



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — February 16, 2022

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From Bishop Hughes

Sharing stories of gratitude and hope

This is a transcript from a video message.

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark. On Sundays, I have the great pleasure of worshipping with the parishes of this diocese. And one of the things that happens after worship is that I get to spend time talking with the congregation. We call it the Congregational Conversation – nothing like a functional name! – and during that conversation in these years of pandemic, I've been asking one question and one question only: "How are you doing?" – and everybody answers that in their own way.

I'm fully aware that when I ask that question, I'm asking it of people who have managed to navigate two years of pandemic and all that that entailed. Some people have lost family members or jobs, some people have seen division happen in their families along with friendships. And some have managed to stay healthy and well and employed and, as they say, it feels a little bit of survivor's guilt about having no real trouble during this time.

I'm keenly aware though, regardless of where anyone falls on that spectrum, that all of us are feeling the impact of almost two years of pandemic because it hasn't just been pandemic – it's also been seeing a whole host of other tragedies and all happening in an environment of constant division and argument – and argument in ways that are

disrespectful and hold others in contempt. We are feeling the wear and tear of that and in the midst of all of this – these things that are hard on us, that are exhausting and frustrating, disappointing and sometimes downright depressing and leaving us sad.

In the midst of all of this, every single Sunday, I hear the stories of God's grace, of who God has been to us in this time. The word that I hear most often from our congregations is "blessed". Someone will talk of the tragedy that they've experienced in their family, the number of people who have died during this time, or the losses personally that have happened in this time. And then they will talk about the blessing – the blessing of the community of faith, the blessing of God, the blessing of becoming more able to navigate their own faith without having someone to do it for them. That they've learned more about the prayer book or more about prayer, more about putting themselves in the presence of God and listening for God's voice even as they pour out their own hearts. It has been a time of incredible blessing.

The other thing that I hear people say as they talk about all of the blessings is their desire to share those blessings. Very often I am asked, "What should we do? How can we help? Who could use our support?". It's an extraordinary thing to listen to someone talk with great sadness, with a deep sense of gratitude and with a sense of hopefulness about what God can still do – not only *for* us but *through* us and *with* us.

These two years – almost two years – of pandemic have been transforming us – we are not the people that we were. We have become something new and our church is not the church that it was, it is becoming something new.

I say all this to remind us that as we go forward and we get tired of it (and we do get tired of it all), I think all of us is ready for the pandemic “off switch” to be hit and to be into a different kind of life. But as we continue forward – because there's no place else for us to go but forward – it's important for us from time to time to share with each other the stories of this time. I do it every Sunday with our parishioners. I invite you to do it, too: tell your story. Tell it to the other people in your church, tell it with your family as you gather and with friends. Tell the story of the hard times and tell the story of God's blessings – not only will it lift you up but it will lift up the people who hear your story.

Diocesan Announcements

2021 Alleluia Fund grant recipients

For over a decade, the Alleluia Fund for Outreach has been helping some of the most vulnerable among us. Thanks to the generous financial support of many individuals across the diocese, as well as congregational support and funds specifically allocated to outreach in the diocesan budget, this year the Alleluia Fund was able to make grants totaling \$155,000 to 30 nonprofits across northern New Jersey and internationally.

With these funds, our Alleluia Fund partners will assist many of the most vulnerable of God's people in our diocese, all year long.

Our 2021 Alleluia Fund nonprofit recipients are:

- Family Promise of Sussex County - Housing Search and Placement

- Good Shepherd Sustainable Learning Foundation - Poultry Farm
- Greater Life Inc. - Kidstute Covid Lifeline
- Church of the Messiah, Chester - Senior Resource Center
- Essex County LGBT RAIN Foundation - Emergency Housing for LGBT Youth
- Newark Shared Ministries - All The Way Up
- Family Promise of Hudson County - Rapid Rehousing Grant
- St. Mark's Church, Teaneck - St. Mark's Quilters' Fabric Purchase for Feminine Hygiene Kits
- Love Must Act, Inc. - Academic Expense for Holy Cross School
- Education for All Children - Educational Support for Impoverished Children in Kenya
- Pathways to College - Academic counseling
- Grace Community Services - Support Breakfast Plus Program
- St. Paul's CDC, Paterson - Emergency Men's Shelter
- The Lighthouse - Food & Social Work Services
- Grace Church, Newark - Food Outreach Ministry
- Family Promise of Bergen County - Shelter Funding
- The GRACE Project, Inc. - Clean Water & Gardening Project
- Seamen's Church Institute - General Operating Support
- Union City, Grace Church - Saturday Lunch Program
- Ahli Arab Hospital - Children's Trauma Clinic
- Meeting Emergency Needs with Dignity - Pantry Partnerships Supplemental Food Purchasing
- Episcopal Jersey City - Triangle Park Community Center
- Communities of Faith for Housing, The Hoboken Shelter - Food Program

- My Sister's Lighthouse Resource Center, Inc.
- Domestic & Sexual Violence support service in Newark
- St. Paul's Church, Englewood - St. Paul's Choir School
- St. Peter's Church, Morristown - Success For All Academic Assistance Program
- Haven of Hope for Kids - General Operating Support
- St. Matthew Trinity Lunchtime Ministry, Hoboken - Food & Supply Cost
- United Community Corporation - Emergency services
- St. Peter's Haven, Clifton - Food and supplies for homeless outreach

Presidents' Day holiday

Episcopal House will be closed next Monday, Feb. 21, in observance of Presidents' Day.

Clergy ministry transitions

Departures

- **Feb. 17, 2022: The Rev. Shawn Carty,** Chaplain at House of the Good Shepherd, Hackettstown