



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — June 9, 2021

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From Bishop Hughes

We have learned so much – and God will continue to guide us

This is a transcript from a video message.

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark. As part of my visitation with churches on Sundays, we do something after the service that I call the congregational conversation. It's a chance for me to hear from the congregation and, during pandemic, I've only had one question that I've wanted answered during that time and that is, "How are you doing?" And every member of the congregation that wants to share an answer to that question has a minute or two to answer it. We don't have time to hear everybody's full story but really in two minutes, we're able to hear a good sense of how people are doing.

It's a blessing every single Sunday because most congregations – I'd say at least 80 percent, sometimes more, sometimes every single person on the call – answers that question and it's not just for me to hear, it's for everyone else who's on the call. These are zoom calls – everyone else who is on the call that's a member of that congregation gets an update on everyone else as does their priest. It's a blessing – it's also a healing time and an instructive time because one of the things that we learned during that time is just how much we have come to know, in all of this, how much we have changed, how much we have grown. And then we

also learned the parts of ourselves that are hurting or that are grieving and that need the help of each other.

One of the things that has been coming up recently in those calls – especially since vaccines have become more prevalent and safety guidelines have relaxed and we are gathering and we can go into certain areas without masks if we're fully vaccinated – is the sense of incredible joy that people have that this looks to be coming to an end, the sense of relief that people have that we don't have to wear a mask forever. But also this sense of carefulness and wariness that we still have to watch things, a recognition that there was no switch that got flipped that ended pandemic on a certain day at a certain time. And that we've been careful and caring for ourselves, for the health of ourselves and our families and our neighbors for so long that now we know that things have changed. But how do we know who's been vaccinated, who's not been vaccinated and who do we need to protect? And a sense of really wanting to protect all of those around us.

The thing that I've encouraged people about on those calls – and that I want to encourage you about today – is this will take some time. It'll take some time. And the way God has been with us every step of this, through all the hardest parts of pandemic – God will be with us in this part, where we navigate whatever it is that the journey has for us at this point. And part of that is determining what we want our lives to look like post-pandemic: what are the things that we want to do with our

time? What do we want to stay committed to? How busy do we want to be? And how much time do we want to make sure that we have for our family life, for our health, for our spiritual lives?

We'll also continue to figure out mask or not mask. Do I feel comfortable gathering? Do I not feel comfortable gathering? And that will take time. And I want you to trust the fact that the Holy Spirit is speaking to you. And if you feel a pause, perhaps that's the Spirit telling you, "Hang on, be cautious for a moment." And you can ask the same Spirit, you can ask that God's Spirit would show you when it is time, to help you to discern the places where you do feel ready to spend time with other people. It will all come with time. I have no doubt.

We have been through the worst already. I say that with confidence – I also say that with hopefulness. This part that is in front of us will take some navigation but it's navigating that we can do and many of us can help each other out as we do that.

We have learned so much during this time. We have deepened our faith and grown spiritually so much during this time. And the God that we have learned to follow more closely in the hardest parts of pandemic will help us as we continue to ease our way out of pandemic. So take the time that you need, be gentle with yourself and know that it will all work itself out in a way that makes you feel comfortable and safe. And give yourself the time that you need to be able to figure out what is best for you and best for your family.

Bishop Hughes adds role as Bishop Visitor for South Carolina order

Bishop Hughes is adding an additional role to her responsibilities as Bishop of Newark. The Order of Saint Helena, a monastic community for women in The Episcopal Church located in the Diocese of Upper South Carolina, has elected her to serve as their Bishop Visitor.

"We were impressed with her listening presence, humor and humility, as well as her commitment to

a church that is seated in tradition and stepping boldly into the future," the Sisters said in their announcement of Bishop Hughes' election.

The Episcopal Church canons require that each monastic order have a Bishop Visitor to shepherd the community according to its vision and to mediate matters requiring fresh wisdom. Additionally, the Bishop Visitor is guarantor to the Church concerning sound administration and stability of the community. Each community adds its own interpretation to the visitor's role according to its gifts and ministries.

"Bishop Visitor" is a literal term; the role includes annual visits to the community.

"Most of my life I have benefitted from the ministry of religious orders," said Bishop Hughes. "I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the Order of St. Helena in this way."

