

Church of Saint Clement

1701 N. Quaker Lane
Alexandria, VA 22302

The Rev. Robin Razzino, Rector

Annual Report 2025



Annual Parish Meeting
January 25, 2026

All are welcome at the Lord's Holy Table

Rector's Report

The last year has been a very important one for the church of Saint Clement. I don't want to jinx anything (!) but we have just made so much progress over the last few years and everything seems in place for a period of sustained growth over the next few years.

We have put in place all the administrative pieces (great bookkeeping, property maintenance schedules, new relationships with vendors, etc.) that will allow the staff of St Clement to focus on our mission - rather than leaks in the roof, plumbing or trash removal (for instance). We have new people coming through our doors and finding us a place of welcome and spiritual renewal. We have a wonderful new organ that will sustain worship for decades to come. The school is back to full capacity and Jenny continues to lead it into new and fresh directions. Our finances are sound – though we will need to bring in more money in the years to come in order to continue to be good stewards of our staff and building. And of course through the two major memorial gifts (from Jim Kincheloe and Jim Payne) - we have been given a wonderful opportunity to take real and tangible steps to improve and renovate our building.

Over the next couple of years the congregation will embark on a new journey to undertake these significant renovations to our building(s). This is necessary and exciting work; I can't wait to see where God is leading us next!! To read more about our first steps be sure to read all the way to the end of this report – good news is in the last two pages.

Membership



We welcomed several new people into the life of the congregation over the last year: Rachel Fishman Feser and Jason Feser (and Sam and Matilda); Eric Gomez and Julie Thompson Gomez (and Mary); Grace Seamon and Spencer Lahiff (and Fin); Tom and Caroline Parker (and Madeline); Jane Carlson; Dennis LaGanza and Zac West.

We also said goodbye to several members of the congregation who moved away: Al and Sara Caniglia (and Jack, Crosby, and Elliot); Lisa D'archangelo (and Christopher); Bonnie Dragotto and Lisa Lundborg (and Jude and Jacob); Pat and Mia Jones; and Marion Mangus. We also mourned the loss of two long-time members, Jim Payne and Rudy Garcia, who died in the latter half of the year.

Pastoral Care:



Pastoral care continued to be an important part of parish life this year. One of the most important ways we cared for one another over the course of the year was through prayer. During Lent, more than half the congregation participated in the Prayer Buddies initiative, praying for one another anonymously (prayer partners were revealed at Easter). Of course we lifted one another up throughout the year but the Lenten season is an opportunity to pray for all (not just those who request our prayers for specific reasons).

We also extended care to others through phone calls, cards, art work, visits, and thoughtful gifts. When Jim Payne was hospitalized and looking at an extended stay in the hospital, the community came together and decorated get-well cards and other art to adorn his hospital walls. Jim was so moved by the display of love and care for him. He was left speechless – which was not common for Jim!!! When Rudy Garcia was first diagnosed with cancer, we brought over a prayer shawl knit (crocheted?) by one of our parishioners. He took this and other gifts from parishioners with him to his first chemo treatment. Later, we brought him a Christmas Tree and book of prayers. Both of these men knew deeply the love and care St Clement had for them - and the love and care God had for them - during their last days.

Fellowship:

Parish fellowship continued to provide meaningful opportunities for relationship building throughout the year. Three foyer groups met regularly, including one group with members from Goodwin House. These small gatherings are an accessible way to build relationships across generations especially between “new comers” and “old timers.”



The parish also hosted a spring newcomers' picnic - which allowed newer members to connect with the community and the Summer SOULstice Chill and Grill game night on July 19 - which brought together parishioners for food, conversation, and outdoor fellowship. The parish is

grateful to Joe Calizo for organizing the foyer groups and to Joe and Amanda Fanning for helping to plan the summer gathering.

Our October Parish Weekend at Shrine Mont was postponed to the Spring due to the Bishop's visit in October.

Formation:

Formation ministries this year focused on deepening faith across generations and preparing the parish for key moments of worship and formation. Highlights included:

A Lenten Book study led by our seminarian, Talley Banazek, and Joe Calizo focused on Bishop Marianne Budde's book: *How We Learn to Be Brave*.



During the Summer, Robin led an "inquirer's class" for those who were new to the church or had questions about the Episcopal Church – its history, prayer book etc.

