



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — February 7, 2024

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## From the Bishop

### A Lenten practice that will give us peace

*This is a transcript of a video message.*

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark. I'm taping this after the end of a long day on Sunday, full of good worship and full of conversation and full of all the things that excite and trouble churches. And one thing that is staying with me, after all that conversation and all that spending time together, is a sentence – one of the verses in the reading that we had from Mark today. It's Mark, first chapter of Mark, and verse 31. Jesus and the disciples just go to Simon's house, they discover that Simon's mother-in-law is sick with fever, and fever could be a life-threatening thing at that particular time. Jesus takes her by the hand, lifts her up, and she is healed.

There is something that stands out to me, and that picture in my mind's eye, of Jesus taking someone who is sick by the hand, lifting them up. I don't even think of him as lifting her as in making her stand, but cradling her up, holding onto her, and she is healed.

I've been thinking about this all through the evening, as I know that when you see this piece of tape, it will be the seventh of February, and we will be a week away from Ash Wednesday. And I know my Episcopalians, we're starting to think already, what is it I want to do as my spiritual practice for Ash Wednesday. And your churches are giving you all kinds of great activities to take on. And most people I know want to think about giving up something, even though you hear us clergy saying, instead of giving up that chocolate, or instead of giving up that fattening food, but if you need to do that,

you go ahead. But instead of making that the focus of Lent, take on a spiritual practice.

And that's what I want to ask you to do. I want to ask you to do three things. One is to pray. The other is to take a look back at the end of the day, and confess anything that you have done wrong. And third is to forgive. All of this for me is coming out of that notion of Jesus, lifting something up and healing it. And so when I say pray, it can be simple, it can be easy, and it actually can be that verse I just gave you. The thing that is worrying you, the person that you're hopeful for or afraid for, the rift, that someplace in this world or in your life or in our country, whatever it is it has you worried or has you complaining or has you suffering, whatever that thing is, take that thing and offer it to Jesus. Even with these words that are right from scripture, "Jesus, take my worry, by the hand, lift it up and heal it." Let's put it in the hands of Jesus instead of our constantly worrying, fidgeting hands that leave us overwhelmed and feeling bereft.

That's one practice. The other practice is at the end of the day, instead of nursing the thing that we didn't do the way we wanted to do and feeling bad about it and taking it to bed with us, take a moment before you get into bed even and say, "God, please forgive me. I confess my sins. I confess my shortcoming." Ask for God's forgiveness and trust that it is forgiven and you can let that go. At the same time when we ask for forgiveness is also the time to think of who do we need to forgive, rather than nursing the hurt? Who do we need to forgive and let that go? And these things, both the things we're worried about, the things that we need to confess, the things that we need to forgive – any of them that we need help with. We can go back to that picture of Jesus, taking what is on our hearts and minds and spirits, lifting it up and bringing it healing. This is a

Lenten practice, that will give us peace and help us face these days that we are in.

## Black History Month book recommendations

For Black History Month here are five book recommendations, for both youth and adults, from Bishop Hughes and her staff.

The Bishop and some of her staff plan to read:

***King: A Life***

by Jonathan Eig, 2023

Another recent book that might be of interest:

***The Second: Race and Guns in a Fatally Unequal America***

by Carol Anderson (2023)

For those who would like more devotional reading:

***What Makes You Come Alive: A Spiritual Walk with Howard Thurman***

by Lerita Coleman Brown, 2023 (selections from this book are being used by the Bishop's Study Group this January)

These two works could be good for a family discussion or for youth groups (as well as other ages):

***She Came to Slay: The Life and Times of Harriet Tubman***

by Erica Armstrong Dunbar, 2019 (the author is a professor at Rutgers)

***Absalom Jones: America's First Black Priest***

by Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones, 2021 (the author is an Episcopal Priest, and this book is designed for older children, although engaging for all)

## Happening at Our Congregations

### Serving God and country

Among the 1,500 members of the New Jersey National Guard who were deployed to the Middle East last month was the Rev. Aaron Oliver, Priest-in-Residence at St. Gregory's, Parsippany. Fr. Aaron, a Guardsman with the 44th Infantry Brigade, will be serving in Operation

Inherent Resolve, which supports the international war against ISIS in Iraq, Libya and Syria.

