



The Forum: Sunday mornings at 10 am in Norton Hall

Grab a cup of coffee and gather with others as we hear from notable speakers and engage in topics at the intersection of faith and life. Come listen, learn, and ask questions. For more information, please contact The Rev. Jenni Ovenstone at jenni@stpaulsalexandria.com.

*Speakers and themes for this forum year include (*designates intergenerational forums and events:)*

September 17th – Rector’s Forum: “Third Time’s a Charm: The Founding of the Virginia Theological Seminary”

This fall marks the bi-centennial year of the Virginia Theological Seminary. Drawing on research for his upcoming book about The Rev. Dr. Wilmer Holland Wilmer, Oran will explore the role of Dr. Wilmer and St. Paul’s in successfully founding the long-awaited seminary, and ultimately in reviving the Church.

September 24th - The Rev. George Caldwell: “Finding Hope:” a reflective conversation

George Caldwell is a priest associate at St. Paul’s. Reflecting on his recently published book of meditations, first written for St. Paul’s during the pandemic, George will lead us in a conversation about the ways we struggle - and succeed - in finding and holding onto hope. Copies of “Finding Hope: Meditations in Troubling Times” will be available for purchase and signing.

October 1st – Episcopal Schools Sunday: Rode Molla, Ph.D. “May they flourish”: how our faith in action creates space for the holistic nurture of children

Rode Molla is an Assistant Professor, Berryman Family Chair for Children’s Spirituality and Nurture at Virginia Theological Seminary. Dr. Molla’s research and writing interests employ an interdisciplinary approach at the intersection of lived religion; the spirituality of children and families; and postcolonial studies.

October 8th - The Rev. Alyse Viggiano, “Notes from a Sabbatical”

Clergy serving in a community for five years or more follow a practice of taking a sabbatical for rest and renewal. Our Associate Rector shares reflections and insights from her first sabbatical, including travels in Italy (and the town that bears her family name.)

October 15th - Dyer/Horne Lecture: The Rev. Judy Fentress-Williams, Ph.D. “Generations: Genealogy as Story in Genesis”

Judy Fentress-Williams is in bi-vocational ministry in Alexandria, VA as the Dodge Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Virginia Theological Seminary and the Senior Assistant to the Pastor for Teaching and Preaching at the Alfred Street Baptist Church. Her fields of expertise include Hebrew Bible, dialogic interpretation, religious studies, Afro-American studies, and literary criticism.

October 22nd – Owning our Faith series begins (October 22, 29; November 5, 12)

This 4-week series will explore the foundations of our Christian faith and practice, designed for those new to St. Paul’s and for long-time parishioners who want to re-engage their faith and learn more about what it means to be Episcopalian. Each year St. Paul’s clergy team considers fundamentals of faith with an eye to an undergirding theme. This year we consider “why church is good for us.”

November 19th – Thanksgiving Parish Brunch*

Newcomers and parishioners of all ages are invited to a light, festive brunch during the formation hour between worship services as we celebrate our many blessings and welcome those who are newer to St. Paul's.

November 26th – Thomas Alexander: “A Special Ministry of Servanthood:” The Ministry of Deacons in the Life of the Church

As he prepares for his own ordination as a deacon and serving as a deacon at St. Paul's, Seminarian Thomas Alexander will reflect upon the ministry of deacons in the life of the Church from historical and theological perspectives.

December 3rd - Advent Wreath-Making*

The tradition of the Advent wreath helps us prepare for Christmas by marking hope-filled signs of life and light, even in the winter darkness. Make a wreath for your home using fresh greens. Forms and candles available for purchase.

December 10th - Laura Francis, “Botanical Christmas Gift Boxes”

Laura Francis, parishioner and member of the Huntington Garden Club, offers a floral demonstration, making botanical Christmas boxes inspired by the gold, frankincense, and myrrh presented to the Christ child by the Magi. These beautiful boxes, used to brighten our homes or share as gifts, help us keep our focus on Christ this holiday season, from Advent all the way through to the Epiphany.

December 17th - Christmas Carol Sing-Along and Festive Holiday Reception (begins 9:45)*

All are invited to a celebration following our 9 am Christmas pageant to enjoy holiday treats and join in beloved carols led by St. Paul's musicians.