In anticipation of the Bishop's visit on October 19, the parish offered a 30-Day Confirmation Challenge beginning in mid-September, inviting the whole community to participate through shared readings, journaling, and Sunday morning reflection.

During Advent, we used new formation resources from *A Sanctified Art* which provided us with art work, advent calendars and personal devotions to accompany our journey toward Christmas.

We also invited Bishop Ted Gulick to join us in December for a forum on the relationship between the Episcopal/Anglican church and the Catholic church – touching on history, theology and practice.

Church School:

The parish remains deeply grateful for the commitment of its Church School teachers who lead Godly Play and Lego classes for children and youth of the parish from September through May. Thank you to everyone who taught in 2025: Lisa Lundborg, Lisa D'achengelo, Beth Bosecker,

Sara Caniglia, Eleanor Patterson, Jenny Darlington, Brian Razzino, Ben Brown, Deirdre Brou, Virginia Pasley, Joe Calizo, Tom Greco, Jordan White, Sara Kirwin, and Tom and Caroline Parker! This is an amazing and committed group of faithful servants! We were so sad to say goodbye to the first four folks but grateful for Deirdre and Virginia who moved up from the Lego class to Godly Play and to Jordan, Sara, Tom and Caroline who joined the Lego team this year.

Worship:



Worship at St. Clement in 2025 was marked by strong attendance, deepened participation, and several joyful milestones. Attendance at worship overall has been consistently higher than in years past.

Lent, Holy Week and Easter were reverent and joyful highlighted by a meaningful Maundy Thursday service shared with Fairlington

Presbyterian Church and an Easter Day celebration that filled the church with 174 worshippers—the largest attendance since 2016.

The May 11 organ dedication, offered in thanksgiving for the ministry of Ann Williams, was a highlight of the year, made especially memorable by the many parishioners who stepped forward to read, sing, welcome, and host.

We tried something new this year on the Sunday following Christmas – usually a Sunday in which few people attend church. Instead of a low turnout – we had over 40 people come for “Breakfast Church” - a service of readings, singing and Holy Eucharist that coincided with a festive Brunch. We will offer this again on the Sunday after Easter. It may become tradition!!!

Outreach:

St. Clement’s outreach ministry in 2025 reflected both steady growth and a deep commitment to dignity, justice, and community presence.

Under Monica Rusk’s leadership the Carpenter Shelter ministry remained strong as we served dinner at the shelter every third Sunday of the month.

Brown Bag Lunches served an increasing number of neighbors, and while volunteer capacity—especially for deliveries—remains a challenge given our older demographic, important improvements were made this year. Debbie Tatum Johnson’s advocacy helped bring about more fair and respectful policies, resulting in a welcoming and well-organized setup that better serves both participants and volunteers.



Our engagement with the wider Alexandria faith community also expanded, particularly through preparations for Alexandria Pride and World Pride celebrations. We continued our tradition of walking with neighbors around the Thanksgiving holiday.

In addition, parishioners generously collected school supplies, food, and Christmas toys - helping to meet practical needs and support families throughout the year.

Immigrant Support:



In 2025, St. Clement also expanded its outreach through new and intentional engagement with the local immigrant community.

A dedicated group of about ten parishioners committed themselves to leading this work, offering a wide range of gifts and availability to meet emerging needs.

Our efforts have focused on coordination and organization among partner groups, advocacy with elected officials, court accompaniment and transportation for immigration hearings, and material support for families in crisis. Some of us have also been trained in rapid response efforts aimed at witnessing and sharing information about the arrests and detentions of our neighbors.

Through generous donations of food, household items, and time, the parish has been able to deliver emergency supplies—including fresh produce—directly to a dozen local families. We

have also helped with rent support and provided space for a community member's funeral. This growing ministry reflects St. Clement's commitment to standing alongside vulnerable neighbors with care, solidarity, and practical support.

Building and Grounds:

In 2025, significant care and attention were given to St. Clement's buildings and grounds, resulting in both needed repairs and welcome improvements.

A roof leak discovered in May prompted us to not only fix the roof – but to address other landscaping issues as well.

The church transitioned from an outdated and unreliable phone system to a modern VOIP system, installed in June.

Ongoing mechanical needs were addressed as well, including repeated repairs to the Parish Hall HVAC system, the initiation of a comprehensive maintenance contract proposal, and the addition of the boiler to a regular inspection schedule.

