



The Episcopal Diocese of New York

Transcript of the October 28, 2020 Diocesan Convention Roll Out Meeting

- Good evening. I'm Mary Glasspool, bishop assistant in the Diocese of New York. And on behalf of Andy Dietsche, Bishop Diocesan and Allen Shin, Bishop Suffragan, and all the wonderful people of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, I welcome you to this, our eighth Roll-out Meeting of the 244th Convention of the Diocese of New York. These meetings are recorded and posted online at the diocesan website for you to view again, should you wish, or for others who were not able to engage right at this time to view at a later time. The convention executive team is comprised of Matt Heyd, convention secretary. Sarah Saavedra, assistant secretary. Alice Yurke, the chancellor of the Diocese of New York. Geoff Smith, director of technology, and Nick Richardson, director of communications.

And I want to thank them all for all the work that they've done in leading us through these Roll-out Meetings. We've operated with the core values of transparency, trust, accessibility and agency. And I want to just focus for a minute on agency this evening. Because during the pandemic, we've been in a time of kind of out of controlness. And we want to very clearly say that each of us has agency. We have the will and the capacity to do things still, even with the restrictions and guidelines imposed by the pandemic. And tonight, as you will hear in just a few minutes, we will be working on reparations and the report of the reparations committee. Your vote counts, your capacity to act counts, and we are doing this important work for the good of the whole. So without further comment, I'd like to turn it over for an opening prayer and an opening song. ♪ Justice ♪ ♪ I have ♪ ♪ Without one... ♪ ♪ Without ♪ ♪ Thy glory ♪ ♪ Work ♪ ♪ Shared on me ♪ ♪ In the my own beautiful ♪ ♪ We come to thee ♪ ♪ Oh, land ♪ ♪ Oh God ♪ ♪ I come ♪ ♪ I come ♪

- Dear people of God, our history is marred by oppression, by the enslavement of those who differ from us, and by the forces of racism that attack human dignity. The sin of racism is woven into our lives, our cultures in small and great ways, in things done and things left undone. As followers of Christ, we reject racism and the oppression of other human beings. In building Christ's Beloved Community, we must strive to love all people, respect all people and work for the good of all people. We must stand alongside of God's children of every race, language, and culture, and work together as agents of justice, peace and reconciliation. In the assurance of our forgiveness, let us kneel before God and humbly confess our sins, Our participation in racism, our privilege based on racism and our perpetuation of racism.



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- God, the liberator, you freed your people from slavery in Egypt, yet the legacy of slavery deforms our lives today.

- Have mercy on us.

- God, the son, you pray that all will be united in your love and service, yet the divisions among us rend your body.

- Have mercy on us.

- God, the Holy Spirit, you inspire us to live peaceably with all, yet the state of genocide and internment mars our striving for justice.

- Have mercy on us.

- We have harmed one another and the earth through negligence, greed, and self-interest.

- Have mercy on us.

- We have decried violence while overlooking inequity and frustration from which it rises.

- Have mercy on us.

- We have sought comfort and advantage for ourselves at the cost of injustice for others.

- Have mercy on us.

- We have welcomed solace over conflict and ignored the cries of those harmed by your comfort.



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- Have mercy on us.

- We have been fearful and distrustful of those who are different from us.

- Have mercy on us.

- We have preferred order over justice and isolation over the struggle for peace.

- Have mercy.

- We have failed to act with courage for the sake of love.

- Have mercy on us.

- Lord have mercy.

- Christ have mercy.

- Christ have mercy.

- Lord have mercy.

- May almighty God have mercy on us. Grant us courage and conviction and strengthen us to love others who are unlike us. May God, the holy and undivided Trinity make us compassionate in our actions and courageous in our works. That we may see Christ's Beloved Community in our own day.

- Amen.



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- Now, I'd like to invite the Reverend Matt Heyd to talk about voting.

