



A Pastoral Letter: Extending The Peace of Christ

As the days grow shorter, and the unpicked tomatoes in the garden become spotted and brown, and the leaves drop, and the ground releases a moldy scent, the Gospel readings also begin to turn more somber. We hear more about the end of things. It's fitting, therefore, at least in the Northern Hemisphere, that we celebrate the twin feast of All Saints' Day, Christ-the-King, and the apocalyptic readings of Advent just as we witness the sun's seeming diminishment and the end of the year. Branches will become stripped. A farmer in the North Country told me, "It's stick season." This, too, Jesus would tell us, is life on the True Vine. The spreading English ivy on my stone wall, as deep green as it is even now, will wither and molt, get buried in snow, only to come out more robust in the Spring.

The word that biblical scholars have used for this kind of talk, talk of the end times, is eschatology. Very little of what Jesus says has much meaning or power unless we remember that he always had an awareness that everything is passing, that God's Kingdom, God's sovereign realm, God's order was being brought into being, this very moment. Despite the lens we put on to ignore or deny the eschatological thrust behind all of our Savior's teaching, parables, and actions, including his death and resurrection, we really cannot escape it. "Your kingdom come" (Matthew 6) is eschatology. The Beatitudes (Matthew 5) which we will hear on All Saints' Sunday and at Convention-- "Blessed are the poor in spirit for they will..." is eschatology. "As you did it to the least of these...as you did not do to the least of these" (Matthew 25) is eschatology. Jesus words have power because he's talking about what things are like in God's coming realm. Despite our flawed and clumsy efforts, God is working God's purposes out, now, even as things of old are passing away. We can choose to be a part of it, or we can rebel and kick against it, and continue to suffer as a result.

In the meantime, Jesus calls us to live in the faith and expectation that God is doing a new thing among us, even as we are witnessing the passing of a former order. The Church in New Hampshire is among those dioceses in New England where the decline of our numbers on Sunday morning is undeniable. The era when the governors, senators, presidents heeded, let alone paid attention, to what bishops post in the New York Times, is way past, though our message may support our witness to each other. The uneasy marriage between the Empire, the State, and the Church, Catholic or Protestant, has been pretty much dissolved, though we still hear odd insistence that we are a "Christian Nation" though our collective treatment of the poor, the child, the racial minority, the immigrant, the sick, and the imprisoned seems to indicate otherwise. In all this seeming decline, diminishment, and displacement we are called to be the Jesus Movement. We get to live out with even greater power and truth the way Jesus calls us to be: humble, traveling lightly, assured of God's power working in us, in each of us. The Resolution to join the movement to join the pilgrimage toward a Beloved Community of truth, reconciliation, and justice, is just that...a movement toward a goal that we cannot reach without God's help and power.

Loving our neighbor, including the neighbor we disagree mightily with, is not done in the end because of a pronouncement from your bishop, a resolution from a diocesan or general convention. It's done by each of us because God has already placed in our hearts a vision and a desire of God's Kingdom where all are drawn to be reconciled with God and each other, even if it's not yet completely accomplished. We know in our inmost being that not being at peace with our neighbor is not God's ultimate will. We know this deep in our souls. If we lived as though the kingdom of God is at hand—just as John the Baptist and Jesus repeatedly preached—we would seek to make peace without delay.

(Bishop Rob's Letter, cont.)

And many of us are, thanks be to God.

What might it mean for us, for our parish churches, for our ministries in our neighborhoods and in our workplaces, to live as though the realm of God was near, quite near, not in the bricks and mortar or timber of our church buildings,

but how we sit with each other in conversation, in prayer, or at table?

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near... (Philippians 4:4-5)



Cuba, like other parts of the Caribbean, had never seen such a powerful storm. Hurricane Irma stalled over the northern central coast of Cuba for two full days with Category Five winds. Cuba takes pride with its disaster preparedness, yet this storm took the lives of ten souls. Even Havana, at the western edge of the storm, experienced massive flooding when the iconic sea wall was breached, leaving citizens to paddle through the streets in makeshift rafts.

