

the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2026 | THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Calling a new communications director

Robyn Banks, currently director of communications at Calvary Episcopal Church in Memphis, has accepted our call to serve in the same capacity at St. Stephen's Church, starting January 11, 2027. Robyn has been with Calvary since 2005, first as executive assistant and then as communications director. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Arkansas and did post-graduate work in web development. Robyn has a stellar reputation among communicators in Episcopal church circles, balancing skill and expertise in print and digital media with a passion for storytelling. Her fluency with digital media will be a particular asset as we continue to grow that aspect of our communications ministry. Robyn and her daughter, Emma, will move to Richmond over the winter break. We are thankful that Paula Chambers will continue as interim director until Robyn arrives.

Today's adult formation

SUNDAY FORUM, 10:10 A.M.: The Rev. Will Stanley continues our four-part survey of the promise, pitfalls, and ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence today in the large fellowship hall. This week he will bring the baptismal covenant of our Book of Common Prayer in conversation with *Magnifica Humanitas*, the recent encyclical by Pope Leo on safeguarding the human person in the age of artificial intelligence. Last week's presentation from Dr. James Fritz, VCU philosophy associate professor, can be found via the QR code here.



MANY PARENTS, ONE VINE, 10:10 A.M.: Today's session on "Navigating and supporting the mental health of children and teens" will feature Bruce Hammond, LCSW, discussing teen mental wellness. Many thanks to Ms. Hammond and Dr. Bryn Schiele Moore, both providers at Summit Emotional Health, for being with us this fall. The series will conclude on Sunday, October 25, with a group discussion and resource sharing facilitated by St. Stephen's clergy. Our next series is "Reading the Bible with heart and mind: A primer for parents," which will be led by St. Stephen's clergy. The four-part program begins Sunday, November 1, with "Bible basics: Who wrote it, what's in it, and how do we approach it?" No registration is required for these gatherings in room 14.

TRAILHEADS, 6:40-7:50 P.M. [NOTE SPECIAL TIME AND LOCATION]: Next in our "Expansive Contemplative Practices" series, we offer contemplative walking with St. Stephen's labyrinth. We'll begin in Palmer Hall with a brief presentation for those new to the labyrinth, followed by time to walk or sit in contemplation. Come to explore for the first time, to walk, or simply sit in meditation. Votive candles will be available to light as a sign of your prayer. Facilitators from St. Stephen's labyrinth guild will be present to offer guidance, so no prior experience is necessary. No sign-up is needed. Questions: the Rev. John Jenkins, jjenkins@ststephensRVA.org.

An opportunity to learn more about our church

TODAY, OCTOBER 18 | 10:10 A.M. AND 7 P.M., CAFÉ

If you're newer to St. Stephen's or still exploring, we invite you to attend one of two orientation sessions today in the café. You'll hear about our ministries and staff, and tour our campus. All are welcome! Reach out to us any time by submitting a Welcome Card, found in church pew racks and throughout the parish house. You may also scan the QR code to the right or call 804.288.2867. If today doesn't work for you, our next session will be November 15.

Youth commissioning

TODAY, OCTOBER 18 | 9 A.M. AND 11:15 A.M.

This Sunday, in both main church services, we honor and commission our youth involved in liturgical ministries. This was inspired by our Family Ministry Discernment process and the desire to mark milestones in the lives of our youth. A commissioning for those who serve in Palmer Hall will occur in the coming weeks.

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.





Last day for WOSS diaper drive

THROUGH OCTOBER 18

For the past several weeks, the Women of St. Stephen's have sponsored a diaper drive on behalf of Little Hands Virginia, a nonprofit that serves children in need from birth to three years old. Today is the last day for donations of baby wipes and diapers in sizes newborn to 5. Please drop them on the table located near the first-floor restrooms. Questions? Email woss@ststephensRVA.org.

Considering freedom

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21 | 6:30 P.M., PALMER HALL

When he dedicated the cemetery for fallen soldiers after the battle at Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln left a timeless phrase. He spoke not only of the horrific sacrifice, but that our nation, under God, would find a new birth of freedom. In the midst of our nation's worst conflict, how could Lincoln have such hope? Now, given our nation's divides, how could we speak as Lincoln spoke, and find hope as he did? In this two-part series, the Rev. Bill Sachs will ask how we can find hope now. All are welcome, and no registration is required. Come at 5:45 p.m. and enjoy Wonderful Wednesday supper!

