



**Southern
Shenandoah Valley
Region**

Diocese of Virginia

*Shared Ministry
Collaborating Together*



**Grace Memorial,
Port Republic**

**St. Stephen & the
Good Shepherd,
Rocky Bar**

**St. Paul's,
Ingham, Shenandoah**

**St. George's,
Pine Grove, Stanley**

Christ Church, Luray

**Emmanuel,
Harrisonburg**

**Canterbury Campus
Ministry, James
Madison University**

**St. Andrew's,
Mt. Jackson**

Emmanuel, Woodstock

**Cathedral Shrine of
the Transfiguration,
Orkney Springs**

Southern Shenandoah Region Report

Diocese of Virginia 231st Annual Convention – 2025

The Southern Shenandoah Region is a region of faithful communities—small in size yet mighty in spirit. From valley towns to mountain hollows, our congregations embody what it means to be the Church in place: gathering at tables, walking with neighbors, serving those in need, and sustaining a sacred presence in places the world too easily forgets. Together, we offer a living witness to the Gospel in the heart of the Blue Ridge.

The Region continues to gather quarterly, both in person and online, with every parish contributing to our shared life and ministry. We were pleased to support a youth delegate and alternate to the 2025 Annual Convention and to participate in the 100th Anniversary celebration of Shrine Mont with both a regional gift and an active presence at the Eucharist. Our Regional Eucharist at Shrine Mont drew 135 people and included eight confirmands, followed by a shared meal in Tucker Dining Room. Twenty-two of us gathered for fellowship at our Region Dinner during the 231st Convention, deepening bonds across parishes. We give thanks for the many ways we continue to grow together in Christ.

The Region extends our sincere gratitude to the Very Reverend Kathleen Murray for three years of faithful leadership as Dean and to Marcia Brownfield for her dedicated service as Region President, and we warmly welcome the Reverend Dr. Peter Frazer-Morris as our incoming Dean.

A Word about the Mountain Missions of the Blue Ridge

The Mountain Missions of the Blue Ridge, established and supported by the Diocese of Virginia in the early twentieth century, represented a bold and compassionate expression of the Church's call to serve those in remote and underserved areas. These missions are small, often isolated congregations nestled in the Shenandoah and Appalachian foothills. They brought not only worship and pastoral care but also education, healthcare, and community development to regions long overlooked by civil institutions. They embodied the Church's incarnational ministry: meeting people where they were, building trust, and weaving faith into the fabric of daily life.

A century later, as many of these congregations struggle or have closed, we risk losing more than historic buildings. We risk losing a living witness to the Gospel's reach into the margins. We invite continued diocesan partnership, especially from larger parishes, to help provide supply clergy and Eucharistic worship for our mission churches, ensuring that the light of these mountain congregations continues to shine in the heart of the Blue Ridge.

Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Harrisonburg

Emmanuel, Harrisonburg, continues to be a beacon of faith in action. In 2025, our Food Pantry served over 9,000 family members, distributed 40,000 pounds of food, 12,000 fresh eggs, and 4,000 pounds of gleaned produce, along with 35,000 baby diapers. During the Tackle Hunger Campaign, we ranked first in Virginia and fifth nationwide. Worship flourishes with Eucharists in the Wild, Pride Worship in partnership with

Canterbury JMU and local ecumenical congregations, and monthly Evensongs. We hosted three women's retreats and began a joyful tradition with our first chili cookoff, which drew record participation.

Canterbury at James Madison University

Canterbury Episcopal Campus Ministry-Harrisonburg draws students from JMU, Bridgewater, and Eastern Mennonite University. It offers a meaningful blend of spiritual formation, community engagement, and seasonal activities for students. Our core weekly gatherings include Eucharist, Bible Study, and Compline, providing opportunities for worship, reflection, and fellowship. Additionally, our weekly No Church 'n' Dinner on Thursday evenings offers students a chance to enjoy a home-cooked meal together. This gathering remains a vital space for connection and hospitality.

Highlights of our year include:

- **Snow Cone Extravaganza** – A fun and welcoming kick-off event to draw in new students and reconnect returning ones.
- **Fall Retreat** – A weekend away focused on rest, reflection, and renewal in community.
- **Apple Picking** – A seasonal favorite that provides a relaxed setting for community building.
- **Snow Tubing** – A winter outing that combines fellowship and fun.
- **Mission Trip** – An opportunity for students to engage in hands-on service and live out their faith in action.
- **Attendance** – 14% increase in ASA and Compline

We look forward to a year filled with spiritual growth, joyful connection, and meaningful service. Canterbury remains a welcoming space for all students to explore their faith and find community.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Ingham

St. Paul's welcomed the Bishop's visitation, celebrated baptisms and homecoming, and continues to gather monthly with clergy support coordinated by the Region. The congregation remains steadfast and faithful, an enduring witness in the mountains. The Region thanks the Rev. Cathy Tibbetts for her dedication to ensuring that the people of Saint Paul's have access to the Eucharist monthly.