- Thank you, Bishop. Over these last weeks, we've tried ways that we can vote together online, that are easy and equitable. And so we're going to try this again today. We're figuring out what doesn't work and we're trying to make sure what does work, so wherever you are, we can vote together. And here's the plan that's going to start next week. We're going to vote two different ways. One way for candidates for diocesan offices, and one way for resolutions. Next Wednesday morning, November 4th, You're going to get an email. Everyone who's registered as a lay or clergy delegate will get an email that has a link to vote for candidates for the offices. It's a secure link, and that'll be the first ballot. On Thursday and Friday, we'll have subsequent emails with the second and third ballot. And this has to be a way we can all vote together before we get to November 7th. And then while at the convention, we're going to vote together for the resolutions, including the budget resolution. So look for the email next week, November 4th, nine o'clock. We'll send reminders throughout the day, and then we'll vote together for the resolutions. Now, here's what you can do. The first is register. Thanks everyone who is registered either as a clergy or lay delegate. That's incredibly helpful and important obviously for voting. The second is, we'll ask you to vote for candidates with the email with which you registered. Most of us have more than one email address, and you'll get the email about the candidates for diocesan offices, to the email with which you registered. And we want to know if you're having trouble. It's been super helpful for us to hear all the feedback. And so let us know if you're having trouble. Now, we're going to try now and we'll put a link in chat that is a link to today's test vote. And we'll put up the link a couple of times, but it's the same link. We're doing one link today. Two weeks, last link, well, that didn't quite work. But the one link has two different questions. Are you voting in the US election? And what's the way you're planning to vote? Two questions, one link. And everyone should be able to vote. If you have trouble, put it in chat or send us a note at election@diocesen.org And we'll come back at the end of tonight to tell you how people voted. Now, let me note a question we have from Ascension about this. We haven't sent emails in the last couple of weeks. We tried that a couple of weeks ago. The last two weeks, we've not sent emails. So that's exactly right. We've tested that out. We think we know what the questions are, and we're ready to start next week. So you have not been receiving emails these last couple of weeks, because we think we've got that part worked out. We're going to try the live voting again today and see how that works. So, Bishop. Thank you. And if you have questions or... I'm going to put...

- Orally answer two questions I saw in the chat, which is, the link is in the chat. And the chat is a little icon at the bottom, usually at the bottom. Sometimes it's at the top of the screen if you are engaged with us via Zoom, to the best of my knowledge. But keep asking the questions if you can't get connected.



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- That's right. And you should be connected once you... I just put the link back in chat again. It ends with diocese NY four. I'll put it once more as we go today. And so in this screen, you can see it. Bishop, thank you. And thanks to everyone for helping with this, especially Jesse and Sara Saavedra.

- Okay. It is now my honor to introduce the Right Reverend Andrew M. L. Dietsche. Bishop Dietsche.

- Thank you, Mary. And thank all of you for tuning into this eighth of our nine pre-convention roll-outs. All of them have been excellent. We've received such positive response throughout the diocese. As Bishop Mary said, tonight's subject or our theme tonight is around the subject of reparations for slavery. And it is as timely and important and urgent a conversation as we need to have in the diocese of New York. The reparations committee in this diocese dates back to 2006 and has done incredible work over all those years in the diocese. But in the last several years, has really helped to get this diocese ready to move forward in this tremendous act of justice and process of justice in new ways. We began with the year of lamentation, which frankly got national attention across the Episcopal Church for what we were doing here in the Diocese of New York, and culminated in a tremendous presentation at our diocesan convention in 2018. That was followed by apology retreats and building towards this year in which we wanted to focus on reparations themselves. The reparations committee has done some incredible things this year. You're going to hear more about it. I want to say how incredibly proud I am of the people who serve in that capacity, and who this year brought us the Knee on My Neck apology retreat in July, and then together with the anti-racism committee, the diocesan wide reading of Ibram Kendi's "How to Be an Antiracist." These and other programs this year have been fully subscribed, if not oversubscribed, as the importance and necessity of this work has brought attention from people across our diocese and even more broadly. Last year at our convention, the delegates to convention took a step out in faith and asked the trustees to remove over \$1 million from our diocesan endowment and invest that money into practical, tangible reparations. And in the couple of months that followed convention, I spent time with Bishop Mary and the reparations committee, as we began to talk and sort out how to begin the conversation and work that would need to happen around using or growing that fund. One of the things that we recognized was that the reparations committee had to be bigger, and we began to invite people to come onto that committee, so as to more fully represent the geographical diversity of the diocese. We finished some of those preparatory conversations and work about five minutes before COVID came, and everything went into something of a lockdown in which we still find ourselves. So not everything could happen in 2020, that at the end of 2019 we hoped would happen. And we are looking now to continue this work in 2021. And I am very, very excited about the direction and the goals and the conversations of the reparations committee. You're going to hear more about that. So I'm going to let them talk about it themselves. But I want to say this. When we were having, when we were doing our year of lamentations, and when we began to have the apology retreats, and when we set aside a substantial portion of our endowment to invest into reparations, and as we came into 2020 with all that behind us and ready to take new steps in new directions in this area, we had no idea at that time that we were going to hit the kind of tipping point that we clearly have in this year. The killing of George



