



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — July 6, 2022

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## From Bishop Hughes

### Finding middle ground

*This is a transcript from a video message.*

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark. It's just a few days after Independence Day, that great celebration in our country, in the United States, of our freedom as a nation, celebrated every fourth of July. It is one of my favorite holidays. I don't have to do a big shop or big cook or big clean. It's a wonderful time to gather in a very casual, carefree way, with family and with friends. We make hot dogs and hamburgers, talk and laugh all day long. Talk about the celebrations we've had before, our hopes and dreams for our families, for our communities, for our churches, and for our nation, going forward. And then we look at fireworks at the end, what could be better than a day like that?

In this past Fourth of July, was yet another series of tragedies, multiple shootings across the country, and the horrific shooting of the parade in Highland Park. There's none of us, I think, who could continue to enjoy our celebrations, knowing that such tragedy was being played out, once again in our nation.

And I think you know, I feel like I've said so much about our efforts in this area. We have protested, we have written letters, we've stood firmly, we've prayed. We have all learned how to pray the names of those who have died, in our churches multiple Sundays in a row, every time it happens. We lead

prayer vigils, we do all of these things. And if there's a thing that I feel that is missing, and it is not ours to do alone, it is when a community comes together and works for the common good.

This will sound like a big jump away from the topic, but General Convention of The Episcopal Church begins this weekend. And it is an example of people coming together, wanting the best for the church, wanting the best for how we behave as church, how we work as church, how we live out our faith as church, and working for the highest good. There is no conversation in which one person expects to win and win outright. There is a coming together, a meeting of the minds, compromise happens. Things change over the time, thinking of things changes, things change over time. And all of it blanketed by prayer and by conversation and camaraderie and hard negotiation, really thinking through what is it that we are called to be doing.

I remind you of this because we do have a smaller version of this at Diocesan Convention every year. It's how we make our decisions. Another version of this happens in your parishes, when your vestries come together and for your annual meeting as churches make decisions, that we have a practice of working for the highest good.

And my question for all of us is how do we take that practice, which I believe is a spiritual practice, of putting ourselves in a back seat and putting the needs of others, putting the needs of our neighbors, first, and hearing everything they have to say and asking ourselves, is there some middle

ground in between what I'm looking for and what they're looking for? That is what we need to see in our nation. That's what we need to see in our legislatures. That is what we need to see, in order to address this vexing problem of gun violence.

I say all this to say don't give up. The tools are in our hands. I know that there's a tendency, our temptation to throw in the towel or to be numb, to act like it doesn't happen or to retreat to your corner and say I'm right, it must be my way or no other way. Somewhere between us all is middle ground. And somewhere in that place, we will as individuals, as communities, as families, as church, as nation, we will find that middle ground. God will lead us there whether we believe in God or not.

## Diocesan Announcements

### [Episcopal House summer closings](#)

**Summer Fridays:** From July 1 through Aug. 26, Episcopal House will close for the weekend at 1 PM on Fridays.

**Week before Labor Day:** All members of the Bishop's staff are using their vacation time to take off the week of Aug. 29 - Sept. 2, closing Episcopal House until Tuesday, Sept. 6.