

the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 2024 | THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Our celebration of 50 years of women in the priesthood continues today

This weekend we have been marking the 50th anniversary of the first ordinations of women as Episcopal priests, not only with activities but with the presence and participation of clergy who have served at St. Stephen's Church in the past. On Friday, a screening of "The Philadelphia Eleven" included a post-film panel discussion with the Rev. Cate Anthony, the Rev. Whitney Edwards, and the Rev. Claudia Merritt. Yesterday, Cate led a half-day retreat followed by a luncheon hosted by the Women of St. Stephen's.

Today we are delighted to have the Rev. Margaret Austin, the Rev. Weezie Blanchard, and the Rev. Penny Nash with us. Weezie is our guest preacher at the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services, and she and Margaret will join Cate in the Sunday Forum. This evening the Rev. Penny Nash, well known to our Sunday evening community, will give the reflection at the 5:30 p.m. service.

Next Sunday: the Bishop's visit

Each year St. Stephen's Church receives a visit from one of our bishops. Next Sunday, May 5, the Rt. Rev. E. Mark Stevenson, our diocesan bishop, will be here to preach and celebrate the Eucharist at the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services, and to confirm, receive, or reaffirm adults and youth. This will be a moving celebration. Join us!

Note: there will be no Sunday Forum, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, youth Bible study, or Many Parents, One Vine next Sunday. All will return May 12 for one final Sunday morning formation time until September.

Quarterly Ministry Night: all are welcome

THURSDAY, MAY 2 | 5:15 P.M.

Once a quarter, the standing committees of St. Stephen's vestry gather in the fellowship hall for supper, fellowship, and to hear from parish leaders about what's ahead. Then the committees move to individual meetings to plan for the ministries they coordinate. Quarterly Ministry Night is a great way to meet others whose interests are similar to yours, and to find out how to be involved in specific areas of ministry. Supper is donation-based. We ask you to let us know if you plan to come simply to ensure that we prepare enough food for the meal. Go to ststephensRVA.org/ministry-nights to learn more and sign up to participate.

Spring music gala tickets: get yours now!

FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 17

We had such a wonderful time at the first spring music gala last year that we're doing it again! The concert features the many talents of St. Stephen's wonderful staff singers in ways we don't get to experience in worship. This year's spring-themed program, "A Musical Bouquet," includes music both serious and fun across a variety of genres. The evening begins with a reception outside Palmer Hall at 5:30 p.m., which will provide an opportunity to register for the silent auction and peruse its offerings. The 6 p.m. concert is followed by a festive supper in the courtyard. All proceeds from the evening support the upcoming choir pilgrimage to England. Tickets are available at ststephensRVA.org/spring-gala. If you would like to donate an item for the auction, please contact Brent te Velde, btevelde@ststephensRVA.org. Dinner reservations are due by May 12.

Sunday offerings for young adults

This spring, young adults are getting together twice a month alternating between morning and evening gatherings. No registration is needed. The next opportunity is next Sunday between the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services. *See inside for another young adults offering.*

Are you new to St. Stephen's? Visiting?

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.





Women of St. Stephen's final 2023-24 meeting is at Roslyn

MONDAY, MAY 6 | 10 A.M.

The Women of St. Stephen's will celebrate the end of the program year at Roslyn, the Virginia diocesan conference and retreat center, with a celebration of Holy Eucharist and luncheon. Please join us in a spectacular setting, celebrating our fellowship and the gifts God has given us, including the beauty of Roslyn. We will gather at 10 a.m. for worship in the Bishop's Chapel, followed by an informal luncheon. Reservations are not required. If you might like to carpool from St. Stephen's, please contact Marilyn Kirkpatrick at woss@ststephensRVA.org.

- Roslyn is at 8727 River Road, just east of All Saints' Episcopal Church.
- NOTE: while the Women of St. Stephen's traditional meeting day is Tuesday, this gathering is on a MONDAY.

Young adults to gather at Brambly Park

SUNDAY, MAY 19 | 3:30-5 P.M.

St. Stephen's young adults are cordially invited to a late spring fellowship event at Brambly Park (1708 Belleville St.) in Scott's Addition. Whether you're single, coupled, have children or don't, join other young adults before summer begins in earnest. St. Stephen's will buy the first round of drinks (both non-alcoholic and alcoholic). Thanks to the outdoor environment at Brambly Park, children are most welcome. Our young adult ministry steering group will also briefly share updates and plans for future opportunities for ministry and engagement. Please join us!