Lighting upgrades throughout the parish hall, kitchen, office, and exterior improved both safety and functionality, and newly installed security cameras are now operational, with one damaged unit scheduled for replacement.

Thanks to a Peter James Lee matching grant from the Diocese, the parish was also able to repaint key interior spaces and purchase new tables and chairs for the parish hall. The preschool funded the repainting of the parish office, completed at the same time as the hallways and parish hall.

Finance:

As of the end of 2025, St. Clement's financial position reflected both significant challenges and extraordinary generosity.

The church is the grateful beneficiary of the estate of Jim Payne, whose total bequest is now estimated to exceed \$800,000, including funds from savings and checking accounts and the anticipated sale of his condominium. Approximately \$171,000 has already been received. These funds have stabilized the church's cash position during a year marked by higher-than-anticipated

expenses, including increased bookkeeping and insurance costs, utility overruns, and HVAC and boiler maintenance.

The church had passed a deficit budget for 2025. Our expected income was \$376,340 and our expected expenses totaled \$404,213 leaving a deficit budget of \$27,873. Given the higher-than-anticipated expenses listed above we ended up spending \$420,690. Not including the gifts from Jim Payne's estate, we ended up bringing in \$362,470 in total income in 2025 for a deficit of \$58,220 (about \$30,000 more than we had anticipated).

While these realities (higher costs and less income) underscore the need for ongoing financial planning and leadership, including securing a treasurer, the church's checking account remains in good shape due to the estate funds received.

In keeping with diocesan requirements the church submitted an audit of 2024 finances at the end of the year.

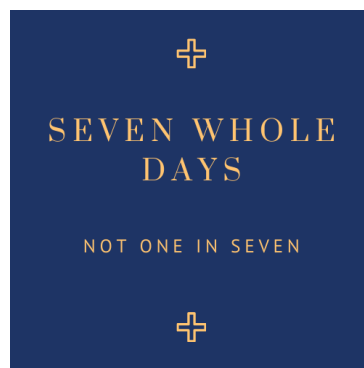
Stewardship:

The theme this year was "Seven Whole Days" and came from the hymn "King of Glory, King of Peace" which we sang during worship throughout the fall, anchoring us in the words of the hymn: *Seven whole days not one in seven I will praise thee.*

Pledge Update as of January 2026:

Thank you to everyone who made a pledge to support the ministries of Saint Clement in 2026; as of today (Jan 21) we have received 51 pledges for \$156,340. The average pledge per household is \$3100.

Faithfully, Submitted by Rev. Robin Razzino



Senior Warden Report:



I have been reflecting on the changing of seasons and what those shifts reveal about life in our church community. Some transitions are predictable and familiar: summer giving way to fall as family travel ends and church school resumes, or the movement in our liturgical life from the celebration of Christmas toward the more contemplative season of Lent. Beyond these rhythms, however, we also experience seasons in our personal lives that shape how we arrive at church—and, in turn, how the church is always here to welcome us.

As we entered 2025 during the depth of winter, many in our community encountered a particularly difficult season. Challenges facing the federal workforce and the impact of immigration policies created uncertainty, fear, and fatigue for many. In response, Saint Clement sought to act with compassion and purpose. As a parish, we assembled care packages, displayed signs of support for government workers, and partnered with local organizations assisting those affected by immigration enforcement. In moments like these, we play a vital role in bearing witness to hope. As I often am reminded by Robin in both her words and deeds, it is precisely in these times that faith calls us not to withdraw, but to mutual support and care for those most vulnerable.

Just when we thought the winter may never end, we also had many moments in the sun like our Summer Solstice gathering of fellowship with a cookout on a lovely July evening. Foyer dinners made a return, and volunteers kept each other warm and cheery during our successful Christmas tree fundraiser. The confirmation challenge and everyone who made the commitment to be confirmed or received was also a brightspot.

