Report of the Registrar and Historiographer

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

While digitization of the Diocesan Archives has remained ongoing throughout the year, increased emphasis has been placed more so on the Diocese's physical records; on cataloging, organizing, and preserving them, as they will always be the foundation upon which any digital repository is built. The Archives will not be of much use to researchers if a complete understanding of all they contain is lacking. Digitization work with Iron Mountain is complete, with several hundred thousand individual documents now preserved electronically; the database within which they will reside, the Magi, is updated on an ongoing basis. Any further digitization will be undertaken at the Archives, which will include rare books, letters, and other ephemera for which it is not desirable to send them offsite. An entire hall of the Archives has been refurbished with new floors and walls; the fifteen file cabinets previously occupying that space were replaced with stainless steel shelving, better suited for archival purposes. The previous contents of those cabinets, upwards of 200,000 documents and photographs, are currently being cataloged, and include photographs used in the production of the V*irginia Churchman*, the *Virginia Episcopalian*, and other publications, as well as the working papers and correspondences of past chancellors, secretaries, and bishops.

The Historiographer's work in obtaining primary source documents and records relevant to the history of the Episcopal Church, and the Diocese specifically, continues, with recently acquired works including, but not limited to: *An Episcopal Charge on the Subject of Revivals,* by the Most. Rev. William White (1832); *The Services of the Protestant Episcopal Church, as Ordered by the Bishops, During the Civil War*, (1864); *Additional Hymns, as set forth by the House of Bishops, to be used in the Congregations of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States* (1869); *All Saints Church, Richmond Va., From Christmas 1888 to Christmas 1903* (1904); and *St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, 1861-1961 (*1961). In August, Mrs. Marion Jones, a lifelong member of Immanuel, Mechanicsville, graciously donated her collection of artifacts and records, spanning over a century of her church's history, to the Diocesan Archives. To Mrs. Jones, the Historiographer offers the sincerest of thanks for her generosity, and her dedication to preserving Immanuel's history.

As of the 2025 edition, the Annual Journal of the Diocese of Virginia has undergone several modifications, a continuation of efforts begun last year to streamline its presentation, as well as to ensure it remains an essential historiographical resource. Some superfluous Journal sections have been combined or truncated as needed, and photographs of the current Bishop and Assistant Bishops have been added to the opening pages, as was the custom for a brief time during the previous century. Further, a new section has been introduced to provide concise historical accounts of churches that closed at any point during each Journal's yearly scope. The Historiographer would like to convey his deepest gratitude and thanks to Mrs. Frances Morris, of Earlysville, Virginia, for her decades of service at Good Shepherd of the Hills, Boonesville before its closure in December 2024, as well as for the wealth of information she has continuously provided regarding her church's history, ensuring that its legacy will endure for posterity.

The records of the sole church to close this year have been transferred to the Diocesan Archives and are currently being cataloged. On September 17, St. John's, Arlington laid down its ministry and held its final service, with Bishop Bourlakas officiating; the week beforehand, the Historiographer traveled to St. John's to collect all records for permanent accession in the Diocesan Archives, including vestry records, service bulletins, church newsletters, correspondence, financial records, and various

physical artifacts; time was also spent with members of the congregation, who were gracious enough to relate their personal histories and recollections spanning decades of St. John's ministry.

On June 13, Mr. Madison attended the ordination and consecration of the Rt. Rev. Karin MacPhail as the seventh Bishop of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, in Roanoke. In addition to meeting much of the staff of our sister Diocese, he was also fortunate enough to speak with the Rev. Scott A. West, Rector of Christ Church, Blacksburg, and the Southwestern Diocese's historiographer; amongst this office's goals for the upcoming year is to increase communication and collaboration between the historiographers of all three Virginia dioceses.

The number of congregations across the Diocese that have either begun or renewed work that is vital to preserving and safely archiving their historical records is encouraging. On April 17, the Rev. Stacy Williams-Duncan, Priest of Little Fork Church, in Rixeyville, hosted several visitors, the Historiographer included, for a tour of the church and nearby Salubria, as well as a presentation given by church historian Don Stockton. Mr. Madison was privileged enough to see all the archiving work undertaken by the church, both physical preservation and digitization, with ideal space set aside for both. With the enthusiasm and dedicated support of Rev. Williams-Duncan, Little Fork's history is receiving the attention and conservation it deserves. On September 9, a meeting was held at the request of the Rev. Benjamin Badgett, Rector of St. Mark's, Richmond, to organize a group committed to preserving, researching, and disseminating the shared histories of St. Mark's, St. James's, and St. Philip's of Richmond, with subsequent meetings planned for the coming months. On September 17, the Rev. Marlene Forrest, Rector of St. Philip's, Richmond, invited Mr. Madison to the inaugural meeting of the church's archival committee. Several hours were spent discussing what records and artifacts the church currently holds, and how best to store and preserve said resources. A room specifically designated for the archives, complete with appropriate preservation equipment and humidity/temperature controls, is currently being organized with the Historiographer's assistance. Rev. Forrest, Inez Tuck, Vickie Seymour, and all the members of St. Philip's archival committee are to be commended for their work in, and dedication to, preserving their collective history.

Whenever time allows, several topics of research, in addition to congregational histories, are ongoing, not least of which the lives of all of the Diocese's bishops – for the placards accompanying each bishop's portrait at the Diocesan Offices; for each bishop's respective page on the Diocese's website; and for planned, future publications. Another avenue of continuous research is the history of deaconesses and the role they played throughout the Diocese, particularly in the Archdeaconry of the Blue Ridge. Numerous resources have been acquired to further this research, and inroads have been made in procuring additional, inestimable primary sources, personal papers, and correspondences in pursuit of as complete a history as possible of the deaconesses' ministries.

The Diocesan Archives continue to evolve. Invaluable resources in the collection are being preserved and digitized, and those not yet in the collection are being obtained when possible. The Diocesan Archives have the potential to be an indispensable resource for historians, scholars, and students of Episcopal, Diocesan, and Virginia history, and the effort is ongoing to bring that potential to fruition.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan Vernon Madison,
Registrar and Historiographer