



The Episcopal Diocese of New York

Transcript of the September 9, 2020 Diocesan Convention Roll Out Meeting

- Good evening, I'm Mary Glasspool, Bishop assistant of the Episcopal Diocese of New York and on behalf of our Bishop Diocesan, Andrew Dietsche and our Bishop Suffragan Allen Shin and all the good people of the diocese, I welcome you to this opening of the 244th Convention of our diocese. The theme for this convention comes from the book of Revelation. "Behold I am making all things new." Certainly, we are doing some new things in order to engage this particular convention. This is the first of eight rollout meetings. Each meeting will follow a general format: it will be hosted by a bishop; we will begin and end in prayer; we will have a video or perhaps two videos produced by a diocesan commission or committee, and a brief time following each video for questions and answers via the chat room; and we will have an opportunity to practice voting using an app or to test out various apps and our secretary of convention Matt Heyd will talk a little more about that a little later on this evening. Right now, particularly since I said we were going to begin and end in prayer, I would like to turn everything over to Jeannine Otis and Larry Marshall for our opening prayer.

- It's comforting to know that when it was proclaimed that I was made in your image, that it's the soul and not the body that was meant; It's comforting to know that when I talk to myself, I'm talking to You; When I talk to someone else that I'm talking to You; It's comforting to know that because of this I am never without You. Therefore, I am never alone as I wander through this wonderment call life; wrapped in the comfort of Your love.

- Thank you, Jeanine and Larry. So that we can become more comfortable with Zoom, unless you've already zoomed out, we would like to invite you to share via the chat room, and hopefully you'll see on your screen Jillian chat support, we would like to invite those of you voluntarily, who are willing, to put in the chat room your name and where you're signing in from, where you're engaged from. I'm gonna use this to say that all of the convention rollout meetings will be recorded and there will be transcripts, word for word transcripts, including the chat room. So I don't need to ask you to think twice about putting a snarky comment in there. You don't want it to go down to posterity. So be nice in the chat room. It would be remiss of me if I were not to thank the small executive committee appointed by Bishop Dietsche back in March, who have worked very hard, including over the summer, to put these rollout meetings together and to try to both experiment and work with our tech assistants to integrate all of this. The committee is Matt Heyd, who is Secretary of Convention, Sara Saavedra, who is the Assistant Secretary of Convention, Alice Yurke, the Chancellor of the Diocese of New York, Geoff Smith, Director of Technology, and Nick Richardson, Director of Communication. We also wanna give a shout-out to Tom Hagerty and the crew here in the Madeleine L'Engle Library, which is our host center, and the Liturgy Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Reparations Committee. During the planning, we've used and returned to four core values that have governed and helped us discern which way to go with all of this. The four core values are transparency, we want you to be able to see and know what we're

doing, it also involves communication, communication, communication. And we know it's not perfect yet and we are open to any feedback or assistance you would like to give us in terms of being transparent and helping everybody understand and engage with this process. We understand that if we do well at the transparency, which includes good and comprehensive communication, that trust will be built. And we need trust in order to build up the body of Christ. We need to be trusting people. Most of all, we need to trust in God. And God, God knows, needs to be able to trust us. We've also worked with the value of accessibility. And you will see on your screen that every rollout meeting will be closed captioned and signed by an interpreter. We don't only mean accessibility for the deaf and hard of hearing, we're also cognizant of the fact that perhaps delegates do not, not everybody has an iPhone, not everybody has a state of the art iPad, not everyone has a laptop even, so we're talking about accessibility across technological lines as well. And if you need help at any point in this process, we are open to receiving your questions, your requests for help and responding to them. And then the fourth value is agency. I don't know about you, but I feel like we're living during a time when I feel a little bit out of control, there's not much I have control over and there's not much I can do about it and it is what it is, is kind of the phrase of the day. We wanna make sure that every individual member of the Diocese of New York experiences, to some extent, to some degree, a sense of agency. You are a child of God, you have agency, and you have the ability to do something about your life and the life of the community. So we explicitly focus on the voting process, and we're still working that out and so far so good we haven't made any huge mistakes yet, but we're getting there. So we've really focused on those four values of transparency, trust, accessibility, and agency. And we hope this will be a fun and energetic experience for everybody. And that in engaging with all of this, as people from ages past, this is the 244th convention, that we will be honoring and glorifying the God who is our creator. So without further talk, I'd like to turn the microphone over to our faithful diocesan bishop, Andy Dietsche.

