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Our history as the Diocese of Virginia has been written many times but has rarely included all the voices of the Diocese. Our history is in process, like an unfinished quilt. Some missing pieces in the story that we tell are things that we don't want to talk about, and some are the meaningful work of people gone unnoticed. We have recently begun to reconcile — as a diocese on a systemic level — with how our power, action, and inaction have affected those whose voices have been left out.

To read our history as told in the past, please find it below.

We know that much of our honest history, as well as much of our best history, is still waiting to be written.

History

Descended from the First Anglican Parish in the New World - 1607

The Holy Communion was first celebrated on what is now American soil at James Towne (Jamestown) in 1607, and the (Anglican) Church of Virginia continued as the established church until the Revolution. On the day after the Colony of Virginia declared its independence from England, the Virginia Convention which governed both the Commonwealth and the Church of Virginia, ordered that prayers for the King and Realm of England be removed from its Book of Common Prayer. Most of the clergy took oaths of allegiance to the new Commonwealth, and a significant number of them bore arms in the Revolution, whose great Virginia leaders were parishioners of the Church of Virginia. Only Connecticut (1784), New York (1787) and Pennsylvania (1787) preceded Virginia (1790) in securing the consecration of a bishop. The Diocese of Virginia is proud to be the direct descendant of the first Anglican parish in what is now the United States of America.

The Diocese of Virginia was organized in May 1785 and was one of the nine dioceses represented at the first General Convention in September 1785 which brought together the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Today, the Diocese of Virginia is the largest in the Episcopal Church and includes 38 counties in central and northern Virginia.

Today's Headquarters

The see city is Richmond, the capital city of the Commonwealth since the 18th century, and the diocesan offices are located in the Mayo Memorial Church House, a 19th century Greek Revival mansion on West Franklin Street. This building, which underwent an elegant restoration in 1982, was left to the Diocese by the heirs of Peter Mayo, a wealthy 19th century tobacco merchant. The Diocese also maintains an office in Northern Virginia.

Post-Revolution and Re-establishment of the Church of Virginia

When the Church of Virginia, in which a bishop had never set foot, was disestablished beginning in 1784, it was at one stroke left without a governing body and a means of support. Taxes had supported it during its years of establishment, and Virginians, therefore, had never learned to support their Church voluntarily. Although the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia was allowed to organize itself in 1785, its incorporation was not permitted because the new General Assembly feared the return of an established church.

The General Assembly continued Virginia's geographical parishes as basic units of local church life and ministry. A parish was administered by a vestry that was elected by the freeholders in a parish. For the first Convention in 1785, each parish, through its vestry, was to choose two deputies, one of which was to be the ordained minister of the parish, if there was one. If not, the second deputy could be a layman. Ordination was not enough to entitle a clergyman to a seat in Convention. He had to hold a parish.

It is generally considered that in 1776, at the onset of the Revolution, there were 98 geographical parishes in the established Church of Virginia. The new Virginia Legislature added at least six more by 1780, bringing the total to 104. Many parishes had within them more than one church building and, in some cases, there were several.

During the week of May 18-25 in 1785, although 35 parishes were unrepresented, 71 laymen and 36 clergymen representing 69 parishes came to Richmond for the first Convention. Only 29 parishes were represented by both a layman and a clergyman. The Convention met at Henrico (St. John's) Parish Church and in the public buildings and chose the Rev. James Madison, D.D., rector of James City Parish, as President of the Convention.

In an address in 1910, the Rev. Dr. Edward L. Goodwin said:

It was preeminently a layman's convention. Not only did they outnumber the clergy nearly two to one, but they far outweighed them in ability and legislative experience. No convention or council since has enrolled so many distinguished names or numbered so many statesmen of the first rank in the Commonwealth. Twenty of its members held seats as members of the State Legislature, including the speaker of both the Senate and the House. Nine had sat in the convention of 1776, and had aided in formulating the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of the

State. Four became governors, four members of Congress and three adorned the bench of the highest state courts, while two sat in the convention which framed the Constitution of the United States. One was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and one was to hold two portfolios in the Cabinet of the first President.

Its primary business was to frame and adopt a set of canons which it called "Rules and Regulations." A second order of business was to select four deputies, two laymen and two clergymen, to represent Virginia at the first General Convention that was to be held in Philadelphia "on the Tuesday before the Feast of St. Michael" in the following September. The Virginia Convention chose John Page from Abingdon Parish in Gloucester County and William Lee from James City Parish, as well as the Rev. Dr. David Griffith of Fairfax Parish and the Rev. Samuel M'Groskey of Hungars Parish in Northampton County. Page, Lee and Griffith have descendants active in diocesan life today.

