



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — January 10, 2024

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From the Bishop

This year, let's take our spiritual lives even more seriously

This is a transcript of a video message.

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark. It is the start of 2024. We're only a few days into it. And we are still, very many of us, at that time of year where we're looking wistfully at the rest of the year and asking ourselves, what is it that I want to do differently this year?

And I would say that this year is a special time to ask that question or a special year to ask that question, because it is the first year in several years that we have started the year without a crisis around pandemic looming behind us, right at us and before us. It was such a part of the last three Christmases and the last three New Years in the last three Januarys. And while there's a whole raft of respiratory illnesses that are going around, some of them really are the common cold. And there's a part of that that is a bit of a relief, to head into this year where we don't have the same worries with pandemic. We are back at work, we're back in school, we're back meeting with people, we're back in our churches. And certainly from time to time, we have to be more careful, like we will ongoing with every cold, flu, RSV, and COVID season, every single year, all of us have to be a little bit more careful in those times. But it is a different time, we seem to be in a different season.

And it is with that hopefulness that I hope that as you make plans about what you want to do differently this year, that one of the things you might consider is taking your faith life even more seriously this year. I know many of you take your faith life seriously, and have a commitment to your church that involves your time being there for not only church, but for meetings and for Bible studies, and to help out with community events. Also means the amount of giving that you do and giving so generously that our churches are able to operate and thrive in many places. That you're generous in your prayers and in your showing up for things at happening, not only in the church, but in the community.

So I know many of you are quite committed to your faith life. And I'm asking that we do this in a way that makes us even more committed to our own spiritual growth, and more committed to our growing deeper in our faith. Because one of the things that happened over these three years of pandemic is each year we grew a little bit more in the faith. So I want to encourage you read that book, the one that you've been meaning to read about the spiritual life, the one that your priest has recommended to you. Decide that this is the year you're going to take on reading a particular gospel, or a particular book of the Bible. Or hey, go crazy, decide this is the year you're going to read through the entire Bible in a year. Decide that this is the year where you're going to really learn how to pray out loud and to pray with confidence. So that when somebody says, "Will anyone lead us in prayer?"

You don't hesitate, you just start praying for the whole group. Let this year be that year, where you decide I'm going to reach out to another person and talk with them about faith and about hanging on. Because I know that that person is on the margins and thinks nobody cares for them. And I want them to know that not only do I care, not only does the church care, but God cares about them.

Let this be that year, that we take our faith even more seriously, that we take our spiritual lives even more seriously than we did when we were in trouble. But in this time of blessing, in this time of optimism, let growing our faith become of primary importance to us. You get to do it your way. You figure out how that's going to happen. What it is that gets your attention or has your interest or makes your heart sing. But let this be the year that we become even more faithful than we were last year.

Feature

Welcome to the Episcopal Diocese of Newark

As we begin the year in which we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Diocese of Newark, we have released a video about our diocese's history and ministries. The transcript follows. Watch the video at <https://youtu.be/r6BaMjUR7A>.

Welcome to the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, the Episcopal Church in northern New Jersey. It stretches from the Hudson River with its views of Manhattan, to the Delaware River at the Pennsylvania border. The Rt. Rev. Carlye J. Hughes is the 11th Bishop of Newark. She's the first woman and first black person in that role, and has served since 2018. We have more than 90 parishes in neighborhoods ranging from urban in the east, to suburban and rural, farther north and west. New Jersey is one of the most racially diverse states in the United States, and you can see that diversity in

our congregations, whose members are a wonderful mosaic.

Our Sunday worship styles also reflect our diversity. Our cathedral, Trinity and St. Philip's, received its charter from King George II of England in 1746. Its original building was destroyed during the Revolutionary War, after being used as a hospital by both American and British troops. The current building, completed in 1810, is in the heart of downtown Newark. It is the oldest Episcopal cathedral building still in use in the nation.

