



The Guardian

ST. MICHAEL'S CALLS THE REV. MARY D. LINDQUIST AS OUR NEW RECTOR

What you dare not hope for that is what God gives you.

Brother Roger, The Taizé Community

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Just last week when I read this quote by Brother Roger, I had the instant recognition that this was how I felt to be called to serve as your Rector at St. Michael's. I hadn't dared to fully hope in this possibility, so you can perhaps understand my deep gratitude and delight as I sit down to write my first letter to you. I have felt the presence of the Holy Spirit from the first time I looked at St. Michael's Profile back in September, to my visit to Brattleboro at the beginning of March. I have been drawn to your sincerity of faith, your desire to deepen your response to God's call as a community, and your prayerful longing to know how the church can be faithful to its mission in a rapidly changing culture. I feel certain that God has a vision for St. Michael's, and I am humbled, honored, and overjoyed to become part of this vision.



The Rev. Mary D. Lindquist

As you probably know, I do not come to you alone, but as part of a family: my husband, Kurt, my children Jonah (6), Nathaniel (4), and Bibi (2), our dog, Gertie, and our cat, My Thai. We have spent the last seven years living on the island of Kauai, the oldest and westernmost major island in Hawaii, where I have served as the Vicar of The Episcopal Church on West Kauai. Our time here has been profoundly enriching and important; my family and I have been formed by the love and culture of the people here, and I'm sure we will bring a bit of the gentle spirit of Hawaii with us as we move across the globe to Vermont. And lest you worry we don't know what a real winter is like, let me assure you that I have experienced many long, cold winters growing up in western New York. My children, however, have never experienced snow, so they may be in shock when winter rolls around and they have to dress in sweaters, pants, and coats instead of shorts and t-shirts.

Our first Sunday with you will be July 31. I know this seems far off, but we are committed to finishing the school year here, having some time with our extended families this summer, and moving into the Rectory before we begin our new life with you in Brattleboro. Until that time, please know that you will remain ever present in our prayers. Know also how extremely excited we are to meet you all, to share in your ministry at St. Michael's, and to become part of the Brattleboro community.

Yours in Christ,
Mary



(photo courtesy of their website)

Some of the members of The Episcopal Church on West Kauai with Bishop Fitzpatrick

A FEW FACTS ABOUT MARY

Education

Masters in Sacred Theology, General Seminary, New York

Fellowship in Theological Studies, University of Tübingen, Germany

Masters of Divinity, Princeton Theological Seminary

Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies, Brown University

(included one year of Tibetan Studies in India, Nepal, and Tibet through SIT)

Church Experience

Vicar, The Episcopal Church on West Kauai, Kauai, Hawaii (a yoked parish of two churches), 2004–present

Associate Rector, St. David's Episcopal Church, Wilmington, Delaware, 2001–2003

Director of Religious Education for Children & Youth, Trinity Episcopal Church, Princeton, New Jersey, 1997–1999

It is our mission to welcome all people to join us in knowing Christ and spreading his Good News of hope through worship, education, fellowship and community outreach.
The Episcopal Church on West Kauai

I ho'okahi kahi ke aloha (Be one in love)
A Hawaiian proverb



A CONVERSATION WITH MARY

As we await the arrival of Mary, our next settled Rector, it seemed we should share with you some of her thoughts as expressed in our discernment process. You will each grow to know her in a wide variety of ways, but here you will find some initial insight. May you be touched in your heart and spirit by what she brings to our St. Michael's parish family.

*Faithfully,
Susan Dyer, Senior Warden*

Describe a moment in your recent ministry that you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

A few months ago, our church hosted two meaningful events on one afternoon: the blessing of our new community garden (on church grounds) and an island-wide Confirmation service. We decided to have both events outside under a huge tree that sits between the church and the community garden. The blessing of the community garden not only incorporated prayers of our bishop, but a traditional Hawaiian blessing, a Taiko drumming group, and a song sung by the Mayor of Kauai (complete with ukelele). It was truly wonderful to me to see the community come together (some church members, some not) in this expression of gratitude and worship that so ably reflected the deep richness of the culture we live in; it was also very moving to see church members so generously sharing their resources for the good of the community. When we began the Confirmation service under the tree, the sun was going down, children were playing in the yard, our choir was singing, and our guitar player was accompanying. It was truly a beautiful and grace-filled event. I believe it reminded all who attended just how connected we are to one another, through the larger church and through our community.

