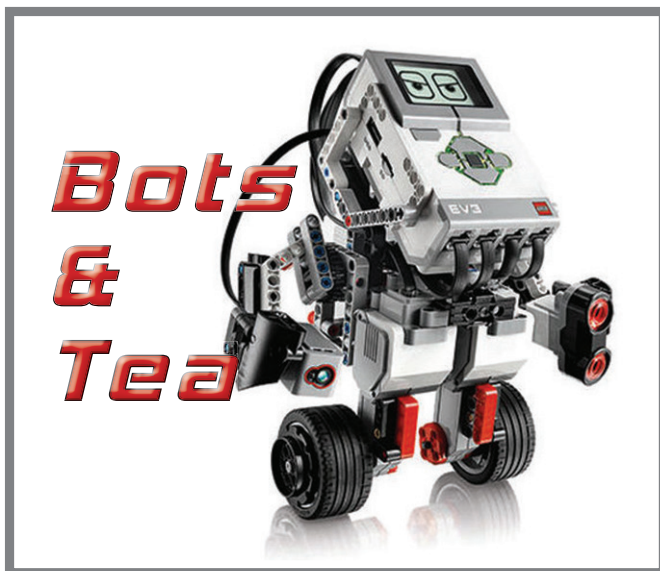


'Bots and Tea Building Youth Involvement

If you attended St. Thomas, Hanover, for the Christmas Eve service, you would have seen an angel. That is, an A.N.G.E.L., an Autonomously Navigating Generator of Endless Love. This A.N.G.E.L. is a homemade Lego robot with wings, built by St. Thomas' youth and its Rector, The Rev. Guy Collins. On Christmas Eve, A.N.G.E.L. carried the Baby Jesus on its back, down the center aisle, to the crèche.



This was the start of a new, ongoing afterschool program at St. Thomas, called 'Bots and Tea, a companion to their longtime Tots and Tea community program.

Lyra Bornholdt-Collins is the 6th grade daughter of The Rev. Guy Collins, and a member of St Thomas, Hanover. She was kind enough to share the following for our Diocesan Newsletter:

What is Lego Robotics?

Lego robotics or FIRST LEGO League (FLL) is a program that teaches people how to program a robot, and build it, out of Lego. The robotics teams compete on a regional, and the national level. There are robotics teams all over the world, not just here! At FLL, people learn that they can make a robot do anything, if they set their mind to

it. FLL is also a big supporter of cooperation, and gracious professionalism. Part of going on to the next level is not just about your robotics skill, but also about how your team cooperates with each other and shows gracious professionalism, but above all, the most important thing for them is that everyone is having fun!

When and where did you get interested in Lego robotics?

I have been building and playing with Lego for a long time, but I have only recently started doing Lego robotics. At [my school], Richmond Middle School, they give you a chance to build and program robots. They separated us into teams and we created team Lego projects. Then we had a big competition. That was when we had the idea for designing and building for Christmas Eve an Autonomously Navigating Generator of Endless Love robot (A.N.G.E.L. for short). That was so great that we then thought up the idea of 'Bots & Tea.

What is 'Bots & tea and why are you doing it?

'Bots & Tea is a program that my dad [The Rev. Guy Collins] and I came up with. We already have a playgroup meeting at St. Thomas on Tuesday afternoons, called Tots & Tea. It made sense for the robotics group to meet at the same time, when families are there anyway, and it provides a fun, new challenge for older school kids. We wanted to make it so kids who wanted to program or build a robot can give it a try. 'Bots and Tea is our way to get everyone to be having fun, all year round, and with no pressure to compete outside our group. We also found that a lot of adults with a background in programming and engineering were interested in helping and being part of the group. We had 18 people at the first meeting. We are off to a great start! All are welcome, whether or not they attend St. Thomas. At the first meeting we had some new people join us.