The early canons of the Diocese reflected a post-revolutionary spirit of caution. Strict limits were set on the authority of the bishop, who was permitted only to ordain, confirm, and to "take precedence in ecclesiastical assemblies." Virginians saw no place for lordly bishops or episcopal palaces in their new Commonwealth. A bishop, indeed, was to have no authority over the parishes of the Diocese and was, himself, "to do the duty of a parish minister," except when called upon to exercise a particular function of his episcopal ministry. The laity, in the form of the vestries, was firmly and happily in control of church life.

In 1786, the Rev. David Griffith, rector of Fairfax Parish and a surgeon, became the first Bishop-elect of the Diocese of Virginia. He was unable to raise sufficient funds, however, to finance a trip to England with William White of Pennsylvania and Samuel Provoost of New York for episcopal consecration. In 1789, he resigned his election in disappointment and died the same year at the age of 47.

The Rev. James Madison, president of the College of William and Mary and rector of James City Parish, was elected, then consecrated in England in 1790, to be the first Bishop of Virginia. His vast diocese included not only what is today the Commonwealth of Virginia, but also West Virginia, Kentucky, Illinois and parts of the states north of the Ohio River. His duties at the college and his parochial ministry permitted him to make long-distance episcopal visitations only during the summer months. Bishop Madison's second cousin of the same name served as President of the United States, 1809-1817.

In 1792, Bishop Madison was privileged to take part with Bishops White, Provoost and Seabury in the consecration of Thomas J. Claggett, the first Bishop of Maryland. Bishop Claggett's consecration, the first on American soil, brought together both the English and Scottish lines of episcopal succession for the newborn American Church. Bishop Seabury never participated in another episcopal consecration.

A man of tremendous ability, talent and intellect, Bishop Madison was given the impossible task of two diverse forms of service to the people of his day, more than any one man could fulfill. Although he was diligent in ordaining as many men as any other American bishop, Bishop Madison could not prevent the number of parishes in the diocese from declining from a pre-revolutionary 98 to fewer than 50. In addition to the lack of financial support and a uniform means for educating those preparing for ordination, priests who had been driven out of the more closely governed dioceses of New England took Virginia parishes and contributed to the overall decline. Attendance at Conventions declined, and between 1799 and 1812, it was possible to muster a quorum only twice. The influence of the Presbyterians, the Baptists and eventually, the Methodists grew as the Episcopal Church waned. Furthermore, as the parish ministers incumbent at the time of the disestablishment died, and as parishes became vacant to clergy, the glebes were seized by counties and used as poor houses. The church plate and bells were sold at auction to finance the Overseers of the Poor, completing the disestablishment and ending an important responsibility of the Church of Virginia.

When Bishop Madison died in 1812, after many years of failing health, only 40 parishes still survived, clergy had been deprived of their livelihoods and church buildings stood abandoned in all parts of the Commonwealth. The outlook was grim. The Rev. John Bracken, rector of Bruton Parish, was elected second Bishop of Virginia in that year, but was opposed by several persons, including the Rev. William Meade. He resigned his election 1813 and died in 1818.

In 1814, the Rev. Richard Channing Moore of New York, the first man ordained by Bishop Provoost, was persuaded to accept election as rector of Monumental Church in Richmond and as Bishop of Virginia. A man of strongly Protestant and evangelical outlook, Bishop Moore was a gifted and eloquent preacher. There is a story about a congregation that listened spellbound to one of his long, 19th century-style sermons, and when it was over, demanded that he preach another. When that homily ended, they called for another. After the third sermon with supper time near, Moore declared that he had preached enough!

An able and tireless leader, as well as a great preacher, Bishop Moore crossed and re-crossed the Commonwealth, reviving parishes, replacing the reprobate priests who had come in during the early years of the century, and building up the financial support of the Church. Virginia's second bishop's episcopate was marked by the founding of the Virginia Theological Seminary and of the Diocesan Missionary Society.

In 1829, the Rev. William Meade was elected and consecrated assistant bishop and, until Bishop Moore's death in 1841, gave his diocesan bishop immense help in reviving the Church in Virginia. Bishop Meade was a prolific writer of letters, prayers, devotional guides, and of historical articles that were later collected in *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*.

Historians and genealogists owe Bishop Meade a great debt for collecting and depositing many of the colonial parish registers and vestry-books with Virginia Theological Seminary.