Describe your liturgical style and practice.

To me, liturgy is a tool that helps us worship God. Sometimes worshipping God looks like a high mass, sometimes worshipping God looks like children playing in the aisles; sometimes worship looks like laughter, or crying. Here is a poem by Mary Oliver that aptly articulates my liturgical style:



Prayer

*It doesn't have to be
the blue iris, it could be
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few
small stones; just
pay attention, then patch
a few words together and don't try
to make them elaborate, this isn't
a contest but the doorway
into thanks, and a silence in which
another voice may speak.*



Kurt



Jonah

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

I practice incorporating others in ministry by preaching and teaching about our Baptismal Covenant and our commitment to offering our gifts to God's service in ministry. In more practical terms, I ask people what gives them joy and prayerfully invite them into a ministry in the church or community. I emphasize the vocational aspect of our ministry; that is, what we do during the week outside of the church is also our ministry and should be approached with the same commitment and discernment of God's will for our lives. In the church, we bless different ministries and recognize those ministries as God's blessing to us.

How do you engage in pastoral care for others?

Pastoral care is the ministry of the whole church. It is how we care for one another, how we come together to share our lives and, as Paul says, how we rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15). For me, a large component of pastoral care involves listening and praying with the person who is in pain. We offer up to God our desire to be healed, however God wishes to heal us. Because

I presently serve a small church, I am able to visit people on a regular basis and bring Communion to those who desire it. However, I do this in partnership with lay members of our church, who also are charged with the task of bringing pastoral issues to my attention. We also have a healing ministry, where trained lay people are present and available on Sunday mornings to offer prayers of healing.

Tell about a ministry project that exists because of your leadership. What was your role in its creation?

In the last few years, my vision of my own ministry and the ministry of the church has changed. While churches often get stuck looking inward, towards our own needs and challenges, I have come to understand ministry in a much wider sense. We are fed on Sunday mornings so that we can serve the world, offering spiritual nurture and hope to the community outside the church doors. In keeping with that vision, I have started two thriving small groups that include Christians and non-Christians, those secure in their faith and those who are seeking. One group began (and continues to meet) in a café for breakfast every Tuesday morning. This Westside Book Group exists to provide a welcoming, safe space for people of many



Nathaniel



Bibi

different backgrounds to gather and explore topics of meaning, spirituality and daily life. The second group, which began last fall, is a Centering Prayer group. The group has attracted many people whom I had never met before because they seek a deep, contemplative group to pray with. The point of these groups is not to get people to come to church, because this may or may not happen. The point is to do ministry, help people share their deep questions about life and meaning and God, and allow God to work through that.

Vermont Episcopalians are marked by a wide range of liberal to conservative theological thinking—from a deep appreciation of Rite One worship to support for the performance of same-sex marriages. While this range of thinking is reflected here at St. Michael's, we wholeheartedly welcome and celebrate diversity, whether of race, color, or sexual orientation. What would your leadership style look like in such a setting?

I am glad to know that St. Michael's welcomes and celebrates diversity, as diversity in the church is a great blessing. I don't know of another institution that possesses the ability to bring people together from different generations, races, incomes and sexual

orientations like the church does. Even in the early church, Paul recognized the necessity for diversity in the body of Christ, since we truly all possess different gifts.

My leadership style is primarily collaborative and prayerful. Because I currently serve in a church with a great deal of cultural, racial and economic diversity, I try hard to support and encourage people from diverse backgrounds to serve in leadership positions, as well as share their sense of who God is to them, where God is leading the church and how the church can best support them as members of the Body of Christ.

At St. Michael's I would value the same approach (i.e., a shared and diverse leadership) but also be clear to the community outside of St. Michael's that this is part of St. Michael's identity; that is, St. Michael's is a church that values diversity, especially diversity of sexual orientation, since so many churches do not welcome and celebrate this kind of diversity.

I would also encourage the church to be intentional about its worship, offering a diversity of music, art, and liturgical styles, exploring how God speaks to us in different ways.



Family



Bibi in sunglasses



Gertie



Nathaniel and Jonah

Finally, I would involve myself and encourage the church to join with other people and organizations in the wider community to fight against prejudice and marginalization in the wider community and in the world.

