

(Reconciling The World, cont.)

Coming alongside another is a reciprocal action. It's about mutuality. We are called to come alongside others and others are called to come along side us, often occurring simultaneously. And it requires setting aside assumptions, presumptions, opinions and beliefs to the point we are just ourselves—vulnerably alongside another without pretense or having much to say. That's the moment when deeper understanding can occur like it did on that first Pentecost.

That's why I am excited about coming alongside you as

Canon for Transition and Community Engagement.

Canon for Transition and Community Engagement, The Rev. Canon Gail Avery comes alongside parishes and clergy in transition, and creatively engages with congregations and the wider community in ways that expand the boundaries of parish reach and give voice to the most vulnerable in our midst.

To Contact the Rev. Canon Gail Avery
gavery@nhepiscopal.org or 603-224-1914 ext. 126

Save The Date

Saturday
November 3, 2018
Christ Church
Exeter, NH

216th Convention of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire!

Draft nominations due June 29
Nominations due July 20
Final Resolutions due July 27

For more information go to www.nhepiscopal.org/convention
Youth and youth leaders:
Plan to join for Youth@Convention retreat!

General Convention Deputation Heading to Austin, Texas

Sarah Ambrogi, Lay Deputy

On July 3, the New Hampshire deputation to General Convention will gather in Austin, Texas. Convention officially opens on July 5 and runs through close of business on July 13, but committees begin meeting the night of the 3rd. Traveling from New Hampshire will be our Bishop, Rob Hirschfeld, clergy deputies—Kate Atkinson, Gail Avery, Sue Poulin, Richard Davenport, and first alternate Janet Lombardo—and our lay deputies—Sarah Ambrogi, Margaret Porter, Gloria Gallant, Bengé Ambrogi, and first alternate Marti Hunt. In addition, clergy alternate Kelly Sundberg Seaman has offered to assist us from New Hampshire in making sure that those here in the Diocese of New Hampshire are kept up to date electronically on important issues and decisions in Austin.

The New Hampshire deputation, with the exception of the Bishop, will attend General Convention in the House of Deputies. This body, which consists of 852 deputies (not including alternates), is for the first time in 2018 majority female, and 66% of the deputies are first or second time deputies (our own deputation in Austin will be 72% female and 81% first or second timers!). The

House of Deputies and the House of Bishops will together take up over 300 proposed resolutions over the course of 10 days of committee meetings and legislative sessions.

The deputation met recently to take turns giving summaries of those resolutions currently available to be reviewed, and will meet regularly while in Austin to compare notes and share information. The topics covered range from addressing important domestic and international social issues (including but certainly not limited to: the opioid crisis, immigration, human trafficking, transgender rights, mass incarceration), to issues of congregational vitality, church governance, and ecumenical relations, to taking up issues related to new liturgies and prayer book revision. The deputation will have their work cut out for them keeping up with all of the issues!

If you are interested in following along with the action in Austin, check out <http://www.generalconvention.org/home>, and please follow our deputation blog at <http://nhgeneralconvention.blogspot.com>

Recruitment For The Next Assisi Program Cohort

We need your help to recruit our next cohort of Episcopal Service Corps Fellows in New Hampshire. As you gather with your loved ones who are new college graduates, please let them know about an opportunity from the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire.

Assisi Program, our Episcopal Service Corps site in NH, invites young adults (ages 21-29) to serve at a partner-

ing nonprofit or social service agency for one year (September 2018-August 2019). Fellows live together in an intentional community, work 32 hours a week at a local nonprofit, and gather weekly for faith formation, spiritual direction, and professional development training. Applications are being accepted now, and more information can be found at www.escnh.org.



EPISCOPAL
CHURCH OF NH

63 Green Street
Concord, NH 03301

Cover Photo: Courtesy of the Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas



News From The Vine A Publication From The Episcopal Church of NH

Letter From Bishop Rob



What's In Our Nature?

