

2026 North Fairfax Region Annual Report, Diocese of Virginia

The churches in the North Fairfax Region are Church of the Holy Comforter, Vienna; Church of the Holy Cross, Dunn Loring; Epiphany Episcopal Church, Oak Hill; St. Anne's, Reston; St. Dunstan's, McLean; St. Francis', Great Falls; St. John's, McLean; St. Thomas', McLean; and St. Timothy's, Herndon. The Very Rev. Jessica Holthus serves as Dean for the Region.

The North Fairfax Region has remained faithfully engaged throughout 2026. We continue to hold hybrid meetings to allow for the greatest participation. Each meeting opens with Bible study and reflection around the diocesan call to "Love Jesus. Embody justice. Be disciples."

December 2025 Meeting: Our Bible study invited us to reflect on the Baptismal Covenant and how it connects to our experience at Convention, including which promise is a strength for our congregation and which is a growth area. The region approved the 2026 budget, including an increase for the Moving Mountains Mission youth trip, and agreed to distribute the budget surplus among ARISE, Just Neighbors, and FACETS. Our nominating committee presented a slate of officers, and the region voted to keep the current executive board for another year and elected a youth delegate and two alternates.

March 2026 Meeting: Our Bible study on the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 invited each of us to reflect on which one most guided and supported our ministry. Our youth representatives shared ideas for a regional acolyte gathering and a trip to the National Cathedral. We also learned about special Lenten offerings across the region, including prayer services at a local ICE detention center and Holy Comforter's display of 57 crosses. Later in March, the region hosted the diocesan racial justice training, I Will With God's Help, at Holy Comforter.

May 2026 Meeting: Our Bible study on the Walk to Emmaus in Luke 24 invited us to share experiences from the previous week's clergy retreat and to consider how this story connected with our ministry. We discussed recruiting new officers for the region's executive board. We shared church happenings, including summer VBS programs and Herndon and Loudoun Pride events.

October 2026 Meeting: Our Bible study on Psalm 46 prompted a discussion of how God has been a refuge for our churches and communities amid a changing world. Our guest speaker, Rev. Canon Ricardo Sheppard, Canon of Discipleship, shared his work on intergenerational discipleship and formation, and invited the region to consider hosting the diocesan Canons for a retreat. We heard reports on the M3 mission trip, where 10 teens and 3 adults served a family in need, and on the region youth's plans to attend the National Acolyte Festival at the National Cathedral.

North Fairfax 2026 Youth Moving Mountains Mission Trip (M3): The 2026 Moving Mountains Mission Trip, held July 11-18 in Wise County and St. Paul, Virginia, was a meaningful week of service, worship, and growth. As always, our teens approached their work with a strong work ethic, teamwork, and spiritual maturity, quickly learning new construction skills under adult supervision. This year we partnered again with Grace House on the Mountain and local

Episcopal congregations, staying at Grace House for the week and worshipping with churches in St. Paul and Bristol.

Altogether, 13 missionaries, 10 teens and 3 adults, traveled from our region. Over four workdays, the team rebuilt a deck with new decking, railings, and stairs, removed deteriorated roofing, reinforced the roof framing, installed new roof decking, repaired the metal roof, and added weatherproofing. The team also completed maintenance projects at Grace House. These efforts directly served a local couple whose home sits in a traditional Appalachian holler. Each day ended with Compline, and the week included a healing Eucharist and a campfire Eucharist, reminding us that the most important thing we build is community rooted in God's love.

Some of the activities of North Fairfax Region parishes since the 2025 Convention are outlined below:

