

the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026 | THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sunday formation is underway!

A variety of programs are available for all ages. Formation begins at 10:10 a.m.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Children ages 4 through 5th grade are invited to classrooms on the second floor of the parish house. Students in grades 6 through 12 meet for Sunday Circle in Room 4, also upstairs. To register your child or youth, scan the QR code here.



SUNDAY FORUM

Today begins a three-part series on the promise, pitfalls, and ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence. The series will continue on **October 11** and **October 18**. On Sunday, **October 4**, the forum will launch our annual giving campaign. This year's theme: "Growing in Grace."

MANY PARENTS, ONE VINE

Two licensed professionals from Summit Emotional Health will lead "Navigating and supporting the mental health of children and teens" over the course of three weeks, beginning today and continuing **October 11** and **October 18**. Parents are encouraged to attend the Sunday Forum on **October 4** for the annual giving campaign kick-off. Today, Dr. Bryn Schiele Moore, licensed clinical psychologist, will speak about lowering anxiety and building resilience as children grow.

TRAILHEADS

Tonight's gathering in the Café @ St. Stephen's at 7 p.m. will be a casual evening of poetry reading with parishioners, newcomers, friends, and neighbors. 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. If you wish to offer one or more works of your own or from a favorite poet, 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

A parent's guide to substance use in young people

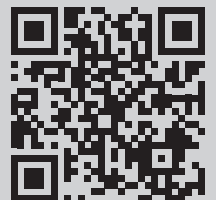
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 | 6-7:30 P.M.

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 here.



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.





Choristers have resumed rehearsals

WEDNESDAYS OR THURSDAYS | 5-6 P.M.

St. Stephen's Choristers welcome all children in grade 1 and above. Rehearsals are held Wednesday and Thursday evenings in upstairs choir rooms (17 and 18); Thursday is for those whose schedules do not permit Wednesday participation. No experience is required for this high-level, potentially life-changing experience. It may take parents' gentle encouragement to give the choir a try; not all children will take the initiative. Contact Robert McCormick, rmccormick@ststephensRVA.org, or visit ststephensRVA.org/choristers.

Choral Evensong marks a holy day

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 | 6 P.M.

The service of Choral Evensong (sung Evening Prayer) is a jewel of the Anglican musical and liturgical tradition. Please come experience the St. Stephen's Choir's offering of Choral Evensong for the feast of St. Michael and All Angels (transferred). Michaelmas, observed on September 29 in Western churches, celebrates St. Michael the Archangel, regarded as the leader of the heavenly hosts. This sung service will last no more than 40 minutes and will feature music of Margaret Burk, David Hogan, and Charles Villiers Stanford. All are welcome.

RSVP for a family ministry party

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

Have you made your reservation for the annual family ministry kick-off party? If not, today's the day! This evening is for the whole family, including kids from birth through high school. Come to be with old friends and meet someone new! We'll enjoy hot slices from Fireside Pizza, treats from Jiji's Frozen Custard, and lawn games, all outdoors on the Three Chopt Road side of the church. The cost is \$15 per person, with a family maximum of \$50 (there's no cost for children age 3 and under). Use the QR code here to sign up. We hope to see you there!



An opportunity to sleep in

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3 | 9 A.M. MAIN PARKING LOT

The Farmers Market @ St. Stephen's moves to a later start time in October, leaving summer hours behind. Vendors will be open for business at 9 a.m. and, for several weeks, will continue to have fresh produce. Baked goods and hand-made creations know no season! Should you arrive early, the Café @ St. Stephen's will be open for business at 7:30 a.m. this month. (The Café opens at 8:30 a.m. starting in November.)

Blessings for living things, both small and great

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4 | 9 A.M. PALMER HALL OUTSIDE; 3 P.M. THREE CHOPT ENTRANCE

The feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and ecology, falls on a Sunday this year. We celebrate his life and works with prayers and readings alongside an observance of the ecumenical "Season of Creation." The celebration includes two opportunities for the animals we love to receive a blessing. Palmer Hall worship will take place outdoors on the Three Chopt lawn and will include time for blessing pets within the service. **Please bring your own chair.** At 3 p.m. we'll hold a traditional Blessing of the Animals service in front of the doors facing Three Chopt Road. At either service, all pets are welcome -- dogs, cats, gerbils, crabs, parakeets -- on leashes and in carriers or cages.

Remember the Ladies: Fashion, Freedom, and the Fabric of a Nation 1776–2026

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6 | 11 A.M.–1 P.M.

The Women of St. Stephen's will present parishioner Whitney Robertson, a clothing and textile historian and founder of Heirloom Care LLC, for a behind-the-scenes look at Remember the Ladies, an exhibition of 250 years of women's clothing that she is guest-curating for the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library in Staunton. While learning about beautiful garments and the women who wore them, we will explore what it means to look at history through clothes and touch on the spirituality of connecting to ourselves and our predecessors through their garments. Bring a friend for this engaging presentation in the fellowship hall. A light lunch will be provided.