At Christ Church, New Haven, where I was ordained priest, between the font and the altar—from the back entrance to the front—there is a tile floor. Inlaid in the tiles are Latin words every three paces or so. I discovered that they were taken from the Second Letter of Peter 1:5-7. Peter says that in order for us to be participants in the divine nature, we must:

*make every effort to support your **faith** with **goodness**, and goodness with **self-control**, and self-control with **endurance**, and endurance with **godliness**, and godliness with **mutual affection**, and mutual affection with **love**.*

The Christian scriptures are peppered with various lists of virtues--and vices. Virtues and vices are church words for good and bad habits, patterns of life that Aristotle and later Aquinas tell us that once implanted in us become like a "second nature." The effect of the architect's decision to include this list of virtues on the floor was to remind us we are in a process of becoming, of deepening, growing, changing from life to life, from glory to glory as we move from the waters of baptism to sharing in the self-giving love of Christ in the Body and the Blood. Yes, we are welcome to come as we are, where ever we are, in our journey of faith. Yes, God accepts us, "just as we are." And yet, if we aren't growing or deepening the love of God in Jesus, we can be stuck. We are, to borrow the first words to describe the Church, members of the Way, the Movement. The path we are on forms us, more and more, into the image of God, restored in Christ. Discipleship is nothing more or less than learning as we go, just as the earliest disciples of Jesus were being shaped by his teaching and presence.

As bishop, I sometimes wonder to what extent our congregations take seriously that high calling to become participants of the divine nature. The Presiding Bishop speaks of our God as "loving, liberating, and life-giving." These words describe a God who is not fixed or stuck, but constantly calling us beyond the status quo. When I see the fortitude of those in Twelve Step meetings, for instance, whose participants seek, day by day, to become more free of addiction and the siren call of "stinking thinking" that can plague one's soul, I see deep commitment for spiritual growth. The alternative is, quite literally, death.

There's one thing that conservatives and liberals agree on: many of the youth in our culture, indeed, many adults, are being formed by images of brutality and violence that trivialize the dignity and worth of human life. What we watch shapes our soul, individually and corporately. The most recent acts of gun violence in our nation, committed by alienated young white men, speak to a tragic sense of dislocation that has made them vulnerable to the callousness of our culture. On average, American youth spend 6 hours looking at a smart phone or other screen per day. Doubtless, we are not reading literature or doing calculus, let alone memorizing the ancient prayers of the psalms or the collects of the Book of Common Prayer. No wonder it feels like such a sacrifice to leave the cell phone at home and come to church for a couple hours a week. But that statistic begs a question: What words or images are you being shaped by these days?

All this leads me to urge our priests, deacons and congregations to be more intentional about our discipleship, our learning together, and our being shaped by the "loving, liberating, and life-giving" witness of Jesus. Forming the faithful. What would happen if we committed, each

(Bishop Rob's Letter, cont.)

member of our churches, to one additional hour of bible study, prayer, spiritual conversation, icon writing or viewing, holy reading, silent meditation, one additional hour--a week? That's right, just one hour a week! If your experience is like mine, you'll feel your levels of

hope, joy, and love increase.

In Christ,
+Rob

Renewing the Faithful

Canon Tina Pickering



and in the lives of others only when we make a practice of it—a habit cultivated alongside our prayer, discernment, and bible study. This holy work requires us to actively SEEK love, liberation and life and to give it a NAME—the name above all names, Jesus. When we see Jesus at work in the world—loving neighbors, freeing captives, redeeming lives—we CELEBRATE, through our worship, our sacraments, across a table, over a meal. And in these celebrations, we hear and tell stories. We do not run away from each other, but, as Brene Brown* encourages us to do, we “lean in and get curious” about our differences, about how we are each formed, about what God is doing in our lives. We listen to each other’s stories, and we tell our own. This is the “way” that Jesus invites us to travel.

In the next year, we will be inviting you to MORE: more quiet, more study, more joy, more formation, more scripture, more prayer, more stories, more movement towards Jesus. We hope you will accept our invitation to move a little deeper into the joyful celebration of God’s active love, liberation and life among us. The world needs us to go deeper, and reach wider, and invite people—not necessarily to cross the thresholds of our church buildings—but to open the doorways of our own hearts and enter into the presence of Christ.

For more information about formation, spiritual practice, evangelism, and lay ministry, please go to:

www.nhepiscopal.org
(see especially lay leadership, evangelism, and Christian formation)

or contact Canon Tina Pickering
tpickering@nhepiscopal.org
603-224-1914, ext. 125

*<https://onbeing.org/programs/brene-brown-strong-back-soft-front-wild-heart-feb2018/>

Revitalizing the Church

Canon Benge Ambrogi

As Canon for Mission Resources/COO, the mission priority I will focus on is *Revitalizing the Church*. A thriving and vital church is a place of joy, exploration, experimentation and discovery of what God is doing in the world. A vital church gives life to each one of its members, and its members, in turn, give life back to the church. The vital church expresses itself on all levels – from our individual ministries, to our corporate worship, up through our collective work as a diocese.

