



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — October 4, 2023

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From the Bishop

If you're lost, stand still and listen

This is a transcript of a video message.

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark. I have been talking with everyone in the diocese for months, for years now about change in the church and about the way I see us changing and that we're already becoming the church that God needs us not only to be now, but where God is calling us to be in the future. We don't know exactly what that looks like, but some of us have embraced it, and we're running with it, those parishes are moving ahead, and those people are moving ahead, they're confident in exploring where God is leading them next. And then we have some people who have just kind of buried their hands and dug their heels in, and they've got their hands over their head, and they're going, "I'm gonna wait this out, when it's over, let me know." Most of us are not on either of those ends. Most of us in this diocese are somewhere in the middle. And we're trying, but we're not sure if that means we've gotten it right. And we're worried and it makes us afraid and nervous and anxious.

And I have been reading the meditations and Catherine Meeks' book and she has one that is just wonderful for this place where we are right now. It's the book that I suggested you to this summer: "The Night is Long but Light Comes in the Morning." It's a series of meditations, they're not in any particular order, you can read the titles and see which one catches your attention. You don't have to do them more than once a day or a week or whatever, there's no schedule, it's up to you when you do them. I've used them several times, and this last one is one that has stayed with me and I share it very often in meetings. And it's because it talks about what happens when you come along something really big. It's on page 184 in her book, and the

meditation is called "George Floyd Died, So You Need to Stand Still."

So when you come up against something really big and shocking, or really big and hard, what do you do? And she uses the example of something that she had heard from people who are indigenous in the northwest of the United States, that they prepare children to be lost in the forest. They know they're going to go in the forest, and they know at some point they're going to be lost. And so what they tell children is, when you are lost, you should stand still. Because you see, the forest is not lost. It knows where you are, and if you will stand still and listen, it will lead you onto the path that gets you back home. If you're lost, stand still and listen.

And she says she uses that story all the time when people ask her, what should I do? What should my ministry look like? How should I handle this particular challenge? She's speaking a lot of the times with people who are active in social justice issues, or trying to figure out how to get their church moving in a certain issue. And what she will say to them is, stand still and see what the Spirit reveals to you. Do what you have the energy to do, not what knee jerk response you can make now when you're in the state of outrage, shock or horror, and I would add to that, or worry or fear. But what is it that your soul needs you to do? No one can hear that answer except you.

After our months of exploring Sabbath, and each in our own way, and still talking about it, I think these are good questions for us. And so I leave you with those questions. When are you going to stand still? When will you listen? What is it that your soul needs you to do? The days before us are only going to get busier, the needs only more demanding, and the ministry only more challenging. There are people all around us that need to know that they are loved by God and by other people. And we can sit and be worried and be afraid or,

we can stand still. And listen. We are the only ones that can hear what the Spirit has to say to us.

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.

How Holy Trinity, West Orange developed their Hispanic/Latino Ministry

By Nina Nicholson

Holy Trinity, West Orange is in a neighborhood where at least 20% of the residents speak Spanish. Over the last few years its clergy, the Rev. Dr. Miguel Hernandez, Priest-in-Charge, and the Rev. Deacon Peter Jackson, have built an active ministry that not only serves their Spanish-speaking neighbors, but attracts Latinos from as far away as Maryland for special services.

"This church historically has been an English-speaking church," says Hernandez. "I think maybe 40 years ago [the community demographics] started to change. But even before I came to this church, there were people who were trying to go to Latino services. What they did was give them a Book of Common Prayer in Spanish. People tried to follow the [English] service, but then they gave up and they didn't come back. I think roughly about seven years ago we came up with the idea that it might be good to offer a Spanish service."

Holy Trinity currently offers Sunday services in English at 9:30 AM and in Spanish at 12:30 PM. On the first Sunday of each month the 12:30 service is bilingual, to give the two congregations a chance to worship together.

At the Spanish service, Hernandez says, "We get about 30 people every Sunday, except when there are special events, when we get about 60."

Hernandez and Jackson invested a lot of personal time and effort in advertising the Spanish services to the community.

"We did flyers about the service, and Miguel and I would sometimes walk down Main Street, go into Spanish restaurants, and we would eat there, and we would give out our flyers about the service," says Jackson. "We'd go to other businesses, and we'd leave the flyers. And gradually the word started to spread. It

grew by our taking that initiative, to go out into the community, and to spread the word in the community that from now on this church at the top of the hill will be offering services in both English and Spanish."