January 7th – Tucker Eskew, “Crossing Chasms: the American movement to depolarize our lives and families, and the role of the church”

Tucker Eskew is a longtime parishioner and former deputy assistant to President George W. Bush. He is a founding partner of the bipartisan strategic advisory and crisis communications firm Vianovo. He serves on the board of directors of the News Literacy Project and the advisory council of With Honor.

January 14th – St. Paul's Serves*

A hands-on time together to work on service projects that support our outreach and mission partners as we learn about needs and opportunities to serve our wider community.

January 21st - John Slattery, Ph.D. "Faith in a World of Artificial Intelligence"

St. Paul's parishioner John P. Slattery is the Director of the Carl G. Grefenstette Center for Ethics in Science, Technology, and Law at Duquesne University. From 2018-2022, he served as a Senior Program Officer with the Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Washington, DC. An ethicist, theologian, and historian of science, Slattery works at the intersection of technology, science, religion, and racism.

January 28th – Latrobe Lecture: Barbara Boehm

Barbara Boehm, Paul and Jill Ruddock Senior Curator for The Met Cloisters, will discuss the fire and restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris, to reopen in December 2024.

February 4th - St. Paul's Sunday: "Travels of St. Paul"

On this day when we mark our patronal feast, Oran and members of St. Paul's recent pilgrimage to Turkey share images and insights about the life, vision, and mission of our patron saint Paul from their recent travels in his footsteps.

February 11th - Peggy Parker: "Preparing for a Holy Lent"*

Artist and seminary instructor Peggy Parker will lead us in a visual arts project that will help us include acts of seeing as an intentional part of our Lenten devotions.

February 18th - Lenten series: "Love God; Love your Neighbor" (February 18th, 25th; March 3rd)

In summarizing faithfulness, Jesus gives us two commandments – to love God, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Tending to our faith this season of Lent, we will turn our attention outwards to listen to and reflect on the stories of our neighbors, particularly in the immigrant community, as we seek to love more deeply.

March 17th - The Rev. Kathy Grieb, Ph.D. "What was God Doing on the Cross?"

Dr. Grieb is an affiliated faculty member and director of the Center for Anglican Communion Studies at Virginia Theological Seminary. Her expertise includes Greek language, New Testament interpretation, social justice, Biblical storytelling, and theater.

March 24th - Palm Cross Workshop*

Always wanted to know how those Palm Sunday crosses are made? Come and learn how to fold fresh palms into crosses and other Christian symbols as a tactile way to pray (or to impress the people around you in the pews!) and take some with you to share with friends and neighbors.

April 14th – John Taylor Chapman

John Taylor Chapman is a fourth generation Alexandrian and member of Alexandria City Council, He founded Manumission Tour Company to bring attention to the historical legacy of Africans and African Americans in Alexandria. John also will be leading a 90-minute Alexandria walking tour for St. Paul's following our 11 am worship on this day. RSVP info forthcoming.

April 21st – "A Time of Education and Formation": Seminarians' Reflections on Seminary

As they complete a year of service at St. Paul's and another year of theological study at VTS, St. Paul's Seminarians Thomas Alexander, Eliza Brinkley, and Jackson Davey reflect together on the life of seminary, what the Episcopal Church's canons call "a time of education and formation" (III.6.4).

April 28th – The Rev. Joseph Thompson, Ph.D. "Bear Fruits Worthy of Repentance": Reflections on the Virginia Theological Seminary Reparations Program.

The Rev. Joe Thompson is Assistant Professor of Race and Ethnicity Studies and Associate Dean of Multicultural Ministries at the Virginia Theological Seminary. With an expertise in African American studies, he works to ensure that seminarians engage with issues of race and ethnicity, justice, and intercultural awareness as part of their theological education.

May 12th - St. Paul's Serves*

A hands-on time together to work on service projects that support our outreach and mission partners as we learn about needs and opportunities to serve our wider community.

May 19th – Pentecost Parish Brunch*

Newcomers and parishioners of all ages are invited to a light, festive brunch during the formation hour between worship services as we celebrate the last day of the Easter season and welcome those who are newer to St. Paul's.