Church of the Holy Comforter, Vienna: Holy Comforter in Vienna, after spending the last several years on capital campaigns, building projects, and staff re-organization is shifting its focus away from so many building-related issues to focus on spiritual and communal formation. Our attention is on developing a rule or rhythm of life for our congregation which helps us state clearly and simply what our congregation is about in ways that others can easily grasp. This is a Simple Church approach coupled with a developmental vision. We recently welcomed brothers Keith Nelson and Lucas Hall of SSJE to share with us about the formation of a rule of life from a monastic point of view. Prior to that the Rev. Rob Courtney helped guide our parish retreat to claim our gifts and goals. We will be taking on listening sessions through the fall to create a working rhythm of life for the congregation. We are enjoying living into our new staffing configurations and hires from this past year; and are grateful for strong lay leadership among our wardens and vestry and staff. This fall we introduced a new contemporary worship service on the first and third Sundays that runs parallel to our traditional worship service. We continue to actively support our Afghan and Venezuelan refugee families through the challenges of our current immigration climate; support adult, youth and children's formation and programming, creation care (The Solar array continues its quiet, effective work of 110% production of electrical needs; and an outdoor chapel in the woods was dedicated this summer, and the re-wilding continues of our 7-acre wood), outreach ministries, thriftshop ministry and preschool. We have almost completed a full renewal of our HVAC systems with a new more-efficient boiler and air handler for the sanctuary installed this fall, hopefully before the freezing weather sets in! Through the summer we worshipped in our Community Hall awaiting the new air handler! We are adding live-streaming into our St. Mary's Chapel and Community Hall settings for formation programs and streaming access to our smaller services.

Epiphany Episcopal Church, Oak Hill: Epiphany Episcopal continues to be thoughtful and innovative in our Outreach ministries with a focus on making Christ's love known as we make a focus of our ministry to care for those experiencing food and housing insecurity in our community. God's people experiencing these forms of insecurity for basic needs is expanding. We have actively supported FACETS, a regional nonprofit that helps individuals and families

move from crisis to stability, making a ministry of their Hot Meals program and providing space for a week-long hypothermia shelter in the winter. Epiphany also assists FACETS by providing guidance to new churches entering the program. In 2026 Epiphany hosted a memorial service for FACETS guests who had died, honoring their dignity and our collective connection to them and held a co-sponsored community, intergenerational Gingerbread House event that taught about housing insecurity in a playful and informative way. The Food4Thought program serves elementary youth with food for weekend meals and involves participation by Epiphany's youth. Our parishioners also serve at the local food pantry, Grains of Hope, and the parish provides financial resources to them as well. Epiphany continues to welcome regular newcomers, celebrate a growing Children, Youth and Family Ministry with a return from the pandemic of Vacation Bible School (VBS), and build ways to connect to each other and the wider community with a second annual Shrine Mont weekend shared with Saint Gabriel's - San Gabriel.

St. Anne's, Reston: St. Anne's is a welcoming community where people of all ages worship, learn, and serve together. Our choir and choristers bring voices of every age to our worship, including choral evensong. Adults deepened their formation through Bible study, a book club, significant sermon series, praying with African American spirituals, a series on science and faith, and "movies that make you think." In a time of growing uncertainty and need, we strive to be a spiritual safe haven and a steady presence, responding to food insecurity and financial hardship through our Food Pantry, direct assistance to families, and advocacy for justice, racial healing, and equality. We are also joining other faith communities in regional Faith 250 gatherings to reflect on the values at the heart of our democracy. Within our parish, we are grateful for the support of Virginia Episcopal Real Estate Partners as we assess our building's needs and plan for its future, including an anticipated capital campaign to renew and expand our Great Hall. Through the Diocese's Pathways to Prayer and Practice grant program, we are exploring new ways to deepen youth participation in worship. Together, these efforts reflect St. Anne's enduring commitment to faith in action and to being a progressive, welcoming, and diverse community where all are invited to gather, grow, and serve.

St. Dunstan's, McLean: Over the past year, under the leadership of our priest-in-charge, Chris Miller, we have been engaged in a thoughtful period of discernment about the future of our church. The Rev. Shirley Smith Graham has also contributed to this process through visits with the parish and conversations about our shared identity and mission. The congregation is exploring the best way for St. Dunstan's to move forward in a manner that is financially sustainable. With the support of the Renewal Team, we are exploring several possibilities. Each option includes the potential sale of a portion of the church property. One option would involve renovating our current facilities, and the other would involve constructing a smaller church. These possibilities were shared with the parish in September 2026. We plan to continue the conversation at a further parish meeting in December as we seek God's guidance for the next chapter of our ministry.