By the time Bishop Meade became third Bishop of Virginia in 1841, he was himself in ill health and another assistant bishop was chosen, the Rev. John Johns, D.D. Bishop Johns was the first bishop to be consecrated in Virginia, at Monumental Church in Richmond, October 13, 1842. By the time he became fourth Bishop upon Meade's death in 1862, the Diocese had assumed a leading position in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States and was large, wealthy, and strong in every respect, its evangelical character and witness owing to the tireless ministry provided by Bishops Moore and Meade.

The Church in the Civil War and Post Civil War Eras

In 1861, the last convention of the Diocese was held and Virginia joined the other secessionist states in forming a General Council to replace the General Convention of the Church and renamed the annual diocesan meeting a "council." The General Convention took no notice of the action, and, during the Civil War years, continued simply to mark the departed dioceses "absent." In 1866, after the war, despite considerable opposition, Bishop Johns led the Diocese back into the Protestant Episcopal Church. Virginia continued to call its annual diocesan meeting a Council until 2016, when a canonical amendment was passed to return the meeting's name to Annual Convention.

The Rt. Rev. Francis McNeece Whittle, D.D., who had become assistant bishop in 1867, became the fifth Bishop of Virginia upon Bishop Johns' death in 1876. His early episcopate, of necessity, was colored by the horrible aftermath of the war. Under his leadership, many of the churches that had been damaged or desecrated were revived and a new era of church-building began. With his consent, the Diocese of West Virginia was carved out of Virginia in 1877, and the Diocese of Southern Virginia in 1892, with the understanding that a further division of Southern Virginia would take place, as it did in 1919, when the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia was organized.

In 1892, the Rt. Rev. Alfred Magill Randolph, D.D., who had been consecrated as assistant bishop in 1883, became the first Bishop of Southern Virginia. In 1894, the Rev. John Brockenbrough Newton was consecrated Assistant Bishop of Virginia, and, when the General Convention abolished that title in favor of Bishop Coadjutor with the right of succession, he became Virginia's first coadjutor. Bishop Newton had been a physician for 11 years prior to entering the ordained ministry. His episcopate lasted only three years before he died of a heart ailment in 1897. The Rev. Robert Atkinson Gibson was consecrated Bishop Coadjutor in the same year and became the sixth Bishop of Virginia upon Bishop Whittle's death in 1902.

Bishop Whittle, fifth Bishop of Virginia, exercised a visionary ministry. He began new work in the isolated mountains of Virginia; helped to establish the Bishop Payne Divinity School

in 1878 to educate young black men for the ordained ministry; and aided in the establishment of St. Paul's Normal School that later became St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville. Bishop Whittle sent some of his best clergy to establish the Church in Brazil and to serve there as missionaries. It was during his episcopate that the Lenten mite box offering for mission was begun in Virginia before its introduction to other parts of the Episcopal Church.

But for all his fundamental strengths and accomplishments, Bishop Whittle died considering himself a failure because he could not prevent the liturgical revisions and architectural changes stemming from the Oxford Movement from spreading throughout Virginia. Nevertheless, the clergy and laity loved him to the end even when they disagreed with him.

After five years as bishop coadjutor, the Rt. Rev. Robert Atkinson Gibson served as the sixth Bishop from 1902 until his death in 1919. Under his guidance, the Blue Ridge archdeaconry was established and many mountain schools, churches and chapels were built, as the pastoral ministry of the Episcopal Church reached into many isolated areas. It was also during his episcopate that the majority of Virginia's black parishes were founded. For the 1907 General Convention that met in Richmond, Bishop Gibson devised a diocesan seal that was to be instructive of the origin and history of the Diocese of Virginia and is still in use as the bishop's seal. He did a great work of repossessing, restoring, reopening and reactivating many of Virginia's colonial churches which had long stood idle or in a state of near ruin. The altar at Shrine Mont is a memorial to his ministry and a testimony to the great love that his people had for him.

In 1909 the Rev. Arthur Selden Lloyd was consecrated Bishop Coadjutor, having previously declined four episcopal elections in other dioceses. Bishop Lloyd served only 14 months before he resigned to assume the Presidency of the Board of Missions of the Episcopal Church, an organization that he had earlier served as secretary. He made a lasting contribution to the Church's mission and devoted the next 10 years of his life to that work. In 1921, he became Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of New York and served until his death in 1936. Though some of his seminary professors had thought him a weak candidate for the ordained ministry, Bishop Lloyd found himself elected to episcopal office no less than six times.

