

the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2026 | THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The next step of faith, by faith, to grow in faith

Dear people of St. Stephen's: The church encourages and invites all people to take the next step of faith, by faith, to grow in faith. Whatever your season of life, this is the time to explore the rich opportunities offered for spiritual growth for children, youth, and adults of all ages, from fellowship or formation to ministries of service within or beyond the church. You may explore all opportunities and connect or enroll through the Connect and Serve webpage, our year-round ministry directory.

Today we offer an in-person opportunity to connect with ministry leaders and staff at the receptions following the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services and at the community supper following the 5:30 service. Visit ststephensRVA.org/connect-and-serve today, and for personal support or guidance as you consider your next step of faith, contact any member of the parish clergy or staff.

Our regular schedule resumes today

Our regular worship schedule resumes today with services at 8 a.m., 9 a.m., 11:15 a.m., 5:30 p.m., and 8 p.m. The 9 a.m. Palmer Hall service resumes today as well. Child care is available during the 9, 11:15 and 5:30 services. Also today, we'll have a ministry fair with refreshments after the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services, and the Sunday supper at 5:30 p.m. The Wonderful Wednesday suppers resume this week, September 16, 5:45-6:30 p.m. Sunday morning formation for all ages resumes September 20.

Family ministry summary and registration now available

St. Stephen's family ministry discernment process, begun in the spring, has arrived at a new stage. After gathering robust feedback from over 100 households in the parish, a team of stakeholders and staff have reviewed and refined plans for fall formation and beyond. A summary of those findings and plans is now available. Visit ststephensRVA.org/children-youth for a link to the summary. On the same web page you'll find a link to registration for children, youth, and parents (also linked in the **eSpirit**). Many thanks to all participants in this process. We are excited about the future of family ministry!

This morning, a gathering for parents of young children

Parents of children grade 5 and younger are invited to a casual gathering in the Café @ St. Stephen's following the 9 a.m. services (main church and Palmer Hall) today. Enjoy fellowship, coffee, breakfast treats, and speak to members of the family ministry team about plans for 2026-27. No registration is needed—just drop in—and child care will be available for babies, toddlers, and school-age children through grade 5.

Register for a small group by September 24

Participating in a small group at St. Stephen's is one of the very best ways to get connected in community and to go deeper in faith. This fall we are delighted to once again offer a variety of adult small groups.

Being With groups, developed by the Rev. Dr. Sam Wells at St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church in London, are oriented for newcomers and for those who want to explore basic theological questions in the context of their lives and Christian community.

Emmaus groups, long a fixture at St. Stephen's, are spiritually-grounded groups that combine discussion of the lectionary or other sacred texts with communal discussion and support. Some of those groups are also affinity-based, bringing together women or men, young adults or LGBTQ+ persons, etc.

Finally, we are pleased to offer a number of topical focus groups, ranging from the spirituality of aging to a Sacred Ground racial healing group, a study of the papal encyclical on artificial intelligence, and more.

Descriptions and registration are at ststephensRVA.org/small-groups.

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.





Notes on the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services this fall

Today we return to our full six-service worship schedule on Sundays. For the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services in the main church, we are introducing a few small shifts to differentiate these two services from one another. Beginning today, the 11:15 a.m. service will include an additional reading of Holy Scripture—usually a letter from the New Testament or a reading from the Acts of the Apostles. At the 9 a.m. service, if a hymn has starred verses indicating that they are optional, we will omit them to shorten the hymn. On most Sundays we'll continue to use one bulletin for both services, but rubrics (the notes in italics) will indicate how to proceed. We hope these small shifts will help us achieve two goals: a slightly shorter 9 a.m. service on occasion (so the formation hour starts more consistently at 10:10 a.m.) and a longer, fuller worship experience at 11:15 a.m., allowing us to use four pieces of scripture for at least one service every Sunday. We'll follow this pattern for the next few months and reassess mid-year.

Reasons to check your online profile (you can do it today!)

Last summer we introduced a new feature to our website through which parishioners can ensure that their profiles are accurate, and choose which portions they wish to be accessible to other parishioners. We have continued to launch other features of Ministry Platform since then. Here's how they can be helpful.

