Celebrating Holy Hospitality



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Dear Friends,

I greet you in the name of God who calls us into holy hospitality, faithful service, and right relationships. Now that I have entered into my fourth year as your bishop, I have visited every congregation. I have witnessed how each community reaches out in love to members and neighbors in their own way, reflecting the diverse ways that the Spirit calls us to embody holy hospitality.

Holy hospitality goes beyond social hospitality. It moves us into a space where we are willing to be uncomfortable – even to sacrifice- for the good of the larger community. When we seek to be a good neighbor to those we do not yet know, we open the heart of our community to the power of God working through us for all of creation.

Opening our hearts invites change. This past year has witnessed changes that I believe grow our capacity for offering holy hospitality, like the formation of a new congregation, All Saints in Baltimore, which draws from a rich legacy of African-descent ministry in order to reach out in love to neighbors. Across the diocese, five congregations have begun working on ways to grow Spanish-language programs. Last fall we began a relationship with the Piscataway Indian Nation which is drawing us more deeply into our work of truth and reconciliation.

As a diocesan community, we've reoriented into five deaneries, we've shifted programs and direction at The Claggett Center, and we've hosted our first Cathedral Day to encourage discernment for ministry. We held our first local Clinical Pastoral Education alternative program for those building skills for pastoral ministry. We refreshed our approach to licensed lay ministry, and we began offering a free tool for making a will. We continued feeding, teaching, supporting and advocating for neighbors from Oakland to Solomon's Island.

As you read through this magazine, I pray that you are buoyed by stories of inclusion, courage, discernment, persistence, vulnerability, service, advocacy, friendship, and faithfulness. May the love of God strengthen us to help build God's kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. May we walk boldly into the future with soft fronts, strong backs, and hearts on fire for Jesus.

In Peace,

Bishop Carrie

HEARTS ON FIRE FOR JESUS



Making Room

HOLY HOSPITALITY CALLS US TO MOVE FROM WELCOMING PEOPLE THROUGH THE DOOR TOWARD MAKING ROOM FOR THEM TO BELONG.

There is a familiar message outside many Episcopal buildings: **"All are welcome."** It is an important promise. Throughout the past year, conversations across the diocese about holy hospitality have been asking: **"What happens after someone accepts the invitation?"**

Can a child wiggle during the service and still know this is their church?

Can someone using a wheelchair figure out which entrance is accessible?

Can an LGBTQ+ person walk through the doors to discover not simply acceptance, but love?

Can an unhoused neighbor be treated with dignity and compassion?

This is the heart of a series of holy hospitality conversations on zoom that have brought clergy and laypeople together to consider what ***welcome*** looks like and feels like in the everyday life of the church. These conversations suggest that holy hospitality is about much more than opening a door—holy hospitality is about ***making room.***

From visiting to belonging

"What helps someone who is new to the Episcopal Church move from feeling like a visitor to knowing that they truly belong?" This is how the convener, the Rev. Dr. Kristofer Lindh-Payne, canon to the ordinary for leadership, opened a conversation. The answers offered beautiful expressions of what love looks like in practice: *Remember their name. Listen. Follow up. Give clear instructions. Learn their story. Discover their gifts. Help them find a meaningful way to participate.*

For the Rev. Susan Mitchell, the conversation brought back memories of what it felt like to be new to the Episcopal Church. There was the challenge of juggling *The Book of Common Prayer* and trying to decipher unfamiliar abbreviations. There were hymn numbers—and the question, "what does S mean in front of a hymn number?" She had a sense that she could finally be in her new spiritual home when she received two hand-written gestures of welcome after a visit: a thank-you from the treasurer for her contribution, and a separate note from the rector thanking her for attending worship. The personal touch matters.

Fresh perspectives help us grow more hospitable. Longtime members can miss what newcomers see: *The bulletin that assumes everyone knows when to stand. The door everyone knows to use. The abbreviations no one explains. The coffee hour where everyone already seems to know everyone else.*

Holy hospitality asks the Church to see itself again through the eyes of the person standing at the door. The Very Rev. Catherine Thompson, rector of All Saints, Frederick, described the ministry of welcoming newcomers as connecting people to the congregation "in ways that are meaningful to them. It involves intentional listening and good follow-through."

Making room for children

Listening to the needs of members changes the way a congregation thinks about children, too. The Very Rev. Rob Boulter, dean of the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Baltimore describes a child-centered eucharist. "It's a 30-minute, 'wiggle-friendly' service with lively music and an age-appropriate sermon. It is designed with young children and families in mind."

Other congregations are reconsidering when formation happens. Congregations like the Church of the Nativity and Holy Comforter, Cedarcroft have considered offering family faith formation early on Sunday evenings, hoping to reach



those for whom traditional Sunday-morning Sunday School is no longer practical. Instead of asking children and families to fit themselves into the established patterns, congregations are asking how the church can make room ***for them***. This is an act of love.

Making room for grief

In the holy hospitality Zoom conversation about grief and loss, **presence** surfaced again and again. The Rev. Joanne Tetrault, assistant rector at the Church of Holy Apostles and St. Stephen, Arbutus described the pastoral role as being a companion. Borrowing a phrase from one of her teachers, said, "we are exquisite witnesses."

Participants challenged the idea that grief should follow a timetable. The Rev. Annette Chappell, bridge pastor at Nativity and Holy Comforter, Baltimore, named the societal expectation that grieving people should "get over it" within some short period. The Rev. Jan Hamill, co vicar at Holy Cross, the Rocks and chaplain for The Corporation, offered a humble acknowledgement that companions cannot resolve another person's grief for them. She said "our presence will not be enough, and that's okay." Holy hospitality doesn't require that we are perfect. It simply requires a willingness to stay near, to be a companion.

Holy hospitality for someone who is grieving can focus on the practical, as well as the spiritual. Anne Burton, a member of Grace, Darlington, recalled the help she needed after her husband's death: figuring out income and health care, supporting her grieving son, and knowing what needed to happen next. Among the resources she found most useful were checklists. Holy hospitality is prayer and presence. It is also compassionately working through a checklist with someone who is navigating through their loss.

Making room without shame

For those of us affected by addiction and recovery, making room first requires confrontation of stigma. A self-described "grateful congregant" at the Church of the Redeemer in Baltimore, Paul Harner, a self-described "grateful congregant" at the Church of the Redeemer, Baltimore, emphasized the importance of other people in the congregation in recognizing the perceived shame and stigma surrounding addiction and recovery, especially lay leaders and clergy.

The conversation moved from compassion to making room: Could a congregation provide meeting space? What pastoral care or prayer practices would help? How should leaders navigate safety, boundaries and appropriate referrals? The questions reveal an important distinction: It is easy for a congregation to **say** people in recovery are welcome. It requires **effort** to organize its common life so that the welcome becomes tangible and visible. "That's why it's so important to educate our parish staff, lay leaders and congregations about



what we can do when approached for space by a 12-step program," encourages Stephanie Middendorf, a member of St. Margaret's, Annapolis.

Hospitality over fear

Local knowledge, some basic preparation, and compassion are key when congregations offer hospitality to neighbors who are unhoused on church property. "Don't be afraid to connect with a person because they are unhoused," says the Rev. Chris McCloud, canon to the ordinary for administration and founder/former executive director of Turning Point Community Services in Irvington, New Jersey. "We can offer the compassion that our unhoused neighbors need with a bit of basic preparation and foresight. Pack up a few zipper plastic bags with life-saving essentials, like a snack, a pair of socks, a t-shirt, gloves in winter, a bottle of water. Add a small zipper bag with a list of local resources to guide a neighbor in need to the places equipped to serve them- the bag keep the resource list dry and helpful in wet weather."

McCloud calls hospitality for unhoused neighbors "an opportunity to really love another person like Jesus teaches in the Gospels. Not only the people inside the building - also those who take shelter under a porch on a rainy night." McCloud recommends working with capable local nonprofits and agencies that offer unhoused neighbors the resources that can make a meaningful difference in their lives.

Her observation adds an important dimension to the holy hospitality conversation: hospitality does not demand that a congregation possesses expertise or resources it does not have. Making room means remaining compassionate while knowing our own limitations—and forming relationships with community partners who can make room to assist in ways that serve God's people more fully.

"All are loved"

For members of the LGBTQ+ community, the difference between an announced welcome and an experienced welcome can be striking. Participants in the holy hospitality conversation named their hopes that people entering Episcopal congregations would feel safe, respected and seen. They also named fears about safety, backlash, and the vulnerability of approaching a church without knowing how they will be received as openly LGBTQ+.

Stephanie Jones, senior warden at St. Paul's, Prince Frederick, who is transgender, described that uncertainty simply: "There is always trepidation in approaching." Her experience at a diocesan retreat offers a glimpse of what can happen on the



other side of that trepidation. "One of the greatest feelings was when I attended the Women's Retreat at Claggett this past spring," she recalled. "Other women were so inviting and loving." While she feels welcome in her parish, where Safe Space decals convey inclusion, she had chosen a single room rather than risk making another retreating uncomfortable. What she remembers most strongly is the reception she encountered. "I was so overwhelmed by the love and acceptance."

St. John's, Havre de Grace member Renee Vesci offers language that evokes the difference between announcing a welcome and meaning it when a person walks through the doors. "Many signs in front of our buildings already proclaim 'All are welcome,'" she notes. She suggests adding another sentence: "All are loved" to our signage. "It feels fuller and more complete," Vesci said.

Making room means removing barriers

"An accepting culture doesn't just happen," Chappell observed. "It has to be built — and that takes leadership." Hospitality becomes visible in the details: *a ramp, an accessible parking space, a sign explaining which entrance to use, a microphone that allows someone to hear, a website that tells a nervous visitor what to expect, a worship service someone can join from home.*

During the accessibility zoom conversation, participants talked about old church buildings, parking, signage, sensory needs

and accommodations that go beyond ramps and doorways. The Rev. Travis Smith, canon for pastoral care and wellness, acknowledged something less visible: leaders themselves may be afraid to ask about accommodations. "When I served as rector of Grace, Elkridge, I found myself sometimes too afraid to have conversations around accommodation--whether it was sensory needs for children with autism or ADA accommodation," Smith recalls. Smith encourages leaders to embody the courage necessary for these conversations. It is the best way to identify the barriers that are missed by members already comfortable in the church.

Making room online

The holy hospitality conversation about technology asked how congregations can use technology to become more welcoming, connected, and accessible while keeping authentic relationships at the center of our ministry. For people unable to attend worship physically, the impact can be profound. "When connected by livestream, the sick and shut in rejoice and send blessings," Robin Quarles, a member of St. Mark's on the Hill, Pikesville, said.

There is no single formula for digital hospitality. Jan DeBoissiere, a member of Christ Church, Columbia, noted that some parishioners deliberately avoid sitting where they might appear on a livestream, while others are uncomfortable going to a microphone to speak. The same technology that opens the church door for one person can become a barrier for another. The answer, once again, is to listen, and to remember that feedback is a gift.

Our growing wisdom around holy hospitality requires us to resist deciding in advance what another person needs. Our wisdom calls us first to notice. Then, to listen and learn. And finally, to act.

