



Red Door Chronicles

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND PRESCHOOL

Experience Christ's Welcome Within Our Door

Advent Edition 2023

Annual Congregational Meeting, Nov. 26

November 26 is the feast of Christ the King and the last Sunday of the Church year. It is also the date of our annual congregational meeting, to be held in the parish hall immediately following the 10:00 service, where Anya and Theodore VonTomaszewski, children of CJ and Bethany, will be Baptized. The meeting will be a little different from previous meetings inasmuch as we are not anticipating a vestry election this year. The only retiring member, Tom Derco, wishes to serve a second term so that he can complete many of the major building initiatives begun during his tenure as Junior Warden. Floor nominations are, as always, welcome! Should anyone be nominated from the floor, the vestry can immediately vote to expand its size or, if it wishes to remain the same size, the congregation will elect one of the two nominees.



Another difference in this annual meeting will be a report from the Discernment Committee (formerly called a Search Committee) regarding its progress toward finding a new rector to succeed Pete when he retires on May 1, 2024. Additionally, members of the vestry will provide comprehensive updates on the rectory renovation, capital fund priorities, and other areas of importance to our life together.

There will be no 8:00 service that day so that everyone can worship together at 10:00 and then meet together right afterward.

Pre-Christmas Events Coming Up!

While we at St. Stephen's love the holy season of Advent as much as anyone, we're also excited to see that the ECW is hosting its annual Holiday Fair on Saturday, December 9, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. On Dec. 14th & 15th, The Preschool will be having fun making Gingerbread Houses at 11 a.m., followed by the Christmas Pageant at 12 noon. On Saturday December 16, St. Stephen's Preschool will host Breakfast With Santa, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. That same afternoon, the Let's Eat people are hosting a caroling, cookies, and cocoa fest from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to bring a plate of cookies. Friends, family, and neighbors are all cordially invited to all these events.

Mitten & Scarf Tree Makes an Appearance Soon!

The ECW invites everyone to help decorate our Advent Tree with mittens, gloves, hats, and other cold-weather items for local school children. The tree will most likely stay up through the Christmas services for delivery to the students in January.



Advent IV and Christmas Eve Are the Same Day this Year

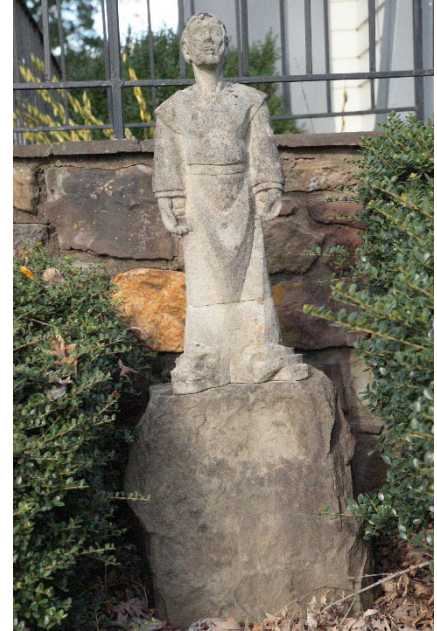


The Episcopal Church follows ancient Hebrew tradition by beginning the observance of a feast day at sundown of the previous day. This means that Christmas Eve (literally the Evening before Christmas) begins at sundown on December 24, which makes daytime on December 24 Advent IV. We would like to hear from you about what kind of schedule would work best for you. Among the options are doing a regular schedule of 8:00 and 10:00 services in the morning and Christmas Eve at 7:30 that evening, or doing a single Advent IV service at 8:00 or 10:00, or something else entirely. Call or email the office and let us know what you'd like to see happen on Advent IV/Christmas Eve.



We Give Thanksgiving for the Life of Jeffrey William DiMeglio: January 25, 1982 – July 30, 2023

Have you ever wondered where the St. Stephen's statue in front of the church came from? Jeff DiMeglio learned to be a talented sculptor as a teenager, and when he was 19 in 2001, he donated one of his first works to St. Stephen's Church. Jeff's girlfriend was Sarah Gulick, which gave him the connection and desire to offer our church one of his first works as a sculptor. Together Jeff and Sarah often went fossil hunting as they shared a love for relics of a seemingly fantastical world. Days after Hurricane Isabel ravaged the cliffs lining St. Mary's River, Jeff and Sarah went scouring for shark teeth and found what Jeff, an experienced fossil hunter, recognized as the rib of a whale. He immediately covered the findings and contacted a museum. Heavy erosion from the storm had unearthed the complete fossilized skull of what paleontologists say was an 8-million-year-old whale. The find is now on display at Calvert Marine Museum in Solomons, Maryland.



