



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — September 20, 2023

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From the Bishop

How do we grow the faith?

This is a transcript of a video message.

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark. One of the most special gifts that I found – I should say, found again – in our focus on Sabbath this past summer, and also on my own re embrace of Sabbath, of making sure that it has a real place in my weekly life. I gave us a very specific way to approach Sabbath this summer, and that was to look at rest, and gratitude, and joyfulness, but that doesn't sum up all there is to Sabbath – that was some practices for us to get used to Sabbath, to stretch our muscles and lean into Sabbath.

And what I found myself working through those different pieces of approaching Sabbath is, sooner or later came a moment of quiet, a moment where I was able to listen. And most often I will admit, I would give a question to God, and I would just sit and wait with that question, hoping for an answer. I have to say that for me – and we all have a different experience – that for me, it's rare that there's an automatic answer. Often, there's a sense of what the next thing to do is. And if I do that next thing and get quiet again, then the next thing is revealed. And it's a slow unfolding, of moving into the direction that God has for us.

I spent quite a bit of time thinking about where we are as a diocese, what is happening with Christianity in the United States, and what is happening with our church, in our churches here in the Diocese of Newark, in particular. And certainly

one of the things that I have heard from everyone is, we need to get people back in. We need to find young people, we need to find young families, we need to figure out how to grow the church. And I am aware that the Christian church has been figuring out how to grow itself consistently for the last 30 years – the entire time, losing ground, every single year, year after year, despite our best efforts and our best plans.

And what struck me this summer, when I kept offering that question over to God, "Do you actually even want to church here in northern New Jersey?" And the thing that became very clear to me this summer, is we have a very big ministry that God is calling us to in northern New Jersey, that every single one of our parishes is surrounded by people who are anxious, depressed, some struggling with addiction, and many incredibly lonely – not having any idea of how to connect to other people, how to be in relationship in a community or a group that cares for them, and certainly not having a sense of who God is in their lives. That is what we are called to. We are called to grow the faith.

And so I'm calling on every Episcopalian in our diocese, to spend time in your parish, spend time in your prayers, spend time in silence before God asking that question. How do I grow the faith? How do I grow it in myself? How do I grow it in others? Let me be clear, there is no one simple answer to this. It will take all of us – faithfully praying, faithfully listening and faithfully always taking that next step so that we can offer the beauty that is God's love, far beyond our parish doors.

Hispanic/Latino Ministry

During National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 - October 15) we are sharing stories of Hispanic/Latino ministry in the Diocese of Newark.

An interview with Deacon Jill Singleton on Hispanic/Latino ministry

By Nina Nicholson

In April we reported on The Lighthouse in Union City, a temporary residence established by the Rev. Deacon Jill Singleton for asylum seekers, the majority of whom are from Latin American countries. Recently Jill sat for another interview in which she shares what she sees as the challenges and opportunities of Hispanic/Latino ministry in the Diocese of Newark, plus gives an update on The Lighthouse. The interview has been edited and condensed.

When we talked last April, you had applied for an ACTS/VIM grant to help fund a women's empowerment program for the female residents of The Lighthouse 2. What's the status of that?

We just got the money in July. So we really just started. The things that made it into the ACTS/VIM application were, first and foremost, increased English classes, which have already started. We have the blessing and the curse of being located in Union City. A blessing because so many people speak Spanish, but then it's also a curse, because the need to learn [English] doesn't have the same sense of urgency that it might if you were living in another area.

Financial literacy classes have been really popular. We have somebody who works individually with the families. None of these people have ever had a savings account before – they've never really thought about saving money, they've really just been living hand to mouth. This person is talking with them about how you prepare a home budget, how you have to anticipate costs that may come up. So that they're saying, "Okay, I'm putting away this much money every month because this is going

to be for my future." This person also has been helping them with how to establish credit, because so much depends on having credit, even renting an apartment.

We're in the final stages of setting up our self-defense classes, that was something they all really wanted to have. I would say all of the women have been party to, either personally or somebody very close to them, some form of sexual assault, of feeling vulnerable of men taking advantage of them. We're really excited that we found somebody bilingual who can come and teach them. We're also going to include the children.

Another one we're about to start is digital literacy. We're talking about really basic things: How do you use a mouse? How do you open a Google Doc? How do you have an email account?

We also put in driving lessons. They're all very keen to drive. We have not had as much luck with that because passing the written test has proven challenging, finding time even to study for the written test has proven challenging. I don't think that's necessarily going to work out.

What are some of the challenges you see to Hispanic/Latino ministry?

I really worry about the anti-asylum seeking rhetoric that's developing. Seeing things like we saw on Staten Island, for example, where people were rioting and picketing over not wanting to have a building repurposed for housing asylum seekers.

We had a generous, consistent donor who backed down on their partnership with us, because they're getting heat about, "Who are these people? They're not vetted before they come here. They could be criminals." People don't understand that they are not here illegally. Every single person who is in The Lighthouse is following the law [on seeking asylum], that's a requirement for living here.

