



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — January 5, 2022

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From Bishop Hughes

Sharing God's love when people are angry

This is a transcript from a video message.

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark, and 2022 has arrived. I imagine there's any number of us that had some secret and silent hope that when the clock struck 12:01 and the end of the last year stopped and the beginning of the new year began, that we would be in a completely different circumstance. That all that has worried us, all that has been complicated for us, and most especially Covid, would be behind us. So the great surprise of 2022 is not a surprise at all: we were in a surge as we came out of Thanksgiving, it only gained strength going into Christmas, it is much stronger now than it was before the holidays, and certainly the added challenge of a new variant has made it even worse. So here we are, no surprise at all.

The good news though, the important thing for us to remember is, it's not a surprise at all, but also, we know how to do this. We were in the same situation this time last year – we know how to navigate. We know how to figure out how what we need to change in order to work, in order to worship, in order to be around each other. We know how to take care of ourselves and our families and our friends and our neighbors. So, while this goes on around us, we make all of those adjustments that we need to make.

My question for us in 2022 has a whole lot less to do with Covid and much more to do with who we are called to be at this time. It doesn't take much effort to see that if there's a thing that defines this time right now, it seems to be anger. That people are on a very short lead, they move from zero to 60 in terms of their anger – half the time they can't even express what they're fully angry about, they just are rawly and massively angry.

It is disturbing and frightening to be around, and I'm convinced that on some level underneath that anger *is* something that frightens people. That it is fear and worry and anxiety that fuels all that anger. Who are we to be in the midst of that? How are we to be God's emissaries? How are we to be the witnesses of God's love in this time that we're in. Clearly there's a need for that. Clearly people need to know that they are heard, that they are loved, that God knows exactly where they are and exactly what they need.

And I think we have a part to play in that. I've talked with you before about a boldness of love and faith and action, and that that is where we want to be in our diocese. That it really does take bold love to let people know that not only that you care for them but that God cares for them. To actually use those words. God knows exactly who you are, God knows exactly what you need, and God loves you.

It's a bold thing to say those words to another person and I want to encourage you to practice saying them with a friend, so that when you have the opportunity you can say them to someone else

whose heart is broken, or who is so full of hurt or so full of anger or so full of fear that they are convinced the whole world is against them. I think when you're at that point where your back is up against the wall and all you can do is lash out, probably the most helpful thing that any of us needs when we're in that situation is to know that somebody cares.

It takes bold love to care. It takes bold love to say the words: to let somebody know that God knows where they are, God knows what they need, and God loves them. I wonder how many times we could possibly share that with another person in 2022. I want to encourage you to do so. I invite you to do so. And when you do, please do let me know about it! I want to know how it goes.

This is our year. This is our time. God is calling us to be bold lovers of God and God's people.

Stories from Our Congregations

An ambitious pandemic project: DIY organ rebuilding

By Nina Nicholson

The pandemic has been a time for learning new skills and starting new projects. Mark Wright decided to teach himself how to rebuild his church's beleaguered pipe organ.

When Wright, a retired high school English teacher and a professional jazz pianist, first began serving as music director at Christ Church, Hackensack, he received multiple warnings.

"The lowest of the three keyboards is completely dead – don't use it. Don't push those couplers. Avoid those unreliable pistons. Only about a third of the stop knobs actually identify pipes. The rests never worked or don't work now. Never use these four stops because a note will continually hang on. You will discover many missing individual notes –

the A and B above middle C do not sound at all. Many of the pedals do not sound. Avoid all the four-foot pipes because they are terribly out of tune. There is a constant hiss from air leaks. The swell door mechanism is unable to be repaired and the doors are jammed open. Turning the organ on or off produces many odd sounds, one of which resembles a coffee maker."

Surprisingly, "most people may not have noticed any of these problems," said Wright. "The organ contains around 2,000 pipes and one can 'camouflage' a lot by coupling unsounding pipes with sounding ones. But, if you are an organist, you want to have a reliable instrument on which to play."