How are you preparing yourself for the Church of the future?

I think the church of the future may look more like Jesus and his disciples in the world than Sunday morning worship and programs. At least we need to be a church that supports the notion that ministry is often what happens after we leave the church building. I am interested in emerging church models and how the church is being forced to look at new models of ministry. When I'm on vacation, I try to attend different kinds of churches and get a sense of what is happening outside of the Episcopal context. I am a member of the Emerging Generations Commission in the Diocese of Hawaii, where we discuss how to learn from and work with new generations of seekers.

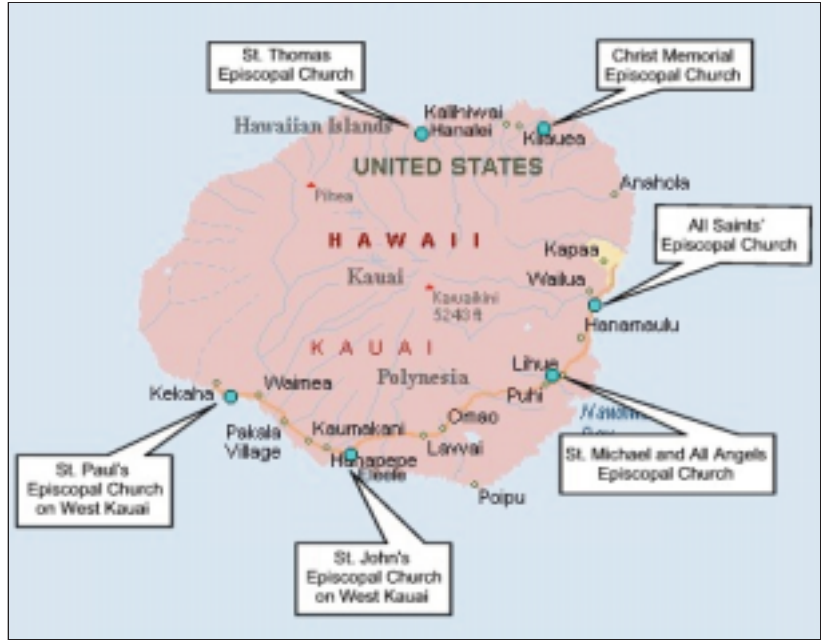
What do you like best about your current position?

I really enjoy working with people from different backgrounds and cultures (Hawaiian, Filipino, Japanese), as well as the general Eastern/Western sensibility of those who live here. Humility, gentleness and openness are highly valued, as well as a sense of *ohana* (family) among people in the community. My family has enjoyed the slow pace and balance of life that living on Kauai has afforded us. In terms of my work specifically in the church, I love leading worship and preaching on Sunday mornings, and love the sense that the Body of Christ is gathered together to worship. I really enjoy participating in Christian formation from working with children and parents (we have a children's service once a month) to creating interesting adult formation offerings that appeal to both church and community members. I love witnessing and blessing God's grace at work in the everyday lives of my parishioners. The people of the church have been very loving to me and my family, and it has been very satisfying to see many of them mature in their sense of ministry.

What do you like least about your present position?



Mary, Jonah, and Bibi



Map showing the two churches, St. Paul's and St. John's, forming The Episcopal Church on West Kauai (bottom left)

Although I have enjoyed small-church ministry, I sometimes struggle with the desire to do more ministry (in the world, community, and church) but feel restricted because of our church's limitations (in number of people and finances). Also, since I have been at my present position for seven years, I'm currently feeling a desire to learn, grow, and be challenged in new ways. It is also hard at times to be living so far away from family and friends. And, I miss the seasons—even winter! ☩



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Clark Anderson, editor • bodyinthelibrary@mac.com, 802-257-1409

Susan Kochinskas, designer • sue@flocksholmdesign.com, 802-387-2732

Guardian Mailing List: contact Cynthia Terzariol with address changes or requests to be added or removed from *The Guardian* mailing list. cynthia@stmichaels-vt.org or 802-254-6048.

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Saint Michael's Episcopal Church

16 Bradley Avenue, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301-3429
802-254-6048 • info@stmichaels-vt.org • www.stmichaels-vt.org

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