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CHURCH OF NH

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News From The Vine

A Publication From The Episcopal Church of NH



Signs of Vitality

Visit the website of St. John the Baptist, Sanbornville, and a simple but powerful pop-up message says:

***“You can lock the doors,
but you can’t close the church.”***

Amen! While we have had to endure physical distancing and exile from our sacred spaces during the pandemic, in many respects, the church has been more “open” than ever. Bishop Rob’s first online service at the Chapel of the Holy Angels in Diocesan House (capacity, approximately 12) attracted almost 400 worshippers!

Wonderful things have been occurring throughout our diocese. Creative, resilient, grace-filled efforts and engagement in worship, prayer, service, and community that speak to the spirit and vitality of our congregations throughout the state.

Numerous parishes are offering online Sunday worship services via Zoom, YouTube, and Facebook (including virtual after-service coffee hours), as well as weekday morning, noonday, and evening prayer. Too many to list here! For a fuller listing of virtual worship and prayer services, please visit the diocese’ website, www.nhepiscopal.org/worship-liturgy. And while we can’t include everything happening at our churches, here’s a sampler:



St. James, Keene has been providing meals for their community’s homeless shelter each weekend through their “Nourishing our Neighbors” fund. To maintain physical distancing and support local small businesses, the parish has been ordering takeout.



Children and youth from the ministries of **Epiphany Church, Newport**, including 4H Explorers, Upbeat Choir, and Newport’s Messy Church congregation gathered on Zoom for a variety of shared activities including games, art, and a scavenger hunt.

Christ Church, Portsmouth features two Zoom gatherings each week. On Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:30 am, they offer a brief Noonday office, followed by a time of conversation and connection.

Church of the Good Shepherd, Nashua gathers weekly via Zoom for an innovative formation series entitled, “A Love Song Everyone in the World Can Sing Together: The Lord’s Prayer.”

St. Christopher’s, Hampstead offered a series of creative formation gatherings on Zoom to discuss “Where Faith and Science Fiction Meet,” as well as Bible studies on Acts and 2 Samuel.

A Prayer from Bishop Rob

O Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee,
I'm just beginning to see how little I have known you.

You didn't talk like me, in the accent of a New England prep school or the Ivy League, or with the elegant linguistic economy of the Elizabethan *Book of Common Prayer* — a book you never held in your calloused hands.

The other day, O Jesus, I heard a black man speak. His brother was murdered when a white officer of the law knelt on his neck, suffocating him.

The brother spoke within marbled halls, in an expensively paneled room on Capitol Hill. And he used language — nothing profane and nothing obscene — but language which didn't sound at all like the way I talk.

And this is a sample of how I was taught to talk about you, O Jesus of Nazareth,

Just as the postmodern sublime is figured through both the fragmentation of form and a (pseudo) regathering sublime is figured through pastiche or bricolage, so too the Christian sublime involves both the shattering the Christ-form upon the cross, and a regathering of that form through the resurrection, a regathering that has an intrinsic element the regathering of the scattered disciples into an ecclesia...

O Jesus of Nazareth, what does that even mean? Would you even recognize that we were talking about YOU in all that code? More likely, we were just talking about ourselves—to people like ourselves.

The language of George Floyd's brother contained verbs that didn't always agree in the number of their subjects. Sometimes he said, "I'm axing you..." instead of how I learned to make a request.

And, like John the Baptist, he took an ax to the root of my supremacy.
He spoke Truth.

More truth, because it came from your own broken heart, O Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee.

I heard him more than I've heard anyone witness in those stately leather-chaired rooms before. Rooms where Laws are made. It was the language you more likely spoke than how I speak. Forgive me, O Jesus of Nazareth, I have dismissed your syntax all these long, empty white-washed years.

O Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee,
When you were lynched on that hill by the garbage heaps of Jerusalem, by officers of the Law, you cried, "Into your hands I commend my Spirit."
The *Book of Common Prayer* took those words and bleached them into such bloodless concepts: oblation, satisfaction, atonement. But what you were saying then and what you're saying to me now, right now, from the lynching cross, is "I can't breathe."

