

US Supreme Court Lets the Episcopal Church Keep Falls Church Property

The Supreme Court on Monday let stand a Virginia court ruling that allows the Episcopal Church to keep the property of a large congregation that left the denomination over theological differences.

In 2013, the Virginia Supreme Court ruled that the 3,000-member Falls Church, which voted in 2006 to leave the Episcopal Church and join an Anglican diocese, did not have the right to keep the property. It also ruled that some of the church's nearly \$3 million in assets belong to the Falls Church Anglican congregation.

As is their custom, the justices on the high court declined to give a reason for not hearing the case and allowing the Virginia Supreme Court decision to stand. The Falls Church, a landmark building in downtown Falls Church, Va., was one of several Episcopal congregations that left the denomination over theological differences, many stemming from the 2003 consecration of an openly gay bishop.

The Episcopal Church has fought for at least \$40 million worth of church property in Virginia, according to *The Washington Post*. Similar property disputes have roiled Episcopal congregations around the country and other parts of mainline Christianity.

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