

The Rev. Kathleen Murray

Diocesan Missionary Society nomination

Emmanuel, Woodstock; St. Andrew's, Mount Jackson

Professional/educational background

I am Rector of Historic Beckford Parish in Shenandoah County, where I have served since November 2017. Before ordained ministry, I spent 27 years in Philadelphia city government, beginning as a legislative aide and later serving as chief of staff to Council President Anna C. Verna. My work included public finance and legislative administration, with experience in redevelopment and historic preservation. Between 1991 and 1998, I worked on legislation supporting bond refinancing that saved taxpayers millions of dollars. I also served on the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation board and the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

I hold a Master of Public Administration from Columbia University, a Master of Divinity and a Certificate in Spiritual Direction from The General Theological Seminary, and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Rosemont College. Before coming to Virginia, I served as Priest-in-Charge of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Keansburg, New Jersey.

Church involvement — local, diocesan, and The Episcopal Church

My parish ministry includes leadership of two small congregations, Emmanuel in Woodstock and St. Andrew's in Mount Jackson. Our community ministries include Emmanuel's Table Food Pantry and Grandparents as Parents. At St. Mark's in Keansburg, I helped the parish recover from Hurricane Sandy and oversaw an outreach ministry serving approximately 4,000 meals each month, along with a food pantry serving 250 families monthly.

In the Diocese of Virginia, my service includes previously chairing the Committee on Related Organizations, past service as Dean of the Southern Shenandoah Region, and membership on the Commission on Ministry, Diocesan Board of Examining Chaplains, Resourcing God's Mission Task Force, and search committee for the Canon for Discipleship and Formation. I was the diocese's clergy representative to Province III and have served as an alternate deputy to General Convention, including GC81 in 2024 and GC82.

In the Diocese of New Jersey, I served on the Board of Missions, Diocesan Council, and Budget and Finance Committee. Before ordination, I served as Senior Warden, Junior Warden, and Vestry Secretary.

Pertinent skills you bring to this work

I bring experience in public finance and institutional governance, supported by graduate training in public administration. My work on bond refinancing and service on housing and historical bodies give me a useful perspective on borrowing, property decisions, and long-term obligations. My diocesan committee work has also given me experience with the structures through which the Church supports its mission.

As a rector, I understand the practical consequences of those decisions for a congregation. A building repair or loan payment can shape what a parish is able to do for years. I would bring careful attention to financial assumptions and the ministry a proposed project is intended to serve, along with an understanding of the limited resources available to many smaller churches.

Why do you wish to serve?

I would like to serve on the Diocesan Missionary Society board because its work brings together two parts of my vocation: responsible stewardship of money and property, and the life of the Church. Decisions about lending and buildings have lasting consequences for a congregation's ability to worship and serve its neighbors.

I know what small congregations contribute to their communities and how much effort it takes to sustain that work. I want them to have access to sound advice and appropriate financing, with a realistic understanding of what they can afford. I would welcome the opportunity to help DMS assess proposals carefully, preserve its capacity to support future ministry, and make its resources better known to congregations across the diocese.