

Sharing What We Have: Our Diocese

A Series on Giving

The Holy Communion was first celebrated on what is now American soil at James Towne (Jamestown) in 1607, and the (Anglican) Church of Virginia continued as the established church until the Revolution. On the day after the Colony of Virginia declared its independence from England, the Virginia Convention which governed both the Commonwealth and the Church of Virginia, ordered that prayers for the King and Realm of England be removed from its Book of Common Prayer. Most of the clergy took oaths of allegiance to the new Commonwealth, and a significant number of them bore arms in the Revolution, whose great Virginia leaders were parishioners of the Church of Virginia. Only Connecticut (1784), New York (1787) and Pennsylvania (1787) preceded Virginia (1790) in securing the consecration of a bishop. The Diocese of Virginia is proud to be the direct descendant of the first Anglican parish in what is now the United States of America.

The Diocese of Virginia was organized in May 1785 and was one of the nine dioceses represented at the first General Convention in September 1785 which brought together the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Today, the Diocese of Virginia is the largest in the Episcopal Church and includes 38 counties in central and northern Virginia.

This is the story of our Diocese, and, subsequently St. Andrew's founding. Yes, we have our own story, but without the events above (granted, presented in Cliff's Notes fashion), there is no St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Burke, Virginia. Their immeasurable support from the beginnings of the founding St. Andrew's, which was held initially at area schools, to the support and guidance of the building of this church, to today's version of St. Andrew's, the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia has been there through every step, phase, and Rector we have had.

The Discernment Process that garnered our current Priest-in-Charge, the Rev. Will Packard, and both wonderful Interim Rectors during that process, the Rev. Rosemari Sullivan and the Rev. Edward Miller, were ALL made possible through the active support of our Diocese.

They are our rock, our backstop, our guiding light, and our way forward here in Virginia. Led by our Bishops, The Rt. Rev. Susan Ellyn Goff, Bishop Suffragan and Ecclesiastical Authority, The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson, Assistant Bishop, and The Rt. Rev. Porter Taylor, Assisting Bishop, and all our Diocesan leadership and staff, now and before, they have been a friend to St. Andrew's, in good times and difficult.

Stewardship is to take care of that which you hold dear, and that is a two-way street with the St. Andrew's and the Diocese. They exist through careful management of their endowments, and through churches like ours giving back to them. It isn't mandatory here in Virginia, like it is in some dioceses. So, for us to give to them, voluntarily, and help all of our fellow Episcopalians in Virginia, ought to be a very natural process, and it is for St. Andrew's.

The Diocese has a very diverse array of resources for churches, clergy, and parishioners, and I urge you to visit the website of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia to learn more about them: www.thediocese.net.

Darren Williams
Stewardship Co-Chair
stewardship@standrews.net