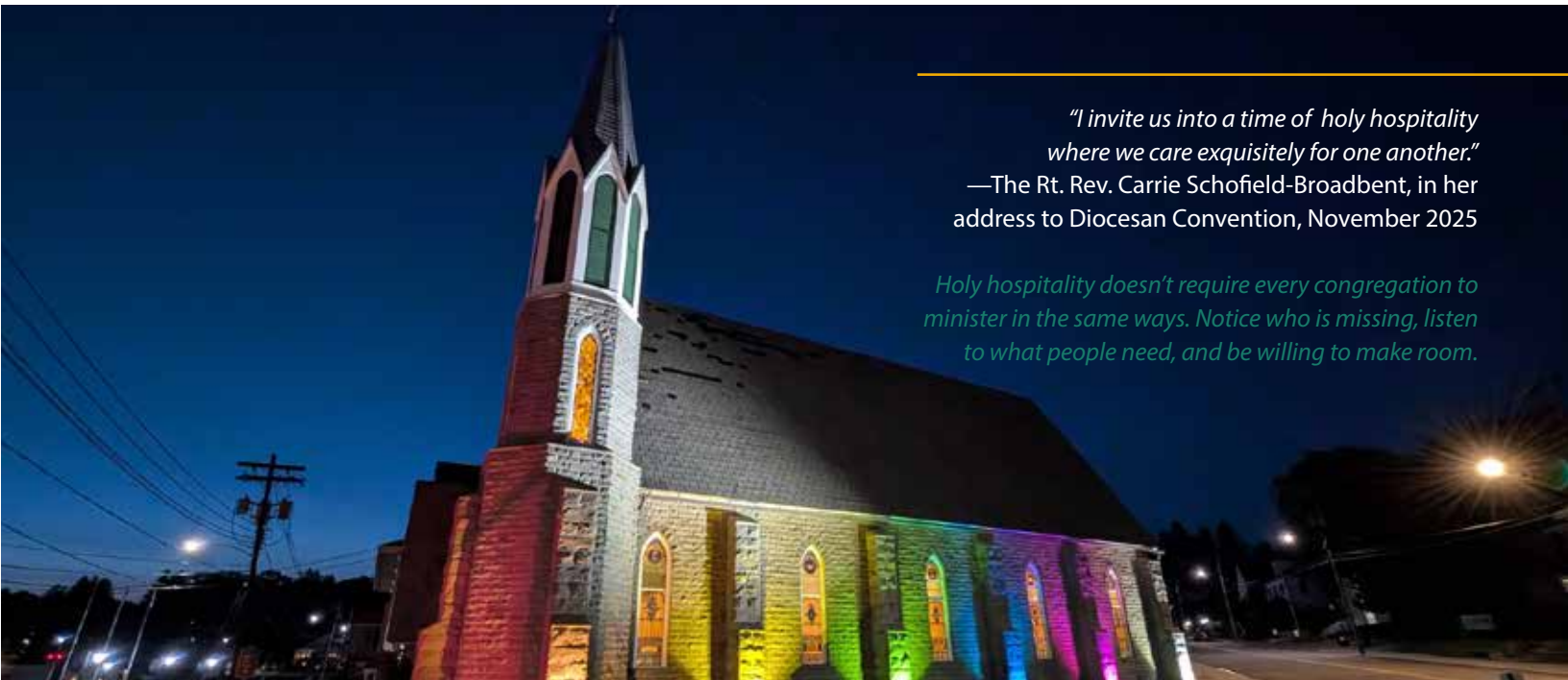
Making room for community & dignity

Nicole Iarrobino, a member of St. John's Episcopal Church, Havre de Grace, and president of Mosaic, a local LGBTQIA+ community organization, used another phrase during the LGBTQ+ conversation: **"restoring people to community."** She said that this was the experience for her wife Megan, herself, and their two girls. This experience was echoed in the recovery conversation, where the story of Jesus and the Gerasene man (Mark 5:1-20) was framed around restoration to "community and dignity." Holy hospitality makes room for people to re-enter into community with dignity.

Our aspiration to offer holy hospitality as followers of Christ is turned into reality as we seek to live into the values of our **Community of Love** as a diocese. Bishop Carrie shared these values with us at Diocesan Convention and with those who have gathered around the diocese with her: ***faithfulness, integrity, compassion, hospitality, curiosity, informed choice, transparency, accountability, humility.*** Our shared values make room for holy hospitality throughout our communities and interactions.

"Humility is realizing we may not be the smartest, rightest person in the room," offered Bishop Carrie as she described these values during her address to Diocesan Convention in 2025. "At any given point, we can realize that we are a beloved child of God, just as everybody else is."

"Holy hospitality goes beyond comfort into well-being. It is not the comfort we're seeking for our neighbor, but the well-being," said Bishop Carrie. Making room for the well-being of each beloved child of God, including ourselves, brings holy hospitality home.



"I invite us into a time of holy hospitality where we care exquisitely for one another."
—The Rt. Rev. Carrie Schofield-Broadbent, in her address to Diocesan Convention, November 2025

Holy hospitality doesn't require every congregation to minister in the same ways. Notice who is missing, listen to what people need, and be willing to make room.



Holy Hospitality in Your Community

The little boy was hugging a loaf of bread. Lisa McGann had doubled back through a crowded grocery store aisle for something she had forgotten when she heard him pleading with his mother.

"Mom! Please? Can we have it? Please?" McGann, a member of St. Mary's Church in Abingdon, expected to find a child begging for a sugary treat. Instead, she saw a child clutching a loaf of bread.

Nearby stood a weary mom with an infant in a car seat occupying most of an otherwise empty shopping cart. She studied a list, pencil in hand, rubbing her temple as she calculated what the family could afford. Eventually, the boy gave up. He put the bread back.

It took a moment for McGann to understand what she was seeing. While she had been moving quickly through the store, putting what she needed into her cart without much thought, this mother had barely moved. She was working through what McGann came to call a "stretch plan"—deciding what her family could afford and what they would have to do without.

Remembering the free food pantry at her church, McGann hurried to the parking lot to find the family and give the mother the church's address. "We all need a little help now and then," she told her. Perhaps that is how holy hospitality begins: with opening our eyes, and opening our hearts.

More Than Welcome

Across the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, congregations are exploring what it means to practice holy hospitality, which was the theme of Diocesan Convention in November of 2025. The stories extend far beyond being friendly on Sunday morning. Hospitality is food and shelter, prayer and companionship, a ride to an appointment, a visible sign that says you are safe here. Sometimes holy hospitality means making room for someone who isn't sure there will be room for them at all.

At St. Margaret's, Annapolis, a pride flag hangs outside the main church entrance. The Rev. Peter Mayer, rector, had preached about the importance of welcoming people for

whom churches have not always been safe places. Not everyone agreed. One woman questioned why the flag needed to be there. Mayer offered to listen to her concerns. She walked away and did not return. Several months later, St. Margaret's hosted the funeral of a four-month-old boy born to a young parishioner. One of the grieving mother's friends was queer. As he saw the pride flag, he was suspicious. His previous experiences with churches had given him reason to wonder whether the welcome was genuine. "Was the flag some kind of joke?" he asked. Someone answered simply: "It's not a joke, it's who we are."



Once inside, he heard that God's welcome extended to everyone. More importantly, he watched a congregation surround his grieving friend with love. After the burial, he told Mayer that he had felt welcomed. He felt that he belonged. Most congregations will describe their community as welcoming. Holy hospitality asks what the new (and perhaps reluctant) person experiences, rather than what the members experience.

Taking Hospitality Outside

At Redemption in Locust Point, holy hospitality has literally moved outside of the building.

Textile artists in the congregation created an outdoor art installation using quilted fabric pockets. People walking down the street can leave prayer requests in the pockets, and every week the congregation's prayer ministry team prays for those needs. Neighbors do not have to enter the church, understand its worship or know how to pray to participate. The invitation is waiting for them on the sidewalk: How can we pray for you? The project is new, and it is already inspiring members to carry their faith into everyday interactions with neighbors.

At Holy Cross, The Rocks, holy hospitality is taking shape through a growing web of relationships. The congregation has partnered with neighboring Chestnut Grove AME Church for shared celebrations, each congregation taking turns to visit the other. Holy Cross has invited neighbors to Maundy Thursday soup and worship and welcomed children and parents for breakfast before Easter.

Holy Cross also hosts a monthly senior lunch for anyone looking for a home-cooked meal and collects items that people cannot purchase with SNAP benefits—such as diapers, toilet paper, shampoo, laundry detergent and pet food. When a family escaping domestic violence had been forced to leave a pet rabbit behind, a member cared for the rabbit until the family could relocate somewhere safe. It is a small act of love. Holy hospitality often lives in the small acts—the things that communicate how the little things in life matter.

When Hospitality Looks Ordinary

An ordinary kindness is the heart of holy hospitality. As Kathy Polk, a member of St. Margaret's, Annapolis, was preparing for knee-replacement surgery, she knew would need transportation to physical therapy. She sent an email to church friends asking for help with rides. "Within two hours, the entire calendar was filled," Polk recalled. "I was overwhelmed with all the help, support, and affirmation!" Holy hospitality is the kindness of church friends sacrificing their time to drive someone where they need to be so that they can get back on their feet.



At St. Andrew's, Pasadena, holy hospitality requires staying up all



"As a child I treasured Bible stories of God coming to earth in many disguises - and the response of people to this Stranger in their midst."
—Lynn Taylor, member of the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Baltimore



night. For two decades, the congregation has participated in the Arundel House of Hope Winter Relief program, through which houses of worship provide shelter and care for people experiencing homelessness. Members prepare dinners, breakfasts and bag lunches. Volunteers work shifts extending from afternoon all through the night.

Site coordinator David Richardson emphasizes that their ministry is about more than completing the necessary tasks required to offer hospitality- "it is about ***how*** we do it, with compassion, Richardson says. "Volunteers are there to really greet and welcome people into the space. Guests tell me that they feel truly welcomed when they stay at St. Andrew's."

That matters. There is quite a difference between providing a meal to someone and sitting down to share the meal with them; between providing a place to sleep to someone and conveying that their presence is wanted. Hospitality is more than what we provide. It is how someone experiences what is shared.

The Gift Comes Back

The free food pantry at St. Mary's, Abingdon began with a straightforward idea: hungry people need food. Organizers imagined all the neighbors the pantry might help. Then one organizer discovered something unexpected. "The first person it helped was me." McGann had been in a personal slump, and working on the pantry gave her a sense of joy and purpose. Then she noticed what it gave to her husband, Pat. The couple remembered their daughter Claire, who lived almost 27 years. For 20 of those years, Claire needed help to eat. She loved eating, and they loved feeding her. Filling the pantry became another way of honoring Claire.

Once, while a family was filling the pantry, they noticed a hungry man sleeping on a bench nearby and made him a bag of food. The experience became an encounter with "the face of Jesus in someone who is in need." The pantry began as something the members of St. Mary's could give to other people. It keeps giving something unexpected back to the community.

A Place to Belong

Holy hospitality is reflected in that first greeting- a warm smile, kind eyes- when someone walks through the doors for the first time. The Rev. Kathlyn and Mr. James Schofield moved to Maryland in 2024. Being accustomed to smaller congregations, they weren't expecting to enjoy a larger congregation like St. Martin's-in-the-Field, Severna Park. Then people greeted them. They experienced immediate care and concern. The congregation's music, inclusion of young people in worship and preaching mattered to them, certainly. And yet, before any of that could become part of their church life, there had to be an encounter in which strangers became something else.

"Hospitality is not simply serving food, it is creating a space where people feel seen, welcomed, and valued," offered Katie Swan, as she reflected on the community meal ministry begun at Holy Apostles and St. Stephen, Arbutus eight months earlier. "I have been transformed by a deeper understanding of community, compassion, generosity, and faith in action."