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Floyd and Breonna Taylor and others, coming on the heels of the deaths of African-American men mostly, but also women and children, at the hands of institutional violence over these years, has brought America and has brought the church to a place from which there is no going back. We know now that we are at a moment when we must seize the future and make a kingdom out of it, and begin to live into beloved community. So when we set out last at our last convention to take some new steps in reparations, we could not have known how urgent that would be now. And so as we come together in convention this year, looking to continue this work in 2021, the imperative that is before us to make a reckoning of our past and to begin to take steps to undo the separation of African-American people from the building of wealth in this country is in front of us as an imperative. You are about to hear from the reparations committee themselves. I want to repeat how proud I am of this group, and what a privilege and honor it is to work with them in this important area. It is, if nothing else, the most important work that the church has before it in our day. Thank you.

- What heals history?

- The Portuguese were the first to land here. Sometime, all these slave boats that arrived here, there were Christian missionaries on board. When we start our tour, you'll find that on top of the dungeon, there is a church. One of the first things that would be done to you when you were captured, was to be baptized. You lose your name and take a Christian name. You become a slave in the name of God.

- The African slave trade was our Holocaust.

- The slave trade was primarily conducted on northern ships, with northern financial backing and northern trade goods. Until this country, it's people and institutions, acknowledge and atone for slavery, and take concrete steps to repair the damage done by 300 years of chattel slavery, then our nation can not move forward in the fullness and strength of its power.

- Five rooms, 15 feet by 30 feet. And that's 1000 people.

- I think what is also important is just the psychology of being kept here in this darkness, with the sea roaring in the background. You are dealing with people who have never had anything to do with the sea. Many of them are coming from inland, hundred, sometimes a thousand miles away.



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- The thing that I guess strikes me more than anything right now, is that we've talked when we were in Bristol and we were in Providence and we're listening to historians and scholars, and we've heard people talk about, you know, you've got to place it in the context of the times, and this is the way things were done. And this is how life was. And I just, I sit in that dungeon and I say, bullshit. It was an evil thing, and they knew it was an evil thing and they did it anyway.

- Are you willing to talk about reparation? Are you willing to talk about other kinds of programs? Not just when you come conscious of it, and you go through the process of accepting it and then normalizing yourself. What's next?

- You know, sometimes I'm really confused. You know, slavery was terrible. I mean, it was awful and we shouldn't have done it, but I didn't do it. I don't necessarily feel responsible. I think people of color began to say, wait a minute, you mistreated us. And some of us have never recovered from that. So what are you going to do about it? Well, we can say, we're sorry, and we can offer them scholarships to college, help them go to school. It's almost embarrassing to say that, that I don't think we ought to pay reparations to great, great grandchildren. On the other hand, maybe we should, I don't know. I think there's a resolution at this convention apologizing, because certainly the Episcopal Church was right in the middle of all of that in the South. And I'm not sure that fixes anything. They make us feel better, but I'm not sure it helps anybody else. So maybe if we make ourselves feel better, that we can go away and say, "Well, we did what we could." And I don't think that's the answer either. So I don't know the answer. I may never know the answer.