By 2004, Constantine Seferlis, an expert stone carver, had taught his art form to Jeff. The Jim Henson Memorial Bench at UMD campus, the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the World War II Memorial, the Baltimore and Pentagon 9/11 Memorials, and the George Bush, Jr. Library Oval office in Dallas, Texas were graced with Jeffrey's high standards for craftsmanship. Many other public monuments that bring people together through feelings of pride, wonder, sorrow, and joy were detailed by Jeffrey's hands. In 2019, Jeff was diagnosed with scleroderma, an extremely rare autoimmune disease that is often connected to the hazards of stone carving. He persevered through all odds, and the disease did not stop him from creating art. His last piece of stone carving sits at First Woodbine Church in northern Virginia, where he added details on their 10 Commandments memorial days before his passing. We understand

that Jeff had wanted to come back and rework some parts of the St. Stephen stone carving since it was his first work, and he wanted to improve some aspects of it, but we here at St. Stephen's will always feel very blessed to see his talented and heartfelt work when we come to church every Sunday. We are so grateful for Jeff's life and his love by sharing his work with us.

Preschool Update for Newsletter

Our Preschool year is moving right along! We've added a few new kiddos and are now up to 48 preschoolers. We were able to find a fabulous new teacher within our preschool family, and start a new 2's classroom to accommodate some of the kiddos on our waitlist. We're hopeful that we can add a few more 2's as the year goes on!

This summer and well into fall our Rooted in Education Garden was thriving. The kiddos were able to spend a lot of time outside doing hands-on learning! Just a reminder, ANYONE is welcome to harvest food from the garden.

Anything that is left, Ms. Nadia from Rooted in Education donates to the local food banks.



In September we hosted two “Goodies with Grandparents” events that were a huge hit! We love any opportunity to welcome family members into our preschool. In October we hosted our annual “Fall Festival” and “Costume Parade”. Special thanks to all our volunteers who helped out, especially Ted and Donna Anders! They grew and donated over 70 pumpkins to the preschool! Our kiddos had a blast carving pumpkins as they learned about the parts of a pumpkin in their classrooms, and then painting pumpkins during the “Fall Festival”.

We'd also like to thank the Gager Family for the donation of a fantastic climbing dome. These kiddos have A LOT of energy, and when we can't get them outside, they're absolutely climbing the walls!!! It's already been a lifesaver on some of the rainy days we've had this year. With the upcoming colder weather, we're looking forward to being able to entertain our preschoolers in the Parish Hall with this awesome addition 😊



**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Women
present their Annual**

Holiday Fair

**Saturday
December 9, 2023
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM**

**Sweet Shop
cookies
cakes breads
oh my!**

**crafts
decorations
gifts**

**Lunch will be
available**

**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
8695 Old Dumfries Rd Catlett
VA 20119
For more information please call 540-788-4619**

Episcopal Church Women (ECW)

There was a time, not too terribly long ago, when every Episcopalian knew exactly what those three initials ECW meant and who it represented. That time is obviously past now, as even members of the 2023 vestry did not know much about the ECW and its mission. One member even half-jokingly remarked that she (yes, it was a she!) thought it was a “secret society.” Definitely time to rectify that impression!

Included in this article is a fascinating (and brief) history of the roots of ECW in the Diocese of Virginia, but senior warden Joanne Faunce probably said it best when she explained to the others that the ECW formed when women were not allowed to serve on vestries; the ECW was – and continues to be – an organization of the Church at automatically includes all women. Originally called a women’s auxiliary, it did what the named implied: it helped, augmented, and joined forces with women throughout the Episcopal Church in the fields of mission, scholarship aid, building grants, and education.

Closer to home, we have often pointed out in our own history that the ECW was on more than one or two occasions responsible for keeping the doors of St. Stephen’s open. Without their unending support, St. Stephen’s would have ceased to exist long ago. Even up to the very publication of this newsletter, the ECW is providing homemade pies for Thanksgiving. This on the heels of its annual pig roast (yes, that’s an ECW thing) and on the verge of the annual holiday fair on December 9 (another ECW thing).

The bookshelves outside the church office contain a number of items for sale by the ECW, which uses those proceeds to continue scholarship offers, grants, and other opportunities to the wider Church. Another fixture of the ECW over the years has been “the little blue box” where everyone dumped their loose change. Those boxes, once a staple of every church, parish hall, and private home, were gathered once a year in what is called the United Thank Offering (UTO), and then forwarded to the Diocesan ECW, who then sent them on to the national Church, where they were combined with UTO boxes throughout the country and beyond, to produce a staggering amount of money, all of which was given away through UTO grants. Kay Shuck was for years and years our UTO coordinator. We still have hundreds of those little boxes lying around if anyone would like to take up Kay’s mantle and resurrect the UTO in our own church. (See side bar on UTO.)