Everyone is welcome at 'Bots and Tea, on the first Tuesday of the month in the St. Thomas Parish Hall at 3.15pm, at 9 West Wheelock Street, Hanover. More information is available at www.saintthomashanover.org.



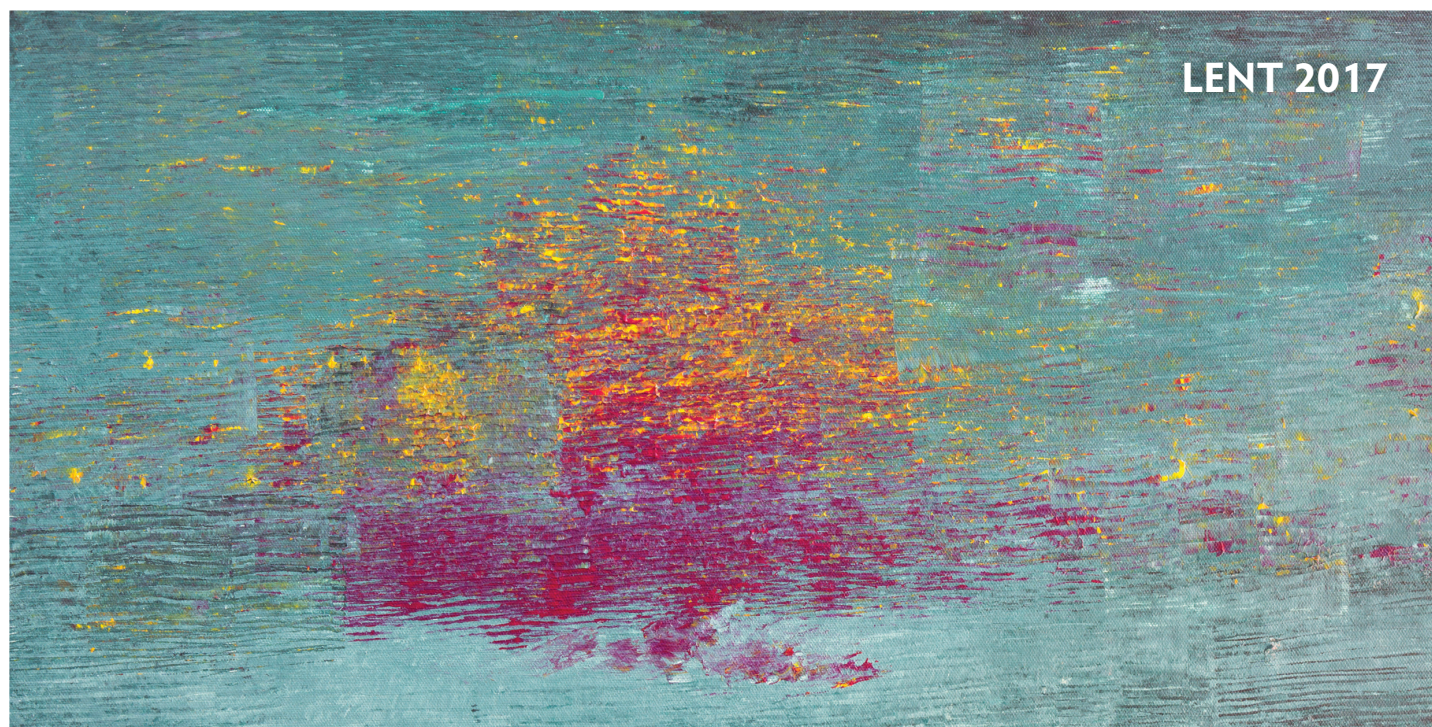
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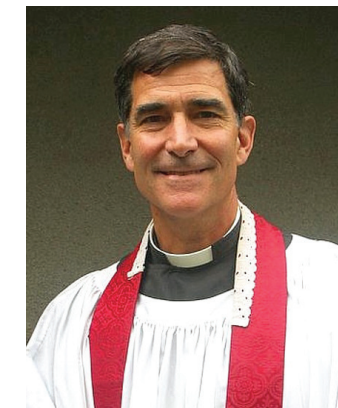


