



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — December 7, 2022

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## From the Bishop

### Cherishing the gift of relationships

*This is a transcript from a video message.*

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark. And we're at about midpoint in Advent, two weeks behind us, just about two weeks in front of us, and Christmas approaching faster than almost anybody I know is ready for it to get here. Ready or not, here Christmas comes.

There is something wonderful about this Advent, and this Christmas, though, for us, especially here in the Diocese of Newark. The last two and a half, almost three years have been a quite a struggle as we dealt with COVID. And while it's not completely behind us, we still have to be careful. I don't know about you, but right now at this very minute, I know six people that are quite ill with COVID. So we still have to be careful. But even in the midst of being careful, things that feel like a regular part of our life are being restored. I am back in my office. I'm back doing visitations again, people are back in church, we're gathering again, we had people at my house for Thanksgiving, we'll spend time with others at Christmas. These things that are so important to us are being restored.

And I don't know about you, but this time in particular, it seems that there is a new sense of joyfulness and delight, and treasuring these gifts that have been given to us. Primarily, the gifts of other people, the gifts of family, the gifts of friends, the gifts of colleagues that we work with, the gifts of prayer partners, and study partners in Bible study, the gifts of the people that sit in the pew

next to us or behind us or in front of us, the gifts of walking down the aisle to receive Communion with the rest of your family of faith. But these gifts seem so much more wonderful this year than they have before. It makes sense. We haven't had them with regularity for the past two-plus years. And they are back now. And so there's a newness to them and a particular delight and joy to them.

And I want to invite you to spend some time looking at these things, acknowledging them, enjoying them, enjoying the gifts and being grateful for those gifts, and also doing some discernment during the rest of Advent and during Christmas season. To determine, what is it that God wants us to remember about these gifts? Is there a special message for us so that these gifts don't become something that we take for granted, again. I know we can't, in our regular lives, give the same attention to everything all the time. Some things have to be priorities, and some things have to be less important. But I am keenly aware that pre-pandemic, many of us took our relationships, we thought they were important, but we took them somewhat for granted. And most of us have discovered during this time, that those are priorities to us. And we want them to remain priorities.

It takes discernment to spend time thinking. And when I say discernment, I really do mean asking God, what are you doing in this situation? And, what would you have me do in this situation? Every Sunday when I go to church, one of the first things I say as I open the service is, what a joy it is to be together face to face. And that I hope we always treasure this and that we don't ever go back to the

place where we take our being able to gather for granted again. For me that has meant making some choices. It means I go to bed earlier on Saturday, so I'm not cranky at all on Sunday morning. Sunday is a big day in my house. For you, it might mean something else. Thinking about where your time goes so that you can be with the people that you care about the most.

This discernment, this asking the question of what is it that God is trying to show me and what would God have me do with it? It might be key to us as we enter into the holiday season and into 2023. It might be key for us as we determine the best ways to hold the treasure that God has given us in a place of honor and a place where it is cherished and not taken for granted.

## Happening at Our Churches

### Two ministries combine to feed both body and soul

*The Rev. Katherine Rollo*

On the Saturday after Thanksgiving two ministries of Holy Spirit, Verona combined to feed both body and soul of those in need. Members of the Shawl Ministry knitted and crocheted 144 hat and scarf sets as a holiday gift for the shoppers who come to Holy Spirit's monthly food pantry.

The Shawl Ministry was introduced to Holy Spirit about a year ago by the Curate, the Rev. Katherine Rollo. It quickly drew a dozen members who gather every other week to 'pray' yarn into beautifully crafted garments. This is a contemplative ministry where each stitch is a prayer for those who will receive the garment, past recipients as well as those who belong to the ministry. Shawls are given to those in need of comfort, healing as well as those celebrating a special occasion, the newly baptized and the newly wed.

It was the idea of the Rector, the Rev. Jerry Racioppi, to bring together the work of the food pantry and the shawl ministry to create a gift of

warmth and prayer at Thanksgiving. Each set included a note explaining the tradition behind the Shawl Ministry, reminding the recipient that they would be held in prayer by the family at Holy Spirit.

### Collecting used bikes and sewing machines as a ministry

*By the Rev. Bill Cruse*

St. John's Memorial Church in Ramsey held a collection on October 15, 2022 for Pedals for Progress / Sewing for Peace. Over 35 volunteers aged 8 to 80+, from both St. John's and from Ramsey's BSA Troop 31, collected 196 bikes and 27 sewing machines.

