

Fall 2019

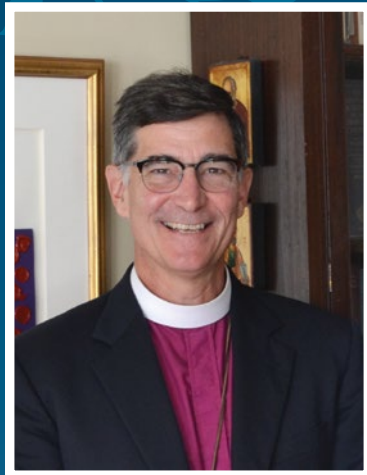
News From The Vine

A Publication From The Episcopal Church of NH



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Letter from Bishop Rob

I am not a politician. For this I thank God daily. Rather, I am a theologian and a pastor. My job, the one I took a vow to perform when I became your bishop, is to guide our conversations about what it means to follow Jesus. Who and what is God calling us to be and do, and how is God equipping us as citizens of God's Realm in times such as these?

Clearly, we are in a political crisis in our nation. Some of the most basic, indeed founding, statements of what it means to be a citizen are questioned. Do we hold self-evident that all men, all persons, are created equal, endowed with certain inalienable rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?

When Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, that lofty claim extended only to white males, excluding women, peoples who lived for millennia on these shores, and blacks who had been forced into slavery, first arriving at the ironically named Point Comfort, in the colony of Virginia on August 20, 1619. The written noble aspirations of our Founders and the inconsistency of the society they actually formed and benefited from (and by extension many of us, including me) has provided the fuel for our struggles for justice, freedom, and dignity ever since. The term used to define that perennial struggle is "politics." And everywhere I go, every parish coffee hour I share, I hear the lament of how painfully fraught and hateful, and even violent, our politics are at present.

I believe we are in as much a religious and spiritual crisis as we are a political one. We are facing a stark spiritual choice. Do we believe in a God whose power is manifest in anger, revenge, retribution, force, control, and violence? In other words, do we believe our God to be no different than the Greco-Roman gods like Zeus (known to the Romans as Jupiter), who required absolute obedience or else destruction would follow? To read Homer's *Iliad* or *Odyssey* is to be introduced to the fickle and emotional insecurity of such gods, who considered human beings almost as children's dolls. That's one pattern for "godly" living.

I believe Christianity holds a radically different shape of faithful living. The God who Jesus embodies is proclaimed in a hymn that St. Paul quotes in his letter to the church in Philippi. To share "the mind of Christ" is to pattern one's life on a God

who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,

but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:3-8)

"Letter from Bishop Rob" continued inside...



RenewalWorks Helping NH Parishes Increase Spiritual Vitality

RenewalWorks is an innovative program that helps parishes and individuals explore and strengthen spiritual vitality through a facilitated process of self-reflection, sharing, and workshop discussion. Introduced by the Diocese last fall, seven parishes have already completed RenewalWorks. This fall, an additional four have begun the program — St Peter's, Londonderry; Christ Church, Exeter; Trinity, Meredith; and St. Andrew's, Hopkinton.



The Rev. Reed Loy, St. Andrew's, Hopkinton, said that the growth and evolution of St. Andrew's congregation over the past two years led to a sense that "We're all in this together as a community, so what's next?" Taking inspiration from Luke's story of supper at Emmaus (Luke 24:13), the parish was seeking to take that next step with Jesus — "Walking together. Recognizing Jesus. Practicing resurrection," said Rev. Reed. In that sense, RenewalWorks became available at just the right time for St. Andrew's.