- Thank you, Mary. Mary named all of the people who have been part of this convention planning process this year. This has been different than every other year. And I'm extremely excited to see how nine rollouts go between Labor Day and our convention in November, an opportunity for us to really dwell in many of the ministries and programs of our diocese as we approach the actual full day of our convention a little bit later. But I'm just, this is our first one, and really very excited to see you all. I'm very grateful to Mary. She named everybody on that committee except herself. And I will tell you that I know, and I've seen how much work she has put in as the Bishop's liaison to the committee. And so I thank you, Mary, and all of the people on that committee. Really a pleasure to welcome all of you to this first rollout event. Obviously we are using this format, it's new for us, to reduce the amount of time that we will have to spend zooming and on computers when we come to the day of the actual convention and to space out, in a more gentle way, the work that is before us. But we know why we're doing this. We are still in the middle of a global pandemic, a fatal disease that continues to be in our community; and the combination of the dangers and stresses of COVID and the conflicts across our country regarding social and racial justice are forming the very dramatic, urgent backdrop to our coming together as a convention. What we've seen over these months, as we have hovered at the border between life and death, life and death at the hands of an invisible, ruthless everywhere virus, and at the hands of a virulent institutional racism has been exhausting and has made us tired and afraid. And it is with the weight of all of the history that we're living through that we gather now for this annual convention. Let me just throw a little

digression in there. Mary and I were talking today about whether or not we did want to create a full word for word transcript of all of these rollouts, even though they really are actually part of the convention, therefore we should have that in our convention journal. And I said, every now and then I go down to the archives and I go back and look for something in a convention journal from the 19th century or some other time. And when I can read people's own words, the things they were saying, the things that they were doing, it brings that history to life. And one day there will be people who look back to say, "What were they doing and thinking "at their convention in the Diocese of New York "during COVID year and the year of racial justice?" So the words that we say here will live beyond us and that is the weight of a some of it. We don't always realize we're living in history. We do right now. We are in a very historically poignant moment. Now, last year, when we came together for our convention, we passed a number of resolutions, which would provide significance for our life in the diocese. I actually thought that the resolutions we passed last year were game changers in some ways. We set aside, by unanimous vote, I think, or close to, we set aside a substantial piece of our diocesan endowment to support the work of the Reparations Committee and the work of Reparations for Slavery that we are called to do. We also passed a resolution that would begin to build serious accountability in our diocese regarding the environmental responsibilities we have in the use of our buildings. And we passed a resolution to repeat the really quite wonderful Indaba conversations that we had in the first year of my time as bishop across our diocese, and to do that now in the context of conversations about racial justice and reconciliation. Now we passed all of that last year and it was inspiring and exciting, but then the coming of COVID, just a few months later, set back a lot of our hopes and intentions, and instead put us into an extraordinary level of energies going into just managing the crises that are right before us. Which isn't say you say that no work has happened in those areas. And I particularly want to highlight the significant work that's happened during these last months by the Reparations Committee and the Anti-Racism Committee. The Reparations Committee rolled out a series of apology retreats, some of which became wildly oversubscribed with people from other parts of the country wanting to be part of it, and the Anti-Racism Committee is, even now, as we speak, beginning the diocesan-wide book study on Ibram Kendi's "How To Be An Antiracist". These are wonderful gifts offered to our diocese and the larger church and world, and they are hope. They're a way for us to recommit to who we are in a time of great anxiety and to remake the covenant that binds us to one another across the broad diversity of people in this diocese. It's a way for us to stand together as one against violence and pain. And always through all of this, all of our churches, congregations and priests have been engaged in the constant all the time care of the people of God in our 200 churches. Margaret and I live here at the cathedral and it's right next door to a hospital, and at the height of the spring, all we heard all day and all night were overlapping sirens coming up Broadway and Amsterdam across Harlem. Too many to count too many to differentiate and distinguish. And it just was a period in which we became so aware of how many were dying around us. And we began to learn that about our churches too. Too much grieving, too many people passing away in our midst and all of that has been our constant companion as we've come now to this day into our convention. In the Revelation to St. John, I'm never quite sure what to think about the Revelation to St. John, but some of the most beautiful stuff in the Bible is in that book, and that includes the passage where the author says, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, "for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, "and the sea was no more. "And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, "coming down out of heaven from God, "prepared as a bride adorned for her beloved. "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "'See, the home of God

