



# SAINT STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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September 24, 2023

Dear Saint Stephen's Community,

For several years, I have spent Tuesday and Thursday mornings with a group of friends, often meeting before the sun comes up, to run a few miles in fellowship. Most of us would much rather sleep in but we are counting on each other. On several occasions, we have found ourselves on especially dark stretches of our run. The first time it happened, without skipping a beat, my friend Phil pulled out his trusted flashlight. Knowing that the rest of us are unprepared, he has cast the light many times to make sure we safely navigate the dark morning terrain. We've come to rely on Phil and his flashlight to illuminate our path.

Sometimes we need each other to help us see clearly. Sometimes we need each other to thrive and grow as the people that God has created. And, sometimes we need to be the light for others. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus shares this idea that his followers are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). In doing God's good work in this world, we point others to the glory of God. We help others to see. I have heard from many colleagues around the country how our community and our faithfulness as a congregation in the midst of the most challenging of circumstances has helped others to have hope in the redeeming work of Christ. Through our faithfulness, we cast a light in this world and point to the glory of God.

My prayer is that you see each act of your own faith as making this world a brighter place. Your service to the community, near and far, your participation in worship, and your own personal reflection on how God is working in your life deepens your ability to cast God's light. I especially hope you see your sacrificial and generous giving as a faithful way of sharing your hope for this world and your ability to be the light of Christ in our community.

As we kickoff our season of Stewardship for 2024, we give thanks for all that you have done to build up the kingdom of God. We ask you to prayerfully consider how you can support God's work through the thriving ministries of Saint Stephen's in the coming year. Over the next few weeks, you will hear how parishioners have been a source of light through their pledged giving, and on Consecration Sunday, November 12, we will celebrate God's abundance in our lives.

Thank you for all that you do to be the light of Christ in this world.

With gratitude,

The Rev. John B. Burruss, Rector