Jesus, I don't know Black.
In college here in New Hampshire,
Black writing, Native American writing, Asian American writing,
Gay and Lesbian writing were all electives, not serious,
believed to come from a lesser muse and inferior talent.
If you need a "gut," take those, I heard, and for heaven's sake don't take them seriously.
So, I avoided those classes.
Gutless.

O Jesus, I could have met you in the strains of Coltrane's *Love Supreme*,
or Ellison's *Invisible Man*, or Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, or in Baldwin,
or Erdrich, or Angelou, or Hughes,
or the songs of Marvin.
But in that old oak empaneled English Department,
with its afternoon teas
and white-buck shoed croquet
on the manicured lawn below Baker Tower,
—the Tower with the caricatured Indian and the peace-pipe weathervane on top—
we all found ways to dismiss your revealed Truth,
Truth we substituted for playful and clever theories about semiotics
and metaphorical structure.
Nothing that would disrupt how to love and move in this world of unlikeness.

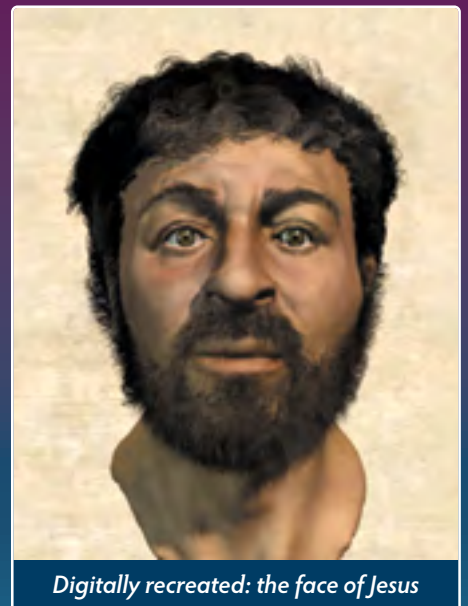
O Jesus of Nazareth, they shot you right out of their Western Canon.
With the sublime chords of Handel in the background
you were, *Despised. Rejected* over sherry in crystal stemware.

O Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee.
They made fun of the way you talked, of who you hung out with, (or should I say whom?).
And when you got too uppity, they hung you, from splintered timber,
nothing like the clean silver and brass cross I wear while sitting at my desk,
air-conditioned.

O Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee.
You didn't look or talk or dress like me.
To be honest, Jesus, your friends usually make me nervous.
To be honest, O Jesus, more and more you make me nervous.
But I trust you.

How long and how many times do I need to remember
that I don't really know many people who look
more like you, O Jesus, than who look like me?
And so, my dear Lord, the truth is
I have not really known you as much
as I've thought or as much as I've claimed.

And I'm not alone.
Help us. O Lord Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee. Help us. Amen.



Digitally recreated: the face of Jesus

“Signs of Vitality” continued from front

St. Thomas, Hanover hosted a Zoom fundraiser: the “No Jumble Jumble” to raise funds for a variety of local and globally-based nonprofit organizations. It included a pet show, live music, virtual pony rides, and mystery auction items. The event raised triple the amount typically raised.

Organized by Never Again Action of New Hampshire, several **Immigration Car Rallies** have driven to the Strafford County Department of Corrections. The protest caravan is urging Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to free the over 70 immigrants at the jail who are awaiting possible deportation.

The Rev. Josh Hill, Chaplain at **Holderness School**, has been sharing a vlog (video blog) for both his students and school staff.

“Classic” phone trees help connect people who may not have access to, or choose not to use, online platforms such as Zoom, Facebook, or YouTube. It’s a proven way to reach out and stay in touch with our elder church members. Several congregations, including **Trinity, Claremont; All Saints’, Peterborough;** and **Grace, East Concord** have created phone trees.

Every Thursday at noon, people from all across the Seacoast area come to the “Common Table | Brown Bag” at **St. John’s Portsmouth**. Bag lunches are available for pick-up.



Parishioners at **St. Matthew’s, Goffstown** are enjoying their own “virtual choir” during online worship services. After individual choir members record video of themselves singing at home, the videos are digitally synched into a single hymn track.

