



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

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## From Canon Wright

### Creation and Sabbath

You may remember that Bishop Hughes talked about sabbath a few weeks ago in *The VOICE Online*. She encouraged us to find the activities and patterns that help us to take care of ourselves, to be good stewards of our own self. I'm bringing this message to you on behalf of Bishop Hughes this month because she is doing exactly that – after a full and extraordinary program year and a very busy June, including General Convention, Bishop Hughes is practicing what she preaches and taking some time this month for sabbath. She's taking time to take care of herself so that she can continue to do the work she's been giving to do here in the Diocese of Newark.

When I was reflecting on the Bishop's words on sabbath, I was reminded that sabbath is part of the order of creation; it's built in from the very beginning. We learn first about sabbath from our creation story in Genesis. God brings about all the elements of creation – sun, sky, waters, creepy-crawlies, birds, fish, animals, and even us! – in the course of six days and then sets aside the seventh as sabbath. God sees that all was good and rests on the seventh day. We hear this again in Exodus, of course, in the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, but it is a fundamental part of creation itself.

Genesis also reminds us that we are made in God's image, that who we are reflects who God is. And so, we are a creative people, a diligent and hard-working people – working all week long to bring the world closer to God's vision of creation – but we also are a people who need times of restoration and rest. We reflect

God's image in that way as well. How can we do the work that God has in store for us, if we are not taking care of ourselves, gathering our energy, refreshing our perspective? Taking sabbath is as much about being renewed in our vision, free from the stresses and anxieties of daily pressure for a time, as it is about resting.

Summer is fully here now and summer often brings some opportunities for time away or apart. If you haven't yet, set aside some time – just as God did on that seventh day – to find out what you need to take care of yourself. What does it take to rest and restore the body? To reset the sleep cycle? What do you need to clear your mind and get a fresh perspective on yourself, your family, and our world? It's going to be a little different for each of us and, indeed, should be.

I hope that this summer gives you the opportunity to live more fully into the image of God – which includes tending this creation that God has given us, but also means taking care of ourselves and finding our own sabbath time, so that we too may be renewed and restored.

## Diocesan Announcements

### Bishop' staff vacation week

All members of the Bishop's staff are using their vacation time to take off the week of July 29-Aug. 2, and Episcopal House will be closed.

# 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention

## Hear from the GC81 Deputies

Near the end of the 81st General Convention in Louisville, KY, five deputies representing the Diocese of Newark shared their experiences and reflections.

### Video Transcript

I'm Father George Dredden from Trinity and St. Phillip's Cathedral, your diocesan cathedral, and I am a first time delegate.

Reverend Grant Mansfield from St George's. It is also my first time here as a deputy at General Convention.

I'm Jewels Quelly. My parish is St James' in Hackettstown, and I am a first time deputy.

I'm Anne Kitch, I'm the rector of St Luke's Church in Phillipsburg, and this is my sixth General Convention, the second as a deputy from the Diocese of Newark.

Janelle Grant, I worship at St Paul's, Paterson, this is my fourth time being a part of the deputation for General Convention.

[Grant Mansfield] One of the things that I have found particularly moving is how we as a deputation have come together to support one another and to collaborate together. I give a special thanks to our fellow deputy, Laura Russell, who has been so great at helping us first timers come in, helping us navigate the legislative process, and everyone together has just come together to support one another on different legislation and different focuses. We really pulled together and said, "Our diocese sent us here to speak and to share the voice that we think needs to be heard." And so it's just been wonderful to see how we've come together in our beautiful diversity to lift up our unified voice.

[Anne Kitch] We worked hard getting ready for this. We talk to each other all the time. We really work together as a deputation, and we respect one another when we have different views on different topics.

[George Dredden] We've been a very active and engaged delegation. I think if you look, I think almost all of us have spoken. All of us have been very passionate about the various issues in which we would like to champion.

[Janelle Grant] Our deputation has become a very tight knit group, and I love the camaraderie that we have developed in such a short time together.

My passion is being with youth and lifting up youth. And the one thing that I love about this General Convention is the fact that we did have an Official Youth Presence here again. But the one thing that I love the most is that we got Meredith McKeever from Grace, Madison as one of the Official Youth Presence representatives, and to hear her get up and speak about something she was passionate about, and also to hear the other youth speak, and the fact that they had a voice to speak and be passionate, and to see their love for their church and their love for God was just beautiful, and it warmed my heart.

[Grant Mansfield] In our worship services, we've been worshiping in English and Spanish and French and Creole and Mandarin and Navajo, so many different languages. And in all of it, we get to see the beautiful tapestry that God has created in the church. We might often think that the church is just our parish experience, or maybe even our diocesan experience, but in spaces like this, we get to see that our local networks, that we build, all of our relationships, they expand out into the wider world, and we have these ripple effects that we don't even know occur. And I think that's a great gift of being able to be here and to see it, experience it, and bring that knowledge back.

