. In 2025, as in 2024, children age 4 through grade 1 also took part, costumed as animals and stars in the final scene.

We commemorated this year's pageant with a video featuring interviews with parishioners sharing memories of pageants past, along with video and photos of pageants over the years. Scan the QR code to watch this beautiful and moving remembrance. "A Living Legacy."



For the second year, young children joined the pageant.



'I bring you good tidings of great joy.'



The shepherds tableau



Palmer Hall: a nurturing and lively community

Palmer Hall Chapel offers a special place of belonging through worship that is especially inviting to children and their families. The location and the service are beloved for the warmth of spirit and relationships among adults and children. This intergenerational bond is continually welcoming and supportive as families grow and change, nurturing faith and supporting one another through the challenges and changes of life. Average Sunday attendance continued to increase in 2025, largely through word of mouth.

This Rite Two service of Holy Eucharist on Sundays at 9 a.m. offers ways for children as young as kindergarten age to serve as acolytes. A child may be trained to serve as crucifer, torch bearer, Gospel bearer, or flag bearer. Children also read Scripture and can serve with their parents as ushers, distributing bulletins, passing offering plates, and presenting the offering each week. Some children accompany their parents who serve on Palmer Hall’s altar guild, preparing the bread and wine weekly as well. Beginning in first grade, children are invited to join St. Stephen’s Choristers who sing in this service twice a month. Children who

have served in these roles serve as models for younger children. Fourth and fifth graders help the celebrant set the altar for Communion as a deacon or subdeacon would in a service in the main church.

Children and adults participate in the annual giving campaign, challenging one another to be generous. Children collect offerings in giving boxes and adults make pledges to the overall campaign. Children learn about St. Stephen’s outreach partners, then vote on which one they want to receive the giving box offerings. In 2025, there was a tie between Shalom Farms and Communities in Schools, our partner at Fairfield Court Elementary School.

In 2025 we completed a partial renovation of the physical space made possible by pledges to the annual giving campaign. By removing a wall, the former Palmer Hall sacristy became part of the worship space, expanding seating capacity, and the sacristy moved to the Palmer Hall annex. The soft space in Palmer Hall shifted to the corner opposite its original location.

The soft space

Families who attend the 9 a.m. service in Palmer Hall know about the “soft space” offered there, with a rug, floor cushions, and children’s books where children can move a bit more freely and comfortably than in rows of seating. Because we do not hold a regular Sunday service in Palmer Hall during the summer and because the soft space has become such a welcoming option there for families with young children, we move the soft space to the main church beginning Memorial Day weekend and offer it there through Labor Day weekend. The summer soft space is at the back of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd where we temporarily remove three or four pews and arrange a rug, cushions, and books in their place. In September, the soft space moves back to Palmer Hall. We are grateful to have so many children in our parish!



Sam Wells visits

We were delighted to welcome the Rev. Dr. Samuel Wells to St. Stephen's Church in November.

Dr. Wells is vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London's Trafalgar Square, a unique institution in which cultural, charitable and commercial initiatives are rooted in the life

of a vibrant congregation. He took part in the Week of Compassion, and during a community-wide offering, Dr. Wells spoke about the theology and practice of Being With, a theology and program he helped create, as a faithful and countercultural response to current events in the life of the church and our country. He reflected on the importance of compassion, empathy, and connection as antidotes to polarization and enmity.

At St. Stephen's, small groups use the Being With curriculum to dive deep into relationship with one another and with God.



Dillon Gwaltney

Small groups: living faithfully

We offered a broad variety of small groups for adults throughout 2025. Emmaus groups, our "classic" small groups, gathered to share in fellowship and faith. Over 100 members of the parish joined focus groups, which have a dedicated topic or practice that participants study together. In 2025, focus groups studied racial healing, contemplative spirituality, Richard Rohr's *The Universal Christ*, the spirituality of aging, and the relationship between literature and liturgy. Our "Being With" groups benefitted from the opportunity to hear directly from the Rev. Sam Wells, the developer of this approach, during his visit in November.