If you want a parish directory, this is how to get one. We no longer publish parish directories, but your profile offers a way to get the kind of information you'd get from a directory: phone numbers, addresses, and email addresses for parishioners who have opted in to sharing their information.

Ensuring that your email address is up to date makes it easy for staff or ministry leaders to **send you a message** about a group, activity, or ministry you're in.

Check your giving record 24/7 for tax purposes or simply to know how much you have paid on your pledge. *Beginning in 2027, paper statements will not be mailed unless you request them. You'll have the opportunity to do that on your pledge card next month.*

You'll have access to **a seamless registration process** for many events. If you're logged into the membership portal when you visit our website, and you see an event on the calendar, you will be able to register for it on that same page.

Today staff are available to help you with your profile if needed, and they'll even take **a quick head-and-shoulders photo** of you if you wish, which we can upload to your profile on the spot.

Our Natural Rights Republic

THIS WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 16 AT 6:30 P.M. | IN PALMER HALL

Ken Davis, a St. Stephen's parishioner, widely published legal commentator, and former deputy attorney general for the Commonwealth of Virginia, will give a short talk on our founding principles and the Constitution enacted to protect them, "Gold Framed by Silver: Abraham Lincoln and Our Natural Rights Republic."

This offering, coming on the eve of the 239th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution, continues our commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and provides a good time to reflect on the religious principles that sparked our revolution and which define the purpose of our constitutional government. This presentation will take place in Palmer Hall Chapel after the first Wednesday night supper of the fall. No registration is needed. Additional Wednesday evening offerings are at ststephensRVA.org/adults/wednesdays.

Fall Ministry Night

THIS THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 | 5:15-7:30 P.M.



A few times during the year, members of various standing committees of the vestry gather for supper, fellowship, and sharing about what is happening at St. Stephen's Church. This gathering time concludes with a simple worship service, after

which individual committees may meet to discuss upcoming plans for their area of ministry. Everyone is welcome at Ministry Night, whether you are on one of the committees or not. Learn about the various ministries happening here, and how and where you might plug in. Sign-up is requested, but not required.

Sundays this fall

An exciting adult formation schedule is planned for this fall. More details are at ststephensRVA.org/adults, but here's what's coming Sundays in September and October. No registration is needed for Sunday formation offerings.

The morning offerings below begin at 10:10 a.m.

SUNDAY FORUM

A wide range of topics and speakers are featured, all in the fellowship hall.

Sunday, September 20: As we do each fall, we'll devote the first Sunday Forum to an update on the parish from our leadership.

Sundays September 27, October 11 and October 18:

The promise, pitfalls, and ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence will be the focus of a three-part series.

Sunday, October 4: Annual giving campaign launch, "Growing in Grace"

MANY PARENTS, ONE VINE

Parents of children and youth gather in Room 14 (upstairs in the parish house) for presentations on and discussion of issues of particular interest to them.

On September 27, October 11, October 18, and October 25, two mental health professionals will lead "Navigating and supporting the mental health of children and teens." Parents are encouraged to attend the Sunday Forum on September 20 for the parish update, and October 4 for the annual giving campaign kick-off.

TRAILHEADS

Trailheads, our Sunday evening offering, resumes September 27 at 7 p.m. in the Café @ St. Stephen's. That evening we'll gather with parishioners, newcomers, friends, and neighbors for a casual evening of poetry reading. Poetry has long been honored at St. Stephen's Church and incorporated into worship and prayer, especially in the evening, alongside the poetry of both hymnody and the liturgy. All are welcome to gather to listen, and if you wish, to offer one or more works of your own or those of your favorite poets. To offer a reading, simply add your name to the sign-in sheet when you arrive. There will be amplification so all may hear the readings.

Beginning October 11, we'll offer a three-part series, "Contemplation, prayer and practices."

October 11: Contemplative Prayer 101

October 18: The Labyrinth, walking prayer

Note the different time and location for this session: 6:30 – 7:50 p.m. in Palmer Hall Chapel

October 25: Lectio Divina

More details: ststephensRVA.org/adults-sundays

World War II memoir pre-ordering begins today

More than 20 years ago, St. Stephen's parishioner and staff member Lyn Presson began collecting memories of World War II from parishioners who had served during the war in the armed forces or in other roles. Soon after retirement, Lyn enlisted help from parishioner Nancy Emerson, a professional editor. Some veterans were eager to tell their stories, while others required a bit of coaxing, but over the years they and their family members shared recollections, photos, and mementoes for this project. In 2025, Nancy completed her work and provided all the materials to the parish communications office for production, design, and publication. Production costs for the hardbound book are being covered by the sales price (\$40 per copy), as well as generous donations from several members of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, including those who made donations to the Women of St. Stephen's in memory of Sara Frances Derieux. Stop by the book display this morning to see the samples and place your order.