Ministry Transition Updates

The following transitions and celebrations are joyful reminders that the Church has remained active and “open” in the midst of the pandemic:

- **The Rev. Peggy Ellan Schnack** has accepted a call as Curate to St. Paul’s Concord. **Peggy** is “fully invested in helping children and youth be involved in church life as a critical part of the church now, not only as ‘the future of the church.’”
- **The Rev. Dr. Stephanie Burette** has accepted a call as Curate to St. Thomas Hanover. During her diaconal year, **Stephanie** served as Porter Fellow at St. George’s College in Jerusalem that provided a strong emphasis on both pastoral care and teaching.
- **Katherine Danielle Boss and Gregory James Baker** were ordained to the Transitional Diaconate on Saturday July 11, 2020, at Trinity in Tilton. **Kathy** will be dividing her time as Curate of All Saints’ Littleton and Chaplain of White Mountain School in Bethlehem. **Greg** is serving as Curate of Church of the Good Shepherd Nashua. They are recent graduates of Boston University’s School of Theology and Yale’s Berkeley Divinity School, respectively.

All Saints', Littleton offers Morning Prayer Wednesdays at 8:30 am, and Evening Prayer/Compline Thursdays at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

Parishioners at **St. Paul's, Concord** are staying connected and learning new ways to live the Way of Love in online small groups this summer. They meet weekly via Zoom using a small group curriculum from the Episcopal Church.

St. Andrew's, Hopkinton adapted its "Making Your Mark Summer Art Camp" for 4th thru 6th grade campers. Each morning, campers meet counselors and volunteers on Zoom for a welcome message, a story, singing a song, sharing art work from the day before, and listening to an explanation of the day's art project.



The youth group of **St. Andrew's, New London** organized an in-person, physically-distanced vigil to protest the murder of George Floyd and support the Black Lives Matter movement. The vigil attracted 200 people and was an inspiring statement from our local youth.

The Rev. Kate Siberine, of **Grace East Concord** and the **Franklin Mission**, offers Morning Prayer at 9:30 am daily and Evening Prayer at 5:00 pm daily via Facebook Live.

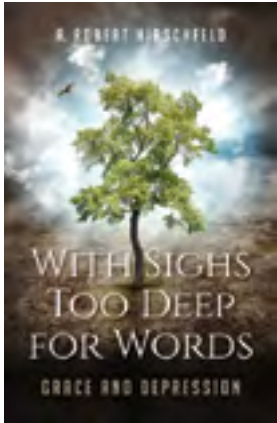
Recovery Ministry offers a Service of Prayer and Healing for people in recovery every Friday at 3:30 pm via Zoom.

All Saints' Church, Peterborough, in conjunction with the Peterborough Pantry, have continued their food pantry and "Hungry Students" ministries. The pantry has switched to curbside pickup, and reimagined how clients make their own selection of foods while staying physically distanced.

- **The Rev. Duncan Hilton** has been called as Priest-in-Charge of St. John's Walpole. Truly a bi-vocational priest, Duncan is eager to serve St. John's and develop and nurture new ministries outside the church such as L'Arche, an international network of communities that care for people with disabilities, and Circles of Support and Accountability to help men transition out of prison.
- Congratulations to the **Rev. Kate Harmon Siberine** who is a recipient of a grant through the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church on behalf of the Taskforce for Church Planting and Congregational Redevelopment. **Kate**, rector of Grace East Concord and Missioner of Franklin, was awarded a Seed Grant in the amount of \$18,551 to further the Mission of Franklin.

For more information about ministry transition please contact the Rev. Canon Gail Avery, Canon for Transition and Community Engagement at gavery@nhepiscopal.org.

With Sighs Too Deep For Words: Grace and Depression. A New Book By Bishop Rob



Bishop Rob has just published a new meditation and prayer companion for those who struggle with depression, *With Sighs Too Deep For Words*.

The stigma around mental illness in our culture has had a damaging effect on those who suffer from its grip. As a priest and bishop, Bishop Rob has quietly been in treatment for depression for decades. In his book, he now shares his own experience publicly. The Bishop offers short meditations, prayers, and suggestions about how one can follow and call upon Jesus for strength and peace during times of emotional upheaval.