Over the last four years there have been annual trips from New Hampshire to Cuba to foster closer ties between our churches, to transport needed water filtrations systems, and to simply worship and pray together.

A Friends of the Episcopal Church of Cuba group has been created to be a resource and network for those wanting to partner with Cuba for mission development, rebuilding of church buildings, coordination of visiting groups seeking to connect and to help raise the living standards of faithful clergy. You can learn more at episcopalrelief.org. In response to Irma and its devastation, The Friends has partnered with the Community of the Cross of Nails to receive donations to help provide food and shelter to those most impacted along the northern coast. We stand with them, in times of trial and joy.

To learn more, visit friendsofeccuba.org.



**Episcopal
Relief & Development**

Healing a hurting world

Additional opportunities to support those hurting and rebuilding following storms and natural disasters across the United States and around the world, are coordinated by Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD). You can learn more about their work and how you can help at episcopalrelief.org.

The Continued Ministry of Giving to Children of Incarcerated Parents

The ChIPs (Children of Incarcerated Persons) program ce-ments tenuous connections between parents or grandpar-ents inside and families outside by bringing Christmas to both. Prisoners choose gifts for the children in their lives. The gift they choose is wrapped for them, and they are al-lowed to present that gift in person, when the family visits. The child receives tangible proof that this loved one hasn't forgotten him or her. The prisoners get to see that their families still care and still need them. Not only does the exchange make Christmas fleetingly brighter for everyone,

it also has a lasting effect in fostering the family bond—a connection so very necessary when the prisoners serve their time and are released. You can drop off gifts or monetary donations at your church. The delegates to the Diocesan Convention brought gifts to the Convention on November 4th to be transported to St. Paul's School for sorting. To read gift giving guidelines and to learn more about other ways to support this ministry, visit nhepiscopal.org/re-sources/, or email maggie.ciancio@gmail.com.

Epiphany, Newport—New Spirit in Song

Epiphany Episcopal Church in Newport, NH, has under-gone a transformation, of spirit and space. The interior of the church has been renovated and the church is ex-pressing new spirit in song with the addition of a youth choir program as part of a year-round after-school program.

The redesign of the church's interior came from Richard Giles, former Dean of Philadelphia Cathedral and author of *Re-Pitching the Tent: Re-ordering the Church Build-ing for Worship and Mission in the New Millennium*. The altar was built by local craftsman Richard Harbour in Hillsboro to coordinate with the existing lectern and Baptismal font. New seating and a refinished floor com-plete the interior transformation.

“We are also overhauling our worship,” explains the Reverend Kelly Sundberg Seaman, the church's main pastor and priest. “The shape of Holy Communion is faithful to the church's ancient tradition, but the ser-vice is more brief, with lots of vibrant singing, thanks to our youth.” Services were rescheduled from Sunday mornings to Saturdays at 5 p.m., and showcase the new UpBeat Youth Choir. The Choir started as a summer camp in August, hosting young people from Newport and surrounding towns. The choir group continues to meet on Fridays after school, and the youth sing during Saturday worship for parishioners and attendees from the Newport area. The renewal at Epiphany was funded with generous grants from the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire and its Our Kids Commission, and by a gift

Transition Ministry Updates

- Drew Courtright is the new Curate at St. Paul's Church in Concord. Drew will be ordained to the Diaconate on December 16.
- Betsy Hess of Randolph, NH, will also be ordained to the Diaconate at St. Paul's Church, Concord on December 16.
- Newly ordained Deacons have been assigned to parishes in the Diocese. Charlie Nichols is at Christ Church, Exeter; Shawn LaFrance is at Grace, East Concord; and Sandi Albom is at All Saints', Peterborough.
- The Rev. Zachary Harmon is the new Priest in Charge of St. Christopher's, Hampstead.
- The Rev. Jason Wells, formerly of Grace, East Concord, is now the Executive Director of the New Hampshire Council of Churches.
- The Assisi Program of the Episcopal Service Corps is up and running with a cohort of four women. Bishop Hirschfeld has appointed a team of spiritual directors to serve the Assisi Fellows. These are the Rev. Maryan Davis, Deacon, serving in Ashland and Plymouth; A. Joan Bowers of Holy Spirit, Plymouth; Anne McCausland of St. Andrew's, Hopkinton, and the Rev. Jason Wells.
- The Rev. Johanna Young has been assigned to serve as Deacon at St. John's, Walpole
- The Rev. Jane Milliken Hague is the new Associate to the Rector at St. Thomas, Hanover.