The Rev. William Cabell Brown was consecrated Bishop Coadjutor in 1914 after serving as a Brazilian missionary for 23 years. During that time, he had translated the Book of Common Prayer into Portuguese and collaborated on the translation of the Holy Scriptures. In 1919, upon Bishop Gibson's death, Bishop Brown became seventh Bishop of Virginia. Bishop Brown was the founder and a guiding force in the growth and support of the Church Schools system in Virginia. Today's diocesan Church Schools are among the finest anywhere. Bishop Brown organized the diocesan offices and served with distinction in

several national capacities. After a relatively brief period as diocesan bishop, while on his first vacation in 13 years (provided to him and Mrs. Brown by people of the diocese), Bishop Brown died suddenly in London in 1927.

Bishop Brown was succeeded by the Rt. Rev. Henry St. George Tucker, eighth Bishop of Virginia. Bishop Tucker had been a missionary in Japan and served as Bishop of Osaka from 1912-23, when he returned to Virginia to teach at Virginia Seminary. He was elected Bishop Coadjutor in 1926 only to become Diocesan the next year upon Bishop Brown's untimely death. In 1938, Bishop Tucker became 19th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, an office he filled with great humility and distinction until his retirement in 1947. At the end of 1943, Bishop Tucker resigned from the office of Bishop of Virginia after the General Convention determined that the office of Presiding Bishop demanded the full efforts of its incumbent. Bishop Tucker was the last Presiding Bishop to serve simultaneously as a diocesan and first Presiding Bishop to serve full time. He died in 1957 after 10 years of retirement.

In 1930, the Rev. Frederick Deane Goodwin was consecrated Bishop Coadjutor and, due to Bishop Tucker's national responsibilities, carried much of the diocesan work on his shoulders. Bishop Goodwin became ninth Bishop of Virginia in 1944 and served until his retirement at the end of 1960. Prior to his consecration, Bishop Goodwin had served with distinction and expertise in several of Virginia's rural parishes, and was Secretary for Rural Work for the National Council of the Episcopal Church. During his episcopate, the Diocese of Virginia achieved notable growth and prosperity.

Virginia secured the episcopal assistance of its first Suffragan Bishop with the consecration of the Rev. Wiley Roy Mason in 1942. Bishop Mason, who had served 27 years in the Blue Ridge, 16 as Archdeacon, had particular responsibility for that work which he loved. Bishop Mason retired when mandatory in 1951, though he continued to provide episcopal assistance for many more years. Bishop Goodwin and Bishop Mason died in 1968.

Virginia's second suffragan was consecrated in 1949. The Rev. Robert Fisher Gibson, Jr. had served as a teacher in the Philippines and elsewhere, and worked as a businessman before ordination. His ministry was quite varied and included serving as a parish priest in Virginia, teacher at Virginia Seminary, missionary in Mexico, and as Dean of the School of Theology at the University of the South in Tennessee. In 1954, Bishop Gibson was elected Bishop Coadjutor and, when Bishop Goodwin retired, he became tenth Bishop of Virginia on January 1, 1961. His active episcopate was marked by church growth and building and by his concern for racial justice. His interest and ministry on behalf of church unity and in ecumenical relations attracted national attention, and Bishop Gibson served with great distinction in these areas for the Episcopal Church. He served as Vice President of the House of Bishops and was chairman of the Nominating Committee for the twenty-third Presiding Bishop in 1973. Bishop Gibson's leadership and gracious assistance made

possible the construction of the Diocese's first official episcopal residence at the Virginia Diocesan Center at Roslyn. This had been part of the dream of Miss Annie Rose Walker, the benefactor, who through the Memorial Trustees has made Roslyn a valuable asset to the mission and ministry of the Church. Bishop Gibson retired in 1974, but continued to serve the Church for many years whenever called upon until his sudden death on September 21, 1990.