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Letter From Bishop Rob



A Pastoral Letter: Extending The Peace of Christ



Several clergy have shared with me a modest, but noticeable, increase in attendance at our churches since last November's election. If social commentators are correct, it may be that the painful and stark divisions within our culture are invitations for souls to seek community, connection, mutual support and healing in our parish churches. As it happens, I am writing this in a monastery where the guesthouse is full to capacity and includes persons of different generations (including young adults!), races, and genders. Some of the monks have wondered if places like this will become more and more a refuge from a society pulling apart at the seams. If so, monastic life will be brought to its original function in society, as we remember that the Saints Benedict and Scholastica founded their orders partly in response to the chaos that ensued during the fall of the Roman Empire.

Here at the monastery, the sermons are not very explicit about the President or the latest Executive Order or tweet. They focus on the Lord Jesus and the beautiful realm that he points us to, the realm we refer to as the Kingdom of God. How Jesus treated people—sinners, seekers, the ill, the powerless—these are the topics for reflection, homilies, prayer, discussion, and contemplation around the Altar of communion. To gather in a community of prayer, kindness, mutual respect, humility, and hospitality towards the stranger is itself an act of political resistance to a culture that is increasingly coarse, hateful, racist, and intolerant of differing political views.

I believe in a Jesus who chose the way of humility, personal sacrifice, kindness, love of community among strangers. In the Gospel lesson from Matthew 5 that we read on a recent Sunday, we heard how Jesus privileged not the wealthy, but the poor, not the bullying, but the meek, not the belligerent, but the peacemakers, not the self-assured, but the broken-hearted. These are ones on whom God's favor rests.

The Jesus who preached the Sermon on the Mount is the Jesus we all need to hear more about these days. The Jesus who referred to a thin-skinned King Herod as a fox, and who was annoyingly silent before an anxious Governor Pilate, and who was willing to lose his life to show how puny worldly power is on Easter morning—that's the Jesus I need to hear more about. That's the Jesus whom I need to listen for more frequently in my life. For Jesus, the Kingdom of God was always first. First. Even before Caesar.

As prevalent as the talk about our President is, it's even more critical for us in the Church to be talking about Jesus right now. Who was he? What does it mean when we say that Jesus is Lord, Sovereign, The Christ? When those in political power claim to make decisions based on their Christian commitments, who is the Christ they are claiming to follow and obey? What is the nature of the power that Christ gives to us? How did Jesus exercise power and authority? The Christ I have followed, and who led me into this Church, is the Christ who chose to empty himself by joining the fallen human race. He did this in order to show how, on that first Easter, love conquers all fear, all death, and shines in every darkness.

As much as each of us is being called to demonstrate and act on our political views in the public sphere of our lives—and we are so called—I believe God is asking something even more risky, more dangerous, more uncomfortable of us when we gather in prayer: to extend the peace of Christ to those with whom we find ourselves on the other side, politically. I agree with those observers who have said that at least part of the reason our nation is in its present predicament is because we've lost the ability to take seriously the pain, the full story, of our estranged neighbors. I think Jesus

(Cont. on Pg.2)

(Bishop Rob's Letter, cont.)

did that—listened to his neighbors, even neighbors and disciples who often irked him. For proof of his being irked, just check out how those first followers fare with Jesus in Mark's Gospel.

