

**Annual Report on Congregational Vitality & Transition
October 2024 – September 2025**

Since last year's report, vacancies for clergy were filled for the following parishes:

- Trinity Jersey Shore: the Rev. Lauri Kerr
- Nativity Newport & St. Stephen Thompsontown: the Rev. Ryan Tobin
- St. Andrew's York: the Rev. Kathy Hettinga
- St. Andrew's Shippensburg: the Rev. Ginger Bennett
- St. Paul's Columbia: the Rev. Deacon, Hank Morrow
- Trinity, Chambersburg: the Rev. Deacon Clifford Brooks

Church of Our Saviour, Montoursville, closed its doors on Christmas Eve, 2024.

In May 2025, I attended the annual gathering of diocesan transition ministers from Northeastern, Mid Atlantic, and Southeastern dioceses.

Trends noted:

- A shortage of Episcopal Priests. For every priest looking to secure a call, 10 opportunities exist. This is of particular interest to rural Dioceses such as ours, which are perceived to be less attractive to applicants, especially young priests and those with families.
- Our aging population means that many, especially smaller, parishes do not have the financial resources to call a full-time priest. This poses the challenge of attracting a priest willing to relocate for a half-time call. We are investigating many options for area ministry.
- We are not alone in our dependance on retired yet working clergy. These good folks allow small parishes to have clergy attention with love costs, as health insurance and pension payments are not required. I have strong concerns as this group ages, however. We will need new methods of maintaining these important outposts of faith.

The Church has weathered many periods of decline throughout history; I have faith that we will get through this fallow period with renewed clergy vocations and the indomitable constancy of committed laity.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Veronica Donohue Chappell
Canon to the Ordinary, Northern Region

and

The Rev. Carenda Baker
Interim Transition Minister, Southern Region