Hernandez adds, "And by word of mouth, people came from all over Long Island, South Jersey, asking for our liturgical services and also for the sacraments, and even some for spiritual guidance and counseling, because for whatever reason, people spread the word that we are helping the community. So we have baptized children from Long Island, from Maryland, from South Jersey."

They've offered Confirmation classes entirely in Spanish, and this past summer they made their annual God, Science and Art Program bilingual for the first time.

Holy Trinity also works with the West Orange Hispanic Foundation to provide resources to Spanish speakers, hosting medical personnel to do vaccinations and screenings, and bringing in or giving referrals to people who can advise on topics such as immigration legal issues, how to buy a house, or how to enroll kids in schools.

When the need arises, they personally advocate for individuals or families. Hernandez recalls a family from Columbia who were having difficulty with the requirements for enrolling their three children in school, such as paperwork and vaccinations. "Through the church, we knew the superintendent of the schools in West Orange," he said. "Right away, he cleared the path. And through the connections that we have with the Hispanic Foundation and the hospitals, the kids were able to get all the shots for free and were able to go to school."

Hernandez and Jackson see much opportunity as well need for Hispanic/Latino ministry in northern New Jersey.

"The big opportunity, as I see it, is this continuing immigration to the United States," says Jackson. "We have to look at the areas where you have large pockets of Hispanic community and try to do something there. And that information is easy to obtain."

One such resource is provided by The Episcopal Church, which has contracted with a geographic-data provider to offer a sophisticated mapping tool for analyzing the neighborhoods of Episcopal churches. Using this free tool, one can easily pull up a map showing "Percent of Population Age 5+ Who Speak Spanish at Home" and then zoom in on any Episcopal church to see the demographics in its location.

Both Jackson and Hernandez acknowledge that one of the biggest challenges is a shortage of Spanish speakers among the clergy.

"I know that there is a language barrier," says Jackson. "I know that there are not enough Hispanic priests or deacons in the diocese, but it has to start somewhere. Small steps have to be taken. The Catholic Church is doing it."

"For Catholic priests, it is mandatory to take liturgical Spanish," Hernandez adds. "You don't really have to know Spanish 100% [to celebrate a service]."

Hernandez, who has consulted with the Diocese of New Jersey on their Hispanic/Latino ministry, offers himself as a resource, and suggests, "If we can get maybe five or six priests who are interested in doing Latino ministry, maybe we can do a pilot program. We have the resources, we can give them the template used to create the [Spanish] bulletins and things like that. And maybe we can find lay leaders who want to get involved – recognize who are the Latinos in our midst? Who would like to be part of the ministry?"

Stories from Our Congregations

Small Faith Groups at St. Mark's, Teaneck

By Allison Davis

This is a video transcript.

The Rev. Joan Conley, Rector: So when the diocese first offered, everything was still on Zoom, when it was a Zoom session that they offered on small faith groups. And there were a few different folks from St. Mark's and myself that were really curious about this and wanted to find out more. So we popped on the Zoom, to find out more about the small faith groups. And the great thing about St. Mark's is following that Zoom, everyone who had been a part of that contacted me and said, "Oh, my gosh, this is awesome. Can we do it?"

Marsha Mackey, Small Faith Group Co-Convener: We've been successful in having three groups that have been operating, I think going on two years now. The men's group is the largest. And the women's group, I think we meet every other week, or at least twice a month.

Yanna Huls, Small Faith Group Co-Convener: Being part of the small faith group as the facilitator is, it's a gift to

me, because it has opened my eyes to all the different lenses we can use to look at scripture, to look at different spiritual writings outside of scripture, and to explore community and spiritual community.

Joann Riccardi, Small Faith Group Participant: It's a source of strength. And when we're going through rough times, it gives us that assurance that additional people are praying for us, especially for what we're going through, and it makes you feel, it gives you the strength to move on.

Ski Austin, Small Faith Group Co-Convener: I think in terms of our spiritual life, it's to our advantage to actually talk about it, and to be with each other and to hear how other individuals connect to that subject. And, and I would also say, many of us are from different religious backgrounds, and to hear how a certain subject has affected them, either through their childhood, their upbringing, their former churches, or, or no church, and, and to see how it manifests itself now.