- Connecting these contemporary behaviors, for example around, among youth or drug abuse or the health disparities. How do you connect those with slavery? How do you disconnect them? Is my question. How do you disconnect them? Because it has been relentless, you see. There's never been a period of healing for anyone in this country 'cause we've never told the truth. The truth is coming out. It's unearthing itself in bones in New York City. It's unearthing itself in the behavior of well-educated astute individuals. That ugly thing is rearing its head. And I think it becomes an opportunity for us, you see, because we can ill afford to ignore this any further. It will be the undoing of this country. It will be the undoing if we don't acknowledge it for what it is, and once and for all deal with it. And people have often asked me, "Wait now. How has this affected Europeans?" You know, again, because there's so much focus on people of color and people from the African diaspora. Well, how has this affected Europeans? My God. It's like, what must it take? What must it do to your humanity to have to bury, to have to hide such ugliness, to have to keep such an awful secret, and to try to control for it everywhere? And then there are those who says, "I can't do that anymore, I got to tell the truth. We've got to own this." And see you have plenty of people. Europeans, who are saying, "No, this is not okay. This ugly secret, I'm getting ready to tell." So you see it's happening. On the one hand, it seems pretty, like it's a



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really horrible thing, but I think it creates for us, African people, And it creates for this country an opportunity to mend this.

- The reparations committee of the Diocese of New York was created in 2006 to collect and document information on the complicity of the church in general, and the Diocese of New York in particular, in the maintenance and justification of slavery, including its lingering effects found in segregation, discrimination, mass incarceration and more. Its mandate is to remember, repair, restore, reconcile, and make amends for wrongs that can never be singularly reducible to monetary terms. Its goal is an historical reckoning involving acknowledgement that an offense against humanity was committed and that the victims have not received justice. To achieve these goals, it created a three-stage process of lamentation, apology and reparation. Each stage represents a step toward healing and justice, and establishing a society closer to the ideals of the kingdom of God. In this pursuit, the committee has produced a DVD titled the Diocese of New York Examines Slavery, as well as a play titled, a New York Lamentation. It has held retreats, book studies, pilgrimages, and liturgies designed to lead our diocese toward repairing some of the harm inflicted in the form of slavery and its ghosts. The retreat you are attending is one more piece of this vast mosaic. In recent weeks, protests have sprung up in every state of the country and around the world, all protesting police brutality and violence. More broadly, they protest discrimination and social marginalization of black people in this country, more than 150 years after slavery was legally abolished. The protests were sparked by several high profile incidents. Incidents of unarmed black people being murdered by police and white civilians. These murders and other indignities are merely the tip of a very large and very old iceberg of racism in the United States. Now, in the days of the pandemic, the burdens placed on essential workers, the lack of healthcare and the disproportionate impact of the virus on poor communities makes this retreat more timely than ever.

- Our last convention happened in the year of lamentation in the Diocese of New York. That was the first of a three-year journey which we committed to make together, to take the deep dive into the horrific reality of American slavery and the legacy, the shadow of white supremacy, which flows from our slave past and continues to poison the common life of the American people, and continues to impose extraordinary burdens, costs, hardships and degradation upon people of African descent in our country. On the first day of that convention, we experienced the tremendous play written by Chuck Kramer, Rector of St. James Church in Hyde Park, which revisited in a vivid and unforgettable narrative form the unvarnished truth of the slave trade past of this diocese, and what that history has done to black people and white people and everyone in our churches to this day. The burdens we have yet to meet. The costs we have yet to pay. The new day we have prayed for, but which has not yet come. You will remember that our reparations committee made sure that we filled those months with plays and lectures and book studies and every sort of intellectual and cultural entry into the truth of what slavery was, what it meant and the untold suffering which it imposed on those consigned to lives of violence, brutality and endless servitude. The hope was that we might find in the midst of that exploration, a place of meeting. Where the suffering of African slaves might become a lived reality known and felt, and