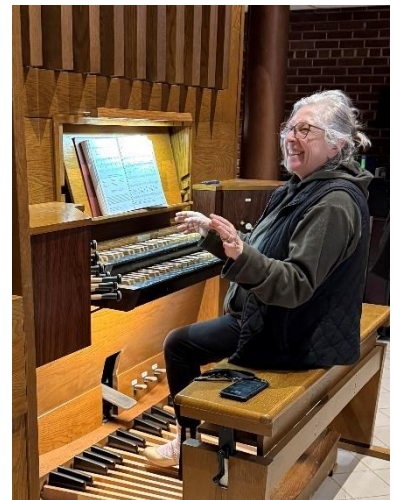
Like the seasons of transition in fall and spring, this year also held both loss and renewal. We honor the lives of Jim Payne and Rudy Garcia and their deep commitment to this place. We said farewell to families who moved on to new opportunities, while also welcoming new volunteers and leaders who have strengthened our worship, church school, and outreach ministries. These changes reflect a parish that continues to adapt, grow, and deepen its shared ministry.

As we look toward 2026, my hope for Saint Clement's is that we enter a season marked by stability, renewal, and sustained community life. Whatever challenges or changes may come, I am confident that we will continue to meet them as we have this past year—through shared leadership, faithful stewardship, and walking this path together.

Faithfully submitted, Joe Calizo, Senior Warden

Music Director Report

The music program flourished in 2025. The St. Clement choir was our anchor exploring new initiatives in congregational participation. The installation of the new Aeolian-Skinner organ and adding instrumental musicians enhanced the services throughout the year. We also continued our outreach in the community with our ecumenical Taizé services.



Singing:

The choir continued to be our leaders in singing. We offered 29 anthems throughout the calendar year, and highlighted some solo and small ensemble singing. Rehearsals continued to be held on Wednesday mornings and Sundays before the 10:00 am service. The repertoire included traditional anthems as well as more contemporary settings of scripture.

The congregation had several opportunities to participate by singing with the choir during the Offertory. All Saints Day was memorable as we marched those saints in, singing “Oh When the Saints” with the help of a lively clarinet!

A “family” choir was initiated in December and they sang the anthem during our first Advent Lessons and Carols service. This invitation to participate was greeted enthusiastically by many families including young children through senior adults and provided a lovely Advent message. This choir will continue to offer simple additions to worship services during 2026.

Instruments:

We continued to have our services enhanced by instrumentalists. Lee Dreyfus dedicated every Sunday to playing the prelude and assisting in the hymns and service music. Our wonderful

clarinetist, Zac West, offered his talents throughout the year, especially for our Bishop's visit in October, our All Saints service, and the special music during Advent. On Christmas Eve we added a violinist who played Christmas carols with Lee before the service and supported the singing of hymns and the Christmas eve anthem. We look forward to continued involvement of special musicians during 2026.

Last year we were anticipating the installation of the Aeolian-Skinner organ, and, as promised, the organ was successfully installed during Epiphany. We held the dedication of the Williams-Ross organ on May 11, 2025. We honored Harry Williams' wife, Ann, a long-time music teacher for our pre-school. Thomas Smith, organist at Christ Church Georgetown and friend of our rector, Robin, played the dedication. We had a church full of singers for our Service of Song, Scripture, and Prayer.

I have had the privilege of playing this incredibly beautiful organ. What a joy and thrill it has been for me to sit down at this magnificent, rich-sounding organ, week after week. Whether we are rehearsing hymns or in the service, every time I play the first notes I am filled with love and gratitude to be here at St. Clement at this special time. What a difference it has made in my life and I hope in the life of our congregation.

I cannot thank everyone enough for this gift of music.

Music Outreach:

We continued our monthly Wednesday Taizé services in 2025. St. Clement joined with Fairlington United Methodist and Farlington Presbyterian Churches in November 2024 to offer these monthly, meditative services. This contemplative form of worship uses singing, scripture, and prayers to center the spirit in silence. Hosted by Fairlington United Methodist, the service has now attracted 20-25 regular worshippers each month.



Faithfully submitted by Anne Tyler, Director of Music

Carpenter's Shelter Dinner Report

Thank you Clementines for another year of faithful ministry to the Carpenter's Shelter. As always, we had great fun interacting with the young families in the shelter and our partners in ministry from Beverley Hills Community United Methodist Church. Our ministry provides a positive example for the kids and shows the newly arrived immigrant families that the Alexandria community takes care of each other.

The Carpenter's Shelter supports families experiencing homelessness and those at-risk, to achieve sustainable independence through shelter and housing placement, guidance, education, and advocacy. St. Clement continues to partner with the Beverley Hills Community United Methodist Church to provide hot and healthy dinners to families at the Carpenter's Shelter of the third Sunday of every month.