The problem of immigration is a concept that can't be made real until you have a relationship. Yes, we can see images on TV. But when you have a relationship with somebody, and you are crossing

that bridge – language, culture, sometimes religion – that's when you're transformed. And that's when your love is transformational.

What are some of the opportunities you see for Hispanic/Latino ministry in the Diocese of Newark?

There's got to be something between living at The Lighthouse, where you have all the support provided, and boom, you're on your own, now you're independent. We have many churches that have space available. And so if we could find a way for some of our churches to open their doors, I think it would be a beautiful ministry. They [the asylum seekers] would be able to pay a little something [to the church], because these are people who have been here for a couple of years, maybe they have a job now, but they can't quite make it on their own.

A church could try it with one family and say, “You know what, we tried it, we're happy that we supported them. And as they move on, we're not going to replace them.” And that's fine. Maybe they'll feel called to help in other ways.

You know, I cared about the issue before, but it wasn't till I visited somebody in detention, and I met them, and I looked them in the eye, that it became real. And then when you meet children, that's when it becomes super real.

I just think that it's a real opportunity for us to practice what it means to be followers of Jesus, and what it means to be Christians and what it means to be putting the gospel to action in the world. We have so many opportunities right at our fingertips. I would just love to see our churches scratching their heads a little bit more and thinking about and dreaming and imagining. Being a Christian requires a lot of imagination, because we need to imagine the world in a different way than it currently is.

Stories from Our Congregations

Christ Church in Short Hills sings in two English cathedrals

By Cynthia McChesney

I had a bit of a 'time travel' experience this summer. As a member of Christ Church in Short Hills' Choir, I found myself standing in the quire stalls of the magnificent Salisbury Cathedral, waiting to begin singing. Light filtered in through stained glass windows high overhead. The organ prelude echoed through the ancient stone walls. The words we would begin singing were ancient as well, the *Preces and Responses*, the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*, the psalms and prayers.

As I joined my fellow choir members in the opening notes of the hymn, I couldn't help but feel a connection with every person whose voice had filled the space. We were worshiping, across time, with thousands upon thousands of others. And as we sang, the cathedral, built centuries ago to amplify and harmonize the human voice, took the sound we were making and transformed it into something larger, fuller—almost as if the echoes of other voices were joining in.

For eleven days this summer, under the guidance of Dr. Andrew Moore, Christ Church in Short Hills' choir master and organist, the 28-member Christ Church Choir had the honor of serving as resident choir in two Anglican cathedrals: Bristol Cathedral (from July 29-30) and Salisbury Cathedral (from July 31 through August 6). Accompanying us on the organ was the esteemed organist Dr. Brian Harlow, allowing Dr. Moore to lead us during the services and prepare us for our daily performances.

Several choir “alumni,” who’d previously relocated as far away as California and South Carolina “came home” to join in the adventure. The Rev. Bowie Snodgrass (along with her family) was part of the group, as were a selection of other friends and

family members, bringing the total number of travelers to almost 40.

Evensong is the name for the Service of Evening Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer. This service has been the principal evening liturgy of the Anglican and Episcopal tradition since 1549, when Archbishop Cranmer combined the two monastic services of Vespers and Compline. Choral Evensong developed out of that tradition and includes music, chant and prayer.

Cathedrals are the main sustainers of the English Choral tradition, and many UK cathedrals produce Choral Evensong six days a week all year long. In the summer, their own choirs can take a break which opens up the opportunity for visiting choirs. Being selected is a competitive process, and Christ Church Choir was fortunate in having sung at Salisbury (a “top tier” cathedral) seven years ago on our first international choir trip.

Both Bristol and Salisbury are beautiful and historic structures, but it was Salisbury that truly threw me into that “time traveler” experience. The building has been standing for eight centuries. It was 803 years ago, in the year 1220, that ground was broken for Salisbury Cathedral, and its main body was completed in 38 years (!). It is widely regarded as one of the most beautiful cathedrals in the United Kingdom and is a leading example of Early English Gothic architecture (and has the tallest church spire in all of England).

Each day we would enter the Cathedral Close through an arch located across the street from our hotel, and in a few steps, you are presented with this magnificent building - almost like walking into a movie set. But it is a movie set humming with activity as the cathedral operated like a small city. We were welcomed warmly by the staff and folded into the community seamlessly.

Happily, you don’t have to fly over to the UK to experience Choral Evensong! In fact, over the next few months you have several opportunities, right here in our own diocese. Come and join in the everlasting song – you may have your own “time traveling” experience!