What not everyone might realize is that every female is a member of the ECW, and your membership is more crucial than ever as its surviving older members are no longer able to do the work in which the ECW has long been engaged; i.e., cooking, setting up and taking down events, distributing meals and other outreach activities, etc. ECW president Christine Sanford would love nothing more than a revitalized St. Stephen’s ECW. If you are so inclined to offer your service, she would love to hear from you!

UTO GRANTS

The United Thank Offering (UTO) is a ministry of The Episcopal Church for the mission of the whole church. UTO encourages people to notice the good things that happen each day, give thanks to God for those blessings and make an offering for each blessing using a UTO Blue Box. UTO is entrusted to receive the offerings, and to distribute 100% of what is collected to support innovative mission and ministry throughout The Episcopal Church and Provinces of the Anglican Communion. Over the next three years, the United Grant Offering, in the spirit of Matthew 25:36, will focus on ministry that serve those whom society has left out and left behind. Therefore, the UTO grant focus for 2023 will be on innovative mission and ministry projects addressing all aspects of the worldwide incarceration crisis/prisoner support outreach.

The following is a brief story of the ECW in the Diocese of Virginia.

Miss Sallie Story

A TRIBUTE TO OUR PAST

Winston Churchill said in 1940, in a speech to the House of Commons:

“If we open a quarrel between the past and the present we shall find that we have lost the future”.



We don't **live** in the past, but we do **learn** from the past! A sense of history...a sense of our past...is vital to our becoming a whole person. Conversely, as sense of the history of Miss Sallie Stuart, our Founder is vital to our wholeness as Episcopal Church Women. Miss Sallie pushed the past into the present and the present into the future, with her Visions, Hopes & Realities. Her devotion to God's work was deep and lifelong.

In 1872 The National Woman's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions was established, and Missionary Societies were organized throughout Virginia by Miss Sallie Stuart and others. Building on this, the National Woman's Auxiliary was formed.

In 1888, Miss Sallie was horrified to learn that Virginia was one of just seven Dioceses to have no Woman's Auxiliary, the precursor of our ECW. Miss Sallie, along with Miss Louise Taylor of Norfolk, visited the Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia in person, and asked if they could call a meeting to form a Diocesan Woman's Auxiliary, using the many already organized mission branches. The Bishop was quoted as say, “The time is not ripe for organized woman's work”. **Well**, Miss Sallie and Miss Louise quickly changed that! And in 1892, the Woman's Auxiliary of the Diocese of Virginia was formed. Two years later, our Diocese split into two Dioceses, and Miss Sallie Stuart, on demand from all the auxiliaries, became President, Secretary and Treasurer for life, until her death in 1916. This demand, in fact, was put in the first constitution!

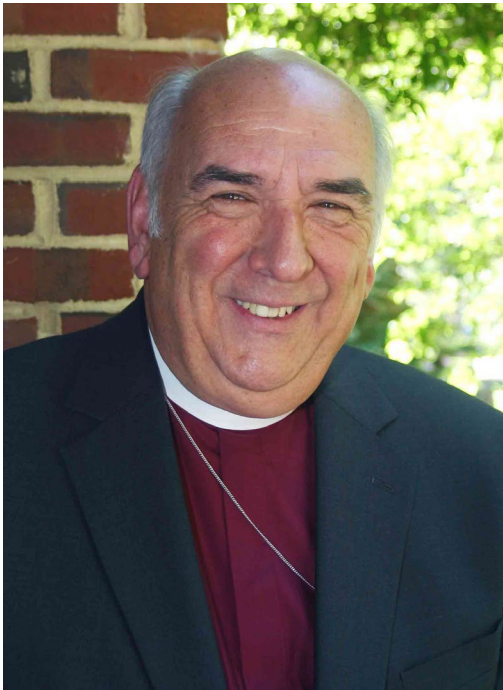
What a lady Miss Sallie Was! She forged forward, organizing branches in Parishes and Missions. Miss Sallie was a genteel, forceful, dynamic woman. Her lifelong motto was “**Joy in Service!**” This is duplicated on our Episcopal Church Women's banner, which was designed by Jeanette Berkeley and Virginia Sales.