Many thanks to the following Clementines that shared their talent, time, and resources:

Lauren Borden and Dan Ziegler, Sara Caniglia, Amy Cloud, Bonnie Dragotto and Lisa Lundborg, Amanda Fanning, Annette Foster, Tom Greco, Wendy Harper, Edrenna Johnson, Kate McGrath, Amy Nelson, Virginia Paisley, Eleanor Patterson, and Deborah Tatum. Your thoughtfulness, culinary talents, creative choices,

and friendly spirits were well appreciated.

This year we had the honor of serving on Easter and prepared a meal entirely onsite of baked salmon fillets, roasted veggies, and rice. Other months we prepared and served popular chicken casserole dinners and closed the year with a hardy chicken tamale casserole dinner. Our creative salads and delectable home made desserts were always appreciated.

This concludes my sixth year of coordinating this ministry for St. Clement. Eleanor Patterson and Edrenna Johnson will serve as coordinators for 2026. Thank you Eleanor and Edrenna! I look forward to your thoughtful and engaging leadership.

If you would like to learn more about the Carpenter's Shelter, our dinner service ministry, or other ways you can support the Carpenter's Shelter (specific donations, tutoring services, job counseling, etc), you can speak to me, Eleanor, Edrenna, any of the above mentioned

individuals, or check out <https://carpentersshelter.org>. A ministry FAQ in the Parish Hall provides additional information.

Faithfully submitted by Monica Rusk, CSD Coordinator

Brown Bag Lunch Report



St. Clement Church collaborates with seven other faith-based organizations—Christ Episcopal, Emmanuel Episcopal, Westminster, St. Paul’s Episcopal, The Old Presbyterian Meeting House, Faith, and Grace Episcopal—to support the Brown Bag Lunch (BBL) program. Operating out of Meade Memorial Church on Alfred Street in Alexandria, VA, this program provides over 50 meals daily every weekday throughout the year except for major holidays.

The 2025 Brown Bag Lunch program has highlighted a consistent and growing need for meal services in our community. While the average number of daily meals served in the fall and winter is around 50, this number surges to over 70 during the spring and summer months.

Several dedicated St. Clement parishioners actively contribute to the program, participating in meal preparation, delivery, and service two to three days a week, every other month. Each bagged lunch includes a sandwich, cookie, fresh fruit, and chips, with additional options like extra sandwiches, fruits, and desserts based on guest preferences. Popular items, such as kosher hot dog chili, chicken tenders, potato salad, cornbread, beans, organ meats, and the guest favorite, chocolate cake, have been well received. In addition to the BBL meal, hot soup is provided from October - March. Several parishioners brought in mirepoix starters for soup and others donated cans of vegetables to make delicious homemade soups.

Under the guidance of Rev. Robin, young helpers and parishioners prepare and pack meals in the church kitchen or Parish Hall when St. Clement is assigned to serve on Mondays. On other days, volunteers sign up to make 50 sandwiches at home or in the church kitchen, often working in pairs to meet the required total. When guest turnout exceeds 50, alternate meals or food items are distributed to ensure everyone is served.

A few parishioners deliver the meals to Meade Memorial Church and stay to assist with serving. This hands-on approach fosters a sense of connection between St. Clement parishioners and the

guests, encouraging social interaction. During these interactions, guests have expressed additional needs for items such as scarves, light jackets, and socks. On several occasions, St. Clement has provided preference-based clothing options, allowing guests to choose from a selection of jackets, shirts, socks, scarves, and portable sleeping mats.

This year, meals have returned to inside sit-down cafeteria style lunches in the Parish Hall. Guests frequently assist the BBL team by setting up tables, sanitizing tables and assisting with dispensing bottled water for meals. Guests frequently assist with bagging groceries on “grocery day,” and helping others make dietary-appropriate food choices. This collaboration not only supports the program’s operations but also fosters a sense of community and shared purpose.

Lauren Borden and Deborah Tatum-Johnson coordinate the BBL program for St. Clement and extend their heartfelt gratitude to the parishioners who consistently prepare sandwiches, assemble lunch bags, and deliver meals to Meade Memorial Church. The program also deeply appreciates the contributions of all St. Clement parishioners—both those actively involved and those working behind the scenes—whose dedication, talents, and generosity make the BBL program meaningful and impactful.

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of those we serve!

