

# Community of Deacons Annual Report to the Diocese of Virginia

November 2025

## 1. Introduction and Vision for the Diaconate

- **Opening Statement:** “Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?” This question from our baptismal covenant is the bedrock of diaconal ministry in Virginia. Before a deacon sets the table for the Eucharist, they are called to serve those in the margins out in the surrounding community. Before they proclaim the Gospel in the liturgy, they are called to be the Gospel to those in need. Our deepest purpose is to live this vow so fully that we can effectively challenge, inspire, and invite the entire Body of Christ to join us in this work. This report celebrates the many ways our deacons are answering that call, serving as catalysts for ministry both inside and outside the walls of the church.
- **Vision:** We will build a stronger diaconate by proactively recruiting those who already show a deacon's heart for service, empowering our deacons to use their professional gifts in diocesan leadership, and investing in continuing formation that deepens their primary ministries in the world. Our hope is to continue to cultivate a vibrant and effective diaconate for our diocese.

## 2. The Community of Deacons in 2025

- **Deacons:**
  - We have 43 deacons in the community of deacons
- **Ordinations:**
  - The following were ordained to the diaconate on April 26, 2025: **Cabell Jones, Florian Jones-Stamm, Judi Thomas, Stephanie Werner**

## 3. Diaconal Formation and Education

- **St. Phoebe School for Deacons:** The St. Phoebe School for Deacons currently has two students in formation.
- **Continuing Education:** We have regularly scheduled Deacon Learning Days with continuing education opportunities specific to the current support needs of our deacons. Four of our deacons attended the Triennial Association for Episcopal Deacons (AED) in San Antonio, TX. We continue to participate in educational offerings through Bexley Seabury and the VTS Lifelong Learning program as well as courses through Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP).
- **Deacon Day with Bishop Stevenson:** We are thankful to Bishop Stevenson for his generous time and support at our annual Gathering with the Bishop. The theme was “The Prophetic Voices of Bishops and Deacons: Speaking Into the Future of the Church.” We also give thanks to The Rev. Dawn McNamara and The Rev. Lee Hutchson for hosting us at St. Martin’s, Richmond.
- **Mentorship:** We continue to enhance our mentorship program. In the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, newly ordained deacons are required to participate in a mandatory

mentorship program for the first two years of ministry. The Bishop, through the archdeacons, assigns an experienced mentor deacon to each new deacon. The colleagues meet regularly for sustained dialogue, guidance, and information sharing focused on diaconal ministry.

#### **4. Ministries of the Diaconate**

##### **Social Justice / Community Ministry:**

Deacons serve in many ministries that bring us face-to-face with those in the margins. Deacons believe followers of Jesus are transformed by being proximate with Jesus in the people he described in Matthew 25:31:46. Some of the ministries include, but are not limited to: food pantries, hot meal kitchens, city and county jails, ministry to the unhoused, state prisons, creation care, and immigration ministries along with a host of other ministries.

#### **5. Conclusion and Acknowledgements**

##### **Looking Forward:**

We celebrate a vibrant 10% growth in our deacon community in the past year. This inspires us to look to the future of this vital vocation. We are committed to fostering vocations by proactively identifying, inviting, and encouraging gifted individuals to discern whether God is calling them to serve as deacons.

At the same time, we are eager to enhance the ministry of our existing deacons, offering new opportunities that will deepen our skills and enrich the joy we find in our sacred work.

##### **With Gratitude:**

We wish to honor the deacons and the families who support them and their ministries. We celebrate your tireless and humble service in carrying the needs of the world into the heart of the Church. Your ministry is a true inspiration.

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##### **In Christ's Service,**

The Ven. Holly Hanback and the Ven. Frederico Garza  
Archdeacons to the Diocese of Virginia