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then shared by modern day black people and white people and all other people of color, so that we might be prepared to go with open eyes and broken hearts into the second year of this movement, the year of repentance and of apology. Yesterday, we received another dramatic offering from the reparations committee, again, written by Chuck Kramer. And out of that presentation, a resolution was brought before this convention, which had already come earlier in 1860, brought by John Jay, which was tabled and tabled again. And when finally Bishop Potter forced the convention to listen to Mr. Jay speak to his resolution, enough people got up and left the floor of the convention to deny the action even the possibility of a quorum. That resolution has been waiting. Still alive, sat on the table, for some convention to take it up, put it before our delegates once again and stand for a vote. But that vote has now happened. And it is one first mark of our repentance and an act of apology. We have passed the John Jay resolution. And 159 years later, we have finally condemned the ownership and traffic in African slaves in the Diocese of New York. We have records of churches in our diocese which owned men and women corporately as parish servants or as property assets. Churches whose wealth was built on the traffic in human beings. You know, Sojourner Truth was enslaved in this diocese up in Ulster County. But there is a third and final chapter to this movement, which begins now with this convention. And that is the year of reparation. The year of repair. What do we do with this knowledge? By what may we give expression to the depth of our sorrow and our repentance? How can we as a community, make reparation for what our forebears did in this place? Slavery was a crime visited upon individual persons and upon a people. The Diocese of New York played a significant and genuinely evil part in American slavery. So we must make where we can repair. All the while recognizing that it will never be possible for this convention or this diocese or even this country to ever make adequate compensation, for the suffering of a great host of people bent under the yoke of 400 years of servitude, violence and privation. And the whipping post. And the lynching tree. And crimes too unspeakable to name here. And the horrors of children taken from their parents and put to hard labor, and of families separated forever and of lives begun in bondage and ended in bondage, which never drew a free breath. And that was the only life that this world ever gave them. \$1.1 million divided among the people of African descent in the Diocese of New York would be less than \$100 per person, which would spend away all the money and do nothing. So what we engaged to do in this coming year, what we will be asked to do at our next convention must be systemic. A remedy for a whole people and for a church, white and black and brown and Asian, trying to come back to itself across the divide of a terrible history.

- Thank you to the reparations committee for that rich video. I wonder if we can start our Q&A portion. I invite the community gathered to put their questions in the chat box. Cynthia, could you tell us a little bit about the video that was shared? What the elements were. It seems like we were looking at such a broad scope of the work of the commission?

- Sure. The video was produced using... It was a mashup basically of material that we have used over the years. It showed the breadth and depth of the things that we've done. So some of the footage that you saw came from the acclaimed film "Traces of the Trade" by Katrina Browne, and the experience of their



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family, going on a journey to find out what their role was in the complicity of enslavement of African peoples. And there's also footage from the general convention that occurred in 2006. So there was a conversation about apologizing at the convention. So we didn't want you to be confused. This was from an earlier set of experiences, but we thought that, we wanted to show just how far and wide and how long the struggle has been. And of course we have footage from our convention from last year, and lots of other materials that we have used throughout the diocese to tell the story.

- Thank you. Yeah. So a beautiful collage and portrait of the work that you all are doing. At the end of the video, Bishop Dietsche mentioned the \$1.1 million, but obviously can't be distributed, you know, \$100 per person. That's obviously not the goal. What can be done with the \$1.1 million? Maybe Reverend Witt, this is for you.

- I think the goal of the reparations committee is to find vehicles or avenues that really have ongoing impact and systemic impact. To that end, we are going to be spending the months to come hosting panels that look at the legacy of enslavement and through various systemic realms of our society. The criminal justice system, housing, political system, health, et cetera, with the continued goal of helping the diocese fully immerse ourselves in understanding the systemic realm around us, and in turn using this fund to help congregations and other entities of the diocese address in an ongoing way, this legacy. And so, we want to have an impact of a fund that isn't something that's shallow, and isn't something that is sort of done and gone, because this is a long-term journey for us. And we expect to arrive at next year's convention with specific pathways for the use of these funds.

