



### **Clergy Webinar October 13, 2020**

Bishop Goff began our call with a prayer from the Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann entitled "Come to Our Shut Down Places," published in 2003 in *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth*, written as a response to reading 1 Samuel 1:

*It does not come easy to us to imagine that you  
closed the womb of mother Hannah  
and thereby foreclosed the future for a time.  
And yet, we can name in your presence  
a myriad of shut down places around us . . .  
those shut down in poverty and despair,  
those shut down in fear and rage,  
those shut down by abuse and violence,  
too hurt to speak,  
too frightened to appear,  
too scared to dance.  
And closer, our own shut downs:  
in anxiety, in resentment, in pretense,  
too weary to care,  
too greedy to share,  
too much of us for neighbor.  
These are not all your doing, we confess,  
But you are the God who opens all shut downs:  
by your power you give futures,  
by your goodness, you give hope,  
by your mercy, you make new.  
So we bid you this day come to our shut down places  
and give birth anew.  
We pray through the Easter opening of the Friday shut downs.  
Amen.*

Bishop Goff shared a few announcements:

- Clergy are encouraged to using the convention worship from Saturday, November 14 as their online Sunday service for November 15.
- The Bishops and diocesan staff will produce another diocesan service, possibly a Lessons and Carols service, for December 27th to give the clergy and the musicians a break. Bishop Goff asked clergy to let us know if their musicians would be willing to contribute a musical piece (not extra work, but something they'd prepared for their parish and recorded) to such a service. If so, contact Canon Mary Thorpe at [mthorpe@thediocese.net](mailto:mthorpe@thediocese.net).

## Centerpiece Presentation – Caring for Congregations Pre- and Post-Election

The focus presentation of the webinar was on the challenge of pastoring our congregations in these weeks running up to the election and in the weeks afterwards, when it is clear that there will be some people who are unhappy with the results, regardless of who wins. Canon Mary Thorpe talked about a wide range of resources available from a variety of sources (all of these are listed at the bottom of this recap report) offering a prayerful and faithful and nonpartisan focus for our congregations, our communities, and the nation. The Rev. Joani Peacock talked about the way her parish, Emmanuel in Alexandria, incorporated elements of the “With Malice Toward None” pledge into the Prayers, inviting all into a position of civil and respectful response toward each other in these intense political times, focusing on Jesus’ call to love one another.

### Assorted resources relating to the focus topic:

*The prayer used by Emmanuel, Alexandria, courtesy of the Rev. Joani Peacock:*

God, source of all wisdom, we seek your guidance. Regardless of how the coming election turns out, help us to not hold hate, disdain, or ridicule for those who voted differently than ourselves. Whether we are pleased or upset about the outcome, we will seek to understand the concerns and aspirations of those who voted differently and will look for opportunities to work with people with whom we disagree. We pray through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** *(From Emmanuel, Russell Road, Alexandria, Based on the Braver Angels’ “With Malice Toward None” pledge.)*

Braver Angels’ With Malice Toward None program: <https://braverangels.org/what-we-do/with-malice-toward-none/>

Forward Movement Prayer/Novena for the Election Season:

<https://www.forwardmovement.org/Pages/Item/15381/Season-of-Prayer.aspx>

Diocese of Indianapolis: <https://indydio.org/light-a-candle-pray-for-the-nation-vote/>

Some areas are still looking for poll workers...<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/officer-of-elections/> or contact your county election office.

### Resources from The Episcopal Church

- **National Prayer Service** : Sunday, November 1 at 4pm EST, the Presiding Bishop’s office will partner with Washington National Cathedral to host “Holding Onto Hope: A National Service of Healing and Wholeness” – Featuring PB Curry preaching, testimonies from Fr. James Martin and Valerie Kaur, prayers and music from across America. Online service to help the whole nation to share in confession, grief and hope in light of COVID, racial reckoning and historic election.

- **Prayer Hotline:** From Nov. 1 to 5, the Presiding Bishop’s staff will partner with TryTank (Lorenzo Lebreja, VTS, GTS) to offer prayer to anyone who wishes. Hotline staffed by more than 200 vetted and trained clergy and leaders. Offering prayer in Spanish and English.

- **Episcopal Public Policy Network Election Series – What to Expect When You’re Electing:** talks about possibility scenarios such as delayed election results and disputed election.