Responding in Love

A CHANGING WORLD, CHANGING MINISTRIES

They had always been the givers. Then they came for food. At RISE, a ministry of Christ the King, Woodlawn, volunteers began seeing people who were uncomfortable—even ashamed—to find themselves on the receiving end of assistance. Families accustomed to helping others were discovering that they, too, needed help.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, local grocery prices were 3.5% higher in August 2026 than in August 2025, with some foods, like cereal, up 4.9%.

RISE has discovered that hunger is only part of the story. When a note comes home from school saying a child needs glasses, there is no money available for the $100 surprise expense. The consequences ripple outward. A child who cannot see well may struggle in school—not because she cannot learn, but because her family cannot afford to help her see. This is how a food ministry began helping children obtain glasses.

Stories like this are emerging across the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland. Economic pressures, educational disparities, migration, war and the lingering effects of the pandemic are changing the lives of the people whom congregations and ministries encounter near and far. As the world changes, ministries are changing with it. Responding in love means paying attention to what our neighbors need ***now.***

When "temporary" becomes ministry

RISE began distributing food as a temporary measure during COVID. The temporary measure never ended. By June 2026, six years after that emergency response began, RISE reported that it had fed more than 100,000 people. This year RISE partnered with a local elementary school on a pilot program to provide eyeglasses for children. Five out of an estimated 30 children are now wearing new glasses thanks to this partnership and its flexible ministry leaders.

RISE volunteers have witnessed an item arriving just when needed most: a car pulls into the parking lot with bags of white rice and dried black beans just as a barrel is running empty. It is a powerful witness to the love God lights up within our hearts



when volunteers and food donors keep showing up. "It is within our power to make it better," encourages the Rev. Mary Eliot, rector of Christ the King, Woodlawn, "one bag of rice at a time."

Thousands of miles away, another ministry followed a surprisingly similar path. In Ponnur, India, the pandemic devastated families – especially the Dalit families who work as day laborers. Families already surviving on very little suddenly had nothing. A local pastor and his wife began feeding them. Their response caught the attention of members at All Saints, Frederick, especially Linda Miller and Angela Furlong (now ordained and serving as rector of St. James', Mt. Airy). Today, this ministry, called Bright Beginnings, serves more than 70 children and their families.

Food remains central to this ministry. Feeding children reduces the financial pressure on families who might otherwise send their children to work in the fields to help make ends meet. The ministry encourages families to keep children enrolled in school, provides medical assistance, and gathers for worship and prayer.

Every week, people in Maryland and India meet by Zoom. Over time, something special has grown alongside the programs: **community**. Bright Beginnings serves Christians, Hindus, and Muslims. Muslim families ask the pastor and his wife to pray for them. Hindu families help prepare food for the children. Emergency feeding programs for strangers have grown into associations of neighbors and friends. A crisis response evolved into community.

When the world arrives in Baltimore

Each day the world arrives in Maryland aboard massive container ships. At the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center, Christian hospitality and pastoral care are offered to international seafarers arriving at the Port of Baltimore.

While the practical assistance can be simple: transportation ashore, a care package, internet access, someone willing to listen--international events have changed the conversations taking place during those visits. Attacks on commercial shipping, longer routes around conflict zones, and wars affecting home countries have brought heightened anxiety aboard ships. Longer voyages can mean extended contracts and more time away from home. Mariners arrive in Baltimore exhausted and worried about loved ones thousands of miles away.

The center's ministry has consequently expanded its attention to crisis pastoral care, stress relief, mental-health resources, and family communication. The Rev. Josh Messick, executive director, tells the story of Andriy, a Ukrainian chief mate whose ship had completed a grueling, months-long voyage rerouted to avoid active conflict zones. "Andriy was exhausted from high-stress watches at sea and deeply worried about his family living under bombardment in Ukraine. He spent an evening at the Seafarers' Center. There was a warm meal. High-speed Wi-Fi allowed him to speak with his wife. A chaplain prayed with him." No ministry in Baltimore could end the war Andriy was carrying with him. The center made sure he didn't carry it alone.

Companions

For immigrants and refugees in Baltimore, responding in love to a changing world can mean organizing the paperwork. Volunteers at Old Saint Paul's, Baltimore, have been helping to organize documents for families served by ERICA, the Episcopal



Refugee and Immigrant Center Alliance. It is, quite literally, making order from chaos.

A folder of properly organized documents may seem like a small thing. For someone unaccustomed to speaking and reading English who is suddenly navigating unfamiliar systems involving employment, education, immigration, health care and public benefits, organized paperwork is a Godsend. ERICA's programs demonstrate holy hospitality through companionship: staying alongside people as they navigate complicated systems.

Companionship for an Afghan mother of three as she obtains her first job; companionship to three asylees as they obtain unrestricted Social Security cards; companionship that fed a



family from Honduras for six months while staff helped establish legal representation; companionship that supported two female Afghan students in ERICA's Pathways to College program as they completed Towson University's intensive Academic English program—this is holy hospitality. Betty Symington, executive director, describes the heart of this ministry of holy hospitality: "ERICA is a place for answers." Holy hospitality goes in many directions. New arrivals bring gifts to share, like culture, experience, perspective, faith, creativity, hope. And ERICA brings answers, food, education, and paperwork organization to new arrivals who long for a safer and settled life.

Love of the stranger

There is a Greek word found in Paul's Letter to the Romans that describes well the unfolding relationship revealed in these ministries: **philoxenia**. The word is a combination of **philo** (love or friendship) and **xenia** (stranger): *"Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend **philoxenia**/hospitality to strangers."* (Romans 12:13, NRSV)

"This spirit of welcome stands in contrast to what many in our communities are experiencing," says the Rev. Margarita Santana, canon for Latino ministry. "Our families are going through very difficult times, facing the fear of deportation and the trauma of family separation. Some are afraid to take their children to school or seek medical care. That fear is keeping people from participating in community life and even from coming to church."

"Our siblings experience discrimination and are aware of the racism behind the hostility they face. Everyday activities, even going to work, can become a source of anxiety," says the Rev. Giuliano Gargiulo, assistant for Latino ministry, regarding the pressures affecting those who worship in Spanish-language services. "They are doing their best to support their families and continue with their lives while facing uncertainty about what tomorrow may bring."

These new realities challenge us to make Christ's welcome tangible through our presence, solidarity, and care. "Being a friend to a neighbor or a stranger is our way of enacting Christ's love in the world," Bishop Carrie elaborates. "This is the heart of holy hospitality – we respond with love when there is a global or local crisis, in contrast to the fear that gets stirred up by forces that would divide us from one another. We are called to respond with compassion for those who are afraid, who are hungry, who are far from home."

Woven throughout Scripture is God's command to love the stranger, remembering that God's people themselves once lived as strangers in the land. Bishop Carrie has noticed that welcome as she travels among congregations throughout the diocese. "I've watched as you pack up leftovers to share from a community meal," she recalls. "I feel a spirit of authentic compassion for neighbors—and for strangers."

From food distribution to a seafarers' center, ministry begins by noticing someone's need, then offering the gifts God has given to us to bring life and comfort to another. The world will keep changing. The needs arriving at the door of the Church, the food pantry, the port, will change with it. The love we know in Christ encourages us to see who is standing before us in this moment and to ask what being a neighbor requires of us: a bag of rice? An organized folder? A reliable internet connection to a loved one on the other side of the world? While ministry changes with each new day and situation, the teachings of Jesus remain the same: *"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."* (Matthew 25:35)



A taste from home

FROM STRANGER TO FRIEND

ERICA (Episcopal Refugee and Immigrant Center Alliance) offers ferini, a traditional Afghan eggless custard scented with cardamom and rose water, as a delicious way to counter xenophobia, fear of the stranger, and replace it with xenophilia: love of the stranger. Ferini offers a taste of the richness that comes when people bring different traditions, perspectives and ways of life into community.





AFGHAN FERINI

Ingredients

4 cups whole milk

5 tablespoons cornstarch

¾–1 cup sugar

½ teaspoon ground cardamom

1 teaspoon rose water (optional)

Chopped pistachios and sliced almonds, for topping

1. **MIX:** Whisk the cornstarch with 1 cup of the cold milk until completely smooth.

2. **WARM:** Heat the remaining 3 cups milk with the sugar and cardamom.

3. **THICKEN:** Slowly whisk in the cornstarch mixture. Cook, stirring constantly, until thickened, about 8–10 minutes.

4. **SCENT:** Stir in the rose water, if using.

5. **CHILL:** Pour into individual serving bowls. Cool, then refrigerate for 2–3 hours.

6. **SHARE:** Decorate with pistachios and almonds before serving.

""This 'friend to strangers' … is our way of enacting Christ's love in the world."
— Bishop Carrie



Lay Ministry

LIVING OUR BAPTISMAL COVENANT

At our baptism, we are welcomed into the Church ***and we are called into a life of ministry.*** This is clear in the Baptismal Covenant: "We promise to continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to persevere in resisting evil, to proclaim the Good News of God in Christ, to seek and serve Christ in all persons, to strive for justice and peace, and to respect the dignity of every human being." *(Book of Common Prayer, 304-305)*

What Is Lay Ministry?

Lay ministry is the ministry of all baptized Christians and includes their gifts, time, faith, and experience in service to God, God's people, and the Church. Lay ministry unfolds in worship, pastoral care, teaching and formation, evangelism, and in the daily work of loving our neighbors and seeking God's justice and peace. It unfolds in the work of God's people wherever they work, study, and live every day of the week

"Communities depend upon the ministry of lay people," offers the Rev. Dr. Kristofer Lindh-Payne, canon to the ordinary for leadership. "They welcome newcomers, teach children and adults, visit those who are sick or homebound, lead worship, preach, share the Eucharist, organize ministries of service and justice-making, care for one another, tell the story of what God is doing in their lives – and more!"

"We minister to each other at Trinity," said Marjorie Schulenberg, licensed lay catechist and eucharistic minister at Trinity, Elkridge. "Serving on the altar is really meaningful—holding and offering the chalice in our small congregation, offering the Blood of Christ. There is a sanctity in that encounter. I have moved away from a fear of doing the 'wrong thing' at the altar to stepping fully into the heart of the encounter."

"We are a priesthood of all believers called to that order by our Baptism and acceptance of Christ as our Savior," offers Peyton Doub, a scientist with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and member of St. Paul's, Sharpsburg. "Lay ministers help bridge the pews and the pulpit. Lay-led worship services and sermons bring the perspectives of people toiling in the world's trenches."

Some of these ministries, especially those in worship or in pastoral contexts, are licensed by the bishop. Licensing recognizes that some ministry roles carry specific responsibilities and therefore call for a particular type of preparation, formation, accountability, and authorization.



Licensed Lay Ministry in the Diocese of Maryland

All Episcopal dioceses license lay people in seven areas of ministry:

Worship leader *leading public worship*
Preacher *proclaiming and interpreting the Gospel*
Eucharistic minister *assisting in the distribution of Holy Communion*
Eucharistic visitor *bringing Holy Communion to members*
Catechist *teaching the practices of Christian discipleship*
Evangelist *sharing the Good News and inviting others into community*
Pastoral leader *providing pastoral care with clergy guidance*

While each ministry has specific expectations for formation and practice, all are rooted in the same baptismal vocation: to follow Christ and participate in God's mission in the world.

Why Does Licensing Matter?

