Diocese of Virginia
Annual Convention Report
The Rev. Canon Ricardo W. Sheppard
Canon for Discipleship

Discipleship and Formation

Throughout the year, Canon Ricardo W. Sheppard engaged clergy and lay members across the Diocese through conversation, relationship building, and parish visits. He preached, celebrated the Eucharist, and led forums, including conversations on multigenerational discipleship in partnership with Gregory Randall, Director of Shrine Mont Camps, and Tyler Henderson, Minister for Pathways to Prayer and Practice. He also facilitated parish retreats at Shrine Mont focused on formation, storytelling, and creation care.

In collaboration with the Communications Team, additional formation resources were made available on the Adult Formation page of the Diocesan website. Canon Sheppard also worked with Province III formation leaders to explore opportunities for mutual support and resource sharing. This fall, he was invited to participate in CEDAR at Forward Movement's Discipleship Summit at Kanuga Conference Center.

Diocesan Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries

Canon Sheppard convened a summit in Fredericksburg for children's, youth, and family ministry leaders. Participants learned from formation leaders, shared their ministries and experiences, and strengthened connections across the Diocese. Individual and group conversations with ministry leaders provided insight into their joys, challenges, and needs, helping identify opportunities to improve support, collaboration, and communication, particularly for lay professionals.

The Middle School Retreat and High School Summit took place at Shrine Mont on April 17–19, 2026. These gatherings highlighted the need for greater youth participation in leadership. Following an open application process, 17 youth leaders gathered in Fredericksburg for the first of five Diocesan Youth Leadership Team meetings. Team members are developing leadership skills and helping plan the 2027 Middle School Retreat and High School Summit, scheduled for April 16–18 at Shrine Mont. We have also partnered with StoryMakers a not for profit organization whose mission is to equip congregations with creative resources that spark faith in children, teens, and families.

Pathways to Prayer and Practice: Lilly Grant

Under the leadership of Tyler Henderson, Minister for Pathways to Prayer and Practice, the July Pathways Hatchathon at Shrine Mont equipped all 10 participating churches with a ministry experiment to implement, supported by $5,000 mini grants.

Participating teams are now working with Ministry Architects coaches. Henderson meets with the coaches every other month to support implementation and address challenges. Feedback from

participants and coaches is informing improvements for the next cohort, and applications for the second round of grants are now open.

Communications and outreach efforts also continue. A first draft of the Pathways video is complete, additional interviews focused on implementation are being scheduled, and a feature story highlighting the Hatchathon and participating congregations' next steps are in development.

Campus Ministry

Campus ministry leaders gathered for an overnight retreat to share ministry reports with the bishops and reflect on campus ministry across the Diocese. Canon Sheppard continued meeting with campus ministry leaders to provide support and remain informed about their needs.

The Diocese is also welcoming a new campus ministry at the University of Richmond, supported by All Saints Episcopal Church, Richmond. Gratitude is extended to the Rev. Katie Gooch, Director and Campus Minister of the PACE Center, as she concludes her service and moves into new ministry.

The Diocesan Communications Team has helped highlight the faithful work taking place on campuses throughout the Diocese.

Lay Licensure

The updated Lay Licensure system is operational, and the diocesan website now includes revised Safe Church requirements. As applicants and parish leaders become familiar with the system, feedback helps identify challenges and guide refinements. Canon Sheppard thanked users for their patience throughout this transition.

Prison Ministry

Canon Sheppard continued working with GraceInside Executive Director Nick Meyer to strengthen the relationship between GraceInside and the Diocese and identify opportunities to connect parishes with prison ministry. He also shared information about state prison chaplaincy as a vocation.

The diocesan Cursillo initiative, spearheaded by the Rev. Joseph Klenzmann, continues to move forward. Its committee has met and begun developing plans. Kairos Prison Ministry also continues its work in the Diocese under the leadership of the Ven. Frederico Garza.

Creation Care Ministries

Please refer to the Creation Care Ministry annual report.

Shrine Mont Camps

Please refer to the Shrine Mont Camps annual report.

Episcopal Church Women

Please refer to the Episcopal Church Women annual report.

Education for Ministry

Please refer to the Education for Ministry annual report.