Faithfully Submitted, Debbie Tatum Johnson

Christmas Tree Sales 2025



It was my pleasure to step into the role of coordinating the Christmas tree sale this year. St Clement has a decades long history of this fund-raising ministry and a wonderful congregation of volunteers that support the process. This was my third year as a volunteer, and I find the event so joyful and fulfilling. Everyone who comes to us to find their perfect Christmas tree is so happy. My hope is that this volunteer support will continue next year and that we can even bring some new members into the process.

Planning:

This year we sold 488 trees along with almost 60 wreaths and garlands. We again purchased trees from Cardinal Tree Farm in North Carolina - they really are spectacular Frazier Firs. As the price of the trees increased from last year, we chose to pass on a nominal increase to our customers. We are still selling trees substantially cheaper than others around us, sometimes close to a 50% discount. Receiving the trees on the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving allows us to hit the ground running starting on the Friday afternoon after Thanksgiving. This year the trees were delivered right after the service, and we were able to unload the truck in 48 minutes - a record for us.

Sales:

We sold almost \$54,600 worth of trees this year, including donations and bake sale items. St Clement raised about \$27,607 in profit after procuring the trees, transport, and square fees. I believe this is about \$4,000 more than the Vestry's estimate for profit.

Marketing:

St Clement is fortunate to have established itself as a premiere place to buy a Christmas tree. Almost everyone who came to buy a tree is a return customer - sometimes for up to 25 years! However, we still must market the sale and kudos to Robin Razzino for her social media acumen. Robin and Jenny created graphics for Facebook and some email blasts, shared the graphics in neighborhood groups and with local clergy in Alexandria. I'm sure I am forgetting others who also got the word out - but thank you all!

Volunteers:

We front loaded the request for volunteers this year which provided strong support for staffing the sale during our most busy time. But if we can increase our number of volunteers, we can better schedule throughout the three weeks that it seems to naturally take and share the fun - it is something to consider for the coming year. As always, we also hope to tweak and re-define processes and timelines, to have sales continue to run smoothly. There are too many people to thank and I sure I'll miss some, but I wanted to shout out to: Joe Calizo, Tom Greco, Ben Brown

and family, Raymond and Debbie Johnson, the Razzino Family, the Fanning family, Jenny Darlington, Lauren Borden, Amy Cloud, Lee Dreyfus, Nancy Marriner, Peggy Nigon, Martha Crawley, Eleanor Patterson, Monica Rusk, Virginia Pasley, and so many others. Thank you

Bake Sale:

Although we have had some stalwart volunteers bring bake goods on an ad hoc basis, this year we reached out to find someone who could take the lead on coordinating a bake sale like in years gone by. Jason Feser and Rachel Fishman took the lead on the bake sale, creating a strategy and providing a lot of wonderful, tasty treats themselves. They also communicated with the other wonderful bakers; helped set pricing (still a bargain), and helped stage the goodies. I think we raised around \$700 from the bake sale, and it genuinely made the tree sale event a lot more fun for everyone!

Thank You:

Thank everyone that joined this ministry and/or bought a tree, whether it was unloading the truck on the Sunday afternoon before Thanksgiving, selling the trees, trimming the trees, running the square machine, or helping with clean-up each day! We will be looking for captains again for this year's tree sales to finalize in March. If you would like more information to assist in your discernment, feel free to ask myself, or Rev. Robin. Thank you again everyone for your commitment to this wonderful ministry.

Faithfully submitted by, John Tyler, Tree Sales Coordinator 2025

Preschool Report

Greetings Saint Clement Community,

It is a pleasure to share an update on Saint Clement Episcopal School and the many ways the school continues to thrive as a ministry of our church. At this time last year, we offered five classrooms with 61 students. We are currently enrolled at 72 students across six classrooms and are supported by a dedicated teaching staff of 16 educators, a wonderful reflection of the strength and care within our program.

Many of you may have noticed that my former office has become the Orange Room classroom. Over the summer, I relocated to the main school office, and Ms. Stephanie, our part-time administrator, moved into the church office. We are grateful to Robin and Bria for generously sharing their space and supporting this transition.



We have entered preschool enrollment season, and I am happy to report that we are on track to sustain our current enrollment numbers for the 2026–2027 school year. We hosted Open Houses on December 9 and January 22 and received strong interest from prospective families. Our three-, four-, and five-year-old classes are currently full, and we are actively recruiting 2.5-year-old students. Please encourage any interested friends or neighbors to reach out to me to schedule a tour.

