



**Alexandria Region Report to the 225th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Virginia
November 14-16, 2019**

The Alexandria Region has been working from the end of the program year last summer, among its individual eight parishes, collaborating as a region, toward

ministries, activities and financial and participatory outreach to support walking in The Way of Love.

On June 7, members of many of our parishes participated actively as community partners with “Moms Demand Action,” in the 5th annual Gun Violence Awareness Day event in Alexandria’s Market Square. The event is held to raise awareness of gun violence in Alexandria, Virginia, and the USA. All participants wore orange that day.



In late June 2019, three of our region parishes, Christ Church, Grace Episcopal Church, and Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, collaborated to provide a widely attended creation-care themed Vacation Bible School. This VBS offered the community’s young children an opportunity to celebrate God’s creation and explore with age-appropriate activities based upon Jesus’s Parable of the Sower, through RENEW, the Green VBS.

Some of our region members participated in the historic memorial and commemoration, in mid-August, of the 400th anniversary of the first enslaved African people arriving in Jamestown. Region members were among the wider community in Alexandria who participated in this first of a series of 1619-related activities that spanned the state from



Photo by Liam Bowman for the Alexandria Gazette Packet

Alexandria to Abingdon, following the Slavery Trail of Tears. This first memorial event was held on August 16 in Old Town Alexandria and included a service and silent walk from the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial to the site of the Franklin and Armfield Slave Office at 1315 Duke Street. This first of a series of events was in collaboration with the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia and the Virginia Theological Seminary.

Some of our parishes also offered summer mission trips including:

Grace Episcopal Church -A June pilgrimage to Iceland and Ireland.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church - A Summer Youth Mission Group worked at a local orphanage in Belize;

Christ Church - the youth group served on a mission trip in Ashville, North Carolina and the annual parish mission trip served the children and youth at Our Little Roses Home for Girls in Honduras in August.

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Christ Church also offered the wider community a first, and well attended, Lenten Women's Retreat in April in Northern Neck.

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Among the most compelling parish journeys of faith and collaboration in our region, the Church of the Resurrection continues to hold its services and activities at Immanuel Chapel at Virginia Theological Seminary and at St. Clement's Parish since Resurrection went to closing in mid-June on the ground least for its new church. The site includes a 113-unit affordable housing project and the new church building, with sanctuary and offices. Occupation by housing tenants and the parish in new facilities is envisioned for Easter, 2021.

The Church of the Resurrection also hosted a fall, community wide, free-will offering Concert at the Virginia Theological Seminary to raise funds to support Hurricane Dorian victims.

At our quarterly Region meeting in late September the Alexandria Region approved the annual budget expenditure of financial support of the following outreach ministries totaling \$5,000 for three outreach ministries in the City of Alexandria, and affirmed two youth to represent the Region at the upcoming 225th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Virginia being held in Arlington, Virginia.

Following the recommendation of the Region Outreach sub-committee, the council approved contribution of \$2,000 for the Meade Memorial Church Bag Lunch program which provides lunch to a range of 28 to 50 people, including children, six days a week. The number of people served is higher during the winter since a heartier meal is provided. Volunteers make the bagged lunches at various churches, including Christ Church, about every six weeks and take them to Meade for distribution by two volunteers. The program has a significant financial impact on the Meade church, including utility costs and cleanup.

A total of \$3,000 was allocated for this program year to the Refugee Ministry and the West End Lazarus Ministry. The Region also approved the recommendation that Melanie Gray, Christ Church Outreach and Mission Director, who oversees these programs, be given the authority to decide how to split the total allocation between the two ministries.

The Region Council is sending two Alexandria high school seniors to the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Virginia: Julie Cizek of Grace Episcopal Church was affirmed as the Region youth delegate; and Jules St. John of Christ Church Alexandria was affirmed as the alternate youth delegate. Julie Cizek is the daughter of Betty Mills and Saul Cizek and a life-long member of her parish. Jules St. John is the daughter of Stephanie and Jay St. John and a life-long member of her parish. Each has served her respective parish in a number of ministries and mission trips.

The Region Council also allocated \$300 to the Region Fall Youth Event, a “Bonfire and Pumpkin Extravaganza” which was held at the Immanuel Church on the Hill Pumpkin Patch on Sunday evening, October 27. Immanuel Church on the Hill hosted its **26th annual Pumpkin Patch** fundraiser all month, benefiting their more than 20 outreach ministries including those supported in the City by Christ Church. The pumpkins are sustainably grown on the Navajo Indian Reservation near Farmington, New Mexico. The pumpkins from the reservation are distributed and consigned to Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill and more than 1,300 other churches of various denominations throughout the nation. These partnerships support more than 300 jobs on the reservation, as well the programs of participating churches.

Additional Ministry Support in 2019 Approved By the Alexandria Region

Interfaith Service in the Park

Church of the Resurrection is planning an interfaith church service at Fort Ward Park on Sunday, May 3, 2020, at 11:00 a.m. The service will coincide with the annual STEP ALIVE! Walk. At the moment, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and Fairlington United Methodist Church are planning to participate. One of our Episcopal Bishops and the new Lutheran Bishop will be celebrating with us. The Region is simply encouraging region-wide participation in the All Alexandria worship service.

Fundraising Event

The amount of funding for the Refugee Ministry and West End Lazarus Emergency Financial Ministry fluctuates annually. The Region’s outreach committee is planning a fundraiser for these always in need ministries. Under consideration is a HymnFest involving all interested performers. A location under consideration is VTS.

Submitted by Alexandria Region President
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Contributions to this report include information from
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