



EPISCOPAL
CHURCH OF NH

63 Green Street
Concord, NH 03301

Non Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Manchester, NH
Permit No. 724

Fall 2020

News From The Vine

A Publication From The Episcopal Church of NH





Letter from Bishop Rob

These days... days of pandemic, deep social and political division, increasing violence, and undeniable racial and gender inequities, and fear mongering and hate-provoking speech emanating out of our computers and from the highest levels, and habitat collapse... I find myself straining to hold on to the Center.

To be clear, by the “Center” I do not mean a moderate, or lukewarm position, or the “golden mean” between extremes. I don’t even mean the hallowed *via media* of our Anglican tradition that maintains the middle way not as a compromise for the sake of an uneasy peace, but a comprehension for the sake of truth. Nor do I mean that political generosity and courtesy that seems to be receding each day in the current political era.

No, by Center I mean something infinitely more stable, more liberating, more purpose- and life-giving. I mean that mysterious place in the deepest part of each of us that knows that God is alive and that God is all. The Center is where we, along with St. Paul, reckon “that the suffering of the present time is nothing compared to the glory that shall be revealed.” (Romans 8:18).

The Center I am inviting each of us and our Church community to dwell in is that soul-ground where God’s presence is most known, and where God knows each of us most closely. There, in that Center, we can allow ourselves to be vulnerable to the pain of those around us. We can face fear, rage, and despair as well as all the joys and triumphs of life. Abiding in the Center these sensations don’t throw us off balance or out of kilter. Holding onto the Center, we find the grace to not return evil with evil, but with good and dignity.

Astoundingly, the Center is where I have discovered that God’s love reaches persons whom I would not love on my own. In that Center, I am brought to the terrifying truth that my worst enemy, my most ugly adversary, the one I most abhor in the world, has a twin *who dwells within me* – even though I hide that one to everyone (mostly) but to the God who loves and seeks to redeem me in the closets of my secret contemplations. Only there, in the Center, can I find God’s *amazing grace* alive and transforming. “Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit,” goes the prayer. When I utter those words, I’m also saying, “O God, give me my Center back! I’ve lost it.” We know how easy it is for us to lose touch with that Divine Center where God relentlessly pursues us in the night watches and in times of turmoil such as these.

In the Scriptures, Jesus teaches, feeds, heals, indeed lives and dies, never apart from that Center. How else could he sleep in the stern of a storm-tossed fishing bark? Moreover, how else could he plead for forgiveness on behalf of those who had just crucified him? Jesus eternally dwells in the Center. I want to be so Centered in Jesus, and that is my prayer for each of us and for the Church of New Hampshire. Especially now in this year of Global Pandemic, Racial Reckoning, and Election. If we speak in public for a peaceful resolution to the conflicts that beset our society, if we demonstrate for the protection

“Letter from Bishop Rob” continued inside...

NEW WAYS TO CONSIDER “How Are You Called?”

From A Deeper Personal Prayer Life to Loving Our Neighbors, A New Program Will Help Everyday Episcopalians Discern Their Calling

We are all called to live faithfully, joining God’s mission in the world. Each call is as unique and personal as the individual hearing their call — but called we are.

Often, we think of a “calling” in a very formal way. The call to become a priest or a deacon, for example. “The discernment process can be used to deepen our spirituality and faith in other, less formal ways too,” says Tina Pickering, Canon for Ministry Development at the Diocese of New Hampshire.





With that in mind, the diocese is launching a new discernment program, called *Discerning My Path for Faithful Living*, to help laity explore the ways in which God is calling them to serve.

A calling may be as simple and deeply significant as making prayer a more vital aspect of your daily life. It may be a call to use your gifts as a member of Vestry. Or perhaps you are called to a new job or to retirement and you want to align your intention with God in the decision-making process. Or perhaps you are called into conversations that heal the rifts in our communities. “Discernment results in becoming clearer about our purpose,” notes Canon Tina. “The process helps us hear and respond to God’s call to us to align our gifts and strengths with God’s work of life, love, and liberation in and all around us.”

Discerning My Path for Faithful Living will be offering information sessions followed by a one-day orientation in January 2021 (more are planned). After that, five small-group sessions will be held — one per month — with a variety of learning activities between sessions. Built around small group cohorts, the program offers a very accessible and approachable process that will use established discernment practices to help people strengthen their faith and reveal new ways in which God is calling them to serve.