Features

Inspired by Bishop's study group, St. Elizabeth's continues conversation

By Wendy Broadbent, Catherine Outen Olivo & Sandy Sullivan

During January and February, three parishioners from St. Elizabeth's, Ridgewood participated in Bishop Hughes' six-week study group on Pursuing Racial Reconciliation through Scripture, Film, Word and Prayer. Inspired to continue the conversation within their home church, these parishioners offered a 4-week discussion group featuring the recently released PBS documentary, *The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song*, which traces the 400-year-old story of the Black Church in America.

For the month of April, a small group met weekly on Zoom for prayers, scripture and discussion questions based on the PBS study guide and other enriching supplemental materials, including documents, videos, articles, artwork and music.

These materials were inspired by Bishop Hughes' idea to use a multi-disciplinary approach to look deeply at the material and subject matter.

The group is planning a summer group discussion centered on the documentary *13th*. According to the NY Times, the film "challenges your ideas about the intersection of race, justice and mass incarceration."

Education for Ministry, a path for exploration

By Annie Pike

How is your Bible Study going? Are you fulfilling your curiosity about the authors of the gospels, did David write all those Psalms? Who are those Ephesians, and why did Paul write them letters, and what about those Roman lions, did the emperor really slaughter Christians as a sport? Maybe, you just want to dive deeper into the scriptures to understand your faith, find a ministry to contribute to or perhaps just begin a new prayer practice. If these or similar questions have come to mind, then maybe joining an Education for Ministry group this fall might be beneficial to your spiritual growth.

Education for Ministry (EfM) offers a four-year course, covering the basic subjects of theological education: Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, and Theological Topics with such topics as how God is calling us in today's very hectic world to love and serve our neighbor. Participants register for one nine-month academic year at a time and meet locally, or virtually every week in seminar groups of six to twelve participants with a trained mentor(s), for two to three hours.

Each week the participants have readings to complete with various resource guides, then bring their insights and discoveries to the seminar group for discussion and guided reflection. The weekly readings help participants to examine their own beliefs, their relationship to culture and the church, the tradition of the Church, all combined to guide

participants into being effective Christians in today's world. It is an opportunity to be together in a community of seekers, supported by prayer and regular worship, honest, private discussions, laughs, community outreach, and sometimes food! Another way that many EfM participants and graduates use to explain the program is **Exploring Faith Matters**.

Developed in 1975 by the School of Theology in Sewanee, Tennessee, EfM's current one-year fee per student is \$375, which pays for EfM materials, textbooks, and an honorarium for the mentor. EfM grants 18 Continuing Education Units (CEU) for each year of study. EfM does not grant college credits. Participants commit to one year at a time, and there are no examinations or papers to write, just a willingness to commit to reading the material, meeting each week, and respecting the group dynamics to ensure all participants are comfortable sharing and discussing how the readings inspired, confused, or amazed their relationship with God. The group mentor is not a teacher, but a facilitator who guides the group discussion and is required to train every eighteen months for mentor accreditation. Mentors often experience as much each week as the group participants.

You can find more information on EfM's website, efm.sewanee.edu. Groups with a September start date are forming now, both in-person and online and participants need not attend church or be Episcopalians to participate. We live in a diverse world, and diversity helps us to understand and love all. For more information on EfM and seminar groups please contact the EfM Coordinator Mark Waldon at teach.efm@me.com or this author at anniealexpik@gmail.com.

Next month, I will introduce some of the texts that will be used for the upcoming EfM academic year.

Diocesan Announcements

Hegg Awards premiere online this Sunday, June 13

The 24th annual David P. Hegg II Lifetime Achievement Awards will premiere on the diocesan YouTube channel, [youtube.com/c/dionewark](https://www.youtube.com/c/dionewark), and can be viewed on demand afterwards.

The downloadable service bulletin and the honorees' bios will be posted as soon as they become available here:

dioceseofnewark.org/event/senior-ministries-2021-hegg-awards

Clergy ministry transitions

Retirements

- **The Rev. Elizabeth Searle**, Vicar, Our Saviour, Secaucus - May 31

Arrivals

- **The Rev. Deacon Carrie Cabush**, Curate, Calvary, Summit - July 12