Why do some lay ministries require a license? Because the Church takes ministry seriously.
A license is the bishop's authorization for a person to exercise a

particular ministry within the Church. It provides a framework for preparation, accountability, supervision, and continuing formation. It also assures congregations that those entrusted have received appropriate training. For those seeking licensure, formation includes ministry-specific preparation and diocesan-wide training. Licensed lay ministers are expected to complete "Safe Church, Safe Communities" training and "Becoming Beloved Community" formation. Depending upon the type of ministry, background checks and additional preparation may also be required. The Diocese partners with the Stevenson School for Ministry and Education for Ministry to provide accessible theological and practical formation for ministry, with diocesan financial support making this education more accessible.

The process of calling, training, and licensing lay ministers seeks to "equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:12) and ensures that ministers are prepared to serve faithfully, safely, and well.

How Do I Discern a Call to Lay Ministry?

Discernment begins close to home. If you find yourself wondering whether God may be calling you into a particular ministry, the first step is to speak with your rector or priest-in-charge. Discernment is not simply deciding what you would like to do. It is a prayerful process of listening for God's call and considering how your gifts, experience, passions, and baptismal promises might intersect with the needs of your congregation and community.

The diocesan Commission on Ministry offers the Exploring Baptismal Ministry (EBM) program as a starting point for a conversation between your gifts and the needs of the community. EBM invites baptized Christians to reflect on the promises of the Baptismal Covenant, identify their spiritual gifts and passions, and consider how God may be calling them to serve. "EBM helped me to act on a call to ministry," says John Rogers, a licensed evangelist at St. John's, Western Run. "I felt encouraged to go beyond thinking about serving and became more confident that I was capable to actually act on it."

A local clergy leader can help a person explore which ministry pathway may be appropriate and whether additional conversations with mentors would be helpful. From there, discernment leads to formation. Next steps include training appropriate to the ministry. "Safe Church, Safe Communities" and "Becoming Beloved Community" ground ministry in healthy relationships, safety, justice, reconciliation, and belonging for those seeking licensure. A last step is endorsement by congregational leadership followed by presentation to the bishop for authorization.

The most important questions to begin with may also be the simplest: **Where is God already at work in my life, and where might God be inviting me to join in?** The answers may lead you toward a licensed ministry. The answers may lead somewhere else entirely. Either way, the journey begins where our ministry always begins: in the waters of baptism and in the promises we make to follow Christ.

"When Father Scott talked about an evangelism course at Stevenson School for Ministry one Sunday, I felt this pull from the Holy Spirit," recalls Brigid Smith, licensed evangelist at Emmanuel, Cumberland. "The class reframed evangelism for me. It is not going door to door asking if people have accepted Jesus. It's acknowledging that God is present in everyone's lives, whether or not we know it. Evangelism is helping people connect with that knowledge of God's presence."



The canons of the Episcopal Church (Title III, Canon 4) provide for the licensing of lay ministers by the bishop to perform specific functions within a congregation: https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/download/31954

MINISTRY TRAINING RESOURCES

The following organizations offer formation and training that can support a call to lay ministry:

Education for Ministry
episcopalmaryland.org/our-ministries/education-for-ministry

The Stevenson School for Ministry
stevensonschoolforministry.org

Stephen Ministries
stephenministries.org

College for Congregational Development
episcopalmaryland.org/ccdmd

Clinical Pastoral Training
Contact the Rev. Travis Smith, canon for pastoral care and wellness



Introducing Deaneries

STRENGTHENING CONNECTION AND COMMUNICATION

Most ministry happens locally—in congregations and neighborhoods, among clergy and lay leaders, and in relationships built over time. A new deanery model in the Diocese of Maryland is designed to strengthen those existing local connections while bringing diocesan leadership and support closer to congregations.

In the fall of 2025, Bishop Carrie Schofield-Broadbent introduced **five deaneries** as a new way of organizing and supporting ministry across the diocese. The model will be tested over a three-year period, providing an opportunity to explore how deaneries can strengthen leadership, pastoral care, communication, and collaboration for ministry vitality.

What is a deanery?

Deaneries are not new to The Episcopal Church. They are used in many dioceses as a way of geographically grouping neighboring congregations so that clergy and congregations can build relationships, share resources and address common opportunities and challenges.

Each of Maryland's **five new deaneries** is led by a priest appointed by the bishop to serve as dean. These appointments were formalized at Diocesan Convention in 2025. Deans, who traditionally use the honorific "the Very Reverend," serve as deputies of the bishop in matters of leadership, pastoral care and communication.

The role of a dean is fundamentally one of connection: connecting clergy with one another, connecting congregations with needed resources, and connecting local communities with diocesan leadership. Because deans serve within a particular part of the diocese, they can also help diocesan leadership better understand the experiences, needs and opportunities emerging in their geographical context. Because deaneries include more congregations that the diocesan region model, congregations have access to a larger arena of ideas, wisdom, and opportunity when they gather.

Deaneries and regions: What's the difference?

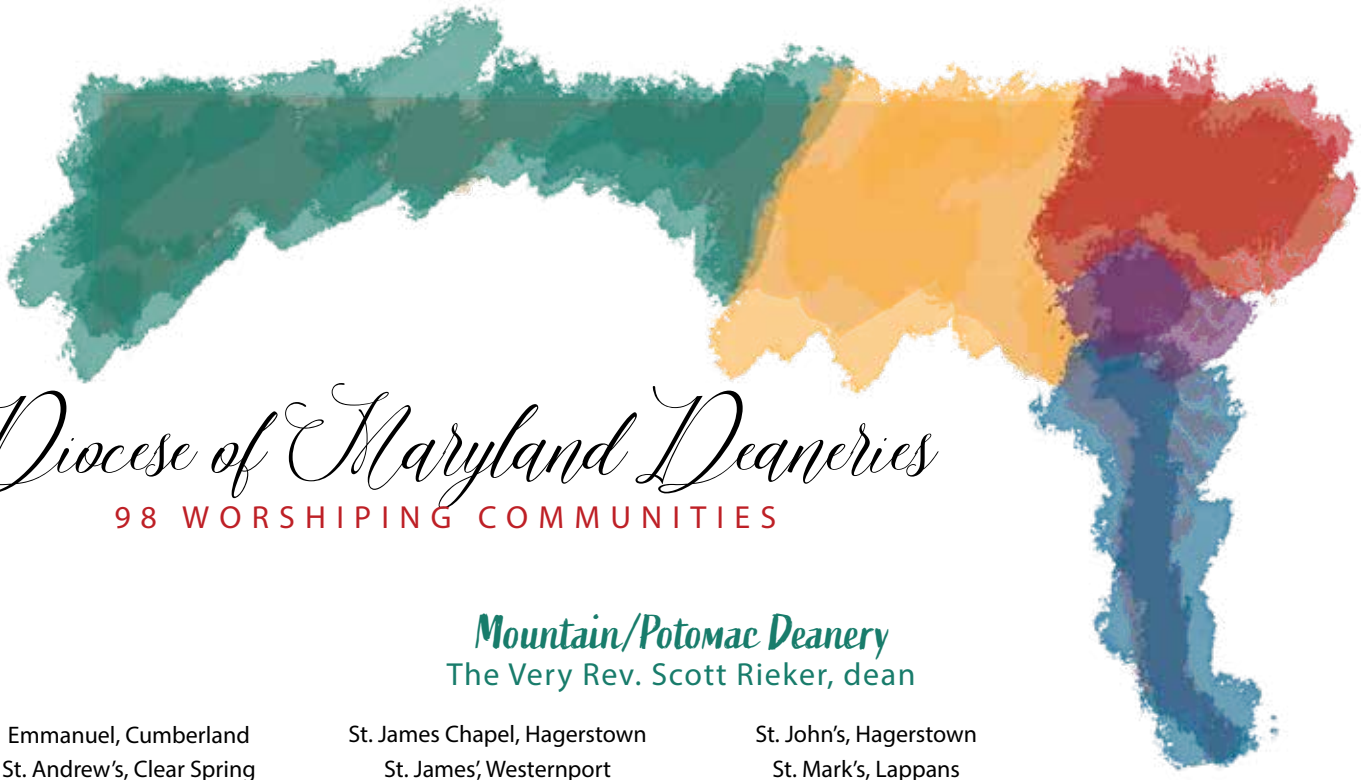
The introduction of deaneries does not eliminate the diocese's existing regions. Regions remain an important part of the governance and democratic life of the Diocese of Maryland. Diocesan Council conducts its work through **nine regions**, with representatives elected from those geographic areas. Regions therefore continue to play an important role in representation and decision-making alongside parish elections, Diocesan Convention and Diocesan Council.

Deaneries have a different purpose. Rather than serving primarily as units of governance and representation, Maryland's deaneries are being tested as a structure for ***relationship, communication, pastoral responsiveness, congregational development, and ministry support.***

In other dioceses, deaneries may have different responsibilities, including formal roles in diocesan governance. Maryland's three-year trial will allow the diocese to discover how this model can best serve its own congregations, clergy leaders, and local communities.

This experiment is a way to practice our value of curiosity: ***What becomes possible when neighboring congregations, clergy and diocesan leadership are more intentionally connected?*** Over the next three years, the Diocese of Maryland expects to find out.

How God's people structure their shared life together is a thread throughout scripture. In Exodus 18, Jethro acts as an organizational change consultant for his son-in-law Moses who is overwhelmed with a workload brought to him by a procession of people from dawn to dusk. Jethro recommended that Moses build a team and trust that team to carry out the work of leadership.



Diocese of Maryland Deaneries

98 WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES

Mountain/Potomac Deanery

The Very Rev. Scott Rieker, dean

Emmanuel, Cumberland
St. Andrew's, Clear Spring
St. Anne's, Smithsburg
St. George's, Mt. Savage
St. James Chapel, Hagerstown
St. James', Westernport
St. John's, Deer Park
St. John's, Frostburg
St. John's, Hagerstown
St. Mark's, Lappans
St. Matthew's, Oakland
St. Paul's, Sharpsburg
St. Peter's, Lonaconing
St. Thomas', Hancock

Central/Piedmont Plateau/Monocacy

The Very Rev. Catherine Thompson, dean

Ascension, Westminster
All Saints', Frederick
Christ Church, Columbia
Christ the King, Woodlawn
Grace, Brunswick
Grace, Elkridge
Grace, New Market
Harriet Chapel, Catoctin Parish
Holy Apostles &
St. Stephen's, Arbutus
Living Grace, Urbana
St. Andrew's, Glenwood
St. Barnabas', Sykesville
St. Christopher's, Linthicum
St. James', Mount Airy
St. John's, Ellicott City
St. Luke's, Brownsville
St. Mark's, Highland
St. Paul's, Mount Airy
St. Paul's, Point of Rocks
St. Peter's, Ellicott City
Transfiguration, Braddock Heights
Trinity, Elkridge

Northern/Susquehanna Deanery

The Very Rev. Joe Zollickoffer, dean

Ascension, Scarboro
Christ Church, Rock Spring
Emmanuel, Bel Air
Good Shepherd, Towson
Grace, Darlington
Holy Comforter, Lutherville
Holy Cross, The Rocks
Holy Trinity, Churchville
Immanuel, Glencoe
St. Francis', Timonium
St. George's, Hampstead
St. James', Monkton
St. James', Parkton
St. John's, Havre de Grace
St. John's, Kingsville
St. John's, Western Run
St. Mark's-on-the-Hill, Pikesville
St. Mary's, Abingdon
St. Thomas', Owings Mills
Resurrection, Copley Parish
Sherwood, Cockeysville
Trinity, Long Green
Trinity, Towson