Lay discernment is something that will be incorporated into the curriculum of the School for Ministry as well. The School, now open and working with its first cohort of students, plans to offer a future class on incorporating prayer in daily life — centered around study and a deeper understanding of the Book of Common Prayer.

The diocese is excited to be offering this small group cohort-based program because there are so many ways in which people can express their calling. For example, the pandemic has triggered a growth in virtual daily prayer offerings — numerous congregations are hosting morning, noon, and/or evening prayer. Many have found this daily pause for prayer to be a deeply meaningful way to weave their faith into their day-to-day lives. Perhaps you are called to help lead Daily Offices in your congregation? Using your gifts to serve as a member of Vestry may be a calling, as is a decision to dedicate personal time or resources to serving an at-risk group in your community.

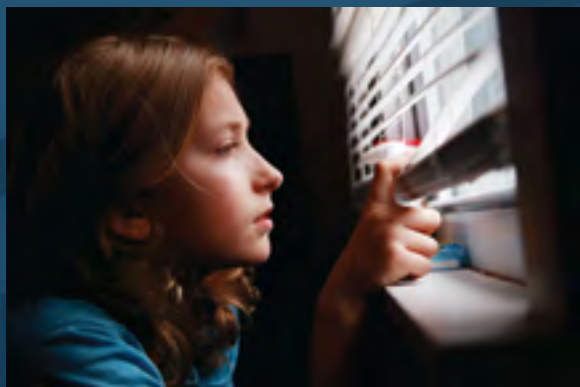
How might you be called to serve God in love and faith? For more information about *Discerning My Path for Faithful Living*, contact Canon Tina at tpickering@nhepiscopal.org.



A Zoom information session to learn more about *Discerning My Path* will be held **Wednesday, November 18th, from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm.**

To register for the information session, please email Canon Tina Pickering at tpickering@nhepiscopal.org

Diocesan-Wide Pray, Share, Care Services Planned



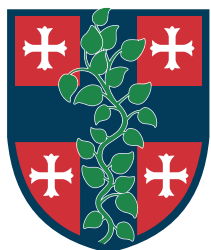
This year, back-to-school has been anything but normal. One area of our society that has experienced tremendous stress as a result of the ongoing global pandemic is our schools. Instead of the usual anticipation of a new year, new classes, and seeing old friends and meeting new ones, students, teachers, parents, family, and friends have had to deal with uncertainty and anxiety.

Decisions have been made (and often remade) regarding remote schooling, hybrid programs, testing, physical distancing, and protocols if a teacher or student tests positive for coronavirus. For most students, very few

extracurricular activities are available — in some schools, if you don't play sports, there may be no extracurricular options at all. Altogether, the stress, isolation, and potential for depression among usually social K-12 students is significant.

As people of faith, we seek to support the efforts of teachers, students and their families, coaches, and administrators across the diocese as they navigate in-person, at-home, virtual, and hybrid back to school models. Ongoing diocesan-wide community prayer, share, and care, services and outreach will be offered, including:

- ❁ Special back-to-school liturgy — invite members of your community who are involved in schools to join us in sharing their stories and their hopes and fears for the school year.
- ❁ Offering back-to-school prayers as we seek ways to support each other.
- ❁ Sending letters of prayer to schools in your area.



Follow The Episcopal Church of New Hampshire

Sign up for eNews!

A regular e-newsletter is sent to church members, clergy and lay leaders, delegates, wardens, and retired clergy. Anyone who is interested may join the mailing list by emailing their interest to ajboots@nhepiscopal.org.



Our Website:
www.nhepiscopal.org



On Facebook:
Episcopal Church of NH



On Youtube:
NHEpiscopal



On Twitter:
@NHEpiscopal
#NHEpiscopal
#tendingthevine

for Our Schools

- ✿ Connecting local churches with local SAUs to see how we can assist. What do our schools need? What would help? Neighborhood access to wifi? Use of a church parking lot?

The first liturgy was celebrated on October 18. This, and future offerings, are opportunities for us to reach out to our communities — not just the members of our congregation — and respond to the needs of the present. More information and other resources are posted on the diocesan website worship page, www.nhepiscopal.org/worship-liturgy.