is among mortals, "He will dwell with them, they will be His peoples, "and God himself will be with them. "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, "death will be no more, "mourning and crying and pain will be no more, "for the first things have passed away.' "And the one who was seated on the throne said "Behold, I am making all things new." We have, with great boldness and perhaps some hubris, adopted that divine proclamation as the name, the title for this convention. But we do that with the certainty that in all times, however hard, God is never inactive and His mercies endure forever. We trust the prophetic promise that death will be no more, and we will see with our eyes, that grief and sorrow will be no more, and that God is making all things new. But that is a statement of faith and we make that statement in the face of many obstacles. But what we mean by a statement of faith is it is simply a declaration that is unsupported by any ordinary proofs. In the Book of Hebrews, we were told that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. And that even when such an astonishing number of people hover at the threshold of life and death, God is still, we may be certain, bringing in His kingdom. And even when the long legacy and present circumstances of injustice, violence, racial hatred, and profound inequality of persons has held up before us every day, we still will say that God is even now creating the beloved community in our midst. Jesus never said, "I will make you safe." What He said was, "I will teach you "to walk through a world of danger without fear," the foundation, which makes it possible for us to live in the middle of uncertainty and change and chance. An actual, real danger without fear is somewhere in the middle of this enigmatic verse, that God is making all things new. We are beginning to talk about what life in the post-COVID era will look like. And as we begin to move farther into that transition, knowing that life will be different, it falls to every person and every people to bring back to mind those principles and virtues by which they want to be defined, and from which they will rise and act in the new age. God said, "Behold, I am making all things new," and that includes us, through the fire and the storm, through pestilence and the fury of human sin to new birth, life and redemption. Who will we be at this convention? We will dwell on that question.

- Thank you, Bishop Dietsche. Tonight's videos are from the college chaplains and the College Chaplaincy Committee and the deacons of the Diocese of New York. So we now move to the college chaplains' video. And Nils Chittenden, who is Chair of the College Chaplaincy Committee, and also I should just, I think Nils will probably do this anyway, but Ryan Kuratko is the maker and producer of the video.

- I'm delighted to commend to you this short video about some of the wonderful ways in which our diocese supports campus ministries. Campus Ministry works with young adults, at one of the most complex times of their life, and ever more so in this situation, which we find ourself in this world right now, and those who engage with campus ministries, in my experience, go on to a lifetime of Christian discipleship and become committed church members. So thank you for your support of Campus Ministry. And our vision is to grow and serve more campuses over the coming years. Thank you.

- [Man] Campus Ministry in the Diocese of New York reflects our diversity. We have Episcopal presences at research universities, liberal arts colleges, state, and private schools, community colleges, and military academies. We are also growing. We added Fordham University as the newest episcopal community this year.

- So Campus Ministry and the Canterbury club made the biggest difference in the world to me, in terms of my college experience. My college experience would not have been the same without it.

- Campus Ministry is a place where we can step back and slow down and students can really be in community with each other and with God in a way that doesn't always feel possible in normal campus life. Currently, I would say Campus Ministry is really even more than that, because it's been one of the only things in my life that's felt really constant. A silver lining of going from school back in spring is that we've actually continued through the summer, which has been really, really good for me. be together and focus on being present and having fun and worshiping together and eating together and making community together.

- I think it's a really special and vast space for people to just kind of relax and enjoy themselves and have good community, but also meaningful conversation. It kind of flicks around between fairly profound, personal, meaningful stuff to pretty fun I guess, fun conversation, which is great.

- I guess the short version of that is that it helped me build a more personal connection to my faith, more personal connection to God and to Jesus. And I don't think that would've been possible without Campus Ministry.