[Jewels Quelly] I am really excited for the church at large in the way that so many congregations are learning to collaborate, whether that means to combine or to share services, or even if it's just talk to each other about how they can connect.

[George Dredden] It's been a wonderful experience. It's a great place to meet others. I've run into other clergy and laypersons from around the country. That's been a great place to share ideas and get ideas. And even more so is the spiritual element that really permeates everything we do, whether it was the election of our new Presiding Bishop, Sean Rowe, to the enthusiastic

joy exuded by our current Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, the revivals and other gatherings where the Holy Spirit is truly in this place. So I'm very anxious to get back to the cathedral, very anxious to get back to our diocese, where we're going to continue our group to get together and try to talk about things and see how we can continue to keep this kind of energy going forward within the diocese that we gained in the General Convention.

[Anne Kitch] It's been a great Convention. I feel a great deal of hope for the Episcopal Church, especially in our leadership.

[Grant Mansfield] So I personally thank you for entrusting me and our deputation with this responsibility and this honor and just we hope we have served you well at this 81st General Convention.

## Actions of General Convention - Highlights

- Elected Bishop Sean Rowe to be the 28th presiding bishop beginning Nov. 1
- Re-elected House of Deputies President Julia Ayala Harris on the first ballot
- Approved the reunion of Milwaukee, Fond du Lac and Eau Claire as the Diocese of Wisconsin
- Authorized the merger of Eastern Michigan and Western Michigan as the new Diocese of the Great Lakes
- Adopted a constitutional change defining the Book of Common Prayer

## Features

### Justice Ministry Spotlight: Commission for Justice and Peace

*By the Ven. Diane Riley*

Based on the goals in the diocese's 2023 Strategic Vision, the four primary justice groups (the Anti-Racism Commission, the Racial History Committee, the Racial Justice and Healing Commission, and the Commission for Justice and Peace) are teaming with the Anti-Sexism Task Force, the Commission on Hispanic/Latino Ministry, the Prison Ministry, and the Newark Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians to collaborate and

coordinate their work and elevate the stature of justice ministries across the diocese. In addition, they hope to create more opportunities for individuals and congregations to participate in justice-related activities. As part of that effort, we will be featuring articles about our justice ministries in each edition of The VOICE Online through the rest of the year. For this edition, the focus is on the Commission for Justice and Peace.

Bishop Hughes created the Commission for Justice and Peace in 2021, as part of developing a broad approach to justice ministry for the diocese. The other groups included in that effort are the Racial History Committee and the Racial Justice and Healing Commission, and the pre-existing Anti-Racism Commission. The mission of the Commission for Justice and Peace "is to grow the Beloved Community, a community in which everyone is cared for absent of poverty, hunger and hate." The Commission develops diocesan advocacy and resources that support the beloved community and address issues that challenge it. In short, they teach about the prevalent issues and share how to act.

The group offers numerous resources for congregations and individuals in the diocese on specific justice issues such as Hunger, gun violence, reproductive choice and voting rates. They have also hosted webinars on food policy and affordable housing in New Jersey. These materials and recordings are available on their page of the diocesan website. During Lent, they hosted a book study series examining poverty through the lens of Matthew Desmond's "Poverty, by America" that was open to members of the diocese.

Moving forward, as the nation approaches the next general election, the Commission for Peace and Justice will sponsor training sessions using A Guide to Civil Discourse, a program developed by the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations and Department of Faith Formation, in partnership with ChurchNext, a ministry of Forward Movement. It is an interactive curriculum that uses the tool of civil discourse to find new ways to love our neighbor. Sessions are scheduled for Tuesdays, August 6, 13, and 20 from 6:30-8:30 PM. The training will cover tenets for civil discourse, values-based conversations, the messiness of policymaking, and the importance of maintaining a sacred space for debate. The Commission hopes it will motivate our congregations to enter confidently into constructive conversations on the

important issues facing our local communities, our country, and the world. The training is offered at no cost to members of the diocese.

Registration and additional information will be available soon but please add the sessions to your calendars and share with your congregations!

**Members of the Commission**

Jody Caldwell, Co-leader – Redeemer, Morristown

Julie Crawford – Messiah, Chester

Marsha Mackey – St. Mark’s, Teaneck

Joy Manasse – St. Andrew & Holy Communion, South Orange

Nancy Meyer – St. Agnes’, Little Falls

Thomas Reynolds – Christ Church, Bloomfield/Glen Ridge

Diane Riley, Co-leader – Grace, Madison

Laura Russell – All Saints, Hoboken

Belinda Stokes – St. Paul’s & Incarnation, Jersey City