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Blogs: The Bulletin, our news blog
nhepiscopalnews.org

Bishop Rob's blog
tendingthevine.org

For Assisi Program: Episcopal Service Corps in New Hampshire
escnh.org

from St. Andrew's Church in New London, with additional funding from the Epiphany Church community.

For more information, contact:
epiphanynewport@gmail.com.

Resolution for Becoming the Beloved Community

The Reconciliation Commission sent a Resolution to Convention to carry out the Episcopal Church Presiding Officer's invitation in "Becoming Beloved Community: The Episcopal Church's Long-Term Commitment to Racial Healing, Reconciliation and Justice." The Resolution starts, "Be it resolved that the Two Hundred Fifteenth Convention of the Diocese of New Hampshire encourage all parishes and missions to take up the Presiding Officer's invitation as described in "Becoming Beloved Community: The Episcopal Church's Long-Term Commitment to Racial Healing, Reconciliation and Justice" by entering into the Holy Season of Lent with an openness to listen, to wait, to pray, and to open our ears so our eyes can fulfill our baptismal vow of promoting justice, peace and love. Be it further resolved that we commit to learning about the history of slavery as it took place in New Hampshire and to becoming more familiar with the stories of our Black countrymen and women through a partnership with The Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire, encouraging the sharing of these stories within and outside our communities of faith."

To learn more, and to read the full Resolution, visit the Episcopal Church website at www.nhepiscopal.org/convention.

"What might it mean for us, for our parish churches, for our ministries in our neighborhoods and in our workplaces, to live as though the realm of God was near, quite near, not in the bricks and mortar or timber of our church buildings, but how we sit with each other in conversation, in prayer, or at table?"

Bishop Rob Hirschfeld



*For everything
there is a season,
and a time
for every matter
under heaven.*

Ecclesiastes 3:1

A Message from Bishop Hirschfeld on the Retirement of The Rev. Canon Hannah Anderson

It is indeed a bittersweet task for me to announce that the Rev. Dr. Hannah Anderson will be retiring as the Canon to the Ordinary as of January 31, 2018. I am deeply grateful for the five years Hannah has devoted to God's mission as we have together sought to pursue that mission in this Church of New Hampshire. The bitter part is that I will profoundly miss her presence at Diocesan House and her many gifts of leadership, spiritual listening and council, and offered generously, wisely, and prayerfully. However, there is sweetness in hearing how God is calling her to new ventures in creativity, coaching, art, and in the blessing of more time to share together with Bob and their family.

Thankfully, we have time remaining to work together at Diocesan House. I have begun to consider the shape of

this office's ministry after Hannah's retirement. Owning in large part to her diligent and creative work and the talents of the Diocesan staff, we are in a very fortunate place. I can take some time to reflect on what the Church needs and how the Bishop's office can best adapt to these needs. Rather than hurriedly filling the traditional role of the Canon to the Ordinary, I have been spending some time in prayer, reflection and consultation about next steps. I will inform you as soon as a plan emerges.

In the meantime, I ask for your prayers for us as we express our gratitude to Hannah and to prepare to say farewell to her as the Canon to the Ordinary in a festive gathering January 20th.