In all that we offer, we seek to explore the realities of living faithfully while carving out space for the Holy Spirit to transform us as we learn new ways of encountering the divine in this world. Together we will be formed into disciples of Jesus.

Becoming disciples of Jesus Christ

Christian formation is the lifelong, Spirit-led process of being transformed into disciples of Jesus Christ. At St. Stephen's Church, we seek to form adult members of our community through a broad variety of formation offerings. In addition to small groups, in 2025 our Sunday morning forum offered hour-long presentations on topics ranging from the art and architecture of St. Stephen's to mental health in adults and youth to innovations in contemporary ministry. Evening presentations considered subjects such as spirituality and meaning in the second half of life, Lenten hymns, practices of faith in a turbulent world, grief and loss, and more.





Our racial healing commission met with Dr. Catherine Meeks (red and white scarf) in late 2024, and continued to draw on her work in 2025.

Do you want to be healed?

The work of racial healing at St. Stephen's Church

The work of racial healing is key to bringing about the world God longs for. St. Stephen's Church offers opportunities to learn about the racial history of our city and country and to engage in present-day efforts for racial healing and reconciliation. Many of these offerings are formation-based, including small groups focused on books such as Dr. Catherine Meeks' *The Night is Long but Light Comes in the Morning: Meditations for Racial Healing*. We have also offered Sacred Ground, a racial healing program created by the Episcopal Church. This film- and readings-based dialogue series on race is grounded in faith. Small groups are invited to walk through chapters of America's history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family story, economic class, and political and regional identity. Through these offerings,

participants tackle the difficult and necessary work of racial healing from a place of faith.

We partner with the Friends of the Sons and Daughters of Ham Cemetery to restore the cemetery and spread awareness about it. Ham Cemetery is located near the church in the corner of Bandy Field.



A headstone in Ham Cemetery

The cemetery is the final resting place of the descendants of enslaved people who labored on the Green Plantation (near the land where our church is now located). The organization works with descendants of those buried there to map the cemetery and return it to dignified, holy ground. It is our privilege to work with the Friends of the Sons and Daughters of Ham Cemetery to tell the story of this important local landmark.

When considering the work of racial healing, Dr. Meeks, a preeminent Episcopal scholar on racial healing, asks this question: "Do you want to be healed?" Jesus asks this question as well. The work of racial healing is work for all people because racial injustice harms all people. At St. Stephen's we seek to facilitate this healing for our own community and beyond.



Some 200 parishioners took place in our initial workshops about ways to embody our core value of bearing Christ's hospitality.

Hospitality as mission

Hospitality is key at St. Stephen's Church—in fact, it's in our mission statement: *We are a community of hospitality, healing, and hope, sharing the love of Christ.* In 2025, we continued to place greater emphasis on this aspect of our mission, and to go deeper into what we mean by “hospitality.”

We are attending to the parish's culture and practices of welcome and inclusion, within and beyond the church. Echoing St. Benedict's Rule, we seek to welcome everyone as if they are Christ himself. We are adopting practices that shape the life of the parish among visitors and newcomers as well as long-time members. We help people make connections to the ministries of the church, from fellowship to formation to service within and beyond the parish. In 2025, this included:

- Three newcomer receptions where staff and members of the hospitality committee welcomed more than 90 newcomers. Just as important, we reach out before and after each gathering to make meaningful connections.
- Two workshops involving 200 parishioners who explored concepts and crafted personal practices to embody the core value of bearing Christ's hospitality throughout one's life. We also took these concepts to the parish weekend at Shrine Mont last June.
- A new ministry where “ambassadors” are available at the farmers market and during events where visitors might enjoy learning more about St. Stephen's Church.
- An open house where the hospitality committee provided information about three hospitality-focused ministries in which people may serve: greeters, ushers, and Ambassadors.

FINDING HOPE in difficult days

For many, the current socio-political landscape of our country inspires feelings of concern, fear, or anger. Citizens at various points on the political spectrum view the ongoing political strife as a battle for the soul of our nation. As Christians, this “battle” takes on an additional dimension: how does our faith inform our political engagement and decisions? What does our faith have to say about how to live faithfully in such times? How can we be a community of hospitality, healing, and hope in this difficult days? At St. Stephen's Church, we strive to answer these questions through a variety of offerings.