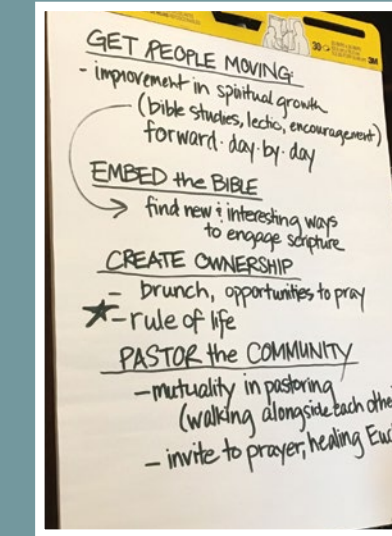
At St. Peter's in Londonderry, Mary Sargent is serving as co-facilitator of RenewalWorks with her wife, Karen Furtado. Mary and Karen were involved with this past spring's *Revival: Reimagined* and loved the experience. "We attended the workshops and had a great time," said Mary. "*Revival: Reimagined* kindled a desire to

further develop our own spiritual growth." The Rev. Colin Chapman approached Mary and Karen regarding RenewalWorks because he knew that their professional backgrounds as workshop facilitators and their personal spiritual journey were a good match.

According to Mary, what's exciting about RenewalWorks is its concentration on spiritual practices. "We have many wonderful parish programs, but they focus on service and community, not specifically on the spiritual growth of our members."

To begin RenewalWorks, parishioners took an initial survey. "We have not seen the results yet," said Mary, "however, I really appreciated the questions asked. The only way to grow is to challenge yourself — what are we doing to challenge ourselves to grow spiritually, and to grow our relationship with Jesus?"

The parishes also held their initial RenewalWorks workshop — some held their workshop jointly with other parishes. "I like that the process is the product," said Rev. Reed. "Our first workshop together was encouraging. We left feeling like this will be good for us." Mary noted that a mapping exercise was revealing. "The exercise guided us to map out our life's journey



so far — important things in your life and where you've been," explained Mary. "Then we mapped out where God has been in our lives."

Rev. Reed added that it was both fun and enlightening to get together with people from other parishes. "The first RenewalWorks workshop brought three of the four parishes in the program together. It fired up my imagination about what is possible."

RenewalWorks will be offered again in early 2020. All congregations are invited to consider participating. The deadline to sign up is December 6, 2019 (with a start date of January 26, 2020). Another RenewalWorks launch is planned for fall of 2020 — the sign up deadline is August 1.

In addition to their parish-focused program, RenewalWorks recently launched an individually-focused process called RenewalWork for Me. Learn more at renewalworks.org/resources/rw4me/.

Contact Canon Tina Pickering at Diocese House for more information tpickering@nhepiscopal.org.

RenewalWorks Participants

Fall 2018

St. Paul's, Concord
St. Thomas, Dover
Grace, East Concord
Holy Spirit, Plymouth
St. Mark's, Ashland
St. Andrew's, Manchester

Winter 2019

All Saints, Littleton
Trinity, Claremont

Fall 2019

St Peter's, Londonderry
Christ Church, Exeter
Trinity, Meredith
St. Andrew's, Hopkinton



spring RENEWAL Save the Date: May 9, 2020

Spring Renewal returns in 2020! The annual Diocesan event will be held on May 9, 2020, at Manchester Community College.

This past spring, over 200 people from across the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire gathered for a day filled with personal spiritual growth, ministry development, connecting, and renewal. Thirty presenters conducted a wide-range of workshops throughout the day, and Spring Renewal's keynote speaker, the Rev. Jay Sidebotham, Director of RenewalWorks, a ministry of Forward Movement,

energized us with insights from his stories about the initial development and subsequent growth of RenewalWorks.

"Once again, Spring Renewal will offer an inspiring forum for worship, fellowship, learning, and community," said Tina Pickering, the Diocese's Canon for Ministry Development. "We have begun developing our program and organizing the event. More information will be available in the near future — in the meantime, please circle your calendar for Saturday, May 9th!"



Addiction Recovery Ministry: Reconciliation, Restoration, and Unity

One of the Diocese's vital ministries, the Addiction Recovery Ministry serves a critical spiritual and community need. "Being a part of a community is very important to all," said the Rev. Sandi Albom, co-chair of the

Addiction Recovery Ministry, "But it is especially true for those in recovery or seeking recovery. God really shows up in community and we've created a safe, loving space for people to connect and move forward."

The Recovery Ministry offers special workshops and events, an annual spiritual retreat, quiet days, and a Service of Holy Eucharist and Healing for People in Recovery on the first Saturday of each month at St. Andrew's Manchester.