- I believe that Canterbury has the potential to expand, not only my, but other young adults' education by situating their Christian faith within a collegiate community and furthering their secular humanistic education by showing how it fits into their larger Christian faith.

- Hi, I'm Allison Moore and I'm the new priest in charge at St. Andrew's church in New Paltz. And over the past 10 years, they have started two food pantry ministries, one at SUNY, New Paltz and one at SUNY Ulster. At SUNY Ulster, we continued distributing food, both in the spring and summer, because students and some staff really relied on the food that we have been providing. And we're finding ways to connect with them while we do contactless delivery, working with the SUNY Ulster administration.

- [Man] In 2020, Campus Ministry around our diocese has been more active than ever. We've had our usual confirmations and baptisms, welcoming new Episcopalians into the fold. We've had our intense dinner conversations about vocations and the even more intense ones about popular music. We have mourned terrible tragedies together. We have had our usual pastoral meetings about breakups. Our faculty and staff have continued to gather for prayer and meditation. But we've also been even busier than usual. With COVID-19, the ongoing need for food banks and material support has increased. The spiritual hospitality and support provided by our young adult campus ministries has been the anchor for many of our young people, who are now scattered literally all over the world, but have continued to meet under the auspices of our Diocese of New York campus communities. Our ministries have been changing from week to week and sometimes hour to hour, much like the lives of our students, faculty and staff, as we all worship and study electronically, or wearing masks at a distance.

- What do I want the Diocese of New York to know about Campus Ministry?

- I would say that Canterbury is also really helpful to the wider Columbia community, because we're showing the campus that you don't have to be homophobic or a sexist to be Christian. I know I've had several people come up and want to talk to me about the sticker I have on my laptop, which has a pride flag and the Episcopal shield.

- I think that the thing that's important to know about Campus Ministry and Canterbury is that it is essential to the longevity and the livelihood of the Episcopal Church. We all know that the Episcopal churches, quote, unquote, dying, there are not enough people joining. And I think that one thing that's really special about Canterbury Ministry is that it allows us to kind of reclaim the idea of evangelism and to think about how we, as a community, of young people can come together in our own faith, but also spread that and evangelize further with it in our school community and beyond in a way that is socially justice focused, that is queer friendly, that is overall a really supportive space.

- About Campus Ministry is that it creates a spiritual haven that does wonders for mental health. I can say, Canterbury has done more for my mental health than anything else at school. You know, it's nourishing when school can be very draining.

- I'd like to thank you for your support of Campus Ministry. It's an essential part of my experience, but also I think, if anything, but this past year has just been, it's so crazy. And if it's proved anything, it's that we need each other more than ever. And Canterbury has been there for, not only the students of our ministry, but the students of the university as a whole, for our spiritual and our mental and emotional wellbeing, now that we're all separate. And it's definitely one of the things that I miss the most and long for the most about being at college. But even from afar, it continues to be one of the most guiding and structured and welcoming, embracing places that I can be. And thank you for your support. And I hope, more than anything, that Canterbury returns in person as soon as possible.

- I think it does valuable work. It really fills a gap in between being in youth group still living at your parents' house and being in the church, and then before you grow up and you join a big adult church and you do that on your own. It just kinda helps you really come to terms with them personal, for me, that's how it was. It helped me determine my personal connection to God, to Christ, to the church. And if it weren't for Campus Ministry, I don't think I'd still be affiliated with the church.

- All right, I just submitted a comment to the chat room, asking for attendees to submit questions or comments to the chat room. And Jillian, who is our chat support, will submit or ask the questions live of the Rev. Nils Chittenden.

- Yes, wonderful. What a great video. Well, we can start with the question that is on everybody's minds right now, which is what has changed with COVID and how has Campus Ministry been and how are you handling it, dealing with it with students?