"St. Gregory's is very proud of having a priest who serves both God and country and we look forward to celebrating his return to us," says Warden Bonnie Keith. The parish plans to send Fr. Aaron care packages for him and his troops during his 11-month deployment.

Before his departure, Fr. Aaron presented Bonnie Keith with a "Patriotic Employer" award on behalf of the Department of Defense, "for contributing to national security and protecting liberty and freedom by supporting employee participation in America's National Guard and Reserve Force."

## Diocesan Announcements

### The diocese will turn 150 in November – join in a year-long celebration!

*By Nerissa Boccino and Jerry Racioppi*

On November 12, 2024, the Diocese will turn 150 years old having previously been a part of the Diocese of New Jersey. Our original name was the Diocese of Northern New Jersey but was changed to the Diocese of Newark in 1886. Bishop Hughes has started a Sesquicentennial Celebration Committee, and the members are listed at the end of this article.

The committee began meeting in December 2023, and has established the following theme:

**Diocese of Newark: Yesterday, Today & Forever  
Learning Our Past, Embracing Our Present,  
and Inviting You into Our Future**

A myriad of events is being planned and the Celebration will kick-off at Diocesan Convention on Friday and Saturday, November 8 and 9, 2024. The event that we would like to highlight – and have you put it on your calendar now – is a BBQ at Crossroads Camp & Retreat Center on Saturday, September 21 from 10 AM to 4 PM. This will be a very informal event and serve as a "soft" opening of the 150th Celebration Year. We hope you will join for lots of fun and fellowship; more information and registration will be available just after Easter. But please hold the date and time!

Other events being planned are a speaker series, a concert, and several opportunities to celebrate and highlight the impact the diocese has had on New Jersey and the greater world. In May 2025, we will close out the “year of celebration” with a worship service led by the newly elected Presiding Bishop, who will be chosen at The Episcopal Church’s General Convention in late June 2024 in Louisville, KY.

The Sesquicentennial Celebration is featured on the diocesan website at [dioceseofnewark.org/150th-anniversary](http://dioceseofnewark.org/150th-anniversary). It will include all the pertinent information about the upcoming events. If you have any questions along the way, feel free to reach out to any members of the Committee, or co-chairs Nerissa Boccino ([nboccino@gmail.com](mailto:nboccino@gmail.com)) or Father Jerry Racioppi ([rector@holyspiritveorna.org](mailto:rector@holyspiritveorna.org)).

## Members of the Sesquicentennial Celebration Committee

**Gail Barkley**, Trinity St. Philip’s Cathedral, Newark / Florence Li Tim-Oi

**Scott Bennett**, The Saviour, Denville / Constance

**Nerissa Boccino**, St. Peter’s, Morristown / Harriett Tubman (Co-Chair)

**Bishop Hughes**, Diocese of Newark

**John King**, Staff Liaison (St. Andrew’s, Harrington Pk) / Benedict of Nursia

**Cynthia McChesney**, Staff Liaison (Christ Church, Short Hills) / Evelyn Underhill

**Andy Olivo**, St. Elizabeth, Ridgewood / Benedict of Nursia

**Jerry Racioppi**, Holy Spirit, Verona / Florence Li Tim-Oi (Co-Chair)

**Susan Rennie**, St. Peter’s, Morristown / Harriett Tubman

**Diane Riley**, Grace, Madison / Evelyn Underhill

**Michele Simon**, St. Paul’s, Englewood / Augustine of Hippo

**Cathie Studwell**, St. Bartholemew’s, Ho-Ho-Kus / Benedict of Nursia

## Clergy ministry transitions

### Departures

**JAN 7 – The Rev. Asa Coulson**

Associate Rector at Grace, Madison

**FEB 11 – The Rev. Elizabeth Ivell**

Associate Rector at St. Peter’s, Morristown

### Arrivals

**JAN 15 – The Rev. Asa Coulson**

Priest-in-Charge at Grace, Nutley

**FEB 22 – The Rev. Elizabeth Ivell**

Priest-in-Charge at the Ministry Team of St. Mary’s Sparta and Messiah Chester