*Our
Episcopal
Service Corps
Assisi Fellows*

*From left to right:
Bailey, Sandy, Niambi
and Anna in front.*





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Cover Art: "Awaiting New Life" by the Rev. Canon Hannah Anderson



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





The Proposed Budget for 2018, was voted on at the November 4th Diocesan Convention, and reflects the goals of the Bishop and the Diocesan leadership to enhance the life of our congregations and to share in the Good News of Jesus' risen, reconciling, and healing love to a world in dire need of that news.

Bishop Hirschfeld reports, "Increasingly, the Bishop, Finance Committee, Trustees, Diocesan Council and other groups are encouraged to ask the sometimes disruptive question, "Why?" in our construction of the budget. Consequently, the Mission Priorities of Congregational Vitality, Leadership Development, Our Kids and Advocacy for People and the Planet have guided our spending decisions. These priorities align with our Baptismal Covenant and the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission. In this age of social and cultural transition, the Church's role as a bearer of Christ's messages of reconciliation, peace, purpose, and healing love is all the more essential. We are blessed in our Diocese to have received strong support of our mission.

This budget includes a reduction in the Fair Share asking of each of our congregations. The Bishop and his staff believe that resources kept closer to home will more effectively support clergy and lay leadership in the local context, even as the diocesan staff is eager to provide pastoral and spiritual leadership to both the Church and the wider society as consistent with the ordination vows of the Bishop. We will continue in the years ahead to ask how the budget reflects our calling and commitment for the ongoing renewal of the Church in this age."

Tending the Vine:

Mission Priorities for the Episcopal Church of NH

The Four Mission Priorities serve as a "trellis" for the Vine as we make decisions that involve our human, spiritual and financial resources. They are:

- developing the ability of congregations to meet challenges, grow, prosper and extend their ministries
- investing in the development of lay and ordained leadership
- supporting the children of our parishes, communities and state
- acting as advocates to uphold the dignity of every human being and care for the Creation

One Mission Project that incorporates aspects of all four areas of our Mission Priorities has been successfully launched. After three years of envisioning and careful planning, Assisi

Program, a partner entity of Episcopal Service Corps (ESC) commenced in August. The collective efforts of a Steering Committee and Diocesan Staff members has led to the placement of four Fellows who reside and worship in the repurposed building that was formerly Trinity Church in Tilton. Bringing curiosity and creativity to the Trinity, Tilton location, the Fellows and various partners will help envision new ways to reach out to the most vulnerable in the Franklin-Tilton area. Assisi Fellows are young adults coming to the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire for one year to live simply and serve compassionately. The Program partners with prominent nonprofit organizations to provide Fellows with volunteer experience in areas aligned with our Mission Priorities, including advocacy, poverty mitigation and work with youth and families in the Opportunity Gap. They also live together in an intentional community, gathering weekly for reflection, formation and professional development. Both lay and ordained leaders from our parishes will facilitate formation days, enhancing educational and spiritual opportunities for both the Fellows and our Church leadership.

A. Congregational and Mission Vitality

A thriving and vital congregation is a place of joy, exploration, experimentation, and discovery of what God is doing in the world. Sometimes congregations need some temporary help to get over a tough period or a hurdle, and the Fair Share Adjustment process continues to provide advice, counsel and, at times, a temporary adjustment. To foster congregational vitality, the Mission Resource committee provides funding for new mission programs. In 2018, Mission Resource funds will be augmented to include resources for Strategic Mission Initiative support. Examples of local initiatives that have bolstered the needs of our communities include:

- Partnerships among congregations to reimagine existing structures and discover new ways to align with God's mission in the world. Strategic Mission Initiative pilots are underway in Claremont, Plymouth & Ashland and on the Seacoast. New Pilots for 2018 are being envisioned
- Three Clergy / Congregations were each awarded \$16,000 in grants through the unique, matching gift opportunity of the Ministerial Excellence Fund, a partnership among Episcopal Church Foundation and Lilly Endowment, Inc. This program is bringing new energy to areas of the diocese that promise particular opportunities for partnership in God's mission
- Providing seed money for the hiring of a Curate at St. Thomas, Hanover
- Providing seed money for the expansion of transitional

housing at the Front Door Agency, Inc. in Nashua;

- Partial funding for the Sunapee Curate who serves in both New London and Newport, forging a new partnership among the congregations and strengthening outreach in this region
- Funding parish-based initiatives such as transitional housing in Laconia and start-up funding for Heart and Hands Ecumenical Thrift Shop in Meredith

With appropriate funding we could also embark upon the planting of new partnerships / missions, especially in specific areas already determined as geographically or economically underserved.

