



For Immediate Release: December 12, 2025

Media Contacts:

Diocese of Columbus

Jason Mays

Senior Director of Communications

Jmays@columbuscatholic.org

St. Stephen's Community House

Madison Massey

Director of Marketing & Development

mmassey1@saintstephensch.org

St. Stephen's Community House to Become Fully Independent Non-Profit Organization

Diocese of Columbus and St. Stephen's honor a legacy of service and announce a new era.

For more than a century, St. Stephen's Community House has stood as a beacon of hope and partnership in Linden and throughout central Ohio. Since 1919, a strong relationship between St. Stephen's and the Diocese of Columbus has guided service to the community and has helped shape St. Stephen's into the trusted resource it is today.

Through input from clients, staff, volunteers, donors, and neighbors, Bishop Earl K. Fernandes and the St. Stephen's Community House Board of Trustees determined that the time is right for St. Stephen's to transition into a fully independent nonprofit organization. St. Stephen's will no longer be a Catholic, Diocesan-affiliated charity. The shared goal is to finalize the new structure by July 1, 2026.

St. Stephen's believes this next step will allow the organization to honor its 106-year history and expand programming, deepen impact, and pursue new partnerships that meet the changing needs of today's community. St. Stephen's remains grateful for the generations of collaboration with the Diocese of Columbus that have strengthened this community.

Over the coming months, the Board of Trustees, St. Stephen's leadership, and representatives appointed by Bishop Fernandes will work collaboratively to thoughtfully guide this transition. Throughout this process, programs and services will continue without interruption, ensuring continued support for families who depend on St. Stephen's.

St. Stephen's was born from a spirit of service, faith, and community. St. Stephen's looks forward to a future filled with opportunity, growth, and continued partnership for the good of the families served.

About the Diocese of Columbus:

The Diocese of Columbus has a mission to spread the joy of the Gospel throughout the 23 counties in Central Ohio that it serves. Erected in 1868 by Pope Pius IX, there are now almost 500,000 Catholics residing within the diocese. The Diocese of Columbus has one of the seven major basilicas in Ohio, as well as a diocesan shrine. The Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes was ordained and installed as the 13th bishop in May of 2022. To learn more about the Diocese of Columbus, visit columbuscatholic.org.

About St. Stephen's:

Founded in 1919, St. Stephen's Community House has the mission of Strengthening Families and Empowering our Community. We live our mission through our five core services areas: Family Services, Senior Services, Youth Services, Neighborhood Services, and our Early Learning Center. Located in Linden, St. Stephen's Community House serves the Linden community and the greater Central Ohio area. To learn more about St. Stephen's, visit saintstephensch.org.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why is St. Stephen's separating from the Diocese of Columbus?

After extensive stakeholder feedback and thoughtful discussion, both St. Stephen's and the Diocese concluded that an independent structure will best support the continued growth and long-term sustainability of St. Stephen's Community House.

When will the separation be complete?

The goal is to complete the legal transition by July 1, 2026, with some additional transition activities continuing afterward as needed.

Will services or programs be affected during this transition?

No. All services and programs will continue without interruption. Families will continue to receive their support.

Will the organization's name change?

Yes. As part of becoming independent, a new name will be selected. That process is underway, and updates and any opportunities for input as decisions are finalized will be shared.

Is this separation happening due to a conflict or disagreement?

No. This is a mutual decision made collaboratively and respectfully. Both St. Stephen's and the Diocese remain committed to serving the community in the ways that best support their respective missions.

Can volunteers and donors still support St. Stephen's?

Absolutely. Current and new volunteers and donors are welcome to support St. Stephen's Community House.

How will this change affect funding or donations?

St. Stephen's current funding streams and partnerships remain intact, and it will be pursuing additional funding opportunities as an independent non-profit. Donor contributions remain tax-deductible, and St. Stephen's is committed to transparent stewardship of all resources.

Will St. Stephen's values or mission change?

The core mission—strengthening families and empowering the community—remains unchanged.

How will this affect St. Stephen's staff?

Staff will continue their day-to-day work serving the community without interruption.

Who can I contact with additional questions?

Jason Mays, Diocese of Columbus
Senior Director of Communications
Jmays@columbuscatholic.org

Madison Massey, St. Stephen's Community House
Director of Marketing & Development
mmassey1@saintstephensch.org