In 1960, the Ven. Samuel Blackwell Chilton, Archdeacon of Virginia, was consecrated to be Virginia's third suffragan. Bishop Chilton served for 36 years as parish priest, editor of the Southern Churchman, Secretary-Treasurer of the Diocese of Virginia and as Archdeacon. Reflecting the rapid population growth of the northern portion of the Diocese and the increasing numbers of congregations there, Bishop Chilton became the first suffragan to be resident in that area. A second diocesan office was established in Northern Virginia, first at St. Stephen's School for six years, and then at Goodwin House, a diocesan retirement residence. Besides cooperating with Bishop Gibson, and later Bishop Hall, in the routine work of the Diocese, Bishop Chilton's main interest and work was church extension. During the 1960s, 17 churches were built with diocesan aid. Twenty years later, these 17 churches reported a total of 6,574 communicants. At the time, there were 12 dioceses in the continental U.S. with fewer communicants. Nine of the buildings were "churches of the '60s," a design developed by the Rev. John A. Baden. Greatly knowledgeable of the history of the Diocese, and much loved by the people, "Bishop Sam," as he was widely known, retired at the end of 1969. After a brief illness, Bishop Chilton died on St. Stephen's Day, December 26, 1984.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Bruce Hall was rector of St. Chrysostom's Church in Chicago in June 1966 when the Council elected him Bishop Coadjutor. On the following October 21, he was consecrated and served as Bishop Coadjutor for the next eight years. A native of West Virginia, he was a graduate of Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, and of the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Massachusetts. In 1949, he went to Trinity Church, Huntington, West Virginia, as curate. He became rector in 1953. In 1958, he went to Chicago where he continued to serve with distinction until chosen bishop in Virginia. He became the eleventh Bishop of Virginia on February 3, 1974, upon Bishop Gibson's retirement.

During Bishop Hall's episcopate, the Diocese of Virginia continued to refine its major reorganization of 1972. The 15 geographical regions of the Diocese encouraged and enabled more grassroots participation in the decision-making and in the mission and ministry of the Diocese. Rapid growth and expansion in the northern portion of the Diocese continued and several new church buildings were erected and several more brought to the planning stage. Bishop Hall encouraged the development of the Church Vacancy Consultation Process to aid congregations in securing the best qualified clerical leadership

and led in the development of the Deacons' Program to assist newly ordained clergy in the transition from seminary to priesthood. With his guidance, the ministry of the laity was recognized and nurtured, the ministry of ordained women was supported and encouraged, ministries with the hearing-impaired and with Hispanics were developed, and the centrality of Christian stewardship was restored to the life of the Diocese and individual Christians. In 1980, a special Council of the Diocese failed to reach a two-thirds majority in favor of a proposal for the Diocese of Virginia to divide itself into two or more dioceses. After suffering a stroke following successful surgery, Bishop Hall died on May 27, 1985, eight months to the day before his sixty-fifth birthday and his planned retirement.

Virginia's fourth Suffragan Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Philip Alan Smith, D.D., who had served parishes in Georgia and New Hampshire and for 11 years had served Virginia Theological Seminary as professor, chaplain and associate dean, was consecrated at Washington National Cathedral in January 1970. At the end of 1972, Bishop Smith resigned to become Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of New Hampshire. He retired as seventh Bishop of New Hampshire at the end of 1986.

The Rev. Dr. John Alfred Baden was consecrated as Virginia's fifth Suffragan Bishop in June 1973, and served in that office until his retirement to his farm in Bunker Hill, West Virginia at the end of 1979. Bishop Baden, who in the early 1960s had declined episcopal election in Northern Michigan, had been a parish priest, Diocesan Missioner, and Archdeacon of Virginia, and returned to parish ministry for 11 years prior to his consecration. For 23 years, Bishop Baden was Director of the Middle Atlantic Parish Training Program, a summer program for seminarians that was highly acclaimed and highly successful in the preparation of clergy for the Episcopal Church. As suffragan, Bishop Baden led the Diocese of Virginia in planning once again for church growth and was much beloved throughout the Diocese. Through his contacts in Tanzania, Bishop Baden worked to restore interest in overseas work and, indeed, many Virginia parishes and people responded to this challenge with human and financial resources and in prayerful support. The apple trees in many Virginia churchyards are living reminders of the times when Bishop Baden grafted fruit stock to root stock, visually demonstrating the meaning of Baptism into the Body of Christ. Bishop Baden died after a long illness in April 1983.

After serving with distinction as a parish priest for 35 years in the Diocese of Virginia, the Rev. David Henry Lewis, Jr., was chosen to be Virginia's sixth suffragan bishop in October 1979. He was consecrated to the episcopacy on February 3, 1980. Bishop Lewis served on many boards, commissions, and committees of the Diocese, of Virginia Seminary, and of the wider Church, and had primary responsibility for mission churches and ministries and for the Vacancy Consultation Process. For several years, he chaired the Council Planning Committee that so effectively enabled the council to combine spiritual nurture with

legislative necessities. After more than four decades of ordained ministry entirely in the Diocese of Virginia, Bishop Lewis retired at the end of January 1987.

The Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee became the twelfth Bishop of Virginia on May 27, 1985. He was the rector of the Chapel of the Cross at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, when the Council elected him Bishop Coadjutor in February 1984. A graduate of Washington and Lee University, he served in the United States Army and was a newspaperman before entering Virginia Seminary. In 1967, he began ordained ministry at St. John's Cathedral in Jacksonville, Florida, and was for three years assistant to the rector of St. John's Church, Lafayette Square, in the nation's capital. He began his ministry at Chapel Hill in 1971. On the Feast of St. Dunstan of Canterbury, May 19, 1984, he was ordained and consecrated a bishop at the Washington National Cathedral where, 16 years earlier, he had been ordained to the priesthood. He had served as Bishop Coadjutor for only a year at the time of Bishop Hall's sudden death. In 1985, Bishop Lee led the diocese in a bicentennial celebration of its organization and called its congregations to a third century of mission and ministry, renewed and strengthened in commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. On January 30, 1986, the newly-installed 24th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, the Most Reverend Edmond Lee Browning, presided over the Recognition and Investiture of Virginia's twelfth Bishop.

At the request of Bishop Lee, the 193rd Annual Council of the Diocese of Virginia approved the establishment of the position of Assistant Bishop for a term of five years beginning in 1989. Subsequently Bishop Lee, with the consent of the Standing Committee, called the Right Reverend Robert Poland Atkinson, the fifth Bishop of West Virginia, to that position. Bishop Atkinson resigned as Bishop of West Virginia on December 31, 1988, and immediately assumed his new duties on January 1, 1989. On January 26, 1989, the 194th Annual Council began with a celebration of his new ministry in Virginia.

Born in Washington, D.C., and raised in West Virginia, Bishop Atkinson graduated from the University of Virginia and from the Virginia Theological Seminary. For the first 11 years of his ministry, Bishop Atkinson served in the Diocese of West Virginia, first as assistant at St. Matthew's Church, Wheeling, then as rector of Christ Church, Fairmont. In 1958, he succeeded Robert Bruce Hall as rector of Trinity Church, Huntington, from which ministry he was called to be rector of Calvary Church, Memphis, in the Diocese of Tennessee. In 1973, the Council of the Diocese of West Virginia called him back home to be Bishop Coadjutor, and he was consecrated Bishop on May 6, 1973, in St. Matthew's Church, Wheeling. On January 5, 1976, he became the fifth Bishop of West Virginia.

Bishop Atkinson has served on numerous committees, commissions and boards, locally and nationally, and was Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Theological Seminary. Bishop Atkinson has brought many gifts, much experience, and great energy to

Christ's ministry in the Diocese of Virginia. He retired as Virginia's assistant bishop in October 1993, a month after the consecration of Suffragan Bishop F. Clayton Matthews.

In January 1992, Bishop Lee called for the election of two suffragan bishops, and the Annual Council of the Diocese affirmed his vision for a "college of bishops" who would begin working together just before Bishop Atkinson's planned retirement. The Bishop appointed a Nominating Committee in the summer of 1992, and they presented a slate of three women and four men to the Diocese following the Annual Council of 1993. On May 1, the Diocese made history when, during a special council held at Virginia Seminary, delegates elected not one, but two men in surprisingly short order, including the first African American ever elected to the episcopate in Virginia. In fact, the election - which many expected to go on all day - was over before the lunch break.

First, the special council elected 45-year-old the Rev. Canon Frank Clayton Matthews, a priest well known to them as the Canon to the Ordinary, Bishop Lee's chief clergy assistant, Secretary of the Diocese and Senior Executive on the diocesan staff. Next, they elected the Rev. Canon Antoine Lamont Campbell of Charleston, S.C., 38, a dynamic and gifted priest and Canon Missioner for the Diocese of South Carolina.

Bishop Matthews, beloved in the Diocese of Virginia, was born in Raleigh, N.C. and graduated from Hampden-Sydney College and Virginia Seminary. He began his ministry in Atlanta where he was chaplain of Holy Innocents School, adjacent to Holy Innocents Church where he was assistant. From there, he went to Christ Church, New Bern in the Diocese of East Carolina. He came to the Diocese of Virginia in 1979 to serve as rector of Emmanuel Church, Brook Hill in Richmond. In 1987, Bishop Lee called him to be Canon to the Ordinary, the post he held until his 1993 election. Bishop Matthews was well-known throughout the Diocese, having worked with diocesan leadership through the Commission on Ministry and the Executive Board, and walking through the search process both with parishes seeking new clergy, and with clergy seeking new cures. He was consecrated in a joyous service on September 11, 1994, in the Washington National Cathedral. Bishop Matthews served faithfully until accepting a call from the 25th Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev. Frank Griswold, to serve as the director of the Episcopal Office of Pastoral Development in June, 1998.