An invitation to the Episcopal Church

WEDNESDAYS | 6:30–8 P.M.
OCTOBER 7 THROUGH NOVEMBER 18

This introductory class is ideal for all who are exploring or interested to learn more about the Episcopal Church and about St. Stephen's, whether you are newer here or newly curious, and it also is a good place to meet people. Topics include our unique identity and perspective, historical origins, our worship, beliefs, practices, and more. The class is excellent preparation if you are considering Baptism or joining the church from another religious tradition. Most of all, this is a supportive and welcoming place to ask questions, however big or small. The class will meet in the Cafe @ St. Stephen's and will be led by two members of St. Stephen's clergy. Questions? Contact the Rev. John Jenkins. Registration via the QR code here.



Fall newcomer reception

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8 | 5:30–7 P.M.

A few times during the year, the rector and other members of the parish staff host a reception especially for those who are new to this community of faith. And the definition of “new” is completely up to you! If you've recently joined St. Stephen's Church, or you have visited but have not yet decided whether this will become your church home, please come to a newcomer reception! These gatherings are very informal. We serve appetizers, wine, beer, and non-alcoholic beverages. Sign-up via this QR code is helpful, but not required.



Fellowship and coffee hour

TODAY | FOLLOWING 11:15 A.M. WORSHIP

Refreshments offered after the final morning service are coordinated by the Women of St. Stephen's, a ministry to which every woman of the parish belongs. Today's reception is

graciously provided by the Altar Guild, volunteer parishioners who care for the linens, vestments, sacred vessels, and communion elements for worship. Altar Guild members, who work in teams, reverently set up and take down all that is needed for our worship services, funerals, and weddings. To learn more about this ministry, please email WOSS@ststephensRVA.org or use the QR code provided.



Thursday Bible study group to read Romans

OCTOBER 1 THROUGH NOVEMBER 19 | 10 A.M. ROOM 14

In this fall's Thursday morning Bible Study we will explore Paul's Letter to the Romans. The longest of all the New Testament epistles, it contains many famous passages and the New Testament's most developed theology of salvation. We will examine the occasion on which Paul wrote to the Romans, what he sought to say to them, and what this meant in the context of Jewish-Gentile relations at the time. Romans offers careful readers much to reflect on, especially when reading and discussing with others. No registration is needed for this offering.

Wednesday evening series looks to the universe

SEPTEMBER 30, OCTOBER 7 AND 14 | 6:30 P.M.

A Wednesday evening series, held in Palmer Hall following the parish supper, offers different ways to contemplate the universe.

September 30

The Rev. Dr. Pamela Conrad is an astrobiologist and former NASA scientist who worked on the 2020 Mars Rover mission. She is also an Episcopal priest serving as the interim rector at Memorial Episcopal Church in Baltimore. Dr. Conrad will guide us on a “believer's journey through the stars,” the title of her new book.

October 7

The Rev. Cate Anthony will conclude the speaking/discussion portion of the series by reflecting on her own interest in the mysteries of the universe, and sharing resources for further study and exploration such as a local planetarium and telescope, “dark parks,” and more.

October 14

The final gathering in the series is a parish movie night with popcorn and a showing of Steven Spielberg's *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*. Questions? Contact Cate Anthony.

Addressing food insecurity, week by week

Our food pantry is receiving record-breaking numbers of visitors who come to us for assistance to feed their families. This week, please consider donating **soup** and **tuna** to stock our pantry. In addition, the weekly fruit ministry needs fresh apples, oranges, and bananas, and plastic or paper grocery bags with handles. Drop off these items at the Somerset entrance to the



parish house or in baskets in the church. The church and parish house are open all day Sunday, Monday through Thursday, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Fridays until late afternoon, and Saturdays until noon. If the doors are locked when you arrive, you can leave donations just outside the glass doors to the parish house.) Thank you for your generous response to the growing need.

"Personal Stories of the Greatest Generation"

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. Their project has come to fruition with the publication of *World War II Memories: Personal Stories from the Greatest Generation*. This book is being published as print-to-order, which means copies will be made following payment. Ordering deadlines are **October 1, November 3, and December 1**. (Orders placed after November 3 may not arrive before Christmas.) The cost of \$40 per book has been offset by donations from several members of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, including those who donated to the Women of St. Stephen's in memory of Sara Frances Derieux. Visit ststephensRVA.org/World-War-ii-memoirs or use the QR code here to order your copy.



Sunday suppers are for everyone

SUNDAYS | 6:30 P.M.

Each Sunday evening following the Celtic service, we serve an informal supper in the fellowship hall. Join others for this simple, delicious, donation-based meal. Most meals are vegetarian, and vegan and gluten-free options are available. It's a wonderful way to meet others. No reservations or registration required.



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

We have returned to our full six-service worship schedule on Sundays. For the 9 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. services in the main church, we have made a few small shifts to differentiate these two services. The 11:15 a.m. service now includes an additional reading from Holy Scripture, usually a letter from the New Testament or a selection from the Acts of the Apostles. At the 9 a.m. service, starred verses within a hymn (which are optional) will be omitted 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 differences between the services and how to proceed. We hope these changes will make for a slightly shorter 9 a.m. service (so our formation hour starts more consistently at 10:10 a.m.) and a longer, fuller worship experience at 11:15 a.m., with four pieces of scripture. We'll follow this pattern for the next few months and reassess mid-year.



St. Stephen's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

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

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