Our Schools, Our Kids



In August, the diocese' Our Kids Commission approved a \$12,000 grant to fund ArtEx, a Youth Arts Enrichment Initiative at the West Claremont Center for Music and the Arts (www.wcc-ma.org/artex). ArtEx is a new program, adapted from their wide-ranging youth programs to help students create and explore together from home!

The grant seeks to reach 1,000 students digitally — locally and across New England — and provide at least 150 students with supplies and instruction through a mix of virtual and in-person meetings.

“Letter from Bishop Rob” continued from front page:

of our democracy, when we vigorously renounce white supremacy, if we stand for equity in education and opportunity, for justice for the oppressed, if we strive for the healing of our planet, AND if we love even those who because of party affiliation are thought of by the other party as unlovable, it will be because we are seeking to dwell in the same Center to which Jesus steadfastly pointed the way. In the end, that Center is perhaps God's greatest gift to us and this unsteady world.

In Christ's Unshakeable Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Hirschfeld".

The Rt. Rev. Robert Hirschfeld

Bishop MacVean-Brown of Vermont to Speak at 2020

The 218th Convention of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire will be like no other. While offering worship, the Bishop's annual address, and providing for the business of the diocese, this year's Convention will be entirely virtual.

We are also blessed to begin on Friday evening, November 13, with special guest, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Shannon MacVean-Brown, Bishop of Vermont. Bishop MacVean-Brown was ordained and consecrated the 11th bishop of the Diocese of Vermont on September 28, 2019. We are thrilled to have her speak to the diocese. Bishop Rob's annual address to convention will occur the following day, Saturday.



Three resolutions will be brought forward to Convention:

Resolution 1:

To admit a unified Episcopal mission congregation in the Pemi-Baker Valley region into union with the Convention of the Diocese of New Hampshire. This resolution intends to unite the congregations who have historically worshipped as Church of the Holy Spirit, Plymouth, and St. Mark's, Ashland, and to welcome that new congregation into the Diocese of New Hampshire.

Resolution 2:

For the study of, and actions leading to, reparations for racial reconciliation. This resolution calls all congregations and Episcopal schools to a covenant with each other that commits to consistent and long-term actions and reparation toward racial reconciliation throughout our communities.

Resolution 3:

Approving the 2021 proposed diocesan budget. This resolution complies with canonical requirements and convention direction for the submission to the annual diocesan convention of recommended funding for the Office of the Bishop, mission and programs of the Convention and Council, administration of the diocese, and support of the wider Church.

As technology is fine-tuned and details continue to be finalized for the Zoom-based virtual convention, diocesan staff are working diligently to assure that all delegates have a positive convention experience and

are able to participate fully. In addition, plans are being put into place to create an event that is as connected, engaged, and community-spirited as possible.

You may find information about Convention, including the Pre-Convention Journal, on our website: www.nhepiscopal.org/convention. If you have any questions, please contact Lynn Eaton, leaton@nhepiscopal.org.

Transition Ministry Updates:

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

- ❁ **The Rev. Dr. Janet Lombardo** has accepted a 2/3 position with Church of the Good Shepherd Lutheran in Laconia as Interim Pastor. This will be in conjunction with her call as Interim Rector at St. James Episcopal Church also in Laconia. Good Shepherd has graciously shared their worship space with St. James after St. James sold their church property to the Boys and Girls Club in 2013. Both worshipping communities are looking forward to deepening their relationship and working collaboratively to serve the Lakes Region.
- ❁ **The Venerable Derek Scalia** has been appointed by Bishop Hirschfeld as Archdeacon of New Hampshire. Derek serves as Deacon at St. James Keene, and Director of Retention and Diversity at Franklin Pierce University.
- ❁ The Search Committee of **St. George's Episcopal Church** Durham will soon be accepting names of candidates to serve as their new Rector. The position is $\frac{3}{4}$ time, which includes campus ministry opportunities at UNH.
- ❁ If you are interested or happen to know of someone looking for a new call, please contact **The Rev. Canon Gail Avery**, Canon for Transition and Community Engagement at gavery@nhepiscopal.org.

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