



The Diocese of Virginia 231st Annual Convention – 2025

Workshops

Hiring and Retaining Quality Staff: A Panel Discussion

Time: 2:00 PM Location: Ballroom C

Presenter: Will Dickinson, Laurel Loch, John Rohrs

Description: Churches of all sizes and character benefit from finding (and retaining) quality staff, especially as tenures of both clergy and lay employees continue to shorten. This panel will explore good practices around search, especially with a Christian ethic.

Telling Your Story: A Personal Approach to Discipleship

Time: 3:00 PM Location: Ballroom C

Presenter: Rev. Ricardo Sheppard

Description: Discipleship is not only about learning the story of Jesus, it's also about recognizing and sharing how His story is alive in us. This workshop invites participants to explore their own faith journeys and discover the power of personal storytelling as a tool for witness, encouragement, and building authentic community. Together, we will reflect on Scripture, practice articulating our stories, and learn practical ways to share them in everyday life. Participants will leave with greater confidence to tell their story in ways that inspire others and deepen their own walk with Christ.

Re-Imagining the Gift of Underutilized Church Property

Time: 2:00 PM Location: Ballroom F

Presenter: Nina Janopaul, President and Kat Turner, Secretary, VEREP

Description: Learn about how congregations have found new uses for their underutilized properties and land for mission and financial sustainability. This workshop will share information about the resources available from VEREP, including discernment coaching, expert real estate advice and feasibility studies. VEREP has been able to leverage grants from Trinity NYC and Virginia Housing for robust consultant studies. We have identified experts in leasing, housing development, architecture and childcare.

Pathways to Prayer & Practice: Engaging Children in Worship

Time: 3:00 PM Location: Ballroom F

Presenter: Tyler Henderson, Pathways to Prayer & Practice

Description: An interactive, peer-to-peer listening session to gather parish perspectives on engaging children in worship. After a brief Pathways introduction, we'll focus on your experiences, needs, and ideas. What you share will guide Pathways priorities. We'll document themes and follow up with clear ways to stay involved.

Rediscovering Our Church's Identity and Vocation Through Storytelling

Time: 2:00 PM Location: Ballroom D

Presenter: Shirley Smith Graham and the Committee for Congregational Vitality

Description: The story of a congregation is always evolving. Creating space to discover our stories helps clarify who we are as disciples of Jesus and what God may be calling us to as our missional purpose. We will spend time learning about types of stories and practice discovering our stories.

Telling Stories of Global Mission, Action that Strengthens Churches

Time: 3:00 PM Location: Ballroom D

Presenter: Shirley Smith Graham, Diane Wright, Nancy Searby (congregational vitality and global mission)

Description: We will demonstrate how storytelling about global mission can be a way of energizing a congregation. Participants will have the opportunity to practice their own storytelling.

I Will, With God's Help: Equipping God's People for the Work of Racial Justice

Time: 2:00 PM & 3:00 PM Location: Ballroom A

Presenter: J. Lee Hill, Jr. and Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing

Description: This workshop offers preview of foundational training for all who seek to actively dismantle racism and build a more just and loving world. It provides participants with a historical overview of the Ministry for Racial Justice and Healing, and a preview of essential tools to recognize and confront systemic racism and build beloved community. Through facilitated discussion, personal reflection, and practical exercises, participants will gain a deeper understanding of racial bias and preview concrete strategies for promoting racial justice and healing.

Godparents: Presence and Presents

Time: 2:00 PM & 3:00 PM Location: Ballroom E

Presenter: Lisa Kimball

Description: Godparents are hidden treasures. Research consistently finds that young people who have a healthy mentor and role model demonstrate higher resilience in daily life. Godparents are natural mentors, and congregations can be communities of intentional support for healthy discipleship by taking godparenting seriously. This “no guilt zone” workshop is designed to (re)ignite enthusiasm and confidence in godparents, and to equip congregational leaders to nurture the potential of godparenting to form healthy intergenerational relationships and grow Christian Vocations.

We are all the Ministers of the Church. Embracing Vocational Discernment for all the Baptized

Time: 2:00 PM & 3:00 PM Location: Meeting Room 1

Presenter: Sarah Kye Price, Vocations Minister

Description: The waters of baptism invite us to explore our vocation: the ways that God invites us to use our gifts, skills and experiences to serve the church and the world. This workshop embraces the idea that discernment of vocation is the work of all the baptized, and all are welcome to learn about and explore how vocational discernment impacts us in our roles with family, workplace, schools and communities.

Good Stewardship of Episcopal Funds

Time: 2:00 PM & 3:00 PM Location: Meeting Room 3

Presenter: Lynn Ivey, Executive Director, Trustees of the Funds; Alan Gayle, investment Committee Chair, Trustees of the Funds

Description: Episcopal organizations with dollars to invest should practice stewardship aligned with Episcopal values: - Pooling money with fellow Episcopalians for mutual support - Minding the guidance of the church with respect to some investments (e.g. avoiding "blood diamonds" and for-profit prisons) - Aligning the types of investments with the needs for cash. Our panel will cover these and other topics that apply to all funds held by Episcopal organizations.

Youth and College Delegate Convention 101

Time: 2:00 PM & 3:00 PM Location: Meeting Room 4

Presenter: Greg Randall, Director of Shrine Mont Camps

Description: Youth and college-aged delegates gather for informal discussion, Q&A, and fellowship.