

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

**Diocesan Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries**

This year, I met with diocesan children's, youth, and family ministers both collectively and individually. These conversations offered valuable insight into their joys and challenges, as well as opportunities to provide greater support, foster collaboration, and improve communication across ministries. The High School Retreat was held October 31–November 2 at Shrine Mont, and planning is already underway for the Middle School Retreat scheduled for April 17–19, 2026. In addition, we are currently organizing a diocesan wide forum for youth, children, and family ministry leaders to share information, engage in training sessions, and strengthen collaboration among our ministries.

**Pathways to Prayer and Practice: Lilly Grant**

Under the leadership of Tyler Henderson, Grant Director, Pathways to Prayer and Practice has seen significant progress. Tyler has been working closely with the Communications Team, the Canon for Discipleship, and Ministry Architects consultants to launch a new website, which is now fully operational. Applications for the first cohort are available through this platform. Tyler has also begun visiting parishes on Sundays, speaking at services and forums to share about the program and invite participants.

**Creation Care Ministries**

The Diocesan Creation Care Committee held a discernment retreat at Roslyn on May 23–24, facilitated by the Rev. Mark Wastler and the Rev. Dina Van Klaveren. During the retreat, Carlo Uchello was elected as the new Chairperson. The committee is now engaged in shaping a shared mission and vision for Creation Care within the Diocese of Virginia and in our wider communities.

**Shrine Mont Camps**

Gregory Randall began his ministry as Director of Shrine Mont Camps on June 1. He spent the summer at Shrine Mont working alongside Mary Beth Abplanalp, who served as Interim Director. A Shrine Mont Camps Summit was held on September 29–30 in partnership with Ministry Architects consultants to review the past year and ensure that the necessary structures and procedures are in place to support Gregory as he steps fully into his role. Registration for the 2026 Shrine Mont Camps session is now open. Gregory and I continue to collaborate with diocesan children, youth, and family ministers to plan upcoming retreats and related events.

## **Campus Ministry**

I have now visited and met with all five diocesan campus ministry leaders. Quarterly visits have been established to provide onsite updates and ongoing support. Coordination with Ministry Architects continues to strengthen campus ministry efforts across the diocese. In partnership with them, we are planning an end of year gathering for all campus ministry leaders to celebrate, reflect, and share ministry updates.

## **Lay Licensure**

Work has begun to review the diocesan lay licensure process with the goal of recommending to Bishop Stevenson ways to streamline and improve efficiency. This includes equipping clergy with clearer resources and guidance to help leaders meet all licensure requirements and prepare for effective ministry.

## **Prison Ministry**

I met with the Executive Director and the Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of GraceInside to explore ways to strengthen relationships between the organization and our diocesan parishes. Our ongoing goal is to create new opportunities for parish involvement and engagement in prison ministry across the Diocese of Virginia.