For over 30 years this 4-star charity in Highbridge, NJ has been delivering bikes and sewing machines to countries where they are needed. St. John's bikes are going to Guatemala and Belize and the sewing machines are destined for Tanzania, Belize and the Togolese Republic. A bicycle or sewing machine makes a significant difference to a family's income. See Pedals for Progress for the inventive ways the bikes and sewing machines are used.

Thanks to the generosity of our local communities and the hard work of our volunteers every year, St. John's has given Pedals for Progress over 1,700 bikes and almost 200 sewing machines since 2010.

### A lunch ministry needed coverage and the Cathedral stepped in

St. John's in Boonton has recently reinstated their "Saturday Luncheon Social," but needed coverage for Saturday, November 26 because their members were participating in the Boonton Thanksgiving Parade. Members of Trinity & St. Philip's Cathedral in Newark came to their rescue.

Fr. George Dredde, Priest-in-Charge at the Cathedral, said that when the Rev. Sharon Hausman, Priest-in-Residence at St. John's, reached out to him, "it was a no brainer to help, and the folks at the Cathedral jumped right in!"

The Cathedral volunteers were welcomed by the lunch attendees, who "asked a ton of questions about the Cathedral. Several had either been confirmed there or attended services many years

ago,” said Dredden, adding, “Everyone took home food for later. God's spirit was alive and well. What a wonderful way to start our Advent season!”

# Diocesan Announcements

## Diocese of Newark Training - Living Out Our Baptismal Vows

*By the Rev. Bill Cruse, Michele Simon, And the Rev. Diana L. Wilcox*

The Diocese of Newark is committed to pursuing ways to live into our Baptismal Covenant of “seeking and serving Christ in all persons...striving for justice and peace among all people, and respecting the dignity of every human being.” (BCP page 304-305). Part of that commitment is to raise awareness of the sins of racism and sexism, and to equip clergy and lay leaders with information and tools to enable this gospel work in their lives, in their parish, and in the world. To that end, our diocese offers two separate and distinct trainings.

Both the Anti-Racism Dialogs and the Anti-Sexism Training are required by the Canons of the Diocese of Newark for all clergy, as well as any lay person seeking election to diocesan office, commission, committee, or board. While Anti-Racism training is also required by Canon across the larger Episcopal Church, our diocese is once again leading the way in the cause of justice for all children of God, being the first to require Anti-Sexism training. However, we will not be the last. Other dioceses have contacted us to gain insight into how to develop their own training, and the larger church, because of the resolution we sent to General Convention, created the “Task Force to Study Sexism in the Episcopal Church & Develop Anti-Sexism Training,” chaired by one of our own, Laura Russell, Esq.

The Anti-Racism Dialogues – offered via Zoom interactive meetings over 3 consecutive Saturdays in the Spring and Fall each year – help participants understand the origin, pervasiveness, and impact of racism; gain practice in speaking with honesty and vulnerability about the impact of racism in their life; and develop the commitment and a plan for tackling the

issue of racism in their life and in their faith communities. The Dialogues are the work of the Anti-Racism Commission, chaired by Michele Simon and the Rev. Bill Cruse.

The Anti-Sexism Training is offered in-person in a single day in various locations across the diocese, multiple times per year. The training includes thoughtful discussion, interactive exercises, videos, and presentations designed to engage dialog on the impact of sexism in the lives of women and girls, understand the role of the church in perpetuating sexism, and equip participants with the tools to effect change. The training is the work of the Anti-Sexism Task Force, chaired by Laura Russell, Esq. and the Rev. Diana Wilcox.

It's important to note that, while certain members of the diocese are required to take these trainings, *any* member of the diocese is most welcome to participate.

So, two trainings, two engaging ways to live deeper and more fully into our baptismal covenant, and to live out the gospel of Jesus Christ in our lives, in the church, and in the world.

## Clergy ministry transitions

On Monday, November 28, Bishop Hughes celebrated the ordination of the Rev. William “Billy” Adams to the Priesthood at St. Elizabeth's, Ridgewood, where he is currently serving as the Associate Rector for Church Growth. Billy comes to us from the Diocese of Kentucky.