Sign up for Shalom Farms workday by 9/18

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 8:45 A.M.-NOON



Join other parishioners for a morning at Shalom Farms' Northside location at 1311 Westwood Avenue on the campus of Union Presbyterian Seminary. We may be planting, harvesting, or washing and packing fall crops, or whatever tasks are needed. All ages are welcome (volunteers under 16 should be accompanied by an adult). Wear sturdy shoes (no flip-flops) and clothes that can get dirty. Bring a water bottle. Advance sign-up is required using the QR code. Questions: Jennifer Bousquet, jbousquet@ststephensRVA.org.

Orientation to St. Stephen's offered next week

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 | 10:10 A.M. AND 7 P.M., IN THE CAFÉ

If you're newer to St. Stephen's Church or still exploring, attend one of two orientation sessions next Sunday to learn the lay of the land, tour the facility, and share your questions. All are welcome! You can also reach out to us anytime by submitting a Welcome Card, found in the pew racks in the church, in kiosks throughout the parish house, at Visitor Central, or at ststephensRVA.org/visitor-card (or scan the QR code in the bottom right corner of page 1 of this newsletter), or call 804.288.2867. These orientation sessions are offered every month; if next Sunday doesn't work for you, watch this space for upcoming dates.



A parent's guide to substance use in young people

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 | 6-7:30 P.M.



St. Stephen's Church will be the location for an event sponsored by the JHW Foundation: a presentation by Linda Hancock, FNP, PhD, and a discussion by a panel of parents and their young adult children about their experiences with substance use, treatment and recovery. This engaging presentation will inform you of the latest trends in substance use among young people and what you can do. Please register for this free community event with the QR code.

RSVP for for a family ministry party

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 5-7 P.M.



Children, youth and parents are invited to a gathering to mark the beginning of a new program year. Enjoy delicious food, sweet treats, and lawn games. The cost is \$15 per person, with a maximum of \$50 for a family; there's no charge for children age 3 and under. Scan the QR code to sign up.

The Rev. Paige Trivett to be ordained priest

The Rev. Paige Trivett, our seminarian intern during the summer of 2025, was ordained to the transitional diaconate earlier this year. On September 19, Bishop Stevenson will ordain her to the priesthood at St. James's Church in Richmond. Details are available at <https://episcopalvirginia.org/event/ordination-of-priests/>. Please keep Paige in your prayers.

Facilities staff news

We are excited that **Kim Dove** joins St. Stephen's staff as Director of Facilities and Operations today! Kim brings more than 25 years of experience leading the operations of nonprofit and food service organizations. In her 17 years with Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, she served as chief operating officer, developing processes and policies to help the garden's operations run more efficiently. For the past three years, Kim has worked for Meriwether Godsey, managing food service operations for academic institutions and government-based agencies across the Mid-Atlantic. In her spare time, Kim enjoys gardening, cooking, and volunteering with a local farmers market. She combines a keen eye for detail and organizational efficiency with a kind spirit that will fit in well at St. Stephen's.

Ian Hayes has been promoted to the position of Associate Facilities Manager. In his new role, Ian will have increased responsibilities for events and facilities coordination, working with staff and various groups that use our buildings to ensure we're prepared to meet their needs. Ian began working here in 2023 as a barista in the Café @ St. Stephen's and joined the staff as a full-time sexton in April 2025. In that time, Ian has proven himself a dependable, detail-oriented team member who cares deeply about St. Stephen's and its parishioners. We are excited about this new role for Ian.

And finally, we are delighted to welcome **Tristan Brown** to the facilities team. Tristan has a breadth of experience ranging from working with ex-offenders seeking employment, to hospitality, to digital arts, audio, video and filmmaking. Tristan and his wife have a young daughter. Welcome!



St. Stephen's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

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

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