In 2025, the Rev. Cate Anthony offered a retreat and six-week class titled “Sacramental Citizenship.” Participants read the Baptismal Covenant as an ethical document and discussed how to concretely live out these promises in our lives as citizens. Throughout the program, much of the conversation focused on creating bridges of relationship across chasms of difference. In the time since that offering, participants shared that they return to the Baptismal Covenant time and again for guidance.

St. Stephen's has hosted occasional Sacred Conversations, discrete sessions when a community gathers for open and vulnerable conversation about a particular topic. Some topics aim to take the temperature of the community at a given moment; others to address the community's various elephants-in-the-room; still others seek to help community members speak truthfully about their faith and lives. At St. Stephen's we have held Sacred Conversations about the Uvalde school shooting, the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, the 2024 presidential election, and immigration, among many other topics. In each case, participants shared deeply, speaking about the intersection of their religious beliefs and their political positions. Often following a Sacred Conversation, participants share a sense of healing, facilitated by the experience of being truly heard by their peers in faith. In all cases, the goal is not to promote conformity or unity of political or theological thought. Rather, we seek to create spaces for our parishioners to have dialogue across lines of difference, finding common ground among those with contrasting views or practices. We are knit together by our shared faith, the living Body of Christ. From this place of common belief, we seek to confront the divisions of this world and work together to bring about God's kingdom.



(Left) During the Sunday Forum, parishioners heard from representatives of our outreach partners, and listened to the compelling story of a woman whose relationship with ReWork Richmond changed her life. (Right) Young people work in the food pantry. (Bottom) A Rebuilding Together Richmond project.

The Week of Compassion

A special focus

During the Week of Compassion, we honor Stephen, our patron saint, chosen by the apostles to be the first deacon in the early church. Stephen led those distributing food and aid to those on the margins, and he continues to inspire our work. Begun in 2024, we continued this new tradition in 2025.

IN 2025, THE WEEK OF COMPASSION INCLUDED:

- Site visits to Shalom Farms, Caritas, UprVA, Anna Julia Cooper School, and ReWork Richmond.
- Acts of service, including preparing a meal for 80 residents of the Caritas shelter, repairing a house in Petersburg with Rebuilding Together Richmond, serving snacks to students at Anna Julia Cooper School, delivering fruit to seniors in the East End with the fruit ministry, assisting shoppers in our food pantry.
- Intergenerational opportunities, including a family ministry team-led activity for children, youth, and adults who packed backpacks of food and small toys for students at Fairfield Court Elementary School to take home over winter break, and assembled emergency pet care kits of food, water, and treats for people visiting the emergency pantry at Atlantic Outreach Center in Richmond.

Outreach is year-round at St. Stephen's, but this special week-long focus provides a path to deeper and broader engagement in our parish. The effects are felt not only by those we serve, but by those who participate and see firsthand the needs in our community, learning concrete ways to address them. We offer ways to sample outreach ministries, try them on, and see if one is a good fit. The week is also a catalyst for ongoing engagement: in 2025, people became regular participants in these partnerships after experiencing them, and the parish renewed relationships with Caritas and Anna Julia Cooper School, and scheduled upcoming work days at Shalom Farms.





Dillon Gwaltney

I was hungry and you gave me something to eat

What are the sources of food for St. Stephen's pantry?

We purchase some reduced-price food from Feed More and benefit from the generosity of many:

- Parishioners and friends who fill our donation carts
- Farmers market vendors who set aside food for donation: produce, meat, bread, and more
- Sunday Community Supper leftovers
- CanCan Brasserie, which donates fresh bread every week, and Panera, which donates bread and pastries twice a month

Where does St. Stephen's fit in the broader food access picture?

