



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — November 9, 2022

If you have email, you can sign up to receive *The VOICE Online*, currently published every other Wednesday. Visit [dioceseofnewark.org/subscribe](https://dioceseofnewark.org/subscribe)

## From the Bishop

### What does God want me to do???

*This is a transcript from a video message.*

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark. And I want to talk with you about discernment. That is an important word we use in The Episcopal Church. And most often when we use it, we mean one of two things. We're talking about people who are trying to determine if they are called to ordained ministry, and we call that whole ordination process a discernment process. And then secondly, we talk about discernment is a parish is trying to make the decision about who to call as their next priest-in-charge, or their next rector. We talk about that decision-making process in both cases being a time of discernment. And while those are times of discernment, those are not the definition of discernment.

Discernment is that time and it can happen at any point in life, and I want to encourage it to be happening for every Episcopalian right now. It is that time where we ask ourselves, "What is God calling me to next? What is happening in this situation in which God is trying to guide me? What are the next steps I should take? How is God trying to lead me into the thing that God has prepared me for in this life?" That is something we should all be asking. We've been asking it as we consider this question of beginning anew as a diocese, and many of our parishes are asking the same question, as they ask, "How do we do our ministry and mission in the world that we're in right now?"

So that question is floating all around us. And it's not just the church! Every organization, every business, every school, everyone is asking the question of how do we do that thing that we do, now? The world has changed, people's needs are different. And for us, as Christians, part of asking that question is this turning to God and looking for the ways that God is working in the world around us and working within us, and identifying those things that matter the most to us, that innately God has put into our hearts and into our spirits that we care about, and how God might be asking us to shepherd those things forward.

This piece, this discernment piece, is something that most people need help in doing. I always think it's interesting when people say, "Well, I'm going to go off to a retreat" – or go off to the mountaintop or go off to the ocean – "where I can make that decision." And that might be a great place to clear out your mind and think things through. But eventually, most of us need people who are wiser, people who are deeply faithful, people who will pray with us, people who will listen to us, and people who will ask us questions. Discernment most often happens within the framework of community, whether that's your family, or your prayer group, or a group of friends, or the faith community that you are living and worshiping in right now.

I want to encourage you to explore discernment. We have an online discernment class happening tomorrow night, Thursday night. Today, Wednesday, is the last day you can sign up for it. And I hope that you're able to partake of that and do some learning about, how do you do

discernment? What are the first steps what might you be looking for?

But even if you're not able to take part in that class, there will be more opportunities for you to discern. And you can start that right now in your own home, in your own heart, asking the question, "God, what is it that you have for me? Help me to see that what you would like me to be doing in my life, in this community, in this world right now."

## Happening at Our Churches

### Animal blessing leads to explosives-detection training at St. John's, Boonton

*By the Rev. Sharon Sheridan Hausman*

Bowie, a black Giant Schnauzer, moved from pew to pew, sometimes jumping on the seats like an excited toddler. Suddenly, he took a good sniff at a pew book rack and sat down. Owner Chris Kline quickly rewarded Bowie with a snack.

Bowie was just having fun, but the game was more serious for his owner and their trainer Carmelo Vinci. Dog and owner were completing training as an explosives-detection team. On a recent Friday afternoon, Vinci hid three pseudo-explosives – inert compounds that smelled like dynamite, a fertilizer bomb and RDX – in St. John's Church in Boonton. Then Kline guided Bowie in a search pattern in the church to locate them.

Bowie completed his mission, and Kline received a training certificate from Vinci, who provides dog training, including scent detection, through his business Roman Empire K9 Academy. In his primary job at a North Jersey sheriff's department, Vinci works with and trains law-enforcement dogs to track people and to sniff out substances like explosives and narcotics.

"Schnauzers are working dogs," said Kline, owner of Boonton Auto Parts. With his children grown and out of the house, Kline thought: "Let me make

[Bowie] work to keep him busy, keep his mind active."

Bowie, now 3, began scent training and then advanced to explosives detection. Kline and Bowie were the academy's first explosive-detection clients, Vinci said.

The dog-and-human team trained in various venues. When Vinci asked Kline to find a house of worship to practice in, Kline contacted the priest at St. John's because she had blessed Bowie during a blessing of the animals at the annual Boonton Day festival on Sept. 25.

Bowie completed a 16-week class to imprint odors such as dynamite. Through training, dogs learn that something good will happen if they locate certain scents, Vinci explained.

"Ultimately, for them it's a game," he said. Bowie's reward for winning the "game" of sniffing out the scent of explosives is food. Vinci's dog at the sheriff's department earns the chance to play with a ball.

"It's got to be fun for them," he said. "If it's not fun for them, they won't do it."

Dogs can sniff out microscopic odors too faint for humans to smell – detecting scents such as explosives or narcotics, even in sealed containers – because a dog's nose has 200 million olfactory receptors, compared to a human's 20 million, Vinci said. "They communicate with their nose. Their nose can dissect odors."

For example, he said, "We see a pizza pie as a whole. The dog, if it was able to speak, would break it down: 'I smell pepperoni. I smell cheese. I smell oregano.'"

Outside St. John's, Kline directed Bowie first to sniff the lower edges of the front door. Then, he carefully opened the door and brought Bowie inside, trying to keep the airflow as low as possible so as not to displace any scents. They searched starting at the back of the church, so that they easily could head for the door if they detected an explosive.

In a real-life situation, such as when dogs are called in to "sweep" a building where there's been a

bomb threat, dogs and handlers leave as soon as they detect an explosive and let the bomb squad take over. Once a potential bomb is located, their job is done, Vinci said.

Looking ahead, Kline said he'd like to do more training and gain more confidence – perhaps do some explosive-detection work or even dog training himself when he retires.

As for Bowie, he seems amenable to staying in the game, as long as the treats keep coming.

*The Rev. Sharon Sheridan Hausman is priest-in-residence at St. John's Episcopal Church in Boonton.*

## Diocesan Announcements

### Update from the Strategic Visioning Team

The Strategic Visioning Team is busy facilitating Listening Sessions across the Diocese, while continuing to schedule new ones by the middle of December. For the sessions that they have already held, the discussions have been lively and engaging. The team looks forward to seeing the results and understanding the priorities that the people of the Diocese share. The team will be compiling results throughout December and will identify the priority areas for the next phase of the visioning process in January 2023.