“My depression continues to teach me about God’s love and grace,” said Bishop Rob. “I wrote in the hope that my experience might resonate with others who bear similar pain and struggle. My intent is to offer some hope to those who experience depression, especially those who have swallowed the dangerous myth that mental illness is somehow a moral flaw, or a sign of God’s judgment, a myth that is tempting to believe—or at least it has been for me.”

The Bishop’s book, with its prayers and practical suggestions for spiritual and creative practices and resilience, can be a companion for those who suffer so that they may know more deeply the resilient love of Jesus.

With Sighs Too Deep For Words is available at local independent NH booksellers including Gibson’s in Concord, the Bookery in Manchester, and Toadstools in Keene, Nashua, and Peterborough, as well as Church Publishing (www.churchpublishing.org/withsighstoodeepforwords), Barnes & Noble, and Amazon.

2020 Annual Convention Goes Virtual

Challenging times call for resilience and creativity. COVID-19 has forced us to adapt and re-imagine many things in our lives, including annual convention.

The 218th Convention of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire will be held virtually, on Friday, November 13, and Saturday, November 14, 2020. This year’s convention is blessed to begin on Friday evening with a special guest, the Rt. Rev. Shannon MacVean-Brown, Bishop of Vermont.

While details continue to be worked out, we expect that Bishop Rob’s annual address and voting will take place Friday evening as well. A worship service will bring Friday to a close. On Saturday, the convention will conduct the business of the diocese, presenting and discussing resolutions, including the annual budget.

The Bishop’s staff will keep everyone updated as plans are finalized for a Zoom-based virtual convention, including technology, tools, and support to assure that all delegates have a positive convention experience, and are able to participate fully.

In the meantime, you may find information about the convention, including convention rules of order, the delegate handbook, important dates, nomination and election information, and resolution guidelines, on our website: www.nhepiscopal.org/convention.

We anticipate registration to be ready in mid-September. If you have any questions, please contact Executive Assistant to the Bishop and Convention Coordinator Lynn Eaton, leaton@nhepiscopal.org.

RenewalWorks for Me Emphasizes the Personal Spiritual Journey



A ministry of Forward Movement, RenewalWorks™ is a pioneering group-based program that helps parishes explore and strengthen spiritual vitality through a facilitated process of self-reflection, sharing, and workshop discussion. Introduced by the Diocese in the fall of 2018, nearly a dozen parishes in New Hampshire have completed RenewalWorks.

Recently, Forward Movement launched an individually-focused process called *RenewalWorks for Me* (renewalworks.org/resources/rw4me/). *RenewalWorks For Me* is a personalized guide for your spiritual journey — one that you can complete on your own. *RenewalWorks for Me* is also free, a gift from Forward Movement.

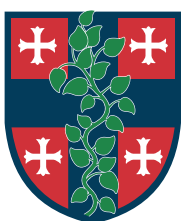
It begins with a quick online survey called the Spiritual Life Inventory. The inventory asks a brief series of confidential and thought-provoking questions. Based on analysis and insights from the aggregated data of hundreds of churches and thousands of participants nationally who have worked with RenewalWorks, your responses to these few, simple questions will allow the *RenewalWorks for Me* system to identify broad aspects and characteristics of your spiritual life, and create a personalized plan of action to strengthen personal spirituality and discipleship.

Your action plan includes an assessment of *RenewalWorks for Me* findings and suggestions for improving your spiritual journey. After reviewing your results, we invite you to take the next step — register online for an eight-week schedule of customized emails with tips, reminders, and suggestions for daily spiritual practices. And all for free.

“The fact that you can work through *RenewalWorks for Me* independently and, at the same time, benefit from the collective knowledge and wisdom gained from thousands of other RenewalWorks participants is exciting,” said Tina Pickering, Canon for Ministry Development for the Episcopal Church of NH. “The program is ideal for congregations too small to make use of the group-based program, and for any person who wishes to strengthen their connection with God.”

RenewalWorks for Me is an inspiring, effective way to challenge ourselves to explore and deepen our spirituality, and to grow our relationship with Jesus.

Sign up directly on the *RenewalWorks for Me* website, renewalworks.org/resources/rw4me/



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