- Well, first of all, I think, I want to say a big thank you, before answering the question, a big thank you to Ryan and to all the students on that video, for just a really wonderful video. And there is an example of how people have stayed together in community and come together in this time of pandemic. And like so many other organizations, Campus Ministries have had to adapt on the fly and they have moved to all of the online platforms that the rest of us have moved on to and use those in creative ways. So for instance, I know, up in West Point, they've been meeting on the Microsoft teams. It's been really hard, because the cadets were largely off campus for a big chunk of time, and then were allowed to return to campus. I know that my colleague, Judy Ferguson, who's the chaplain at West Point, is with us today on this webinar. And I love all of the little social events that Judy tried to put together for her students, including getting the Army's permission to deliver a birthday cake to the center of a public space outdoors so that cadets could celebrate a birthday. And then there's been obviously online worship on Zoom or Facebook Live. There's been online choirs formed in various ways. I know Columbia has had a Spotify playlist going. And so, I mean, in many ways, there have been a lot of positive things, but of course in the midst of all of that there has been the deep sadness and fear amongst our students about their loved ones and then anxiety of course about themselves and what does this mean for their education. What does it mean, for instance, if there's an internship that's canceled and what does it mean for their career? And I do remember Ryan, who is our chaplain at Columbia, Barnard and Fordham, saying, back a few months ago, that also a big factor that has been very kind of distressing for students is just the, as well as the anxiety, is just the sheer boredom of the new situation, especially for young adults, who are so naturally geared towards being in community with each other. So yeah, like Homer Simpson would say, "It's been a crisitunity." And there were a lot of positives, as well as the obvious negatives.

- Oh my gosh, yes. It's amazing. We have lots of thank you's in the chat. We have lots of incredible experiences that people have had with college and campus ministry, which is great to read. We have two main themes that keep coming up that I'll let you answer separately. One is the colleges and campuses that you currently serve, and the other one is expansion. Those are the two--

- Yeah, yeah. So the campuses that we currently serve, well, we've got Canterbury Downtown, which is Downtown New York City, well, Downtown Manhattan, which is served by the Reverend Megan Sanders, and she's been there for about a year now. And Canterbury Downtown is kind of centered around New York University, has a spiritual home at Grace Church, but also within that Canterbury's orbit are some other colleges such as Hunter, for instance, and various other campuses, of which there are a lot in that part of the world. And then we have Canterbury Uptown, and that is served by Ryan, Chaplain Ryan Kuratko, who made that wonderful video. And he is also looking to expand to other campuses within the northern boroughs of New York City. But then we also have a chaplain, a chaplaincy at Vassar. I say chaplaincy, because we're in a sort of transitional phase at the moment, and Megan Sanders was our chaplain at Vassar and she moved down to Manhattan. And so at the moment we have benefited from the interim work of the Reverend Leigh Hall, and she will be doing interim work again this academic year, but we are beginning a search process. And it's a search process that is going to partner more with a parish in Poughkeepsie - Christ Church. And that is in a sense a bit of a paradigm about the way that we want to develop and become more closely involved with local Episcopal parishes in order that they might serve their campus ministries as well as the, as the set-aside campus ministers. We have a chaplain, as we

heard on the video, up at SUNY, New Paltz and Ulster. And Allison, I just wanna say, she literally arrived in post brand new, like about three days before lockdown, And she didn't get to meet any of her students. They'd all gone. She barely got to meet any faculty. She really is - it's been a very, very strange start for her and I want to commend her for the brilliant and creative ways that she's done that and the food pantry as well. And then we have a chaplain up at West Point, Judy Ferguson, who also serves a church in that neighborhood. But we want to expand, let me backtrack and say, so that's seven something campuses. There are actually about 140 further and higher education campuses in the Diocese of New York. And so we are serving obviously only a very small number of those. Although we are, by Episcopal diocesan standards across the country, doing pretty well, but we would love to serve many more campuses. We would like to serve campuses perhaps in counties that are underserved by Campus Ministry. I mean, Westchester, where I am, is one of those, but there are plenty of other counties that are underrepresented. And we also want to focus on under representative, underrepresented kind of demographic groups in terms of campuses, such as community colleges. That's a really important way that we want to go forward. And all of this, as I say, is something that we really want to do much more in partnership with parishes. And so I would like to invite any parishes, who want to know more about how they can serve the needs of campuses in their neighborhoods, to just reach out to me or reach out to one of the college chaplains, reach out to Bishop Mary, and we will be glad to assist and help develop that kind of ministry.