- Anyone can come to our pantry for free food on Monday afternoons.
- We deliver groceries to the residents of Virginia Supportive Housing and a handful of others who cannot come to the pantry. Lack of transportation is a major barrier to food access.
- Our farmers market accepts SNAP benefits for payment, and participates in Virginia Fresh Match, a program which doubles SNAP customers' funds for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Customers spent \$1,600-\$2,000 per month using SNAP and VFM funds at our farmers market in 2025.
- During the government shutdown in 2025, our weekly pantry attendance increased from an average of 45 families per week to an average of 60 families per week, and Feed More had reduced stock available. Fortunately, historic need was met with historic generosity from the parish, and the pantry remained well-stocked throughout the shutdown.



In 2025, St. Stephen's distributed **\$125,000** in outreach grants to **25** different organizations recommended to the vestry by the outreach grants committee. The committee evaluates requests with particular attention to those serving individuals and communities who are marginalized and vulnerable. While we focus grants in Richmond's East End, we also support organizations across the region where parishioners are directly involved in service. In addition, the Women of St. Stephen's made grants to **31** local organizations serving women and children, and three "in-house" ministries—the food pantry, the fruit ministry, and Dogwood Preschool. The total of **\$47,500** was a record high and came primarily from May Fair House sales.





Highlights from 2025

1. The 100th presentation of St. Stephen's Christmas Pageant. **2.** Palm Sunday. **3.** Easter Day. **4.** The Farmers Market @ St. Stephen's, founded in 2009, and going strong. In 2025, the year-round market was named one of the top three markets in the region by readers of Virginia Living and Richmond magazines in 2025. **5.** The Great Vigil of Easter. **6.** Easter egg hunt. **7.** Maundy Thursday Agape meal and footwashing. **8.** Rebuilding Together Richmond. **9.** Small groups are a foundation of our community of faith.

Photos 4, 8, and 9: Dillon Gwaltney; others: Kim Lee Schmidt



A year of blessings

For St. Stephen’s Church, 2025 was a year of challenges, but it was also a year of blessings, including financial blessings. These blessings came in different forms and not all of them were fully anticipated as we entered the new year in January 2025.

One blessing was continued financial momentum as our congregation gave generously to fulfill their annual financial pledges supporting our operations and ministries. Another blessing was from the clergy, staff, and volunteers who deploy our resources in support of diverse and effective ministries—and did this in a way that balanced financial discipline with God’s grace and love. On the unexpected side, we are now benefitting from the addition of a number of new staff members, including Kathleen Wilson-Kennedy, executive director of finance and administration, and David Ellis, director of facilities and operations, who have enhanced our operational expertise and financial acumen.

As we did in 2025, we have entered 2026 with a balanced budget adopted by the vestry, thanks to the results of the annual giving campaign and an exciting allocation of resources across our many vibrant ministries.

The annual campaign, “Abound in Hope, launched in October 2025. Campaign leadership—including co-chairs Becky Boyers, Wortie Ferrell, and Andrew Robertson, and our rector, the