On my wall is a framed quotation that was given to each bishop who was ordained during Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori's time as our Presiding Bishop. The quote is from Archbishop Helder Camara, who served as a bishop in Brazil during a prolonged and oppressive military regime in that economically fractured country. Dom Helder, as a young priest, adhered to some very right-wing political views, and over time his experience among the poor led him to a ministry in solidarity with the disenfranchised, for whom he became an outspoken advocate. All the while, with God's help, he maintained relationships with those who took exception to his witness. The quote on my wall reads:

The River of Life Pilgrimage

A 40-day Sacred Tribute, on and off the Connecticut River



The first-ever spiritual Pilgrimage along the length of the Connecticut River, from northern New Hampshire to the Atlantic Ocean, will be held this spring to highlight the River's ecological, social, historical, economical, and spiritual impact throughout New England. The Pilgrimage is hosted by The Episcopal Churches of New England, the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Kairos Earth, in partnership with local, statewide, and regional organizations along the River. This 40-day Pilgrimage is open to people of all backgrounds, faiths, and beliefs. For more information, visit the River of Life website: www.kairosearth.org/river/.

Mark Kutolowski, guide for the River of Life Pilgrimage, explains, "Water is central to life and the Connecticut River and its tributaries are a prime example of waterways sustaining the myriad aspects of a region. For anyone interested in engaging in a sacred relationship with the natural world, the River of Life Pilgrimage will allow that on multiple levels along the Connecticut River: from being

Let no one be scandalized if I frequent those who are considered unworthy or sinful. Who is not a sinner? Let no one be alarmed if I am seen with compromised and dangerous people, on the left or the right. Let no one bind me to a group. My door, my heart, must be open to everyone, absolutely everyone.

May God give us such a capacity for love and openness in these times so marked by shame, division, and scandal, remembering how Jesus stretched out his arms of love on the hard wood of the cross, so that everyone might come within His saving embrace. (Book of Common Prayer, page 101).

O God, help us.
Yours Faithfully, in the Lord Jesus,
+Rob



a core 'river pilgrim' and paddling segments of the river, to attending shore-based events hosted by local churches and conservation organizations, to being a 'Pilgrim in Prayer' by joining in the daily spiritual readings and lessons from your own location, everyone has the ability to participate."

The Rev. Stephen Blackmer, Executive Director of Kairos Earth, and Church of the Woods, Canterbury, says, "This journey, like any true pilgrimage, is intended to be a doorway to interior transformation and lasting change. The daily prayer and spiritual exercises of the pilgrimage, as well as the land-based gatherings, will be held in the context of the Christian tradition. On a daily basis, we will also be focusing on the health and conservation of the flora and fauna of the Connecticut River."

Registration for the three-to seven-day paddling segments is now open; space is limited and filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Interested participants should sign up early at the website: www.kairosearth.org/paddle-the-river. Events along the Connecticut River will be added throughout the spring—featured locations will be Canaan, VT; Littleton, NH; Hanover, NH/White River Junction, VT; Brattleboro, VT; Springfield, MA; Hartford, CT; Essex, CT; and many others.

2.

St. James, Laconia, Meeting Community Needs with Mission Resources Grant Funds



Jeff Pearson (right), outgoing St. James, Laconia, Senior Warden, presents \$6,000 grant check to Tammy Emery (left), Belknap House Family Support Coordinator, with incoming Sr. Warden Kathy White, The Rev. Tobias Nyatsambo, and St. James parishioners looking on. Photo by Ginger Wells-Kay.

The Episcopal Church of New Hampshire's Mission Resources Committee awarded a \$6,000 grant to St. James Church in Laconia, for the benefit of a community nonprofit, Belknap House. This new cold weather shelter for Belknap County homeless families with children opened this winter. Belknap House also offers family supports and case management in a county that continues to see increases in homelessness. According to The NH Coalition to End Homelessness, Belknap County saw an increase in homelessness of 38 percent in 2015. Homelessness among families increased by 50 percent in Belknap County from 2013 to 2015.

The parish's commitment to Belknap House extends beyond grantmaking. For more than two years, parishioners have provided carpentry and other skills, donated kitchen cabinetry, participated in fundraisers, and served on the Belknap House Board of Directors.

St. James Parishioner Ginger Wells-Kay, explains, "Our ministry is to support several local efforts that address

serious unmet needs in our local area. Belknap House addresses the issue of homeless families with children, and offers us the opportunity for continued volunteer service ranging from governance and day/overnight staffing, to building maintenance and fundraising, using the gifts of our St. James community."