- That's great. That's actually such a great segue. As we move forward to the deacons video, we want to say that no question will be left behind, no question will be lost. So if you type something in here, the Campus Ministry Committee will follow-up. Thank you so much, Nils. We're so excited to hear about what's going on and we'll move it over to the deacons video. Thank you very much, Jillian.

- Thank you, Nils, and all the college chaplains. Let's move on to the deacons.

- Hello, I'm Deacon Denise LaVetty and I'm the Director of Deacon Formation and Transition for our diocese and I'm here to report on the diaconate. I'm happy to say that despite the year being 2020, the diaconate is alive, well and kicking, and we're here, as is our directive, ready to serve. An exciting development is the recreation of the Bishop's Committee for the Diaconate. That committee is chaired by Deacon Kent Curtis. And Kent has prepared a written report, which is in your materials, and I encourage everyone to take a look at that. One of the great characteristics of the diaconate has always been its flexibility and adaptability. And this has been apparent by the wide diversity of the ministries embraced by deacons. That has certainly been evidenced during the past few very difficult, unsettling months. While adapting to new ways of doing things, deacons have continued organizing and building lay leadership, pastoral care, bringing the world to the church by implementing outreach opportunities, teaching and guiding. Many have been able to continue their involvement in food ministries, prayer on the streets, pastoral care and hospitals, and organizing online prayer and support groups. Deacons are typically known as ever present on the margins, thinking outside the box. And that has continued even when the margins are a screen and the box is a laptop. There are currently 44 deacons serving in parishes in our diocese. Our deacon formation program closed our last semester with two Zoom classes, no surprise, and it's beginning again this month. We're trying to not skip a beat in the midst of current complications. In

fact, our three year-two postulants will be entering field placement and will begin their pastoral care training, and I'm so impressed and deeply thankful for the flexibility and enthusiasm of the field placement parishes and the hospitals where they will train. Honestly, I was concerned we would be able to do this, but the Holy Spirit has paved the way. We have one new postulant beginning this month, So there are currently four students. Our active recruiting for deacons has taken the form of parishes inviting a deacon to come and be a deacon for the day, and also with inquirer's events. I'm planning one of these inquirer's events on the evening of October 20th, which will be a Zoom event, and information on that will be forthcoming. However, those events are not enough. I encourage everyone, even with the limitations of current times, to keep an eye out for parishioners, showing the heart of a deacon with a view towards raising a deacon from your parish. Thank you, stay safe, and walk in the embrace of God's most Holy Spirit. Wearing a mask, of course.

- Wonderful. Okay, we will begin with some questions, after Deacon LaVetty. Let's see, there she is. Okay, wonderful. Let's start here. So we know that you get this question a lot. Are deacons clergy?

- Thank you for asking. I do get the question. I'm sure other deacons do as well. So deacons are clergy. And sometimes you hear people refer to priests and sometimes that means there's an, kind of a blanket term. Or sometimes, I should say it the other way. People refer to clergy and they really mean priests. Priests only. So that's a really good distinction and I think that, as there's more deacons in the diocese and more people become aware of us and educated about it, they'll understand that bishops, priests, deacons are all clergy, okay, and just different titles. Hope that clears that up for some people. I've actually gotten the question quite recently.

- Oh, good. Well, I'm glad I brought it up then. The next question, kind of going off of that, is what kind of training, do you want to become a deacon?

- Okay, well, I'll say that kind of, sum it up kind of briefly. Currently, our academic piece is EFM, Education for Ministry, which a lot of people know about already. And that's a four-year program. But then parallel to that, even though it's a different period of time, it's a three-year program of deacon formation. So once you get through all of the discernment process and you enter the program, you begin three years of the deacon formation program. And that includes meeting once a month There's some other meetings, there's deacons conference and maybe a couple of other things there. It's classroom training. There's a lot of elements of that. I bring in speakers from, and presenters, from all over. I bring deacons in, because I believe that the deacons should train other deacons as much as possible. But I do tap into my relationships at General Theological Seminary and I bring professors in from there. Occasionally, we have homiletics professor, I'm getting in their ethics professor, Michael Ball coming in this year. And so we do that. Then, after year one, the deacons need to go to a parish not their own for field placement and they will do two semesters of field placements in one or two different parishes. And then they also will go into a hospital to do their pastoral care training. And there's a lot of other little, but that's kind of the basics. That's kind of--

- Yeah, amazing, thank you. For our last question, could you talk a little bit about, I mean, you talked a little bit about what you do, but if there's any specific ministry that maybe you're focusing

on now, maybe it's different now because of COVID, if there's anything specifically that you're focusing on.