We are also looking ahead to Saint Clement’s Superhero Summer Camp, running from June 22 through August 7. Registration for current and enrolling families will open in mid-March. This year’s theme was selected by the children and teachers through a coin-voting fundraiser. “Superhero Summer” narrowly defeated “Art Explosion,” making it an especially meaningful and fun choice.

Our dedicated PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) is busy planning the 3rd Annual Spring Fair Fundraiser. We invite members of the church community to contact the school if you or your business are interested in sponsoring an event. We would also love to see you there. Please save the date for May 2, 2026.

Saint Clement Episcopal School is a vibrant and essential mission of this church. Our staff, families, and students benefit greatly from the partnership and support of the Saint Clement community. Please do not hesitate to contact me for a tour, a conversation, or with any questions you may have. Your continued support is deeply appreciated.

Faithfully submitted, Jenny R. Darlington Director



Taking the next steps into an exciting future at Saint Clement: 2026 and beyond

At the diocesan convention in early November, Jenny Darlington (our convention representative) and I attended a presentation by the Virginia Episcopal Real Estate Partners (VEREP), a volunteer-run organization that supports Episcopal congregations across all three dioceses in Virginia. VEREP exists to help churches faithfully discern how their buildings and land might be renewed and repurposed in service of God's mission.

As VEREP describes its work: "Many churches are carrying the weight of aging buildings, shrinking budgets, and uncertain next steps. At VEREP, we walk with Episcopal congregations in Virginia as they discern how to repurpose church property—whether sanctuary, rectory, schools, or vacant land—into tools for lasting mission, affordable housing, and community impact."

From the very beginning, the presentation rekindled our imagination (I mean we are *always* thinking about how we might best use the space downstairs but then day-to-day work takes us from our dreaming). Then, shortly after convention, a member of the VEREP board *reached out to us* to continue the conversation and explore how their experience and gifts might align with our own sense of calling. It soon became clear that this was not just a helpful connection, but a timely one.

We are blessed with a building that holds tremendous potential—especially in the basement of the preschool, which is currently underutilized. While portions of the space are used for storage, a Sunday morning Lego class, and an art studio for Bishop Bourlakas, the area as a whole is limited by its current condition. Left as it is, the space cannot fully serve the ministries and community we are called to nurture. This presents not a problem, but an opportunity: an invitation to re-envision how our physical space might more fully support our mission *to Spread the word of God, Share the love of God and Serve the people of God in his part of Alexandria*.

Rather than allowing this space to languish, we believe it is time to take a fresh and faithful look at what it could become. Renovation possibilities include updating and refreshing the existing rooms, improving accessibility through the addition of an elevator, and creating new, well-designed bathroom facilities that better serve children, families, and guests. These changes would allow the space to become safer, more welcoming, and more adaptable for future ministry.

In the coming year, we hope to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with VEREP to begin a thoughtful, prayerful planning process for this next chapter of our shared life. This partnership would help us move from imagination to informed discernment.

The congregation will be informed and have opportunities for input every step of the way!!!

The proposed MOU would likely include three key steps:

1. Capital Needs Assessment

A comprehensive review of the building's current condition, helping us understand both immediate needs and long-term care of the property, along with recommendations for sustainable maintenance.

2. Feasibility Study

An exploration of how the basement level might be transformed to support expanded ministry—such as new classrooms, improved accessibility, and other renovations—guided by architects and consultants with relevant experience.

3. Business Plan for Expanded Childcare

Development of a clear, mission-aligned plan for expanded childcare offerings, identifying community need, age ranges served, and financial sustainability.

Funding for this initial planning work would come from Jim Payne's estate and would be kept separate from the church's regular operating budget. Once we have a clear understanding of what is required to keep the building safe, what is possible through renovation, and what resources would be needed, we would then invite the congregation into a capital campaign and explore additional avenues of support.

Major renovation and a capital campaign represent significant steps—but they are also part of the ongoing life of a faithful parish. The last major campaign in the 1990s reshaped our worship space and left a lasting legacy in the form of the lowered ceiling, the artificial skylight, and the *Tree of Life* tapestry. In the same spirit, this work is about more than bricks and mortar; it is about preparing our church to serve future generations in mind, body and spirit.