Revitalizing the Church starts with *Renewing the Faithful*. A renewed commitment to spiritual formation will restore energy in our congregations and refocus us on our core mission: spreading the message and sharing the love of Jesus Christ. Building on that energy, we will continue to support grants of new innovative ministry through the Mission Resources Committee, support new clergy leadership through the Ministerial Excellence Fund, and continue to support congregational operations through financial reviews, retreats, mutual ministry reviews, Fair Share adjustments,



vestry training, and others.

We are particularly excited to have been chosen by the Episcopal Church Foundation to participate in a new program funded by the Lilly Endowment called the Diocesan Leadership Initiative. This program brings the Bishops and key leaders from 11 Dioceses together for an intensive training workshop, followed by 8 months of coaching and consulting. We will use the DLI as an opportunity to create specific goals around our mission priorities, and create an action plan to achieve these goals. We are honored to be included in this selective program.

“...Bishop participants have been selected based on their demonstrated entrepreneurial leadership, openness to change and capacity to propose and implement new, innovative models of diocesan and congregational ministry.” We will be doing the pre-work for the DLI over the summer, attending the workshop in September, and creating and executing our plans for *Revitalizing the Church* well into 2019.

Reconciling the World

The Rev. Canon Gail Avery

Every year at Pentecost we recall the story in the Book of Acts how the Church is birthed. We hear how the Spirit comes and falls upon the disciples. They are bewildered, perplexed and amazed, yet there is an understanding that occurs as never before. Those who are there, amid a cacoph-

ony of native tongues, are able to understand one another. “What does this mean?” they ask. No doubt if Jesus was there, we would hear him say, “The Advocate I promised you has finally come.”

Transition Ministry Updates

• Wednesday June 27th, St. Barnabas in Berlin—the Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Hess’ Ordination to the Priesthood.

• The Rev. Janet Lombardo is serving as Interim Rector at St. John’s the Baptist, Sanbornville.

• Farewell celebration for the Rev. Canon Kevin Nichols—3:00pm Friday, June 29, 2018 at Diocesan House in Concord. Our beloved Kevin has been elected IX Bishop of Bethlehem Pennsylvania.

• Priest-in Charge, the Rev. Sarah Rockwell, has been called by St. Andrew’s, Manchester to be their Rector.

• The Search Committee of Church of the Good Shepherd, Nashua has completed their Parish Profile and are accepting names of potential candidates in their search for a new Rector.

• July 1st, Mr. Robert (Benge) Ambrogi will officially move into the role of Chief Operating Officer & Canon for Mission Resources of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire.



In Greek, the word for advocate is paraclete which holds a deeper meaning than one who advises or gives comfort. A paraclete is someone who is called in—a coming alongside. I believe that all effective ministries are those that ‘come alongside’. It’s what I aspire to model in my new role as Canon for Transition and Community Engagement as I come alongside parishes and clergy in transition, support congregations, and engage with community partners throughout New Hampshire.

Coming alongside is a familiar maritime term I came upon years ago as maritime chaplain among foreign seafarers who frequent our ports. When a ship is docking, it is described as coming alongside. Tug and pilot boats come alongside to help ships navigate into terminals.

A Pilot Boat has to adjust its rate speed 5-10 knots before coming alongside a ship. When it is positioned just right the Harbor Pilot steps away from the boat onto a Pilot’s ladder (one of those rope ladders with wooden rungs that you see in adventure movies swaying side to side) and then boards the ship by climbing up the ship’s gangway. That moment of transfer onto the Pilot’s ladder is a point of great danger. One misstep and the Harbor Pilot will fall.

Coming alongside another can be scary (even downright dangerous at times) but rewarding beyond belief. Done effectively, it’s like the Harbor Pilot’s transfer aboard a ship. There is always that point where we have to abandon the safety of our surroundings (especially our need to do things perfectly or our way) and commit to another.

Coming alongside another is not about giving something that is lacking. It is not about giving someone what we have and they don’t. It’s about our willingness to be with others—a willingness to step aboard and listen to their stories and learn from one another. It’s about knowing who we are coming alongside of and asking for their input before helping.

(Cont. on Pg.5)

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tendingthevine.org

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escnh.org

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