We're the home of the beautiful Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center, which we run in partnership with the New Jersey Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Our diocese also includes the Community of St. John Baptist, an Episcopal convent that has been active in Mendham, New Jersey since the early 20th century. One of the 12 religious communities for women in the Episcopal Church, they run St. Marguerite's Retreat House, which welcomes visitors from all over for spiritual renewal.

Located within our diocese is Port Newark, the principal shipping port for the northeast quadrant of North America. For nearly 200 years we've worked with Seamen's Church Institute to minister to the mariners who spend months away from their families, bringing us many of the goods that we purchase. This ministry became even more important after 9/11, as mariners' access beyond Port Newark was restricted in response to Homeland Security's need to protect our waters, and during the height of the pandemic, when crews were not allowed shore leave at all.

Social justice is very important to us. The Diocese of Newark was an early supporter of women's ordination, and is proud to claim one of the Philadelphia 11, the Rev. Canon Nancy Wittig, as our own. We were one of the very first diocese in the Episcopal Church to fully include openly LGBTQ people in the life of the church. In 1989, The Oasis was founded as a diocesan ministry with lesbian,

gay, bisexual and transgender people. In the early 1990s, our diocese made national news when our assisting bishop at the time, the Rt. Rev. Walter Righter, was tried for heresy after ordaining an openly gay man. In a landmark decision, the court dismissed the charge, finding that the Episcopal Church, quote, has no doctrine prohibiting the ordination of homosexuals, end quote.

In recent years, we've responded to mass shootings by working for gun safety. Our former Bishop, Mark Beckwith, co-founded Bishops United Against Gun Violence. Our churches run more than a dozen food pantries. Some of them support other food ministries by donating fresh produce from their Good News Gardens.

We have an active prison ministry and provide a summer camp and other special events for the children of incarcerated parents. We advocate for immigrants and asylum seekers, and several of our congregations have renovated their unused buildings to host refugees from Syria and Afghanistan. And our support is global. Through our Alleluia Fund for Outreach, we support dozens of ministries close to home, as well as overseas in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere.

We are the Episcopal Diocese of Newark. Working for justice, peace, love, and a world transformed, and looking forward to where God is taking us next.

Diocesan Announcements

Introducing the Convention Corner!

Are you looking to be in the know of all things Diocesan Convention? Secretary of Convention John King and Arrangements Committee Chairwoman Donna Caputo have teamed up with The VOICE Online to create a new way for clergy and laypeople across the diocese to be kept informed about Convention 2024!

So, what can you expect to see here in Convention Corner? Each publication will provide you with the most current Convention updates. Included – but not limited to – you will find information on Deputy requirements, youth Deputy requirements, and their registration deadlines. Other features will include the big announcement of the location of the 150th Convention, how to volunteer at Convention, and how your congregation can take part. Of course, as we get closer to the big date there will be more details that we will want to share to help everyone navigate Convention. There is so much information coming to you that we hope the new Convention Corner will help you and your congregation be ready for Convention.

Of course, there will also be some reoccurring information included in each publication. First, you will always find the link to the Convention webpage where you will find all the information pertaining to Convention. Next you will find the contact information for those important people who are working hard to make Convention happen, with information about them to help you contact the best person – and if they can't help you, they know who can. Of course, we can't leave out all the important dates that you and your congregation will need to know. From the countdown, to registration deadlines, that information will always be found right here in Convention Corner.

We can't wait to keep you updated on all thing Convention 2024! Stay tuned for the next publication where we share how those who aren't Deputies can volunteer at the 150th Convention.

Reference Information

Convention Webpage

<https://dioceseofnewark.org/convention>

Contacts

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Committee (Volunteer Opportunities)
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Dates & Deadlines

303 days until the 150th Convention! (Nov. 8-9,
2024.)

Registration Dates for Deputations and All
Canonically Resident Clergy: **9/16/2024 at Noon**
(Forms to be sent May/June)

Registration Date for Guests: **10/18/2024**

Nominations Deadlines: **9/13/2024** (Late Nominees
11/1/2024)

Hotel Reservations Deadline at group rate:
10/8/2024

Episcopal House holiday closing

Episcopal House will be closed next Monday, Jan.
15 for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.