Its genesis occurred about five years ago when concerns about addiction and overdoses led a small group to offer a regular Monday morning prayer service at the Diocesan House Chapel. Prayer led to an exploration of greater service, and ultimately to the creation of the Recovery Ministries of NH.

During the process, the group realized that about 80% of the Episcopal parishes in New Hampshire already opened their doors to a wide range of recovery groups. St. Andrew's Manchester hosts up to 15 various recovery-related gatherings a week — it was a logical choice for the monthly recovery Eucharist.

The Rev. Susan Ackley (retired), Co-chair, has developed much of the ministry's liturgy, including over 20 different reflections and readings that meditate on addiction, recovery, hope, and healing.

The monthly Eucharist, quiet days, events, and spiritual retreats attract primarily those who are in recovery or thinking about entering into recovery. About 75% are not Episcopalian, "And many have not been to church since they were children," adds Rev. Sandi. In recovery from addiction herself, Rev. Sandi notes that addiction brings with it the burden of shame and guilt. "People often feel that they need to show up to church 'finished' — all cleaned up inside and out. Many stay away from church for just that reason. We create a spiritual space that is fully accepting and respectful. We work to help people seeking reconciliation, restoration, and unity with God and their neighbor. Everyone is truly welcome."

An Evolving Ministry

"We received a grant from the Diocese to launch the ministry and have enjoyed wonderful ongoing support from Bishop Rob," said Rev. Sandi. Important efforts for the coming year include:

- A focus on educating and engaging other Episcopal Churches in New Hampshire — including building awareness with visits to all Convocations.
- Offer a second annual spiritual retreat (held this November). The ministry expects 30 people to attend, providing an opportunity for prayer, contemplation, and fellowship.
- The monthly Eucharist will soon be celebrating its first anniversary — plans are in the works to evolve the service into a dinner church.
- Offer an information table and continued presence at Spring Renewal (May 9, 2020, at Manchester Community College).



- Continue its collaboration with efforts led by the NH Council of Churches.

Discovering God's Presence

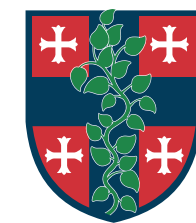
The web of destruction created by addiction is enormous. It impacts not only the health and well-being of the individual, but their families, friends, and community. Sometimes the damage happens quickly, such as opioid addiction. Often, like alcohol, the damage occurs over decades or even generations.

"We've made progress. It's now alright to discuss addiction in polite society and in church. It's OK to say 'I have a problem and I don't know what to do next.' We're working hard to help people recognize that addiction is an idol — whether it be alcohol, drugs, or

other types of addiction, such as material consumption."

Rev. Sandi returns to the theme of community often. "What moves us all, but especially for someone in recovery, is the understanding that no one can do it alone — we need something greater than ourselves. And that's where we find God's presence."

Want to learn more? Get involved? Make a connection? Contact the Rev. Sandi Albom, sbalbom@comcast.net. Additional recovery resources can be found on the ECNH website: <https://www.nhepiscopal.org/recovery>



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"Letter from Bishop Rob" continued from front page:

For the ordinary Roman citizen, to hear that God would be willing to die rather than get his own way, or even to protect himself against evil, sounded not only utterly absurd but offensive. And yet, that's precisely the God who the early Church proclaimed, preached, and practiced. More than weapons and crusades, or the alluring attraction of its basilicas, cathedrals and chapels, when the church follows the self-emptying way of love, it spreads and grows like a healthy life-bearing vine. Even, perhaps especially, when it is pruned or persecuted.

So, I am called to ask the Church and all who claim to walk in the way of the Cross, who is the Lord that we seek to follow? If it's Jesus, the one who risked and lost everything so that he, and all humanity, can share the resurrected life right now, then how might that change the way we talk about the great "political" issues of our day? How might taking on the mind of this self-emptying God change the tenor of how we talk about immigration, guns, the health of our planet, and the inequitable state of our public schools?

Yours in the crucified and risen Savior Jesus,

The Rt. Rev. Robert Hirschfeld

Episcopal Church of New Hampshire to Establish School for Ministry

Responding to the changing needs of the state's congregations and evolving trends in vocations for ministry, the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire is excited to announce its plans to establish a School for Ministry. Based in Tilton, NH, the School will focus on the local formation of priests and licensed lay ministers.