St. Francis, Great Falls: It has been a wonderful season of growth and renewal at St. Francis, and we are grateful for the ways God continues to work through our parish community. We have

convened a Sacred Ground Circle to create opportunities for learning, reflection, and honest conversation about race, identity, and reconciliation. On October 4th, we celebrated the calling of the Rev. E. Weston Mathews as the 5th Rector of St. Francis. It was a joyful and Spirit-filled occasion as we welcomed this new chapter in our parish life. Six parish members, including our Deacon and Associate Priest, made a pilgrimage to South Dakota, spending meaningful time with the people of Pine Ridge. Through listening and learning, we were reminded of the importance of walking alongside our partners in ministry. We also began a new 9:00 am Family Worship Service, held on the second Sunday of each month, meeting a real need for families with young children. We look forward to continuing these ministries and discerning where the Holy Spirit is leading us next.

St. John's, McLean: St. John's continues to experience a period of growth in both depth and breadth. Last year, we began our program year with two new worship opportunities: Choral Evensong on the second Sunday of the month and Supper Church Fellowship Meals on the third Sunday of the month. These continue to be enhancements to our worship life. Our staff and clergy have offered additional enhancements in programming: a parish pilgrimage for Spring 2026, day trips and outings for adults, a crafting group, multiple opportunities for parishioner-led Bible studies, a "Faith and Film" series, as well as a diversity of youth events balancing time for celebration and service. This past summer, we sent our team of youth and adult volunteers on a service trip to our companion parish of twenty-eight years in Consuelo, Dominican Republic. This fall we are celebrating our expanded gardens with native trees, shrubs, and pollinators, as well as reducing our monoculture footprint by converting a portion of our grass lawn into a native wildflower meadow. We continue to find ways to find partnerships with the wider McLean community, and use of our facilities for community groups continues to grow. We offer meeting space for McLean's two high schools' youth leadership training. Students with disabilities from Langley High School visit us weekly, learning basic life skills as weekly office helpers. For over a century, we have enjoyed a relationship with a Scouting America Troop of Boys and Girls. Recently, local garden clubs have gathered at St. John's. We also offer space for twelve-step meetings six days per week.

St. Thomas, McLean: St. Thomas has focused on both local and global mission this year. Partnering with Bishop Thomas Tut of the Diocese in Ayod in South Sudan, and many other churches and dioceses, we were able to help build a building for St. Paul's Academy School in Ayod. Prior to the building of the school, children were only able to learn during the dry season as they held classes outdoors. Following Bishop Tut's visit to St. Thomas, we raised the funds to fully fund one classroom in the school. In our partnership with Second Story (a local non-profit ministry partner) we provided more than 125 backpacks stuffed and ready to help the students in their community program start school with what they needed. Our Share garden provided fresh vegetables for those receiving food at our local food pantry, Share of McLean, from May through September. In December, two of our Iranian parishioners were detained by ICE and held for seven weeks. Much of this year has focused on supporting them, and showing up for hearings. Their cases remain unresolved and we pray that they will be given asylum so that they can stay in the US.

St. Timothy's, Herndon: St. Timothy's had a busy year of transition, growth and change. Much of that occurred on the staffing front as we said a tearful goodbye to our Parish Administrator and Pre-School Director, both of whom retired in the Spring. After thanking those individuals for their years of service and contributions to our church community, we were able to make new hires for both positions. Meanwhile, our Associate Rector position (vacant since 2024) was filled with the calling of the Reverend Marycelis Otero. Madre Marycelis+, as a bilingual priest from Puerto Rico and the Diocese of Atlanta, will work across the breadth of the congregation with special emphasis on our Spanish-speaking service. St. Timothy's is then excited to host, on behalf of the Diocese, the first ever Latino Festival in October of this year and to welcome our new Diocesan Minister for Hispanic/Latino Communities, the Reverend Edgar Otero. Finally, St. Timothy's has been blessed with a new part of our parish, the Social Justice Ministry, which has been active in Immigration efforts, LGBTQ Advocacy, and Hunger initiatives in the greater Herndon/Reston area.

Respectfully submitted
Chris Cameron, President, North Fairfax Region