Marsha Mackey, Small Faith Group Co-Convener: Leading a small faith group is really, it's a very simple thing to do. We all gather together. We check in with each other, how are we wiser, how our couple of weeks were since we last met, and then we share where God has moved or sort of touched us or shown up in our lives since we last met.

Joann Riccardi, Small Faith Group Participant: Jesus called us all to minister to each other. And this is a way that we can minister to each other.

Yanna Huls, Small Faith Group Co-Convener: It's a safe space where we can express that love. It's a safe space where we can cry together. It's a safe space where we can laugh together. It's a safe space where we can question our own decisions, and know that our questions will be heard, and not judged. Simply being together. It's a place where we can pray together honestly, or choose not to, say, "I just can't say that right now. I don't believe that." It's a safe space and it's a wonderful space.

Holy Trinity's God, Science and Art Summer Program continues in Spanish and English

By the Rev. Dr. Miguel A. Hernandez and the Rev. Deacon Peter Jackson

Holy Trinity, West Orange held its annual God, Science, and Art Summer Program for the youth of the Church and the surrounding community. The program, held in

the church's Parish Hall every Saturday afternoon from July 15 to August 19, was attended by an average of 16 to 20 students at every session. This year, because of the shift in the demographics of the community, the sessions were conducted in a bilingual (Spanish/English) format.

To establish the connection between creation, science, and the gift of nature and life, as well as the need to care for the environment, each session started with a reading from the creation story in the Bible. An emphasis was made on water quality.

Participants were then introduced to several advanced mathematical concepts, including the Fibonacci Sequence, the Pascal's Triangle, the properties of the circle, scaling, and Fractals. They were shown how these concepts could be applied in everyday life.

Those participants with an interest in art benefited from the presence of a cartoon artist who participated in four of the five sessions and conducted classes in the elements of constructing cartoons. The smaller children were also able to practice their skills using the art supplies available.

The science component enabled participants of every age group with an aptitude for science to display their skills, using the electronic kits. This provided them with the opportunity to discover how everyday things around them function. This year, two groups of students built AM and FM radios, and two of the more advanced students built a computer.

Participants also had the opportunity to hear from various mentors, including West Orange Council President Tammy Williams and Mr. Felix Plata, Supervisor of ESL and World Languages, K-12, who spoke to the students about the importance of education and job opportunities in West Orange. Presentations were also made by several professionals who spoke about their careers, for example in cyber security, real estate, and small businesses. Former participants in the program returned to talk about their experiences in the program and how it helped them in school and college. Ms. Shanelle Chambliss, a student at St. John's College in Queens and a Butts Scholarship recipient, spoke to the students about how to navigate the first year of the college experience.

We are grateful for the support provided by our area sister churches. The generous gift by St. Peter's, Essex Fells made it possible for us to acquire new and more advanced electronic kits, a computer project, and art supplies. In addition, we offered refreshments to the

children every Saturday. St. George's, Maplewood organized a number of mentors who spoke to the children in the program. In addition, a group which runs a farmer's market in Montclair offered fruits and vegetables to the children and made a presentation on the importance of growing our own food.

At the conclusion of the program, the children were given school supplies, while enjoying a slice of pizza.

Harriet Region congregations join for Creation Cares service

The Harriet Tubman Regional Ministry Network celebrated Summer Sabbath at the Community of St John Baptist with an outdoor Creation Cares evening prayer service (using resources from The Episcopal Church) and ice cream social. Approximately 45 people from 10 of our regional member congregations enjoyed prayer and fellowship. The event engaged first time visitors to the community's beautiful property and several people with fond memories of other visits. All were grateful for the warm welcome and hospitality of the Sisters.

Happening in the Wider Church

Health update on the Presiding Bishop

Oct. 2, 2023

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's medical team has confirmed that the mass removed on Sept. 20 was not cancerous. Because successfully removing the mass required open surgery instead of laparoscopic, his full recovery time will be longer than originally hoped.

Out of an abundance of caution, Bishop Curry's doctors continue to monitor him in the hospital for a minor infection and management of his medication for atrial fibrillation. He is in good spirits and expresses his heartfelt thanks for all the prayers and well wishes during this challenging time.