Upcoming Diocesan Evensongs:

Saturday, September 30, 5 PM, at St. Paul’s, Chatham

Combined Evensong sung by the choirs of Grace, Madison and St. Paul’s, Chatham

Sunday, October 1, 6 PM, at St. Peter’s, Morristown
Choral Evensong sung by the choir of St. Peter’s, Morristown

Saturday, November 4, 5 PM, at Calvary, Summit
Vigil for All Saints' Day sung by the choirs of Calvary, Summit and St. George's, Maplewood

Sunday, November 5, 4 PM, at Christ Church, Short Hills
Evensong for All Saints Day sung by the choir of Christ Church, Short Hills

Trinity, Allendale and Tails of Hope Foundation celebrate a decade-long relationship

By Debby Brown

On Sunday, September 17, parishioners at Trinity Church, Allendale joined with many members and friends of the Tails of Hope Foundation, Inc. (TOHF), an all-volunteer non-profit organization, to celebrate the rewarding relationship between the parish and this exceptional service group over the past ten years.

During the Holy Eucharist service, Linda Blick, president of Tails of Hope, highlighted the organization’s purpose, history, and many accomplishments. Former Army Sergeant, David Kist, whose service dog, Patrick, recently succumbed to incurable illness, followed, recounting the vital outreach extended to him personally through TOHF’s ongoing commitment to military veterans. Because TOHF service dogs save many lives by extracting individuals from dangerous situations, or by providing life-saving comfort to persons overpowered by distress, when these canines die, they commonly are honored with end-of-life ceremonies.

As a rule, a service dog is placed with the recipient following 18 months to two years of training. The canines TOHF gifts are highly trained multi-functioning service dogs that are even taught how to “call 911” in emergencies. Dogs are exceptional in so many ways – their senses are far superior to those of humans in sight, sound, scent capabilities, and agility.

While dogs are complex, what is exceptional about them is the unconditional love and loyalty they will devote to an individual. An invaluable bond thus develops between the owner, who is sorely challenged, and the canine that becomes a reliable, loving partner in life. When one’s day-to-day existence is profoundly twisted by terrible events, explained Kist, a service canine can become one’s sole source of salvation. Kist came to Trinity on September 17 to say good-bye to his loving dog, Patrick, and shared that Patrick’s profound effect on him would last his lifetime.

An example of only one type of wound endured by military personnel is that shouldered by Trinity parishioner Kevin Henry, who recounted that upon his return from Vietnam, a woman did not want to ride in a cab with him because he was in a military uniform. He had experienced the grueling nature of war, receiving two Purple Hearts. He noted, although some individuals treated Vietnam veterans poorly, a service dog will care about its owner “all day long.”

Kist explained that it is very hard to engage in combat, even though one has been trained in preparation for it. What can have an even more lasting effect, however, is the lack of training to return home from the first-hand experience of war.

Tails of Hope Foundation offers special opportunities to many, including students who wish to engage in community service. As only one example, Zach, a grandchild of Trinity parishioner Donna Speizer, served as a Tails of Hope Foundation Youth Ambassador, who earned his Eagle Scout Award by building agility equipment for the Paterson, N. J. Police K9 Unit. This unit taught Zach about professional K9 police work. Zach, in turn, built a car door “agility window,” through

which police K9s could jump to apprehend criminals.

Female Youth Ambassadors have joined the mission, too. For example, they have supported the Canine Operational First Aid Kit (COFAK) Campaign to protect America’s national security K9 teams from line-of-duty injuries from bomb, bullet, stab, and slash wounds as well as toxic exposure. Tails of Hope seeks to educate youth about working dogs through mentoring and pointing toward career and volunteer opportunities by raising awareness of the importance of sustaining pure breeds that perform essential services.

Tails of Hope Foundation was founded in 2006 to help elderly and disabled people fund treatment for pets that faced euthanasia for lack of ability to pay. Thereafter, TOHF became deeply involved in honoring the service K9s active after 9/11. Dr. Cindy Otto at the University of Pennsylvania founded the Penn Vet Working Dog Program and noted that the dogs that had served in recoveries after 9/11 had never been nationally recognized. Linda Blick stepped forward on September 11, 2011, to correct this oversight in an outpouring of trainers and canine teams from all over the country to Liberty State Park in Jersey City, across the river from Ground Zero. Following the stately and patriotic tenth anniversary ceremony, Tails of Hope Foundation legally changed its mission to solely supporting America’s national security K9 teams and service dogs for disabled veterans and 9/11 responders.

Diocesan Announcements

Senior Ministries has a new name

After much discussion and with our Bishop’s approval, Senior Ministries is now the **Commission on Aging**.

We feel that the new name makes our ministry clearer to the people of our diocese. For a long time we have been asked “What is a senior?” The reality is that we seek to honor all people in the aging process, not just those who are of a “certain

age.” We will continue to recognize the ministries of people 60 and older in the Hegg Awards and continue to provide information for everyone who might need it regardless of age.

Our new website address is dioceseofnewark.org/aging. We can be reached by email at aging@dioceseofnewark.org.

As ever we are grateful for all those who support us in our ministry.

Scott Bennett
Chair, Commission on Aging