Annual giving campaign is ongoing

THROUGH NOVEMBER 22

Growing in Grace is off to a great start! As of Wednesday, October 14, we have received \$820,907 in pledges from 135 households. Many thanks to all those who picked up their personalized packets at church. All unclaimed packets were postmarked and mailed Monday, October 12. We have heard that the USPS is working slowly, so please be patient. You can always pick up an unlabeled packet at Giving Central (in the Hollerith Foyer by the large fellowship hall) or on the Family Ministry table outside Palmer Hall. You may also pledge online via the QR code here. Thank you for helping us grow in grace, supporting the mission and ministry of St. Stephen's Church in 2027 and beyond!



All Saints' observances

SUNDAY AND MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1 AND 2

HEIRLOOMS OF THE HEART RETREAT: Come **Sunday, November 1, 1-4:30 p.m.**, for an afternoon spent in remembrance, grief, and reflection on the sacred gifts that remain within us: love, wisdom, stories, values, traditions, resilience, and blessing. While there is no charge, it is helpful to have an attendance count. Please register using the QR code or by calling the church office at 804-288-2867.



ALL SAINTS' SERVICE: Our traditional All Saints' Service is a deeply meaningful liturgy offering time to light a candle, place it on the altar, and speak the name of a beloved one who is now at peace. Seeing the altar filled with the "saints in light," as the burial service says, is a beautiful and holy sight. This year's service will be held **Monday, November 2, at noon**. The bulletin for this service will include the names of those under the care of St. Stephen's who have died since All Saints' Day 2025. If you would like to add the name of a loved one who has died in the past year and may not be known to the parish staff, please contact Kitty Ball, kball@ststephensRVA.org, by **Monday, October 26**.

Week of Compassion is on the horizon

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8-SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

As we have observed for the prior two years, St. Stephen's Church will have a Week of Compassion in November designed to help focus attention on the example set by

our patron saint, whose story in the Acts of the Apostles is one of servanthood. While our congregation seeks to practice compassion year-round, this focused effort provides numerous opportunities for children, youth, and adults to engage in acts of service. We'll also enjoy visits from our missionaries, Heidi Schmidt and Monica Vega, who serve in Argentina. The week begins with an observance of the Feast of St. Stephen on Sunday, November 8, relocated from its traditional date of December 26. A full schedule of events will be available soon.

Youth ghost walk

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30 | 7-8:30 P.M.

All youth in grades 6-12 are invited for an exploration of Shockoe Bottom, the oldest and most haunted neighborhood in Richmond. This outdoor 90-minute walking ghost tour, led by Haunts of Richmond, will cover roughly three-quarters of a mile through historic streets. Flat walking shoes are recommended, given uneven pathways. We'll meet at Richbrau Brewing Company, 5 S. 20th Street. Tickets are \$20/person, and we have room for 25 folks! Scan the QR code here to register and pay.



About the 'Season of Creation'

SUNDAYS IN OCTOBER

In the ecumenically adopted "Season of Creation," Episcopalians join with Christians around the world to celebrate in prayer and action our Gospel calling to protect the Earth and reform our relationship with God's creation. The 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church recognized climate change as "an all-encompassing social crisis and moral emergency that impacts and interconnects every aspect of pastoral concern including health, poverty, employment, racism, social justice, and family life, and that can only be addressed by a Great Work involving every sector of society, including the Church." St. Stephen's observes this season throughout October with special emphasis in our prayers, hymns, and ministries to deepen our response to the living God and strengthen our resolve to follow Jesus.

Lend a helping hand

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14 | 8:15 A.M.-5 P.M.

During our annual Week of Compassion, we are partnering with Rebuilding Together Richmond to help with basic tasks at a local residence. This might include painting, spreading mulch, fixing a fence, etc. These projects enable senior citizens to remain safely in their homes. We seek at least 12 people, ages 11 and up, to participate. A parent/guardian must accompany youth under age 16 and sign a waiver for any participant under the age of 18. More details will be provided after sign-up is complete. Please register by November 11 via the QR code here. Note: Rebuilding Together Richmond has their own sign-up and waivers. Once you have registered using St. Stephen's form, we'll send you links to RTR's required forms.



Caring for the caregivers

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18 | NOON-1:30 P.M.