Help our farmers market get to first place

Did you know that the Farmers Market @ St. Stephen's was voted the #2 best market in the city by readers of Richmond Magazine last year? Voting time has come again, and you can vote for St. Stephen's as your favorite market by scanning this QR code and going to question 181. Help us make it to #1!



Dogwood Preschool summer camp spaces available

TWO SESSIONS: JUNE 3-6 | JUNE 10-13

Is there a junior athlete in your family? Dogwood Preschool's Summer Olympics Camp is open for students age 3 (before March 1, 2024) through rising kindergarteners. You may choose one week or both. Visit dogwoodpreschool.org/camp2024 to enroll.

New art exhibits in the Gallery and Café to showcase student work

Coming later this week, exhibits in the Gallery (adjacent to the fellowship hall) and in the Café @ St. Stephen's will feature work by students of two schools near and dear to our hearts: Dogwood Preschool which has its home right here at St. Stephen's; and Anna Julia Cooper School, the East End, tuition-free school that St. Stephen's helped found and continues to support. Many St. Stephen's parishioners also volunteer at AJC. Be sure to stop by to see the art once it's up.

Support Dogwood at Blossom Bash

MAY 9 | TICKETS ON SALE NOW

The halls of St. Stephen's have been filled with joy this year as we welcomed Dogwood Preschool to our church and community. On May 9, Dogwood will host its annual fundraiser, Blossom Bash, in St. Stephen's courtyard. This adults-only event features live music, food from FiftyOne Pizza, and a fabulous silent auction.

This year, Dogwood is fundraising to fulfill student financial aid requests, support teacher and staff compensation, and—of particular importance to our congregation—to improve the playground. You can show your support by participating in this wonderful event. Tickets are available at <https://givebutter.com/c/blossombash2024>.

High school seniors: have you signed up for these events?

SACRED PAUSE: APRIL 30 | 6-7:30 P.M.

SENIOR RECOGNITION: MAY 5 | 9 AND 11:15 A.M. SERVICES

We are excited to offer two events to celebrate and honor our graduating high school seniors. **Sacred Pause** provides a unique and intimate way for families to share this sacred moment before the crunch of exams, graduation gatherings, and parties. **High school seniors will be specially recognized**, presented with gifts, and formally blessed by the congregation at both the 9 and 11:15 a.m. liturgies in the main church on **May 5**. For more information and to register for these events, visit ststephensRVA.org/seniors. Questions: Caroline Harris, charris@ststephensRVA.org.

St. Stephen's youth going to Kings Dominion

SATURDAY, MAY 11 | 10:30 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

We're headed to Kings Dominion for the last youth group gathering of the school year. We will meet at St. Stephen's at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 11, and will be back at the church at 4:30 p.m. Registration is open now and closes May 6, or when we reach our capacity of 30, whichever comes first; the form is linked on the youth page of our website, ststephensRVA.org/youth. Tickets are \$60 per person and include admission to the park and a meal. Financial support is available; if needed, please contact Caroline Harris, charris@ststephensRVA.org, to make arrangements.

Vacation Bible School: register now!

JULY 21-AUGUST 1 | 9 A.M.-NOON

We're making plans for this summer's Vacation Bible School, focusing on the theme "Seekers in Sneakers: Discover Jesus." This journey of discovery has many twists and turns which will give children the opportunity to grow through asking questions, working together, shining their light in the world, gaining insight from the Bible, and trusting Jesus.

When you register your child, please indicate how you will support VBS as a volunteer. We need plenty of adults to help during the week. There are also opportunities for parents who work outside the home during the day to support VBS in other ways; you'll find those on the registration form as well.

VBS is also supported by youth volunteers and many adults of all ages in our parish (not just parents). VBS is truly an inter-generational undertaking. If you are a young person or adult who is not registering a child, you can indicate your interest in volunteering using a different form.

VBS at St. Stephen's is for children age 3 (toilet-trained) through grade 5. Registration closes May 19 (or sooner, if we reach capacity). The cost is \$50 for one child and \$25 for each additional child in the same family, with a family cap of \$100.

Registration for children and the volunteer form are both linked at ststephensRVA.org/VBS.

Dogwood staff openings for 2024-25

Dogwood Preschool at St. Stephen's Church is looking for your help. After a successful start in our new space, we are planning ahead for 2024-25 school year. We will need **lead teachers, assistant teachers, and substitute teachers** as we continue to grow.

We serve children from 16 months old to 5 years-plus. Our goal is to nurture a child's creativity and self-confidence using a dynamic, age-appropriate curriculum in small classes. We are a half-day program. We have positions ranging from two days a week to five days a week. If you are interested in joining our team, contact Elizabeth Sykes at 804.665.4902 or programdirector@dogwoodpreschool.org.