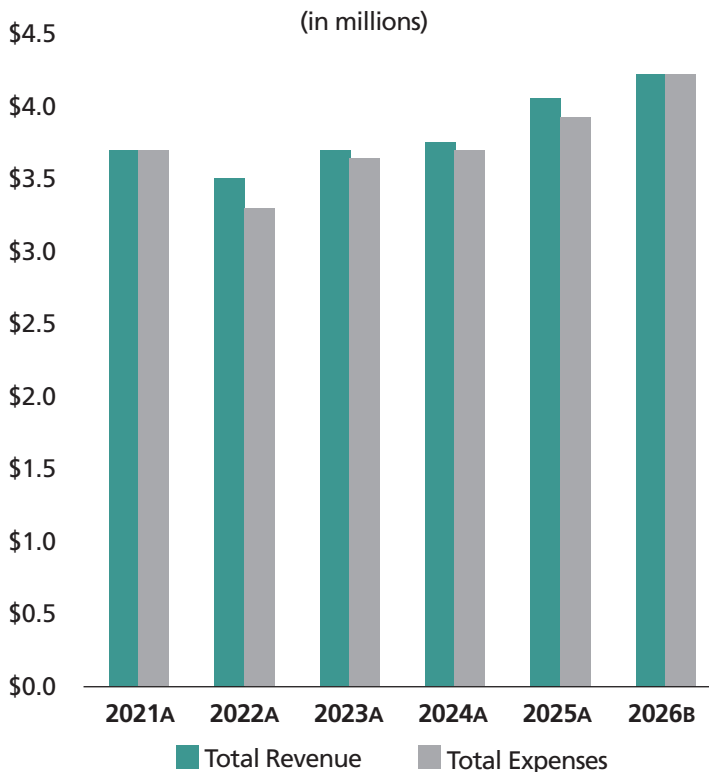


Attendance at Compline continued to grow in 2025.

Dillon Gwaltney

Rev. John Rohrs—set ambitious goals: \$3 million in pledges, and commitments from 850 households. We surpassed the \$3 million goal, and came very close to the participation goal, receiving 828 pledges. Financial commitments were spread among people who attend our various services, from the 8 a.m. service of Holy Eucharist: Rite One to the 8 p.m. service of sung Compline. The steady increase in average Sunday attendance shows vitality and commitment, another great blessing.

Revenue vs Expenses for 2021-2026



A = actual amounts for 2021-2025

B = budgeted amounts for 2026

Designated Funds Report / Cash Balances

	Fund Balance (January 2025)	Fund Balance (December 2025)
Designated Outreach Funds	\$120,736	\$76,700
Parish Life Funds	85,430	125,134
Garden of the Holy Spirit	77,142	83,331
Discretionary Designated Funds	53,381	48,908
Preschool Funds ¹	189,878	155,571
Prepaid Pledges / Other Funds	539,005	643,812
Operating Reserve	204,197	346,034
Capital Reserve Fund	1,353,306	1,463,594
Endowment Funds	6,963,364	8,151,723
All Designated Funds	\$9,586,439	\$11,094,807
Cash Balances		
Unrestricted	\$237,241	\$265,398
Designated & Other	1,052,346	1,112,089
Total Cash Balances	\$1,289,587	\$1,377,487

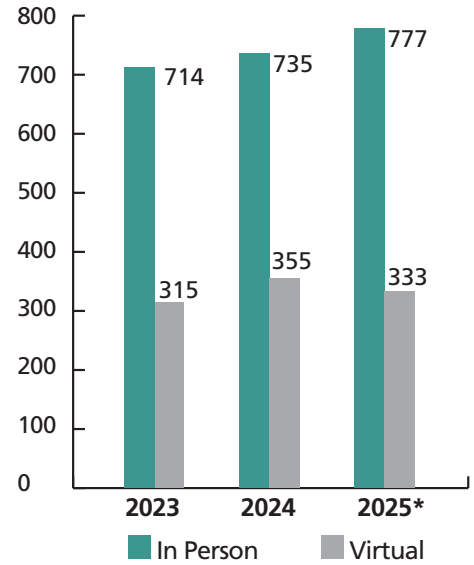
(1) Preschool funds pending minor adjustments to true up Playground Project costs

2026 Budget versus 2025 Actuals and Budget

	2026 Budget	2025 Actuals	2025 Budget
Revenue			
Annual Fund	\$3,420,000	\$3,308,816	\$3,304,000
Other Contributions	212,635	202,306	237,000
Endowment and Trust Revenue	295,610	275,327	275,328
Other Revenue	271,206	307,935	262,449
Funding Transfers	17,200	0	20,000
Total Revenue	4,216,651	4,094,384	4,098,777
Expenses			
Personnel	\$2,604,582	\$2,410,686	\$2,523,441
Giving	252,500	233,160	232,500
Outreach & Missions	183,300	170,445	171,800
Church Services & Events	296,928	297,549	291,919
Christian Education	61,921	46,008	63,675
Pastoral	7,700	2,001	3,500
Parish Ministries/Groups	9,800	10,265	9,000
Vestry	2,000	1,052	2,000
Administrative & Support	349,452	335,156	341,249
Facilities, Security and Vehicles	405,503	433,306	410,370
Capital Projects	35,000	35,330	35,000
Debt Service	7,873	7,873	7,872
Total Expenses	4,216,559	3,983,431	4,092,326
Net Surplus (Deficit) from	92	110,953	6,451
Noncash & Adjustments		3,703	0
Net Surplus (Deficit)	92	114,656	6,451

Figures as reported at the annual parish meeting; may be subject to final adjustments.