The Diocese's joy over Campbell's election, however, was short lived. Soon after his election, charges of misconduct were brought against him. Though the charges were never proven, an investigation and subsequent complaints left serious questions in the minds of many Virginians about Canon Campbell's judgment. On November 4, 1993, he resigned his election and was later called to serve a church in the Diocese of Texas.

Bishop Lee held a series of meetings throughout the Diocese to discuss the situation and to consider the future of his "college of bishops." At the following Annual Council meeting, in

January 1994, he called for another election, this taking place in January 1995 during the 200th meeting of the Annual Council.

A nominating Committee for Suffragan Bishop appointed by Bishop Lee with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee began working quickly and, from a field of some 70 suggestions, presented a slate of six nominees to the 200th Annual Council; three women and three men. Following the publication of that slate in November 1994, two additional men were nominated by petition.

One of those was the Rev. David Colin Jones, rector of Church of the Good Shepherd in Burke. When the Nominating Committee had approached Dr. Jones earlier in the year, he declined to be nominated because of the serious illness of his daughter. However, several months later, Liz Jones had recovered fully and Dr. Jones was approached by clergy wishing to nominate him. He consented and was nominated by petition in December 1994.

Weeks later, on January 27, 1995, delegates to the 200th Annual Council meeting in Reston elected the 51-year-old Dr. Jones in just three ballots.

He was consecrated on June 24, 1995, the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, in the Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul (Washington National Cathedral).

Bishop Jones was born in Youngstown, Ohio and reared nearby in West Virginia. He graduated from West Virginia University with an A.B. in 1965 and went on to earn an M.Div. from Virginia Seminary in 1968 and a D.Min. in 1991. Prior to his election, he had served as this diocese as rector of Church of the Good Shepherd for 17 years, and as a deputy to General Convention, a member of the Standing Committee, a member of the Executive Board, the chair of the Commission on Congregational Missions, chair of the budget committee of the Annual Council, and a regional dean. These experiences as well as service on diocesan committees helped prepare him for his new calling.

Before coming to the Diocese of Virginia, Bishop Jones served churches in the Diocese of West Virginia under then-diocesan Bishop Robert Poland Atkinson, who was the preacher at the new bishop's consecration. He and his wife Kay have two children, David Colin Jones Jr., an attorney, and Elizabeth Jones DeVoll, a social worker.

At a special Council held on September 19, 1998, at St. Stephen's Church, Richmond, Bishop Lee requested authorization to call an Assistant Bishop. Shortly thereafter, and with the consent of the Standing Committee, the Rt. Rev. Francis Campbell Gray, the Bishop of Northern Indiana since 1987, accepted a call to serve as Assistant Bishop. He began his ministry in Virginia January 1, 1999.

Bishop Frank Gray was consecrated Bishop Coadjutor of Northern Indiana in 1986, and he came to the Diocese with a wide experience with the world mission of the Episcopal Church, as well as experience as a seasoned parish priest. Bishop Gray retired in 2005, and

today continues to serve the Episcopal Church in many ways, including as commissary to the Episcopal Church of Sudan.

At the 211th Annual Council of the Diocese of Virginia, held January 27-28, 2006 in Richmond, Bishop Lee asked Council to authorize the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Virginia to appoint a nominating committee to bring before the 212th Annual Council in 2007 several nominees for Bishop Coadjutor for election at that Council and with plans to have the Bishop Coadjutor consecrated in the spring of 2007. Bishop Lee also announced his plans to resign no later than 2010.

On January 26, 2007 at the 212th Annual Council meeting of the Diocese of Virginia, Council elected the Rev. Shannon S. Johnston as Bishop Coadjutor. He was consecrated at Washington National Cathedral on May 26, 2007.

Bishop Johnston and his wife, Ellen, came to Virginia from the Diocese of Mississippi, where he served as rector of All Saints', Tupelo. A graduate of The University of the South, he holds degrees in philosophy and music. His first employment was in programming for young adults and youth, first at the University of North Alabama, Florence, and then with the Boys' Club of Gwynn in Brunswick, Ga. In 1985 Bishop Johnston entered Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill. His studies during this period included two terms at Westcott House Theological College at Cambridge University in England, where he engaged in independent research as well as following the regular course work. Bishop Johnston received the M.Div. degree summa cum laude from Seabury-Western in 1988, graduating first in his class. Bishop Johnston was ordained to the diaconate on June 11, 1988 and to the priesthood on December 14, 1988 by Bishop Robert Oran Miller in the Diocese of Alabama. He served as curate of St. Paul's Church, Selma, Ala. before accepting a call in 1990 to become rector of Church of the Advent in Sumner, Miss. During this time in the Mississippi Delta region, he was a founder of the Kairos prison ministry at the nearby state penitentiary at Parchman. In 1994, Bishop Johnston accepted the call to serve as rector of All Saints' Church in Tupelo, Miss.

