

Diocese of Virginia
Arlington Region [Formerly Region 3]

October 2018

For a third time, the seven parishes and two missions of the Arlington Region--all in Arlington County--came together at St. Peter's/Arlington for a combined food packaging event on Saturday, March 17, 2018 with the Raleigh-based global headquarters of the RISE AGAINST HUNGER organization, formerly STOP HUNGER NOW.

In less than two hours, over 75 volunteers from the region packed 20,000 individually-sealed packets [twice the number as last time] containing long-grain fortified rice, high fiber soy and dehydrated vegetables, to which a package of vitamins and minerals from Kraft Foods is added after cooking. Each pack is designed to feed six people. The official shelf-life is two years, while the unofficial shelf life is much longer

The completed packages were packed in cartons and shipped to a local warehouse—ours is in Ashburn, Virginia, and there are three others in Virginia—before being shipped overseas in containers. Each container contains 285,000 packets is shipped to a participating partner in countries where the need is greatest and where there are partnerships authorized to receive and distribute the food.

We do not know to which country the 20,000 meal packages will be distributed, but RISE AGAINST HUNGER did tell us that it ships to Haiti, among many other countries including the Episcopal Church in Sudan, which is an authorized distribution partner. There are other Episcopal parishes and dioceses which work with STOP AGAINST HUNGER, and the in-country partnership agreements/applications are reviewed annually [usually in late July and early August] for compliance.

While not yet approved, the Arlington Region 3 may stage another RISE AGAINST HUNGER event in 2019. Those wishing to have further information on the organization may go to www.riseagainsthunger.org.

In addition to the foregoing, many of the Region's parishes and missions are individually committed to the same local homeless and hunger ministries including AFAC, A-SPAN, SOME, AHC Christmas Toy Drive, Arlington Interfaith Council CROP Hunger Walk, Meals on Wheels, Samaritan Ministries and Thanksgiving Food Drives.

Individual parishes also sponsor region-wide gatherings to keep abreast of and support local programs, such as refugee resettlement programs in the area.

Internationally, individual parishes support overseas dioceses in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, among others.