<https://episcopalchurch.org/posts/ogr/eppn-election-series-what-expect-when-youre-electing>

- **Poll Chaplains:** Tuesday, October 20 at 12:00 noon EST, Working with Lawyers & Collars organization to train Episcopal clergy to be near polls, providing prayerful presence and ensuring people can access vote safely. With partnering organization Lawyers and Collars, the Episcopal Church will teach public faith engagement for church leaders as a prayerful presence at the polls. [The Episcopal Church’s term for this role is “Poll Chaplains.”] Learn how to provide a calm and loving presence in the way of love, the way of peace, the way of justice, and reconciliation -- that is affirmed on Election Day. As Lawyers and Collars says: “All people are created in the image of God. Protecting the right to vote affirms the divine image and inherent value of all of God’s children.” REGISTER IN ADVANCE:

[https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAkcO2rrzMiHdP3aCm6frLdUo2GCOel9\\_2s](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAkcO2rrzMiHdP3aCm6frLdUo2GCOel9_2s)

- **Protest Chaplains:** Training Episcopal leaders to be a peaceful, prayerful presence in the midst of direct action and protests. Reconciliation and Justice Team & Ethnic Ministries offered first training on Tuesday 10/6. Next Training: 10/27

[https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMrciorjwpHNQcpDc6VEp\\_CyRISX\\_KYKNi](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMrciorjwpHNQcpDc6VEp_CyRISX_KYKNi)

### **Bishops United Against Gun Violence Resources**

- <https://bishopsagainstgunviolence.org/>

- October 19 webinar:

[https://bishopsagainstgunviolence.org/news\\_release/uniting-against-the-epidemics-of-racism-and-gun-violence-a-webinar-with-bishops-united-against-gun-violence/](https://bishopsagainstgunviolence.org/news_release/uniting-against-the-epidemics-of-racism-and-gun-violence-a-webinar-with-bishops-united-against-gun-violence/)

- Facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/3254463341270130/>

- The Service of Lament:

[https://bishopsagainstgunviolence.org/news\\_release/praying-for-an-end-to-gun-violence-a-service-of-lament-hope-and-resolve-with-bishops-united-against-gun-violence/](https://bishopsagainstgunviolence.org/news_release/praying-for-an-end-to-gun-violence-a-service-of-lament-hope-and-resolve-with-bishops-united-against-gun-violence/)

### **Resources from colleagues**

From Robin Razzino: We have a 30-day countdown to vows and voting:

<https://www.facebook.com/Church.of.Saint.Clement>, "A New Opportunity for Faith Formation and Exploration: The 30-Day Countdown to Vows and Voting 2020.

Feeling stressed or anxious about the upcoming Election Day? Feeling worn out from isolation, lack of sleep, loneliness, grief or anger in our current cultural moment? Then join with other St. Clement disciples in a 30-day deep dive into the convictions, promises and blessings of our faith as preparation for our souls and our nation’s polls!

On Sunday, November 1st we will celebrate All Saints together and renew our Baptismal Promises. And then on Tuesday, November 3rd, we will vote or wait for our ballots to be counted.

Follow along each day on our Facebook page to find a question for your spiritual curiosity and spiritual

hunger. The topics of the daily posts will connect with our baptismal vows and consider how those vows guide our conscience on topics of social concern, like racial justice, immigration and 'the stranger,' public education, housing, and healthcare. There will be resources and short video.

From Bruce Stewart: I have put together a booklet of Prayers for our Common Life from various traditions for our residents at Goodwin House Alexandria for use during these times. It draws mostly from the BCP and from a number of other sources.

We also recommend the Civil Discourse material from ChurchNext. I will be doing an overview of that method for our residents at Goodwin House.

## General Q&A

May our vestries meet in person? **This can happen outdoors, distanced and with masks. Inside, this is possible if you've been okayed for Phase II regathering.**

Are we still following the same protocols as DC and Maryland? **We are close. In other dioceses nearby, we are finding there are some congregations that are meeting in person, and in other places not. The context of the dioceses is different, so our application of the shared principles is a little different in each diocese.**

Can there be a session on preparing worship for Advent and Christmas? **Much has been covered by the programs presented by VTS on this topic ([presentation](#) and [YouTube](#)) but there seems to be enough interest in the topic that we will try to pull something together for you.**

Question about programs: Are ministries like youth groups or children's ministries able to hold events on the church campus, including indoors or outdoors? **You can consider doing them outdoors, if you've got permission for outdoor worship, following the same protocols. You may consider doing them indoors if you're cleared for Phase II regathering. For younger children, though, it might be challenging given their desire to NOT sit still! In that case, it may work better if you keep family groups together. Paris will pull together some resources – check out the Office of Christian Formation website for more information.**

Has the House of Bishops addressed the notion of "Virtual Eucharist"? **The HOB gathered in August and discussed it and did not come to a place of consensus or complete the work. At this point, the mind of our church is "no".**

Are we still operating under 14 days decline in diagnoses, hospitalizations and deaths before reopening? **We are now looking at a seven day rolling average of new cases, using the new tool for tracking the metrics in your locality. Check out the tool [here](#), and the instruction guide [here](#).**

Are there any churches who have started meeting in person yet? **Many are meeting outdoors, a small number have been approved to regather indoors, and we think there are a couple who are starting their services this week.**

Is there a Diocesan plan for an Election Prayer Vigil? We will all be a part of the Novena that has been put forth by TEC through Forward Movement:

<https://www.forwardmovement.org/Pages/Item/15381/Season-of-Prayer.aspx>