

REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR AND HISTORIOGRAPHER

To the Two Hundred and Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Diocese of Virginia:

In last year's report, the stated goal for digitization by the end of 2025 was 180,000 documents, taking into account what had been completed in 2024. It is the Registrar and Historiographer's pleasure to report that this number has been augmented, and that by the time of this convention, approximately 240,000 documents have either been digitized, or are currently in the process of being so, in addition to additional documents, records, and photographs digitally preserved using equipment housed in the Diocesan Archives. The myriads of documents digitized thus far run the gamut in terms of topics and content – bishops' papers, committee records, property files, sermons, and more. Highlights of works digitized this year include – the papers of the Rev. Ivan Ramirez, a founder of the Diocese's Hispanic ministries; information regarding many Diocesan and church properties, including the Diocesan Offices in Richmond; records related to the Moncure School; and the papers and correspondence of Bishops Goodwin, Gibson, Hall, Lee, Matthews, Johnston, and Goff. Documents newly acquired have also been digitized, as they were made available; following the closure of Good Shepherd of the Hills, Free Union in December of 2024, a vast number of invaluable records and documents were transferred to the Diocesan Archives and processed for digitization soon after. The Registrar and Historiographer would like to express his sincerest thanks to Frances Morris and her family for their help in this effort, and their continued support in the preservation of their church's history. The focus for 2026, as far as digitization is concerned, will be an increase in onsite scanning, particularly of parish registers, board and committee minutes, and correspondences and related documents from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The digital database within which all digitized documents will be archived is being constructed; the basic framework is established, and as each new record is added, that infrastructure is being built upon, layer by layer. The Diocesan Archives, physically, are roughly divided into three sections of adjoining rooms, with each section housing specific materials. As the Archives, ideally, will in the future serve as the greatest source of information regarding the Diocese's history, the Registrar and Historiographer has informally named each room after one of the Three Wise Men of the East – Melchior, Balthazar, and Gaspar (varying transliterations over the centuries notwithstanding), collectively known as the Magi; therefore, the digital database for the Archives will be called the Magi. In addition to serving as a searchable repository within the Diocesan Offices, the Magi also provides a foundation upon which a publicly accessible version of these archives will eventually be made available.

Efforts continue to organize not only records, but the shelves, cases, and rooms housing those records. Several bookcases have been added; dehumidifiers and air purifiers put to use; and the reallocation of space to provide the optimum in safe, effective storage is ongoing. On the second floor of the Diocesan Offices, a curated space has been established containing portraits of all bishops and ecclesiastical authorities of the Diocese, alongside informational placards pertaining to each, with embedded QR codes linked to websites which will contain further biographical information.

The Annual Journal of Convention has also undergone several changes, in an effort to streamline its content and ensure that the entire tome is more accessible and better serves its primary function as an historical tool. Some sections have been renamed, and entirely new sections have been added.

Numerous primary sources have also been obtained to augment the historiographical scope of the Diocesan Archives' library. Acquired works include: a 1632 edition of Richard Hooker's *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie*; *Memoirs of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America* (1820), by the Rt. Rev. William White, first presiding bishop; *Sermons Collected from the Manuscripts of Rev. John D. Blair* (1825), one of the two principal founders of the Monumental Church in Richmond; and several original printings of sermons given by Bishops Moore and Meade, ranging from the 1820s to the 1840s.

At times, primary sources also happen to take the form of physical artifacts. A collection, acquired last December, of 115 photographs from Episcopal missions in Japan, from approximately 1910 to 1920, sheds further light on the works and achievements of the Diocese's missionaries, including the Rt. Rev. Channing Moore Williams, a missionary priest from Virginia who travelled throughout China and Japan and became Bishop of Edo (modern Tokyo). In May of 2025, portraits of Bishop William Meade and his first wife, Thomasina, circa the 1830s, were graciously donated by one Jaye Richey of Connecticut, whose husband is a Meade descendent. Bishop Meade's portrait has been placed alongside his predecessors and successors on the second floor, and Thomasina Meade will be placed in a second museum space dedicated to women in the Diocese, currently in progress. In August, the Diocesan Archives received from Gordon Wilkins the records his late sister had accumulated concerning the history of Church of the Messiah, Highland Springs, which spans the 1920s to the 1960s and includes correspondence, photographs, bulletins, and a very detailed, handwritten history of the church covering the years 1920 to 1932.

Outreach continues to be an important part of this office's focus. In March of 2025, the Registrar and Historiographer provided assistance, in conjunction with the Rev. Penny Nash and Claire Galvin of St. James Church, Richmond to visitors from Rikkyo Ikebukuro Junior and Senior High School and Rikkyo University in Tokyo, Japan, as they made their decennial pilgrimage to Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery and the grave of Bishop Williams, the afore-mentioned Bishop of Edo who laid the groundwork for their school. Historiographical assistance was also provided to the Historic Richmond Foundation, in service of their fabrication of new interpretive signage within Richmond's Monumental Church.

2025 has proven to be even more productive than the year that preceded it, and no doubt 2026 will continue that trend, unabated.

Respectfully submitted,

NATHAN VERNON MADISON,
Registrar and Historiographer