Southern/Western Shore/Chesapeake

The Very Rev. Joe Walker-Lenow, dean

All Hallows, Davidsonville
All Saints', Sunderland
Christ Church, Port Republic
Christ Church, West River
Epiphany, Odenton
Middleham & St. Peter's, Lusby
St. Alban's, Glen Burnie
St. Andrew's, Pasadena
St. Andrew the Fisherman, Mayo
St. Anne's, Annapolis
St. James', Lothian
St. Luke's, Eastport
St. Mark's, Deale
St. Margaret's, Annapolis
St. Martin's in-the-Field, Severna Park
St. Paul's, Prince Frederick
St. Philip's, Annapolis
St. Stephen's, Severn Parish

Baltimore/Patapsco Deanery

The Very Rev. Christopher Pyles, dean

All Saints', Baltimore
Cathedral of the Incarnation, Baltimore
Church on the Square, Baltimore
Emmanuel, Baltimore
Grace & St. Peter's, Baltimore
Guardian Angel, Baltimore
Holy Nativity, Baltimore
Holy Trinity, Baltimore
Holy Trinity, Essex
Memorial, Baltimore
Nativity & Holy Comforter, Cedarcroft
Redemption, Locust Point
Redeemer, Baltimore
Resurrection, Baltimore
Slate Project, Baltimore
St. Andrew's, Baltimore
St. Bartholomew's, Baltimore
St. David's, Baltimore
St. James', Lafayette Square
St. Matthias & Messiah, Baltimore
St. Paul's, Baltimore



The Claggett Center

NEW LIFE SPRINGS FORTH

By the Rev. Mark Wastler, executive director of The Claggett Center

Jesus taught that new life grows out of the old. His own life, death, and resurrection embodied that spiritual and ecological truth—new life springs out of that which came before. It is the fundamental truth of Christian spirituality.

In 2027, the Claggett Center will mark our 75th year by birthing something new. With the generous financial support and spiritual guidance of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, an Episcopal monastic community, through the award of their Abiding Hope Grant, we are launching "Chesapeake Abbey" at the Claggett Center. As an experiment in spiritual formation, Chesapeake Abbey's mission is to help people experience the union of their spiritual lives with nature.

"Chesapeake" names our place—the 64,000 square mile Chesapeake watershed, stretching from New York to southern Virginia. The Claggett Center sits at the geographical center of this vast ecosystem. This new endeavor shifts our attention to the landscape and all the living beings that call it home.





Scripture, indigenous peoples, and the ancient monastics all tell us that our spiritual lives grow up out of the earth. The more we know about our place, the closer we are to God. We are taking them at their word.

"Abbey" captures the union of a specific place with a program of spiritual growth. Ancient abbeys were places where people of various backgrounds and vocations came together for spiritual nurture and challenge. Those old abbeys, whether on Irish coasts or in Egyptian deserts, were rooted in their landscapes. The spiritual formation they offered, the communities they birthed, and their impact on the world were all rooted in their close relationship to the local landscape. They knew their place and learned the lessons it had to teach.

Chesapeake Abbey weaves together a sense of place with a set of practices. Cultivating a deeper relationship with God and other living beings requires sustained action over a long period of time, or what we call, spiritual practice. We are starting with three ancient practices. We will teach *contemplative prayer* to people of all ages. We will learn *local ecological knowledge* and its spiritual meanings. We will *grow, eat, and share food.*



This combination of place and practice structures our new programming. The 2027 programs will include intergenerational weekend retreats focused on the intersection of ecology and spirituality (for example, building bluebird boxes or starting a garden). We will host multi-day retreats for adults. Two summer camps will guide young people into a deeper relationship with nature. We will host monthly contemplative services in the barn. Each of these programs will incorporate the three core practices—contemplation, ecological awareness, and food as sacrament.

We envision a contemplative community emerging out of these gatherings over time—a community dedicated to reconnecting human spirituality to the natural world.

This new venture in formation is not a divergence from the well-loved programs of old, but rather the regeneration of their core values: community, nature, and spirituality. Even so, the growth of something new often brings grief at the loss of the familiar. Many people have had formative experiences here over the past 75 years. It is, as scripture says, "a goodly heritage." That heritage will be honored in the next generation of Claggett programs.



For several years now the Claggett programs have accumulated significant annual deficits that have compromised our financial wellness. Our new programming, and accompanying operating changes, will put us on solid financial ground and increase transparency. A modest start allows us to lay a solid foundation upon which to build a robust, sustainable program of spiritual formation for our diocese and people across the watershed.

The Claggett Center will continue to welcome a diversity of guest groups to our conference facilities. The Chesapeake Abbey's emphasis on contemplation and ecology will gently infuse the guest experience. Our diocesan-wide legacy groups, like men's and women's retreats, will continue through self-organization and running their own programs through the Claggett Center.

There is a widespread desire among people in and out of church to integrate nature more fully into their spiritual lives. We hear from many of our 8,000 annual guests that they long for a centeredness that is so easily stolen by the attention economy and sold to the highest bidder. They feel disconnected from their bodies and disorientated by their fragmented communities.



We have a unique opportunity here at Claggett to address their longing, your longing, our longing for an authentic experience of Life. There are lots of things we could do to dismantle dehumanizing systems that separate us from ourselves and each other. Chesapeake Abbey contributes to that liberation by slowing things down and helping people hear the regenerating Source of Life who whispers in the woods, the river, and the meadows, "Behold, I make all things new."



Generous Hearts Sustain Ministry for Generations

THE GIFTS WE LEAVE BEHIND BECOME GOOD NEWS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The next time you walk into your church, look around. Notice the altar where generations have bowed their heads before God, the kitchen counters where meals have been prepared for neighbors, the doors that open again and again to hearts searching for a community of love. Much of what surrounds us in our church home exists because someone decided that the worship and ministry should continue in this place long after they were gone. "I give thanks to God for those who labored to build our buildings and establish ministries," Bishop Carrie Schofield-Broadbent says. A spirit of generational generosity is at the heart of planned giving.

The Quiet Power of a Legacy Gift

At Middleham and St. Peter's in Lusby, generosity has paved the way for future ministry for more than two decades. Following a presentation on planned giving at the 2002 Diocesan Convention, the Rev. Berkeley Ford, along with members Hugh Davies and Don Smith, returned home to Lusby with a goal to establish a planned giving program. Soon after, the 1684 Society was launched.



At the time, the parish had an endowment of approximately $200,000. Today, that endowment exceeds $750,000, and the 1684 Society includes 71 members. The significance of that growth is measured in much more than dollars. Income from the endowment helps care for the congregation's physical plant while providing greater stability for outreach and new ministry. "The commitment to supporting outreach ministry and addressing racial discrimination is a primary reason why Diane and I have included Middleham and St. Peter's in our estate planning. We want our legacy to help the parish to be Christ's hands in this world," shares Davies.

Gifts made years ago continue to make ministries of holy hospitality possible today, which is why the 1684 Society hosted a luncheon to recognize members on October 4. "We recognize that legacy giving is much more than giving financially. It is living into our daily prayers that the mission of the church is supported beyond our time here on earth," explains the Rev. Erin Betz Shank. "Legacy giving encourages those here now to really think about their participation in the church of tomorrow - the same church that they have worked for and loved so deeply. We all want the mission of the church to extend beyond our years. Legacy giving can make that dream a reality."

That is the quiet power and possibility of a legacy gift. We may never meet the neighbor who receives food through a future outreach ministry or the person hungry for Good News who will walk through the church doors decades from now. Even so, our generosity today will be there to welcome them tomorrow.

Developing a Legacy Program

The Diocese of Maryland has been encouraging congregations to cultivate generational generosity for 40 years. An organized

diocesan planned giving effort began in 1986, when Dr. Mary Blair and the Rev. Charles Cloughen were asked to co-chair a committee on planned giving initiatives. Over the years, workshops, diocesan leaders and congregational advocates helped congregations to establish endowments and legacy societies of their own.

For Cloughen, the importance of legacy gifts became especially clear in 1990 when he became rector of St. Thomas', Towson. The parish already had an endowed Outreach Fund. What it needed next was an endowment to care for the building and grounds.



Cloughen learned that the Church of the Redeemer in Baltimore had established a Heritage Fund for just that purpose. Redeemer shared its fund's bylaws, inspiring St. Thomas' to create a Heritage Fund of its own. In his 1997 book, *One Minute Stewardship Sermons*, Cloughen described the invitation simply: parishioners were encouraged to remember the church in their wills so that their gifts could help preserve its buildings "to minister to future generations."

The All Saints' Legacy Society

The diocesan Planned Giving Task Force eventually established the All Saints' Legacy Society, recognizing people who have remembered their congregation or a diocesan ministry in a will or as a beneficiary of a retirement account or insurance policy. In 2009, the society included 170 households representing 38 congregations. By the time Cloughen joined the diocesan staff that year at the invitation of Bishop Eugene Taylor Sutton, the planned giving effort was poised to grow significantly. Today, 472 households from 60 congregations have notified the diocese that they have included a congregation or diocesan ministry in their estate plans. Behind that number are faithful hearts extending a lifetime of stewardship long into the future.

Cloughen reminds us that "planned giving is not a type of generosity reserved for wealthy parishioners or large congregations. Gifts of varying sizes, combined over generations, can build resources that support worship, formation, outreach, property maintenance and new ministry."

Creating a Culture of Generosity

Across the Diocese of Maryland, congregations are finding their own ways to make conversations about legacy giving a natural part of parish life. At Trinity, Towson, members were invited to participate in "Make-a-Will Month" in August, with a link to the diocesan FreeWill resource included in the congregation's weekly Trinity E-Times. The invitation linked estate planning directly to ministry: a gift made through a will could help worship, music, formation, food ministries and community organizing continue for another generation.



At the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Baltimore, planned giving is highlighted during worship two times a year. On All Saints' Sunday, the names of the Cathedral's 52 Legacy Society households are published in the bulletin – except for those who prefer anonymity, of course. Members are recognized again with a special reception on the fourth Sunday in Lent.

For St. Andrew's, Pasadena, the congregation's legacy society carries the name of the Rt. Rev. Carl Wright, former rector. Members who make a planned gift to St. Andrew's receive a magenta shield lapel pin that honors their commitment to the congregation as well as Wright's legacy of faithful leadership. When the society was chartered in 2021, through the faithful efforts of the vestry and the Rev. Dr. Jason Poling, eighteen households became the charter members. The Bishop Wright Society has grown to twenty households.

While each approach is different, the underlying invitation is the same: How has God blessed you in this community—and how might you bless future generations who will gather here?

FreeWill Makes the First Step Easier

The first step to leaving a planned gift became easier in January, when the diocese made FreeWill available to every congregation. The online resource allows individuals to create a legally valid will at no cost and gives congregations an accessible way to encourage members—and neighbors—to complete an important piece of life planning. People may use FreeWill to gain peace of mind and care for their family whether or not they intend to make a charitable gift. You can take the first step here: episcopalmaryland.org/freewill-planned-giving



For those who choose to leave a planned gift to their church, FreeWill offers a simple way to turn gratitude for their spiritual home into support for its future. Since January, 43 people have made a planned gift to a congregation or ministry of the diocese using FreeWill. We celebrate their generosity! Many others have made a will without including a planned gift, and we celebrate their care for their household and loved ones.