Joy in Service is Miss Sallie's legacy to us, as is her black onyx cross. Miss Sallie wore this cross whenever she presided over a Women's Auxiliary meeting. The cross now hangs on a gold chain. Originally it hung from necklace of large jet beads that were strung on a black grosgrain ribbon, tying into a bow at the back of the neck.

The cross stayed in the possession of the Stuart Family until 1950 when they give it to the Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia. It is now worn by every new Diocesan ECW President during her tenure.

Contributed by Mary Jenks, Past Historian and Ruth Gibson, Past Diocesan ECW President

Bishop Stevenson Announces Appointment of Visiting Bishop



The Rt. Rev'd E. Mark Stevenson announced today the appointment of the Rt. Rev'd James Joseph "Bud" Shand as a Visiting Bishop in the Diocese of Virginia. He will serve in the Diocese from January through May of this year and will be based in Northern Virginia. Bishop Shand is the retired Bishop Diocesan of the Diocese of Easton (Maryland), where he served from 2003 to 2014.

"Bishop Shand is a Jesus-loving disciple whose easy-going style and pastoral gifts will be a wonderful addition to our diocesan staff and a blessing to the clergy and parishioners of the entire Diocese," said Bishop Stevenson. "I'm so grateful he will join the diocesan family on our journey in Christ."

Ordained in 1972, Bishop Shand began his ministry as rector of St. Mary Anne's Church in North East, Md., where he served from 1975-1989. He was then called to Christ Church Parish, Kent Island in Stevensville, Md., where he served as rector from 1989 to 2002.

While in parish ministry, Bishop Shand was heavily involved in youth ministry and in the development of active church schools in each community. During his time at Christ Church, he was also a Field Work Supervisor for Virginia Theological Seminary. In service to the wider church, Bishop Shand was a six-time deputy to General Convention and also served on the Convention's Standing Committee for the Church in Small Communities.

Bishop Shand became a member of the Board of Trustees of Virginia Theological Seminary in 2002 and served as Chairman of the Board from 2009 to 2017.

"It's an honor to share ministry with all the people of this historic and vital diocese," said Bishop Shand. "I look forward to proclaiming the message of God's love, forgiveness, and peace for all of us in this world."

Raised in Plainfield, N.J., Bishop Shand graduated from Canaan College in Canaan, N.H. with a Bachelor of Arts. He received his Master of Divinity degree from the Philadelphia Divinity School in 1972. He also holds a Master of Arts in Christian Education and an Honorary Doctor of Divinity from VTS.

Bishop Shand and his wife of 49 years, Lynne, have two children, Jonathan and Meghan, and one grandchild, Connor.

LET'S EAT! 2024 CALENDAR		
SATURDAY, JANUARY 6 5:30-7:00PM SPAGHETTI	SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3 5:30-7:00PM CHILI & CORNBREAD	SATURDAY, MARCH 2 5:30 PM - 7:00PM SOUP & SALAD
SATURDAY, APRIL 6 5:30-7:00PM CHINESE	SATURDAY, MAY 4 5:30-7:00PM TACO'S	SATURDAY, JUNE 1 5:30-7:00PM PASTA PRIMAVERA
SATURDAY, JULY 6 5:30-7:00PM BURGERS & DOGS	SATURDAY, AUGUST 3 5:30 - 7:00PM SALAD & ICE CREAM	SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 5:30-7:00PM WELCOME BACK- LUNCHEON
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 5:30-7:00PM FONDUE	SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 5:30-7:00PM SWEDISH DELIGHTS	SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 5:30-7:00PM APPETIZERS

Mark Your Calendars!
Please RSVP to letseatststephens@gmail.com
so we can prepare accordingly.
See you there!



We give thanks for the November and December Birthdays of Mark Lindsey, John Haragos, Jeff Cox, Nathan Demski, C. J. VonTomaszewski, Ed Dandar, Craig Granche, Bethany VonTomaszewski, Lisa Shuck, Gigi Granche, Nolan Demski, Aaron Moyers, Henry Moyers, Bessie Woodward, Carol Miller, Mary Keith Russell, Peggy Molloy, and Rachel Miller.



We give thanks for the November Anniversary of David & Marianne White.

RED DOOR CHRONICLE

by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church & Preschool.

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PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday - Friday, 8 am -1 pm



WORSHIP AT ST. STEPHEN'S
 8:00 AND 10:00 AM
 SUNDAY

Contact St. Stephen's

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sststephencatlett@yahoo.com
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ssep20119@gmail.com
(540) 788-3364

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8695 Old Dumfries Road
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OUR MISSION

**We will minister
to each other
and reach out to
all people in the
community to
strengthen the
Body of Christ**



Like us on Facebook and get up to the
minute activities