B. Investing in Leadership: Targeting resources towards the development of Lay and Ordained leaders

Our leaders, clerical and lay, need support as they take on new ways of being and leading. Cultivating leadership means developing new practices and competencies for mission in our communities. After six years of tremendous success, the Lay Leadership Institute will expand in 2018. “Spring Training” will focus on bringing together our entire diocesan family for educational events, spiritual formation and celebration. As we are called to serve communities beyond our walls, we need to support continued clergy formation in new, adaptive ways. With appropriate future funding, we hope to provide expanded formation programs for all Orders of Ministry.

C. Support of Ministry to Children, Youth, Families and Young Adults

Over the past few years we have increased our funding and efforts to support Christian Formation, Youth Ministry and Campus Ministry. These efforts have sustained existing ministries, and brought youth and young adults from different congregations together to broaden their faith experiences. These programs have raised awareness of the large, and widening gap in access to educational and social opportunity for low-income youth in New Hampshire.

Over the last two years, the Our Kids Commission has awarded \$50,000 in grants in support of youth in communities where our churches are present. These initiatives have included: after-school programs; educational enrichment; food backpacks; summer camps and other programs aimed at serving children at risk. We need to continue to work with schools, community groups and additional funding sources to support this vital ministry.

D. Reconciliation: Advocacy for Upholding the Dignity of Every Human Being and Care for the Creation

The Bishop has determined the following priority areas in which to witness to Christ in the public sphere: homelessness; racial reconciliation, human trafficking and sexual exploitation; stewardship of creation; gun violence prevention;

mass incarceration; and the repeal of the death penalty. We have invested in advocacy training and support for congregational leaders, so we may all lift our voices for the Gospel. Our newly formed Reconciliation Commission, is charged with determining the most critical needs of the most vulnerable in our communities and to strategize the Church’s response. We have joined the church-wide invitation of “Becoming Beloved Community: The Episcopal Church’s Long-Term Commitment to Racial Healing, Reconciliation and Justice” and are exploring ways to advance this work across our diocese.

The River of Life: Connecticut River Pilgrimage, first envisioned by Bishop Hirschfeld, and involving leadership from all of Province I, was launched in the summer of 2017. Through national and local grants, Kairos Earth formed a spiritual pilgrimage all along the route of the Connecticut River. Connecting our church communities with the rich and often challenging history of human activity along the river was a powerful reminder of our call to care for God’s Creation.

Capital Campaign to Fund Priorities

In 2017, a Steering Committee, led by the Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire, began to explore a Capital Campaign scheduled to launch in 2018.

Goals of the Growing the Vine Campaign are two-fold: 1) To Invest in Flourishing Communities in Christ and 2) To support the Mission of God to Reconcile Society and Heal the Planet.

In 2018, we plan to develop a set of reasonably defined needs for capital, a strategy for demonstrating why these needs are critical for the long term success of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire, and a strategic program for finding capital to address these needs.

Budget highlights include the following:

The Diocesan Council and Finance Committee recommend adoption of the 2018 Proposed Budget for the Diocese of New Hampshire as presented herein. The Proposed Budget calls for total revenue of \$1,915,914, total expense of \$1,882,073 and a reserve for multi-year items and anticipated expenses of \$33,841. The revenue figure represents a decrease of \$91,229, or 5%, from the 2017 budget. Over \$39,000 of this decrease is from a reduction in Fair Share to congregations from 16.5% to 15.9%.

To read more Budget Highlights and see the Diocesan Budget spreadsheets, visit <https://www.nhepiscopal.org/convention>.