On January 23, 2009, at the 214th Annual Council in Reston, Bishop Lee announced that he would resign as Bishop of the Diocese effective October 1, 2009, after 25 years of ministry. On March 6, Bishop Lee announced that, following his resignation, he would serve as interim dean of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, the third largest cathedral in the Episcopal Church. Bishop Lee and the Diocese joined in a celebration of 25 years of ministry together at St. Paul's, Richmond on September 19, 2009. On October 1, 2009, Bishop Johnston became Diocesan Bishop. On January 29, 2010, the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, presiding bishop, preached and presided at celebratory investiture ceremony during the 215th Annual Council of the Diocese of Virginia.

During his episcopate, Bishop Johnston outlined a set of priority items of mission and ministry for the Diocese: youth and young adult outreach; evangelism and proclamation; multicultural and ethnic ministries; mission beyond ourselves; and strengthening our congregations. In February of 2011, Bishop Johnston ordained the first class of vocational or permanent Deacons in the Diocese of Virginia. These Deacons exercise faithful and intentional ministries through specific local service activities and through raising up others in the church for hands-on service to the poor, the needy, the sick and the lonely. Since then, the diaconate has continued to grow in the Diocese.

In 2010, Bishop Johnston appointed the Rt. Rev. Edwin F. "Ted" Gulick Jr., former bishop of the Diocese of Kentucky, to serve as assistant bishop in the Diocese of Virginia. He started his ministry in January 2011. The same month, the Rt. Rev. David C. Jones, bishop suffragan, announced his plans to retire in January 2012. Bishop Johnston called for the election of a new bishop suffragan that will take place in April 2012. The Diocese celebrated Bishop Jones at his retirement during the 217th Annual Council on January 27, 2012.

The Diocese elected the Rev. Canon Susan E. Goff, who was serving as canon to the ordinary in Virginia, to serve as bishop suffragan at a special elected Council in April 2012. The first female bishop in Virginia, Bishop Goff was consecrated at St. Paul's, Richmond on July 28, 2012. As bishop suffragan, she oversees mission churches, in addition to multicultural and ethnic ministries.

Bishop Johnston resigned earlier than expected for personal reasons, officially stepping down on November 3, 2017. In the absence of a Bishop Co-Adjutor to succeed him, in accordance with the Canons of the Diocese, Bishop Suffragan Susan Goff became Ecclesiastical Authority. She committed to serving in this role through the election of the next Bishop Diocesan. She announced in 2019 her intention to retire within a few months after the election.

Bishop Goff appointed the Rt. Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson as Assistant Bishop in 2019. Bishop Brooke-Davidson was previously Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of West Texas since July, 2017. She was ordained a priest in 2009 after graduating from Fuller Theological Seminary. She began her ordained ministry at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Wimberley, Texas, where she served as the Assistant Rector from 2009-2011. She then served as Vicar of Saint Elizabeth in Buda, Texas, from 2011 until she was elected Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of West Texas. Bishop Brooke-Davidson left the Diocese of Virginia in 2022 to accept a call as Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina.

In 2020, Bishop Goff appointed the Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor as Assisting Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia. Taylor is the retired Bishop of the Diocese of Western North Carolina and a visiting professor at Wake Forest University Divinity School. He retired as Assisting Bishop in 2022.

In February 2022, Bishop Goff announced that she would retire December 31, 2022.

On June 4, 2022, the Diocese held a Special Electing Convention at which the Rev. Canon E. Mark Stevenson was elected to become the 14th Bishop Diocesan of Virginia. He was consecrated on December 3, 2022 at The Saint Paul's Baptist Church in Henrico, Virginia.

In 2023, Bishop Stevenson called the Rt. Rev. Gayle E. Harris to be Assistant Bishop of Virginia.

Compiled from many sources and written by the Rev. Dr. E. Allen Coffey, Registrar, September 1983; revised September 1992, November 1994, November 1995, and November 1998. Revised 2011 and 2012 (with updates from 2005-2012) by Emily Cherry. Revised 2021 by Nancy Chafin.

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