- Well, deacons are all generally going along with what's going on in their parishes and adapting to all the new ways of doing things. But one of the beautiful things about the diaconate is its flexibility. So if you talk to six different deacons, you're gonna get a different story about what they do, because we can follow our heart. Some people, some deacons are very much attached to food ministries and some are attached to pastoral care. So we can do the things that feed us and those are the things that we go into parishes that have those things available for us to do. So there's not a laundry list of the things, but, oh, I just happened to have a Book of Common Prayer here and it just happens to be open to the Ordination of a Deacon. The examination, which is on page 543. And it says, "At all times your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless, they are serving Christ himself." So, any activity that falls under that is a deacon thing. So, you can see that that really opens it up to quite a lot of things. The amount of things that the deacons are involved with, prison ministries, it just goes on. It's a very wonderful thing.

- What an incredible response. Thank you so much. As we move on to prayers, I invite the bishop to come back. Thank you so much.

- Thank you, Jillian. Thank you, Denise. And thank you, Nils, once again, for two wonderful videos. Now we're going to call on the Secretary of Convention, the Reverend Matt Heyd, who will say a few things about the voting process, which I will just comment is probably the most challenging technological thing we are dealing with right now. We need your help. So, help us out.

- We do need your help. Thanks to the bishop. You know, every year we join together to vote for the offices for our diocese, and this year will be different than ever before. We are following the four different values that the bishop mentioned at the start of our meeting tonight. Transparency, trust, accessibility and agency. Every night, on the news, we see incredible stories about the November election in our country and what's going on and what might go wrong, we can model together a different way. And so over these next weeks in our convention rollout meetings, we're gonna try out different ways to vote, to make sure everybody's voices are heard, that everyone's vote is counted, that everyone has accessibility when we come together on November seventh. And so we're gonna try it together. Different possibilities, different apps, step by step, half step by half step so we all feel comfortable by the time we come together on the seventh and vote for the office of convention. I'm really grateful to Sara Saavedra for all the work that she does every year to make sure we're ready, and certainly this year more than ever. Just let me say about these rollout meetings. Thank you to the bishop for her leadership. Thanks to Sara for all of her work, to Geoff Smith and Tom Hagerty from the team, from the diocese. Thanks to Lucas Thorpe and Julian Jameson from the team at , who are helping bring these together. We are excited about the time together and looking forward to figuring out together how we vote when we come together on November seventh. Thank you, bishop.

- Thank you, Matt. That was great. We're gonna move into a time of prayer, as we bring the meeting to closure. And so I invite you to once again, should the spirit move, write your prayers or your prayer requests for the diocese or any other aspect of our lives, our praise, our thanksgiving,

as well as our intercession and petition in the chat box as a kind of, I don't know, electronic form of prayer. But we're gonna have about two minutes of quiet time while we offer the opportunity for you to do that. And of course, there may be prayers on your hearts that you do not necessarily want to write in the chat box and that's okay, too. God hears all prayers. And then I will call up the liturgy people right now while we're getting ready to have our final prayers.

- Let me invite the people who are doing the closing liturgy to commence.

- Eternal spirit, earth maker, pain bearer, life giver, source of all that is, and that shall be, father and mother of us all, loving God, in whom is heaven.

- Hallowing of your name echoes through the universe. The way if your justice be followed by the peoples of the world.

- Your heavenly will be done by all created beings, your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

- With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test strengthen us.

- From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign and the glory of the power that is love, now and forever, Amen.

- I want to thank you on behalf of everyone, for engaging this first of our eight rollout meetings for the 244th convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. And announced that not for the first, time next week's meeting from five to six on September 16th, I think is the date, we'll feature Episcopal charities and will be hosted by Bishop DG. So, I invite you back for that particular meeting, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.