Christ Episcopal Church, Luray

In the last year, while we have continued in our regular ministries and rhythms, Christ Episcopal Church Luray has also seen some exciting growth and change. We had five young people confirmed, and also began a bi-weekly Youngish people group/Bible study. Relatedly, we have expanded our Sunday school for children and started a Sunday school class for adults. Christ Episcopal Church has also expanded its engagement with local ministries and outreach. This has involved increased giving of time and money. For instance, last summer we raised over \$5000 to buy exam tables for the no-cost Remote Area Medical Clinic (RAM), and when the clinic was in town, several of our parishioners volunteered to assist them, including shifts from 6 pm to 6 am. Christ Church remains committed to learning, loving, and looking for new opportunities to serve God in our community. Christ Church continues its ministry in the heart of Luray, where faithful worship and service sustain a historic congregation deeply rooted in the community.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Mount Jackson

At St. Andrew's, we remain committed to caring for one another through pastoral visits, shared meals, and transportation for those who need it. We host local Boy Scout Troops, including a newly chartered Girls Troop, and welcome the Garden Club monthly. Our parish is active in community life, offering cocoa and cookies after the Town Christmas Tree lighting, joining the Thanksgiving service with local clergy, and supporting neighbors through our Thank Offering and rummage sale, with proceeds going to local food pantries and disaster relief. We enjoy being together—whether at a Super Bowl party, a weekly watch party of period TV drama, or a monthly birthday coffee hour, because fellowship is ministry, too. Saint Andrew's has developed an EfM cohort that we participate in jointly with Saint Luke's, Alexandria. We meet weekly at Saint Andrew's and participate via Zoom with our siblings in Christ in Alexandria.

St. George's Episcopal Church, Pine Grove

St. George's now shares its sacred space with a Quaker congregation, ensuring continued worship and community use. Eucharist is celebrated monthly, and this mission, an absolutely stunning example of local stone mason work, is part of the historic Blue Ridge Mountain Missions and continues to need and deserve our support and companionship.

Grace Memorial Episcopal Church, Port Republic

Grace Memorial continues its vibrant ministry through worship, fellowship, and outreach. We recently celebrated a joyful regional service with confirmands from Emmanuel, Harrisonburg and our sister church, St. Stephen and the Good Shepherd, Rocky Bar. Our annual Apple Butter Festival and Auction draw neighbors from across the eastern Valley and help us support the Grottoes Fire and Rescue Squads, the Christian Compassion Fund, Harrisonburg Rockingham Social Services, and flood relief through Bethel Presbyterian Church. Our well-attended Lenten Series, "Come Follow Me," deepened discipleship by exploring Jesus' earthly ministry and its call upon our lives today.

St. Stephen and the Good Shepherd, Rocky Bar

At St. Stephen and the Good Shepherd, Rocky Bar, our care extends beyond Sunday services. Each year, we joyfully contribute to Rockingham County's Children's Social Services to provide Christmas gifts for local children; additionally we sponsor ten elderly people through our Angel Tree project. We also participate in Grace Inside prison ministries, where we offer both financial support and hands-on volunteerism.

We have an active pastoral care presence: One devoted couple regularly visits parishioners who are ill or in need of comfort, a thoughtful parishioner ensures no birthday, anniversary, or moment of illness goes unnoticed—sending cards that remind others they are loved and remembered. A dedicated couple provides music for Canterbury Campus Ministry's services in Harrisonburg, enriching worship with their talents.

Our annual Lawn Party is a cherished tradition, bringing us together in fellowship and fun. The proceeds are reinvested into the community or directed toward national causes such as natural disaster relief and immigration support, reflecting our commitment to the greater good. Another cherished tradition is making apple butter in

the Fall; not only is it a fundraiser, it gives us a chance to get together and fellowship with each other. Our long-term supply priest thinks that we make the best fried chicken and the best apple butter in the Valley.

Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Woodstock

Emmanuel continues to serve God in meaningful ways in our small town. Our two largest ministries, Grandparents as Parents and Emmanuel's Table Food Pantry, stand as tangible signs of love in action. Emmanuel's Table has received \$10,000 in grants since December 2024 from the Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation, Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative, and Woodstock Moose. We seen the need for pantry increase by 300% in recent months. GAP is now a 501 (c) (3) organization that serves 62 families and 82 grandchildren. 54% of elementary-aged public school children in Shenandoah County are being raised by someone other than a custodial parent. Our monthly potlucks, where community and faith meet around the table, continue to thrive, with 70 gathered for Thanksgiving dinner. Sunday attendance has grown, and our Compline service and weekly book study are nurturing deep, steady discipleship.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Southern Shenandoah Region

*Marcia T. Brownfield
Region President*

*The Very Rev. Kathleen Murray
Dean*