Belknap House has a winter shelter capacity of 19, and will function as a hostel during the summer months. To learn more, volunteer, or donate, please visit www.belknaphouse.org. To learn more about St. James, Laconia, visit www.saintjameslaconia.org.

The Mission Resources Committee of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire is a committee of Diocesan Council, administering grants to congregations actively growing their new or existing mission work. These grants are funded directly from the annual Diocesan budget. For more information about Mission Resources, visit www.nhepiscopal.org/mission-resources-committee.

Transition Ministry Update

- The Rev. Robert "Odie" Odierna has announced his retirement after 31 years of service to Church of the Good Shepherd, Nashua. The Rev. Alanna Van Antwerpen will serve as Priest in Charge for two years during which time there will be the formation of a Search Committee for a new Rector.
- The Rev. David Ferner is the new Vicar appointed to serve Holy Cross, Weare.
- The Rev. Winnie Skeates will be available for supply coverage and is devoting full-time work to her consulting practice.

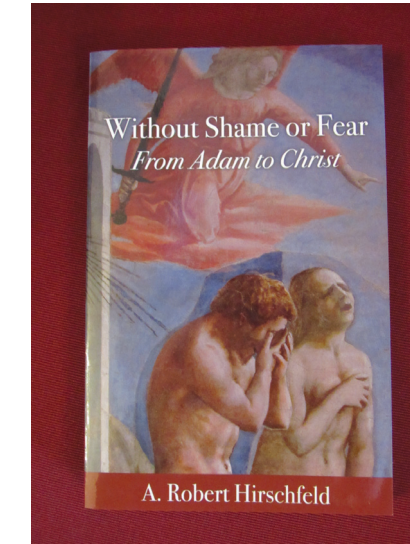
Several congregations are involved in searches, including the following:

St. Andrew's Church, Hopkinton
St. Matthew's Church, Goffstown
St. Andrew's-in-the-Valley, Tamworth
St. Christopher's Church, Hampstead
Church of the Good Shepherd, Nashua Union/St. Luke's, Claremont-Charlestown

For more information about Clergy/Parish Transitions, contact The Rev. Canon Hannah Anderson, Canon to the Ordinary, at handerson@nhepiscopal.org.

3.

New Book by Bishop Hirschfeld Examines Shame and Fear



Bishop Rob Hirschfeld published his first book this spring. *Without Shame or Fear, from Adam to Christ*, examines ancient and contemporary stories, which connect shame and vulnerability to Scripture and Christian theology. The book delves into this emotional and spiritual phenomenon to mine what shame has to teach.

Early reviews include the following:

"This book will be helpful not only for individuals caught in cycles of shame and guilt but also in study groups where participants seek to help one another 'grow into the full stature of Christ.' We all know the reality of shame. Healing comes, not when we ignore those moments, but when we realize that those moments are not all who we are," writes Brother James Koester SSJE, Superior, Society of Saint John the Evangelist, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"Written by a pastor who looks with compassion on the complexity of the human heart, this book offers keen insights into Scripture, literature, and the arts, and sets us on a path to freedom," adds The Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, Missioner for Creation Care for the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts.

A study guide is also included with the book, making it ideal for discussion groups or formation classes. To order your copy, visit Church Publishing's website: www.churchpublishing.org/withoutshameorfear.

Watch our NHEpiscopal Facebook page for updates and news of upcoming book signings.

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[#tendingthevine](https://twitter.com/NHEpiscopal)

On Instagram: [NHEpiscopal](https://www.instagram.com/NHEpiscopal)

Blogs: The Bulletin, our news blog
nhepiscopalnews.org

Bishop Rob's blog
tendingthevine.org

Canon Hannah's blog
thepurplefinch.org

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Bishop Rob Hirschfeld

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