New Realities for the Priesthood

The School for Ministry grows out of new realities for the church and the priesthood. "Churches are increasingly moving to a 'bi-vocational' model for ministry," said the Rt. Rev. A. Robert Hirschfeld, Bishop of New Hampshire.

Convenient Hybrid, or "Flipped Classroom" Learning

Typically, life circumstances for a bi-vocational candidate for the priesthood make it unrealistic to attend a distant seminary or school of theology on a full time basis. Creating a local school to meet the needs of bi-vocational candidates for the priesthood is critical. For those seeking the priesthood, the School will deliver a hybrid, or "flipped classroom." In this model, students meet face-to-face one weekend per month. In between, students read, view videos, and follow online study guides on their own — and based on their individual schedules. Part of the learning is in person; part of the learning is online.

This trend is so significant that *Bivocational: Returning to the Roots of Ministry* by Mark D. W. Edington is now required reading for all who are engaged in the process toward the diaconate or priesthood.

"The bi-vocational model assumes that the primary ministers are the baptized church members, not the priest, and that the vocation of the church is not only with church members but with the community," adds Bishop Rob. "The priest may have a paid job outside the church as well as a job in the church, for which they may or may not be paid."

Convenient Hybrid, or "Flipped Classroom" Learning

"During the monthly weekend classes, students will gather together to work with facilitators, reflect on their studies together, and learn hands-



on, practical ministry skills," said Tina Pickering, Canon for Ministry Development. "Face-to-face classes will meet at Trinity Episcopal Church in Tilton. The diocese will be making several upgrades to the building and the sanctuary."

Curriculum Based on the Iona Collaborative

Much of the content of the curriculum is available to the diocese through the Iona Collaborative <https://ssw.edu/ionacenter/ionacollaborative/>. The Iona Collaborative is a ministry of the Seminary of the Southwest and includes 24 (and counting) dioceses throughout the Episcopal Church. The collaborative is dedicated to providing high quality theological education for formation and educating a new generation of leaders who, for various reasons, cannot attend a residential seminary. There will be three general areas of study: Bible, church history, and theology and ethics.

The diocese has great flexibility to learn from the experiences of the 24 other dioceses, and modify the model to meet its own local needs within the context of Province 1 (for example, training for deacons will not be included because a school for deacons already operates in Province 1, which includes all of the New England dioceses).

In the future, curriculum may also be developed for licensing lay ministers in order to serve the church in areas such as preaching, worship, evangelism, pastoral care, formation, and church administration.

Launching in 2020

A search is currently underway for a Dean of the School and expectations are that an appointment will be made soon. This spring, the School is planning to offer a "taste" of what's to come with a special, tuition-free class offering.

A full launch of the School of Ministry is slated for fall of 2020.

Transition Ministry Updates:

- **The Rev. Susan de Puy Kershaw, Rector of St. John's Walpole**, announced her retirement, effective November 30th. Susan has served 15 years as Rector of St. John's Walpole, loving the parish and being awed by the faith and commitment displayed there. Her retirement marks her 41st year in parish ministry. Please join us in thanking the Rev. Susan for her continued dedication and love.
- **The Rev. Michael Bradley, Rector of St. George's Durham**, has accepted a call as Rector of St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan, near Lake St. Clair, bordering the east side of Detroit. Michael has been Rector at St. George's for 22 years. His last Sunday there is November 24th. Blessings upon the Rev. Michael and his family in their transition, and the faith communities of St. George's and St. Michael's as they both welcome a change of leadership.
- **Steve Baker has been named Canon to the Ordinary for Mission Resource & Chief Financial Officer for the Diocese of Bethlehem**. Many will know Steve for his years of good work as Chair of our diocesan Mission Resource Committee. Steve will travel between New Hampshire and Pennsylvania, and continue to be an active member at St. Paul's, Concord. Congratulations to Steve on his new appointment.

For more information about ministry transition please contact the Rev. Canon Gail Avery, Canon for Transition and Community Engagement at gavery@nhepiscopal.org.