- Thank you. Another thought that comes to mind is, how can we as a diocese engage in this work ourselves? Are there educational opportunities? What ways can we engage our churches and communities in reparations at this very important moment in history? Maybe that's to the Bishop.

- Oh, okay. So that question got sent in my direction, but my immediate instinct is to kick it back to the reparations committee. And let me say why. When we went to convention last year, and I asked the convention to ask for the money, this did not actually come after months and months of conversations with the reparations committee, and then we turned around and said, "Okay, here we are." And this needed to have some conversations then about how we took this and went forward with it. One of the things that just, I said, as an aside to Richard in the conversation earlier today was, you know, if the money doesn't do anything else, at least it focuses our minds, and it is doing that. And what Richard just said a moment ago, is that among the various and different ways that this money can make repair and do reparations in the Diocese of New York and in our communities, a part of that is to provide resource and help and guidance to local congregations, to look at their own history and make that reckoning, and then to look at how they can bring repair to their own communities, which begins with repairing the



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congregations themselves. Because as we've done some of this research, it's pretty clear that almost every church in this diocese had a part in this history. So I'm not sure how to fully answer that question yet. The answer to that question is what's going to get lived out in the work over this next year. And then when the reparations committee is able to make proposals at the next convention, the work that will spring from that, as we go into what we can only pray to God will be a new and different kind of future than our past.

- And we're not clear either on how to guide and direct people either, but we do have some general ideas. And of course we think that it starts with the self, and individuals have to sort of come to a reckoning within themselves as to who they are individually. Making an understanding of the fact that most of us come with all kinds of biases and prejudices and ideas of people who don't look like ourselves or who are unlike ourselves. And so we have to really come to terms with that and acknowledge that. And once we do that sort of excavation of the self, we'll be able to have our own truths. And then those individual truths collectively can perhaps work in concert to make the changes that we are hoping to make. This isn't easy work. This isn't fast and or rushed work. This is work that requires a commitment to a lifelong term of transformation. And we can only do that if we're true and honest with ourselves as to who we are, and what we actually believe and what we value. And so we think that our committee members have gone through that process. We continue to go through that process. There are good days and there are bad days, but we all come to it with a place of love and a commitment to making a change. That's what we really believe in. And I think what's also key to our growth and development and being able to arrive at the place where we are in 2020, is we've learned to listen to one another, and we've learned to value all of the stories. We're so quick to be defensive and to invalidate people's stories and existence and experiences. And we have come to learn that it really is important to meet people where they are and help each other grow, holding each other's hands, having patience, which is not always easy, but we do think that that type of work and that type of honesty, being really authentic within ourselves and within our broader communities will be something that will lead us to better places. We also, as a committee, feel that we would be happy to work with other congregations as we have in the past. We always say that we were probably, I don't know, 15 years too early for this conversation, because it has been met with a lot of resistance because people were not sure. And we quite frankly don't know our history. We don't know the history of the United States. We don't know global history. We don't know the history of the church. And if we really were honest and took the time, which is what we're hoping to do with these book discussions and the film presentations that we've had, and trying to establish these workshops, we hope that people will indeed participate and come with an open heart, come with an open mind to learn and to not cast aspersions, but to really be open and to listen and learn what's there in black and white in the print. And of course, it's subject to interpretation. But when you combine the interpretation with the lived experience, there is reason for greater conversation and greater empathy to develop.



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- Wonderful. Thank you. That's a hopeful and encouraging note to end on. If any of the other panelists have something to add, I welcome that at this time. I'm grateful for all of your important work and excited about the future. All right, thank you to the reparations committee. I'll turn it back over to Matt Heyd, who will have the voting results. Thank you.