By renewing our diocesan commitment to planned giving resources, we pray that the long-term financial stability of ministry is strengthened. Congregations are encouraged to link their websites directly to the diocesan FreeWill portal, making the resource readily available to their community.

Growing the Community of Love

Every December, Bishop Carrie invites members of the All Saints' Legacy Society to a reception to recognize their planned gift commitment. Attendees gather for ministry updates, a time of fellowship with the bishop, and Advent Lessons and Carols. It is an occasion for gratitude—and also a reminder that legacy giving ultimately points beyond those gathered in the room.

"The people who built our churches could not know everyone who would eventually worship inside of them. Those who established endowments decades ago could not anticipate every ministry those funds would support. The saints who taught the faith, cared for the buildings, funded outreach and welcomed newcomers could only imagine how far the effects of their generosity would travel," the Rev. Dina van Klaveren, canon for development and stewardship, reflected. "We are their heirs. We have received so much. Now we have the opportunity to become ancestors in generosity ourselves."

Planning Your Legacy

Creating a will is an important act of care for the people and organizations that matter to you. The Diocese of Maryland provides access to FreeWill, an online tool that can help you create a will at no cost.

- You are not required to make a charitable gift to use the service, although you are always welcome to do so.
- FreeWill Link: episcopalmaryland.org/freewill-planned-giving.
- Congregations interested in developing or strengthening a planned giving ministry can also find brochures, booklets and other resources through the Episcopal Church Foundation website: www.ecf.org/programs/planned-giving-stewardship/planned-giving/pg-brochures
- Those who have already remembered a congregation or ministry of the Diocese of Maryland in their estate plans may contact Sally Swygert in the diocesan business office to be added to the All Saints' Legacy Society.

GOOD STEWARDS**: a new monthly e-newsletter is available for treasurers, wardens, clergy, finance committee members, legacy committee and stewardship leaders in the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland. To subscribe or to locate past issues, go to: **https://episcopalmaryland.org/stewardship/



By the Numbers

472 HOUSEHOLDS

have remembered a congregation or diocesan ministry in their estate plans and are members of the diocesan All Saints' Legacy Society.

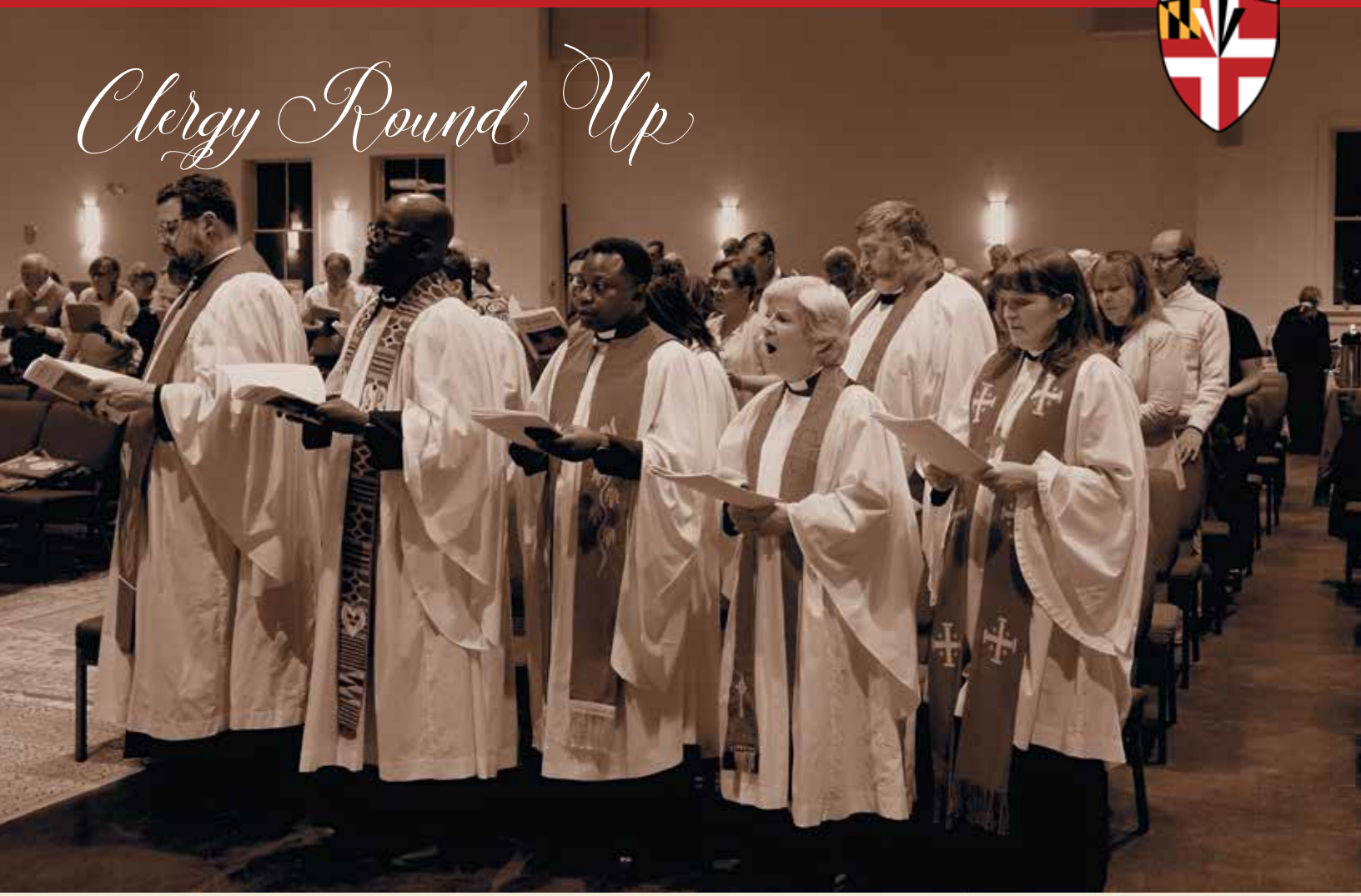
60 CONGREGATIONS

are represented in the society.

NEARLY 75%

of Episcopal congregations churchwide report having an endowment or investment account

Clergy Round Up



How Does One Discern a Call to Ordained Ministry?

BY THE REV. DR. KRISTOFER LINDH-PAYNE, CANON TO THE ORDINARY FOR LEADERSHIP

A call rarely arrives as a single, unmistakable moment. Discernment is a journey of listening to God, to oneself, and to the community of faith and love over time. Sometimes a call begins as a persistent sense that something is stirring within us: a desire to serve, a recognition of gifts that seem particularly suited to ministry, or a recurring sense that God may be inviting us toward something not yet imagined. A call may be accompanied by questions, uncertainty -- even resistance. Discernment gives our questions room to breathe and invites us to discover where the questions may be leading.

The ordained ministry discernment journey begins close to home. Anyone sensing a call is encouraged first to speak with their rector or priest-in-charge. From there, discernment becomes increasingly communal. The diocese's Commission on Ministry (COM) accompanies people as they explore their baptismal vocation and consider whether their gifts and sense of call may lead toward the diaconate or priesthood.

The Commission on Ministry offers a process for discerning in two stages.. The first is Exploring Baptismal Ministry (EBM), a six-month experience in which participants explore both lay and ordained ministry with a peer cohort and a team of lay, deacon, priest, and vowed religious mentors. Some then continue into Discerning Ordained Vocations (DOV), another six-month experience focused specifically on ordination. DOV includes a peer community, a mentor team, spiritual direction, and ministry in an internship congregation.

This process recognizes something essential about vocation: we do not discern alone. The handbook and other resources available on the diocesan website describe discernment as both individual and communal, inviting candidates to examine their lives, motivations, strengths, weaknesses, and understanding of God's will. Psychological evaluation, mentoring, congregational feedback, internships, interviews, prayer, and reflection all become ways of listening for the Spirit. The purpose is to help each person discover the ministry to which God is calling them, whether through ordained or lay ministry. Learn more at https://episcopalmaryland.org/diocesan-governance/ministry-discernment-process/

The Book of Common Prayer offers a profound lens for understanding what it means to discern such a call. In the examination at ordination, the bishop asks the ordinand whether they believe they are "truly called by God and his Church" to the ministry of a deacon or priest. The question is striking because it joins two dimensions of vocation: God's call and the Church's recognition of that call. For the deacon, that calling is a ministry of servanthood; for the priest, it includes proclaiming the Gospel, caring for God's people, celebrating the sacraments, and building up the Church.

Perhaps, then, the deepest question in discernment is not simply, "Do I want to be ordained?" Nor is it even, "Do I feel called?" The deeper question is: "Where is God calling me to serve, and can the Church recognize that call with me?" Discernment gives us the time, relationships, prayer, and community to listen for that still, small voice.

The Next Chapter: Congregations in Transition

BY THE REV. KRISTIN KRANTZ, CANON FOR TRANSITIONS

Pastoral transitions offer space for change, creativity, and hope. They are framed by endings, with all the attendant feelings, and are a time to look forward to new beginnings. When a priest retires or leaves a congregation to answer a new call, a "good" goodbye can build a solid foundation from which a new chapter begins for the community. This new chapter offers space for a congregation to reflect on their vocation and vision, generating excitement for what's next. It is also a time for renegotiating expectations and responding to demographic shifts in the neighborhood. Prayerful discernment strengthens lay leadership, renews a commitment to mission, and fortifies fellowship in congregations across the diocese.

Transitions in the Diocese of Maryland

On any given day, a quarter to a third of the 100+ congregations within our diocese are in various stages of priestly leadership transition. Each transition is a time for a congregation to consider who they are, what their purpose is, and how they are related to their neighbors. The process generally begins with planning for pastoral coverage following a priest's departure. Depending on circumstances and timing, congregations may be served by a constellation of different folks, which may include some of the following roles: an interim rector, a bridge pastor, a long-term supply priest, a Sunday supply priest, or a transition consultant. Congregational leaders,



Trust and kinship in Christ

"Before I even packed up my North Carolina office, diocesan staff went out of their way to connect me to clergy in the diocese. They understand the importance of making good friends with fellow priests, of building that trust and kinship in Christ."

—The Rev. Alice Grant, associate rector for formation and evangelism, St. Anne's, Annapolis





often with support from diocesan staff or a consultant, reflect on heritage, leadership, connections, mission, and vision for the future. Through conversations, surveys, meetings, and prayer, the congregation considers the gifts and leadership needed for its next season of ministry. The three hopes we hold up for all congregations in a time of transition are that they **grow closer to God**, they **grow closer to one another**, and they **call a great new priest.** Every transition is guided by the core value of informed choice. To this end, there are different paths through transition depending upon the needs and circumstance of each congregation.

Searching for a Priest

The Episcopal Church launched a new tool last March designed to support clergy, lay people seeking new calls and congregations seeking their next priest. The Vocation Hub (https://vocationhub.episcopalchurch.org/) replaced the former Office of Transition Ministry (OTM) database, bringing the work of pastoral transitions into a more modern, flexible, and mission-focused platform. It is one of the tools used to find priests who match the leadership and ministry skills identified by a congregation during their process of self-study. Priests use this platform to create a candidate profile, and congregations create a position profile when opening a search.