Caring for those we love with dementia is a challenging journey. St. Stephen's pastoral care ministry has created a special gathering for parishioners who provide care for someone living with dementia. We hope to offer a resting place for refreshment, friendship, mutual support and perhaps a little grace along the path. While there is no charge, please register by **November 13** using the QR code so we may accommodate dietary restrictions or otherwise make this time more welcoming for you.



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 May Fair House, which awards grants from its proceeds to local nonprofits with an emphasis on those who support women and children at risk. Some of the most popular items sold at the shop are foodstuffs prepared by volunteers in the St. Stephen's kitchen. After you enjoy a sampling today, head over to the shop and make a purchase! And mark your calendars for the annual Holiday Bazaar, set this year for Tuesday, November 3, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (note extended afternoon hours). More information about May Fair House can be found via the QR code here.



Feeding our neighbors

This week, please consider donating **dried beans and pasta sauce** to stock our food pantry shelves. We also welcome apples, oranges, and bananas for our fresh fruit ministry. Plastic and/or paper grocery bags with handles are also useful. All donations may be left inside the parish house foyer facing Somerset Avenue or in baskets in the church. The foyer doors are open Sunday, 7 a.m.-9 p.m.; Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.; Friday, 7 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Saturdays 7 a.m.-noon. If the doors are locked when you arrive, donations may be left outside. Thank you for your generous response to the growing need.

Music to our ears

At today's 11:15 a.m. service, the St. Stephen's Choir will sing Harold Darke's Communion Service in E. Darke was an English musician who, in addition to being a highly regarded composer, was acting director of music of King's College, Cambridge, during the Second World War. This piece is subtitled *Collegium Regale*, which is Latin for "King's College," and accordingly is dedicated to the choir of that chapel. For more information about Darke and the tradition of a Musical Mass, scan the QR code here. And mark your calendars now for the Winter Solstice concert, **Wednesday, December 16, at 7 p.m.**





Parish Staff

To reach a staff member, call 804.288.2867 or send an email using the text provided in parentheses – often first initial and last name – with [@ststephensRVA.org](mailto:ststephensRVA.org).

Other helpful numbers: May Fair House: 804.282.3004 | Café: 804.288.3318 | Dogwood Preschool: 804.665.4902

Betsy Anderson, *May Fair House Manager*

The Rev. Cate Anthony (canthony), *Associate Rector*

Kitty Ball (kball), *Office Coordinator*

Taylor Bigelow (nursery), *Nursery Coordinator*

Jennifer Bousquet (jbousquet), *Director of Outreach and Engagement*

Tristan Brown (tbrown), *Sexton*

Alexis Capeheart (acapeheart), *Sexton*

Paula Chambers (pchambers), *Interim Director of Communications*

Diana Chou (dchou), *Associate Director of Music*

The Rev. Judy Webb Davis (jdavis), *Associate Rector*

Matt Depaolis (mdepaolis), *May Fair House Cooking Coordinator*

Kim Dove (kdove), *Director of Facilities and Operations*

Isaac Dyer, *Barista*

Chris Edwards (cedwards), *Director, St. Stephen's Choir*

Mary Feldman (mfeldman), *Executive Assistant to the Rector and Vicar*

Dillon Gwaltney (dgwaltney), *Communications Associate/Video Producer*

Claire Hackley (chackley), *Parish Suppers Coordinator*

Caroline Harris (charris), *Youth Ministry Coordinator*

Ian Hayes (ihayes), *Associate Facilities Manager*

Paul Honaker (bell-choir), *Director, St. Stephen's Bell Choir*

The Rev. John Jenkins (jjenkins), *Associate Rector*

Anna F. Jones (ajones), *Farmers Market Manager and Food Ministry Coordinator*

The Rev. Abby Kocher (akocher), *Director of Children's Ministry (on leave until December 6)*

Robert McCormick (rmccormick), *Director of Music*

Susan McNamara (smcnamara), *Finance and Administrative Assistant*

Robin Raver (rraver), *Café Manager*

The Rev. John D. Rohrs (jrohrs), *Rector*

Thatch Rudolph, *Barista*

The Rev. William L. Sachs (bsachs), *Historian-in-Residence*

Andrew Scully (ascully), *Sexton*

The Rev. William S. Stanley (wstanley), *Vicar*

Kathleen Wilson-Kennedy (kwilson), *Executive Director of Finance and Administration*

Our Missionaries in Argentina

Heidi Schmidt

Monica Vega

Dogwood Preschool

Kate Batten, *Executive Director*

Elizabeth Sykes, *Program Director*



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