Furthermore, while "camouflaging" the organ's many shortcomings made it possible to play it loudly, it was impossible to produce a sound soft enough to accompany a soloist.

"As a kid as a congregant of St. John's in Union City, I helped the rector to service a 1907 organ there," Wright said. "I remember having been inside the organ holding my finger over a valve that had failed as the organist played during a service conducted by Bishop Rath. I wasn't afraid to look inside Christ Church's organ."

He discovered serious air leaks patched with duct tape, exposed wires, and pipes crowded together too close to be serviced, accessible only by dangerous, rickety ladders. However, it wasn't until January 2021, during the pandemic shutdown, that he finally had the time to begin a serious study of exactly what was wrong with the pipe organ.

"I made a massive spreadsheet inventorying every possible note that could be sounded, what was missing, what was not sounding. Then I studied as many church records and histories as I could find to determine just how old this instrument was, who built it, and when it had been rebuilt, if ever."

He found evaluations performed by three professional organ builders in 1980, following a 1978 fire at the church in which the instrument

sustained considerable smoke and heat damage. “These evaluations were very useful to me,” he said.

However, he knew the church did not have the funds to make the necessary repairs. “So, I rolled up my sleeves, hired some college kids who were home during the shutdown, enlisted the help of my brother and nephew and set out to make the best of what we have.”

Initially Wright and his small crew worked on their own, cleaning out debris, mapping the pipes, and building safer ways to access them via new ladders and catwalks. They worked slowly and carefully, so as not to do any additional damage. “Pipe organs are like elephants – large but also very sensitive,” said Wright.

Wright admits that while he comes from a family of woodworkers, “I was the klutz – my father wouldn’t teach me how to use power tools because he was afraid I’d cut my finger off. I’m not anywhere near as gifted as my brother,” who is a cabinetmaker. He said his brother’s expertise was invaluable in building the ladders and catwalks.

After four months working on their own, Wright realized, “OK, now it’s time for surgery – and I’m not a surgeon.” He brought in professional organ builder Jim Konzelman, who was willing to work with them. Konzelman taught Wright how to make some repairs, such as patching leaky pipe stoppers or repairing disconnected wiring, which Wright in turn taught to his helpers. In this way, they continued to do part of the work themselves.

“When we showed Jim what we’d done, he said, ‘this work is excellent,’” Wright noted with pride.

They have completely rebuilt the mechanisms for the jammed swell doors, as well as the pneumatics under some of the pipes. Other pipes need to be replaced altogether; because they cannot afford new ones, they are buying used ones from a Pennsylvania company.

Up until this month, Wright has paid for everything out of his own pocket. Now the church has

established an organ fund, with an anonymous parishioner promising to double any gifts up to \$1,000.

Nearly a year into this project, Wright estimates that the organ renovation is 90% complete. “The organ is so much more versatile now. I can accompany a soloist with a lovely soft sound. People are noticing during the services.”

A rededication of the organ is tentatively scheduled for the Feast of the Ascension in May 2022. “I want the organ to be a sign of rebirth,” he said. He also hopes that it will encourage the re-establishment of a choir.

Wright’s advice for anyone considering a similar project: “Never tell yourself that something is too hard to do. Rather, focus on learning as much as possible about how this instrument works. Throw your ego away, grow and learn. Then when you reach the limits of your knowledge; get advice, and if you are lucky the assistance of an expert. If you are super lucky, as I have been, find an expert who allows you to work with him or her.”

Summarizing the project as complicated and challenging but also exciting and satisfying, he says, “This Covid shutdown has turned out to be a blessing in disguise.”

Diocesan Announcements

Clergy ministry transitions

Ordinations

- **Dec. 18, 2021: The Rev. Katherine Rollo, The Rev. Lorna Woodham and The Rev. Carrie Cabush, to the Priesthood**

Departures

- **June 5, 2022: The Rev. Canon Robert Griner, Rector, Christ Church, Newton**