A discernment committee, working with the vestry and diocese, interviews and prayerfully discerns with candidates. The process concludes with the calling of a new priest, and the beginning of a shared ministry together. Once the new clergy leader is in the congregation, the community plans either "A Celebration of New Ministry" service for a rector, or a "Blessing of a New Pastoral Relationship" with a priest-in-charge, which offers a public moment to commit to the ministry shared by clergy and congregation.

Priest Retirement

While priests can retire earlier, the mandatory age for official retirement in The Episcopal Church is seventy-two. Many priests choose to work past that age, however this policy means that when they reach seventy-two, they cannot retire and keep on working in the same congregation.

Over the past year, seven congregations have marked the retirement of their rector or priest-in- charge. They celebrated faithful leadership and shared ministry with special meals, gifts, and moments in the community.

While ending a pastoral relationship can be hard and raise a myriad of emotions, it also makes space for the Holy Spirit to move in new and powerful ways for both the congregation and the priest. For the congregation it is a fresh opportunity to look inward at who they are in that moment so they can articulate their hopes and dreams for the future. For the priest it offers a chance to rest and discern how God will continue to use their gifts, skills, and wisdom in new ways. Whether that leads to "full retirement" or to other opportunities to work with a congregation, retirement is an opportunity for a new season to emerge.

You will know when it's time

"After 19 years of ordained service, I was blessed with the awareness, deep down, that it was time for me to go. I knew I no longer had the energy I expected of myself for parish ministry…I'm grateful to the diocese for the pastoral support it gave to me, the wardens, vestry, and congregation during the transition. As for advice, I offer simply this: You will know when it's time."
—The Rev. Tim Grayson, recently retired from St. Barnabas, Sykesville



Renewal and Strength

Clergy transitions remind us that the life and work of the Church is not defined by any single leader. Times of transition invite congregations to listen deeply, welcome new possibilities, and continue the work of building communities of love. Through faithful discernment and shared ministry, each transition becomes an opportunity to renew the Church's mission and strengthen its witness of holy hospitality in the world.

Early and sustained support for our transition

"We were blessed to have early and sustained support for our transition. Bishop Carrie and Canon Kristin visited a year before Father Christopher Garcia retired. We received consultation in preparing our materials, and suitable clergy were directed to us. Several diocesan canons visited us during the interim to lead worship and work with us on growing our parish's ministry presence."

—Jim Yoe, profile committee member at Christ Church, Port Republic

Mutual love and support

"I have felt warmly welcomed in Maryland. The transition was smooth and Spirit-led. The interim priest competently guided the congregation through significant challenges and change. The search team and vestry were thoughtful and thorough, and they even gave me two weeks to settle in before my first Sunday. I arrived full of energy and love, and the congregation responded in kind. The priest-in-charge role has provided the room I needed to grow into this role naturally and authentically. This setting is so full of mutual love and support. That trust has eased the stress and anxiety that can crowd out discernment. It has given me more space to be present, to pray, to listen, and to enjoy the work we're doing together."

—The Rev. Dr. Colin Maltbie, priest-in charge of Good Shepherd, Towson



Transitions Across the Episcopal Church

Pastoral transitions are taking place within a broader transformation of congregational life. Across The Episcopal Church, the number of congregations served by full-time priests has shifted. In 2010, approximately 74% of parishes had full-time priest positions. In 2023, about 44% of congregations had full-time priests, while 20% were served by retired priests.

These changes reflect the diversity of Episcopal congregations and the many ways ministry is being sustained. Some communities are served by full-time rectors and priests-in-charge, while others rely on part-time priests, interim priests, or shared ministry arrangements. Each congregation's transition is shaped by its size, resources, mission, and local context.

Recent New Calls

We give thanks to God for the congregations and priests who have started new calls together in the past year:

The Rev. Kiona Lookingbill, priest-in-charge at Grace, New Market

The Rev. Allan Weatherholt, long-term supply at St. Andrew's, Clear Spring

The Rev. Jennifer Grimelli, interim rector at St. Peter's, Ellicott City

The Rev. Angela Furlong, rector at St. James', Mt. Airy

The Rev. Virginia Tyler Smith, interim rector at All Saints, Sunderland

The Rev. Josh Laws, chaplain at St. Paul's Schools, Baltimore

The Rev. Jennifer Mariano, associate rector at All Saints, Frederick

The Rev. Loree Penner, long-term supply at St. Paul's, Poplar Springs

The Rev. David Svihel, rector at Christ Church, Port Republic

The Rev. Joanna White, interim rector at Trinity, Elkridge

The Rev. Arianne Rice, priest-in-charge at St. John's, Havre de Grace

The Rev. Carole Douglas, long-term supply at Holy Trinity, Baltimore

The Rev. Kirstin Tannas, priest-in-charge at Messiah & St. Matthias, Baltimore

The Rev. Alice Grant, associate rector at St. Anne's, Annapolis

The Rev. Allison Harmon, curate & parish day school chaplain at St. John's, Ellicott City

The Rev. Santana Bartoldus, assistant rector at St. David's, Baltimore

The Rev. Dr. Darryl R. Kemp, priest-in-charge, All Saints, Baltimore

The Rev. Daniel Catalano, curate at Cathedral of the Incarnation, Baltimore

The Rev. Mary Sulerud, associate rector at St. Anne's, Annapolis

The Rev. Annette Chappell, bridge pastor at Nativity & Holy Comforter, Cedarcroft

The Rev. Michael Looney, curate at Emmanuel, Baltimore

The Rev. Natalie Tinner, curate at Christ Church, Columbia

Recently Retired

We give thanks to God for the faithfulness of priests and congregations and their shared ministry as the following have retired in the past year:

The Rev. Garrett Carskadon from St. James', Westernport & St. Peter's, Lonaconing

The Rev. Lynne Hade from Grace, Darlington

The Rev. Benita Keene-Johnson from Holy Trinity, Baltimore

The Rev. Tim Grayson from St. Barnabas, Sykesville

The Rev. Dr. Chip Lee from St. Matthew's, Oakland & St. John's, Deer Park



For those discerning new ministry

God of our beginnings and endings, silence the distractions of the world and open the hearts of all those who are seeking a new call that they may hear your voice. Grant them the ability to listen attentively and the discernment to understand your subtle guidance. Help them to release preconceived notions and approach this moment of decision with an open mind and a receptive spirit. May they discern your purposes through the whispers of your love and the gentle nudges of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Curacy Program Launched!

The Diocese has launched a new three-year Curacy Pilot Program designed to strengthen congregations while supporting the formation and deployment of newly ordained priests.

The program responds to two realities facing the Church today: newly ordained priests benefit from well-supported first ministry settings where they can grow as leaders, while many congregations have the potential for renewed ministry yet lack the financial capacity to add clergy leadership. The Curacy Pilot Program brings these needs together through financial support, intentional clergy formation, and congregational vitality resources.

An important part of making the pilot possible has been the creative collaboration of the Bishop's Office with the Standing Committee and Diocesan Council. Together, they have worked thoughtfully to identify ways to support this new initiative and make a meaningful investment in both congregational vitality and the formation of new clergy. Their partnership reflects a shared commitment to stewarding diocesan resources creatively, responding to the changing needs of congregations, and creating new possibilities for ministry across the diocese.

Participating congregations receive graduated diocesan grant support toward the cost of a new curate, with the goal of helping each congregation build toward long-term sustainability. Congregations also engage in intentional vitality and stewardship work, including coaching, vitality assessment, planning, and the development of a five-year financial plan for sustaining the position after the three-year pilot.

"This program came at just the right time for Emmanuel," said the Rev. Anne Marie Richards, rector of Emmanuel, Baltimore. "The curacy program allows us to expand our capacity for ministry in ways we might not have even imagined."

The program also creates space for creative approaches to ministry. Two congregations may share a curate, allowing a larger congregation to serve as a teaching parish while a smaller congregation gains consistent priestly leadership and pastoral presence. Coordinated by the Rev. Dr. Kristofer Lindh-Payne, canon to the ordinary for leadership, the pilot brings together diocesan staff, congregational leaders, and vitality resources around a shared goal: adding clergy staffing that builds healthier, more sustainable congregations.

The first cohort of the Curacy Pilot Program is already taking shape, with four curates beginning ministry before October 1st: the Rev. Allison Harmon at St. John's, Ellicott City; the Rev. Michael Looney at Emmanuel, Baltimore; the Rev. Jennifer Mariano at All Saints, Frederick; and the Rev. Natalie Tinner at Christ Church, Columbia. Curacies represent an exciting investment in both the future of ordained leadership and the vitality of congregations throughout Maryland.



Deacons: Between the Sanctuary and the Streets

BY THE VEN. DENISE SCHIAVONE, ARCHDEACON

In communion with our bishop, deacons partner with priests and lay leaders across the diocese to empower and equip all members of the Body of Christ for justice-oriented ministry. As servant leaders, we stand at the threshold between the sanctuary and the streets — pointing the people of God to the needs of their neighborhoods, communities, and beyond.

Maryland's deacons are non-stipendiary, bi-vocational ordained clergy who work in or are retired from secular professions in education, communications, law, healthcare, government, and more. These vocations often complement our role as bridge between the Church and the world. As community organizers, we work to address challenges such as housing instability, food insecurity, immigration, and environmental justice. Outside of our congregations, we hold leadership positions at the national, province, and diocesan levels. We also serve within various regional, state, and county organizations.

Four persons are currently enrolled in the Deacon Formation Program to prepare for ordained ministry in the Sacred Order of Deacons. Nineteen active deacons are currently discerning, training, or serving more than twenty congregations in the diocese:

The Rev. Carolyn Armstrong
St. James, Baltimore

The Rev. Linda Boyd
Holy Trinity, Essex

The Rev. Neva Brown
St. Bartholomew's, Baltimore

The Rev. Cindy Christopher
St. Francis, Timonium

The Rev. Ruth Elder
St. John's, Ellicott City

The Rev. Mimi Mathews
Grace, Elkridge

The Ven. Denise Schiavone
serves as archdeacon

The Rev. Kathy Shahinian
serves as chaplain to the deacons

The Rev. Amy Shimonkevitz Holy Apostles & St. Stephens, Arbutus and Trinity, Elkridge

The Rev. Lisa Siciliano
Christ Church, West River and St. Paul's Prince Frederick

The Rev. Chip Tucker
All Saints', Sunderland and St. James', Lothian

The Rev. Gail Tucker
St. Andrew's, Pasadena

The Rev. Vaughn Vigil serves as the deacon for Latino ministry in multiple congregations
The Rev. Rebecca Warlow Sherwood, Cockeysville

The Rev. Sue Wert
St. John's, Hagerstown and St. Mark's, Lappans

The Rev. Kirk Devore, the Rev. Nathaniel Gibson, and **the Rev. James Reaves** are currently in internship settings.

The Rev. Christian Ventura, who was ordained to the diaconate on August 1st, serves occasionally in the Diocese of Kansas where he is a medical student.



Recently Retired Deacons

The Rev. Beth Bellner from Christ Church, Port Republic

The Rev. Bob Frederick from Christ the King, Woodlawn

The Rev. Jane Mayrer from Guardian Angel, Baltimore

The Rev. Kathy Shahinian from St. Anne's, Annapolis

The Rev. John Verdon from St. Philip's, Annapolis





From Strangers to Friends

YOUTH ADVENTURES THIS SUMMER

When one young student first arrived at Sutton Scholars, she was shy. She hung back from the group, approaching the experience cautiously. Three summers later, James Woody, executive director, saw a different young person emerging. She was stepping forward to lead. And when the Sutton Scholars were preparing to give speeches before the entire program, she volunteered to go first.