Shrine Mont waiting list available

RETREAT DATES: FRIDAY, JUNE 28 TO SUNDAY, JUNE 30

The annual parish weekend at Shrine Mont, our diocesan retreat center and camp, has filled up more quickly than usual, and we've started a waiting list. If you would like to attend, visit ststephensRVA.org/shrine-mont for details and a link to the waiting list. The weekend will offer ways to re-engage our values, relationships, and conversations with God, and planned activities are balanced with time for rest, relaxation, and recreation.

Coffee, tea, free wifi, and art

TUESDAY-FRIDAY, 7 A.M.-11 A.M. | SATURDAY, 7 A.M.-NOON

The Café @ St. Stephen's is the perfect place to warm up on a chilly morning, and if the weather is balmy, you can enjoy our outdoor seating. Locally-roasted Rostov's coffee is freshly brewed, a variety of teas is available, and our baristas can make the full range of espresso drinks. Bagels, muffins, and other morning fare are also available. Enjoy the friendly, relaxed atmosphere, free wifi, and ever-changing art exhibits.

Lost and found items on display

St. Stephen's Church has a lost and found brimming with eyeglasses, umbrellas, Bibles, prayer books, clothing, and other items. Please stop by the table outside the fellowship hall to see if you might have left something behind over the past weeks (or months).

Icon workshop registration is full, but a waiting list is available

WORKSHOP: JULY 21-26

One of our most popular annual offerings is a week-long workshop led by iconographer Suzanne Schleck. Students include St. Stephen's parishioners and people from the larger community and beyond. Writing icons does not require art skills; you simply follow each step guided by the instructor. Registration filled on the day it opened. If you had hoped to get a spot, go to ststephensRVA.org/icon and click on the link to a waiting list. It's not unusual for folks on the waiting list to end up getting a place in the workshop.





This week's pantry needs

CANNED TUNA, CEREAL

This week as you do your grocery shopping, please consider a donation of **canned tuna and/or cereal** to stock our pantry which serves those in need. In addition, we always welcome fresh apples, oranges, and bananas for the fruit ministry, and plastic and paper bags with handles.

Staff receives communications awards

At the recently-held annual conference of Episcopal Communicators, members of our staff received awards for communications work produced in 2023:

Video, Short Form | The Award of Excellence went to "Icons: Praying with Brushes," a video about our annual icon workshop. Dillon Gwaltney was the videographer, interviewer, and editor. Sarah Bartenstein was the producer.

General Excellence: Campaigns | The Award of Excellence went to St. Stephen's annual giving campaign, which included print, digital, video and other communications by Sarah Bartenstein, Dillon Gwaltney, Will Stanley, and John Rohrs.

Periodicals: Parishes and Cathedrals | **Seasons of the Spirit** received an honorable mention in this category, for an edition that included articles by John Rohrs, Cate Anthony, Diana Chou, and others; Sarah Bartenstein was the editor and freelancer Steven Longstaff the graphic designer.

Episcopal Communicators, an international group of communications professionals, celebrated the 50th anniversary of their founding at this year's conference which included workshops on a wide range of topics, from crisis communications to social media strategies to an introduction to Episcopal polity.

Looking ahead

There are still several weeks to go during the 2023-24 program year, but here are some things to be aware of as summer draws near.

The final day for Sunday morning formation is May 12.

The final day for our regular Sunday worship schedule is May 19; the summer worship schedule will begin Sunday, May 26, during Memorial Day weekend:

8 a.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite One

10 a.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite Two*

5:30 p.m., Celtic Evensong and Communion*

6:30 p.m., Sunday Community Supper

8 p.m., Compline (held May 26, taking a break in June and July, resuming in August)

*childcare available

The regular schedule resumes the Sunday after Labor Day.

In addition to offerings mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, such as Vacation Bible School, the Shrine Mont parish weekend, and the icon workshop, other events will take place this summer, including:

Evensong with the combined choirs of River Road Church and St. Stephen's

- June 2, 5 p.m., at River Road Church, Baptist
- June 9, 4 p.m., at Washington National Cathedral

The combined choirs of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and River Road Church, Baptist, will sing music planned for their choral pilgrimage to southwest England this July, including works by Gerre Hancock, Margaret Burk, Kerensa Briggs, David Hogan, William Bradley Roberts, David Hurd, and Herbert Howells.

Watch the **Spirit** and **eSpirit** for announcements of other summer offerings.