- Thank you, Lucy. And so after a little bit of a false start, I think folks were able to vote with the link. I'm going to put it one more time in chat. And so if you, it won't be in what I'm about to show you if you vote right now. However, it's interesting as this is the actual questions. It's not about the questions, it's about the method. And so if you want to try, if you had trouble before, try once more and thanks for those of you who I just know you had trouble with one of the links today. We're trying to keep our links straight. But here's what we heard. 94 folks were able to cast ballots. 90 said you would vote. Two said you would not vote. And two abstained from the question. Next question also, 94 ballots cast. In terms of, will you vote in person or by mail? In person early, 52 votes. By mail, 23 votes. In person election day, 14 votes. Abstained, four. So if you want to try once more, we'd love to just to make sure that everyone feels like they can do this. The Bishop mentioned our values at the start of the session tonight, and agency is one of them. So we want to make sure that voting is easy and equitable for everybody. And we're one more time, how we'll do it next week. To vote for candidates, everyone who's registered as a clergy or lay delegate will receive an email nine o'clock, Wednesday morning, November 4th, with the first ballot. And it'll have an email link. You can vote for the candidates there. For resolutions, including the budget, we'll vote on Saturday morning, the seventh, just the way you just did, with a link that we can all access and vote. Bishop, thank you very much. And thanks to everyone who's trying this out with us. Thanks for these last weeks of trial and error and trial again.

- Still working on it. Yeah, thank you, Matt. And thanks for giving me many, many lessons on patience and persistence. I want to call attention to the booklet that Sara Saavedra, among many other things that she does so well puts together for our convention. One of these hard copies was mailed to every single parish in the diocese. The booklet is also online. It's the official calendar of business. Of course the agenda, the order of the day is subject to change, but basically, the information about candidates and the resolutions are in this booklet. So it's pretty critical that people read it. Maybe mark, learn and inwardly digest it as well, at least so far as our opportunity and privilege to vote goes. So again, many thanks to all. I guess, just to say almost a point of personal privilege. We are all aware of the anxiety and tension in the climate of our current environment. And I believe for one, that one of the most fateful things we can do in addition to voting, is to do what we do as a church. And that is to pray and we make our lives grounded in prayer and centered in Jesus Christ. And then we're not so much thrown by all of the exigencies in the world, tossed to and fro like tumbleweed. So we're grounded in prayer, and I want to invite your prayers now. You can write them in the chat room. We can pray for convention, for society, for a healing of our racial divisions. We can pray for anything you'd like to pray. And I invite you to put that in the chat room as kind of a record of what we're praying for right at this moment in time, that will be recorded for posterity. And part of the telling of the story of the Episcopal Diocese of New



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York. When we've had a few moments of silent prayer, we'll then hear some music and that will be followed by a closing prayer and a blessing.

- Our closing prayer will be for the human family. Let us pray. Oh God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus, your son. Look with compassion on the whole human family, but take away the arrogance and the hatred, which infect our hearts. Break down the walls that separate us. Unite us in bonds of love, and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth, that in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

- Once again, and as always, I am humbled by the prayers of intercession, the blessings which are offered in graces in our time of common prayer at these Roll-out Meetings. There is something profound about our being able to read one another's prayers through the chat room. And I feel blessed by the communion that I share with all of you, and what it means for all of us to be one in prayer. I think we see in one another and in our common life, the seeds of that grace and peace for which we pray. I trust so. The God of peace who brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever, and the blessing of God almighty, the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen. ♪ We shall overcome ♪ ♪ We shall overcome ♪ ♪ We shall overcome someday ♪ ♪ Oh deep in my heart ♪ ♪ I do believe ♪ ♪ We shall overcome someday ♪ ♪ We'll walk hand in hand ♪ ♪ We'll walk hand in hand ♪ ♪ We'll walk hand in hand someday ♪ ♪ Oh, deep in my heart ♪ ♪ I do believe ♪ ♪ We shall overcome someday ♪ ♪ We shall live in peace ♪ ♪ We shall live in peace ♪ ♪ We shall live in peace someday ♪ ♪ Oh, deep in my heart ♪ ♪ I do believe ♪ ♪ We shall overcome someday ♪ ♪ We are not afraid ♪ ♪ We are not afraid ♪ ♪ We are not afraid today ♪ ♪ Oh, deep in my heart ♪ ♪ I do believe ♪ ♪ That we shall overcome someday ♪