"She stepped out of her comfort zone and joyfully volunteered for opportunities to stretch and grow," Woody said.

At the program's culminating celebration, Woody asked the gathered community to think about what their presence meant. When the scholars walked onto the auditorium stage and looked out, he told them that they would see more than an audience. "You will see that you are surrounded by people who believe in you, who believe in your future success, who care about you enough to show up."



Showing Up

Across the Diocese of Maryland this summer, showing up with and for young people took many forms, like a lakeside picnic and a child's name chalked onto the asphalt at Claggett. It was an adult sitting beside a child and opening a new book at Reading Camp. It took the form of a teenager walking alongside a canoe, hauling out storm debris from the French Broad River in the heat of a North Carolina summer. And it was a community filling an auditorium at Mercy High School so that Baltimore City high school students could look out from a stage and know a whole community of friends, family and neighbors believes in their future.

Different places, different young people, different ministries – and each offered an experience of holy hospitality. Each ministry made room for another person, received them as they came, and created the relationships and experiences through which strangers become friends.

Making Room to Belong

For six weeks this summer, young people came to the Claggett Center to swim, kayak, bike, play in the Monocacy River, share picnics beside the lake, make new friends, and explore creation. Each summer, a custom curriculum is developed for camp, creating a rhythm of twice-daily chapel and small-group reflection. Worship is joyful. Conversations invite campers to explore their faith. Adventures outdoors offer opportunities to experience the beauty of creation with one another, and with God.



"I learned when to use meditation to help me when I get upset. I learned new songs in chapel, and I made really good new friends," said Genna, a middle school camper.

Summer camp offers a community that is intentionally created to help young people know that there is room for them. That intention is visible in the people who lead camp. Claggett has made a concerted effort to recruit and develop a diverse team of counselors so that campers from many backgrounds can see themselves reflected among the young adults leading the program.

"Last school year was rough for him," reflects Richard, a grateful high school camp parent. "I can see the positive impact of camp already. Being there, feeling welcomed, safe, validated and seen has done wonders to his self-esteem."

Hospitality at camp requires careful planning to create the conditions for belonging: an understanding counselor, a new friend, a place to ask questions about faith, a paddle dipping into the water, voices joining together in chapel.

When Strangers Become Friends

Elsewhere in the diocese, holy hospitality began with a book. For children who are reluctant readers, summer reading is an obligation to avoid. Reading Camp seeks to change that by surrounding literacy enrichment with friendships, encouragement and fun.

This summer, reading camps at St. Alban's, Glen Burnie, St. Mary's, Abingdon and St. James, Lothian welcomed children from the wider community. "Reading Camp is an opportunity for congregations to build meaningful relationships with children and families in their communities and through those relationships, to listen, learn, and discover how the Church can respond to the real needs of our neighbors in practical and significant ways," said the Rev. Randy Callender, canon for mission. The need is real. Shifts in the economy mean that many families have less access to summer enrichment. Free, community-based programs like reading camp can help children continue learning during the months when school is not in session.

The deeper ministry of reading camp may be found in the relationships formed when a congregation opens its doors to children it may not already know. Volunteers give them time and attention. A reluctant reader discovers that books can be enjoyable. Strangers become friends.

Caring for a River, Caring for a Community



Holy hospitality might invite us to pack up our bags and toolboxes and head to a community in need. In September 2024, Hurricane Helene brought catastrophic flooding to western North Carolina. Rivers surged beyond their banks, landslides tore through mountain communities, infrastructure was destroyed and debris was swept into waterways. The French Broad River has carried evidence of that destruction long after the floodwaters receded.

This summer, 15 young people and adult mentors traveled to western North Carolina to become part of the continuing work of storm recovery. Their service took them out onto the French Broad itself, where they used canoes to remove trash and storm debris from the river. "Each day was different," recalled Juliette, a high school student from Garrett County. "One day we loaded groceries into people's cars and had really nice interactions with them. Other days we worked in a warehouse or on the river."

"Paddling in a canoe to find and collect debris in humid, July heat is not for the faint of heart," said adult mentor Kendall Ludwig, a member of St. Matthew's in Oakland. "And yet, our teens were relentless in their work --we even had to remind them to take breaks and hydrate! They were downright cheerful


RIVER
MALT
PILSNER

in their service. I was inspired by the dedication to leave God's creation better than we found it."

The experience turned the usual image of hospitality around. Instead of being hosts, the youth became guests. They were visitors entering someone else's community, ready to serve.



Margot, another Garrett County high school student, said "I made friends with other youth from all over Maryland. Now I'm thinking about a career that helps people."

"I am so proud of all of our young folks for following the call to be part of something bigger, something that takes work and effort, something that brings value to their lives and to the world at large," says Kate Riley, canon for youth. Their work offered another understanding of hospitality: entering a new place with humility, paying attention to what is needed. In the river, care for God's creation became inseparable from care for God's tired people, who have been cleaning up their communities for two years.

Believing in What Comes Next

For Baltimore City high school students participating in Sutton Scholars, summer offered a different kind of invitation: an opportunity to imagine their future and prepare themselves to meet it through six weeks of enrichment. Bishop Carrie Schofield-Broadbent described Sutton Scholars as a place where "gifted and hard-working young people dedicate their summer break to their futures, and to the future of Baltimore City," growing in confidence and competence and becoming leaders who serve with character in their communities.

"My favorite field trip was the day we went to the Blacks in Wax Museum and Hampton [National Historic Site]," said Logan, a Sutton Scholar from Baltimore Polytechnic Institute high school. "These are my closest friends, " added Aliyah, another high school student. "We challenge each other and support each other."

The change is steady and visible. The student Woody remembered as shy and cautious didn't become a leader in one week. Her transformation unfolded over many summers—in a community that continued to welcome her, challenge her and believe in her.

Holy hospitality requires consistency and presence. For more than a decade, the Rev. Neva Brown offered both for Baltimore City students through her leadership of Sutton Scholars. Brown retired July 31, leaving a beautiful legacy shaped by years of showing up for young people. "We are very proud of what these young people have learned, experienced and accomplished over the summer," Bishop Carrie said, while expressing gratitude for Brown's faithful ministry and many years of holy hospitality.

The fruit of that investment could be seen at the July 31 closing celebration. Students who once quietly stayed in the background were now willing to step up to the mic. And from that stage they looked around to absorb a whole auditorium of people showing up for them, encouraging them, celebrating with them.





Thank you for supporting ministry

IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY AND THROUGH THE BISHOP'S APPEAL MINISTRIES, WHICH INCLUDE:

The Sutton Scholars High School Enrichment Program

The Claggett Center

Baltimore International Seafarers' Center/BISC

Youth Ministry

The F. Garner Ranney Archives

Reparations Ministry

Latino Ministries

The Truth & Reconciliation Commission

Reading Camp

Campus Ministries

Episcopal Refugee and Immigrant Center Alliance/ERICA

Giving Tuesday is December 1.

Thanks to a grant from four longtime supporters, we've been challenged to raise $15,000 to unlock another $15,000 for the ministries of the Bishop's Appeal. Watch your email inbox and social media for convenient ways to contribute on Giving Tuesday and help us match the challenge gift!

Thanks to your Support, Sutton Scholars Gain Skills That Shape a Future.

Sutton Scholars helps young people imagine a future of their own—and develop the skills to pursue it. For two alumni who completed the program in 2021, the impact of the Sutton Scholars program continues through higher education, meaningful work, and entrepreneurship.

Victoria Diggins credits Sutton Scholars with helping her prepare for college and life beyond high school. The program encouraged her to think about her future while developing professional skills. Diggins is especially grateful for the financial literacy skills she learned, which she knows will inform her decisions for the rest of her life. After studying psychology at North Carolina Central University (May 2026, *summa cum laude*), she has begun master's program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Old Dominion University.

For Maleke Neville, Sutton Scholars opened doors to new environments, relationships and possibilities. Those experiences helped him to develop his own ideas for his future while growing more adaptable and receptive to new perspectives. Neville identifies the ability to connect with others as one of the program's greatest benefits: "It has allowed me to gain many opportunities that I otherwise wouldn't have been able to obtain for myself." After pursuing HVAC training at All-State Career School, Maleke works full time while also working toward owning a business of his own.

The benefits of Sutton Scholars extend beyond the summer sessions. Practical skills, broader perspectives and stronger relationships become resources alumni draw on as they continue their education, earn a living, and build their futures. As Neville puts it, the program gave him "great skills that bore fruit later on."

Upcoming Events

242nd Diocesan Convention

NOVEMBER 20-12, 2026
AT THE CLAGGETT CENTER

Each year, elected delegates from each congregation gather to elect diocesan leaders, discuss issues, and review policies and structures. Voting delegates register to participate. All are welcome to observe via livestream through the diocesan web page.





Clergy Conference

MAY 16-19, 2027 AT THE CLAGGETT CENTER

An annual gathering for clergy in the diocese that offers fellowship, rest, formation, and worship.

General Convention: Blessed Are the Peacemakers

JULY 2-7, 2027 IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA; $550

For 9th - 12th graders who are interested in learning more about church governance, community organizing, and exploring how faith calls us to act: gather with community organizers, hear from faith leaders, apply skills during General Convention legislative sessions, and prepare to enact change when you return home. If interested, please directly email Kate Riley, canon for youth: kriley@episcopalmaryland.org



An Invitation from the Piscataway Indian Nation

The Piscataway Indian Nation has invited members throughout the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland to walk the land and navigate the waterways of the region. Additional information and sign-up opportunities will be available in the spring of 2027 in the Diocesan E-news.

WALKING THE LAND

The Piscataway Indian Nation has invited our congregations to join a nature walk guided by Indigenous tradition. This unhurried journey treats the land as a living community of relatives rather than as scenery. Along the way, the guide will share the stories that the landscape holds: ancestral histories, ancient markings in stone, and a living culture that has called this place home for thousands of years.

NAVIGATING THE WATERWAYS

Congregations will also have opportunities to take pontoon boat excursions on the Patuxent River guided by the Piscataway Indian Nation. These excursions will be offered from late spring through the summer months.

Would you like to stay informed about Upcoming Events and other diocesan information? You are encouraged to sign up for the twice a month emailed newsletter on our website: episcopalmaryland.org/diomaryland-enews/

Celebrating Holy Hospitality

MARYLAND EPISCOPALIAN
FALL 2026

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"Those small things you do are saving people's lives, saving families, saving futures, generations unseen, building bridges… lives are changed by every one of you. Every one of you. It is so important. The world seeks our mercy, seeks God's grace, and the vessel is this Church…the Church is essential… It is so important that you bear your witness of love and wholeness and hope exactly where you are. The precious, precious things we hold. The bridges that we stand on confidently. The quilts that we make together. Aren't we so fortunate? What a beautiful life we all get to live." - The Very Rev. Winnie Varghese

The Very Rev. Winnie Varghese, Dean at St. John the Divine, New York City, offered the keynote presentation at Diocesan Convention in November of 2025. She led diocesan convention participants in a reflection on the mercy, human dignity, and call of the Church to stand together in witness to what matters in the lives of God's people. Weaving together moments from Angola prison, her grandfather's farm in India, a Shinto priest from Japan, and her train ride from New York City the previous afternoon, Varghese inspired the gathering to notice and cherish the mercy, the repairing love, the dignity that each community experiences in ministry together. Listen to the full presentation at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQyqNN5m0ds