Average Sunday Attendance



*6% increase v. 2024

*9% increase v. 2023

Abound in Hope Annual Giving Campaign

GOAL:
850 pledges
\$3 million

AS OF APRIL 28, 2026:
828 pledges
\$3,021,293

Number of Pledges for 2026 by Primary Service Attended



8 A.M. SERVICE	67
9 A.M. SERVICE	253
PALMER HALL SERVICE	67
11:15 A.M. SERVICE	213
CELTIC SERVICE	234
COMPLINE	35
LIVESTREAMED SERVICE	67

Numbers total more than the number of pledges because some pledgers attend more than one service regularly.

From generation to generation

The hope for every generation is to make life better for those who follow. For more than a century, St. Stephen's Church has provided spiritual sustenance to its members and the surrounding community. Many have demonstrated their gratitude by making provision for the ongoing vitality of St. Stephen's Church in their estate planning; they are considered members of the Legacy Society.

Planned giving can be an option regardless of financial means or age. There are many ways to do this, from bequests to trusts to life insurance, and members of the staff and Legacy Society committee are happy to discuss these options in light of your individual goals and circumstances.

In 2025, the Legacy Society hosted a luncheon for current and prospective members of the Society, as well as an informative presentation for the entire parish about advance planning for our own funerals, wills, powers of attorney, and related considerations. Speakers included our rector, a parishioner who is a former funeral director, and an attorney with expertise in wills and estates.



THE LEGACY SOCIETY

St. Stephen's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Our long-term goal is to continually increase the endowment through investments as well as gifts and bequests from parishioners, enabling the fund to provide greater support to the ministries of the church.

Established in 1949 to support the financial well-being of St. Stephen's Church, the endowment makes quarterly distributions to support programs and operational needs. In 2025, these totaled \$275,327.56. As of December 31, 2025, the total balance held was \$8,122,649. Returns were surprisingly strong, especially on the heels of above-average returns for 2023 and 2024 and given concern that valuations had been on the higher end of historical norms. While we are grateful that the endowment has grown in recent years, it is small for a parish as large as St. Stephen's. Learn more by contacting Kathleen Wilson-Kennedy, kwilson@ststephensRVA.org, or 804.288.2867.

RETURNS AS OF 12/31/25

	2025	Average Since 3/31/24*
Equities	14.6%	11.2%
Bonds	7.6%	6.3%
Cash/Money Mkt	4.0%	4.3%
Total Portfolio	11.9%	9.3%

*We began using a new fund manager in 2024

The stewardship of our campus

The buildings and grounds that help make our ministries possible require consistent upkeep and repair. David Ellis, who joined the church staff as director of facilities and operations in 2025, works with the buildings and grounds committee, the junior warden and other vestry members, and the staff to ensure that our facilities are well maintained and ready to serve our mission.

In 2025:

- We converted interior and parking lot lighting to LEDs to provide greater energy efficiency, covered in part by a rebate from Dominion Energy.
- We made emergency repairs to the slate roofs in the summer and scheduled ongoing repairs.
- We repaired the floor in the large fellowship hall after water from a faulty fan coil unit damaged it; the entire floor will be refinished in 2026.
- We received a free energy audit from the Community Climate Collaborative to guide us in best practices.
- We signed a contract for a comprehensive capital needs assessment to help the vestry and staff manage facility maintenance and budget forecasting.
- We upgraded the audiovisual system in the church for greater reliability during livestreams.
- In a joint project with Dogwood Preschool, we renovated our playground.
- We serviced the backup power generator which is now back online.



St. Stephen's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

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