



The Guardian

JUNE 2017

FROM THE RECTORY

CHURCH ON THE MOVE

I love the photographs we have of St. Michael's Church being moved up Main Street in 1953. Though this event happened many years ago, it speaks to a quality of spirit that continues to exist at St. Michael's. We have showed a willingness to move into the world with our faith, a willingness to take risks for the sake of expanding our witness to God's love, and an ability to move and change in response to the world around us.

Much has happened at St. Michael's in the last few months. When a small group of parishioners came together to help me plan for next year's sabbatical, something surprising happened. While reflecting on St. Michael's history, our current ministry and all the cultural changes in our world and in our community, we felt compelled by the Spirit to pray about what is next for our faith community and where the Spirit is leading us. After much prayer and conversation, we wondered what it would be like if St. Michael's really made an investment in church of the future.

We shared this idea with the Vestry at their retreat in April and they entered into this process of discernment with us.

The more we talked and prayed, we experienced greater clarity that God was calling us at St. Michael's to a deeper commitment to discipleship and discernment. By discipleship, we mean providing training, support and encouragement to live lives transformed by our faith. By discernment, we mean the action of prayer and intentional engagement in the endeavor of discerning the church of the

future, a church perhaps that will look more like Jesus' disciples in the world than like the gathering of the faithful on Sunday mornings. How we can both listen to and share our faith with those outside the walls of our church, those who have no faith community?

The church is declining nationwide, churches are closing and the institutional church is rapidly changing. Given that St. Michael's is healthy and vital, we believe that the time is now to make a deeper commitment to our neighbors, to share the stories of our faith as well as listen to their stories, to discern together what it means to be the Body of Christ in this time and in this place.

Please keep the Vestry in your prayers as we decide how to best live-out this vision for ministry at St. Michael's!

photo of St. Michael's moving up Main Street



NEWS OF THE PARISH

*Margit Lilly was the preacher for the Tuesday service in Holy Week.
Below is the sermon she shared with us, reflecting on John 12:20-36.*

Many of you probably remember the comic strip Calvin and Hobbs that was popular back in the 80s and 90s by cartoonist Bill Watterson. One of the cartoons had Calvin and Hobbs out on a dark night...the script goes like this... Hobbs says "What a clear night! Look at all the stars. Millions of them!" Calvin replies, "Yes, we're just tiny specks on a planet particle, hurling through the infinite blackness." Then a look of panic appears on Calvin's face and he says, "Let's go in and turn on all the lights!"

In this passage from the Gospel of John that was just read, the stage is set for the approaching crisis of Jesus... The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Jesus had to make a choice! The Greek word *helko* appears, meaning the drawing of the Father of Humanity to Christ...or stated in another way, a persuasion or an attraction to Christ. But the text states that not all will be attracted. The reaction of the crowd shows that they understood something that was incompatible with the eternal character of the Messiah. Jesus draws attention to the truth that He is the light so that darkness will not overtake them. He instructs them to believe in the light so that they will be children of light. This revelation was the last public statement of Jesus.

These last words of Jesus were full of paradox...life through death, glory through humiliation. So, life through death? We all know how light and darkness are used both figuratively and symbolically, especially when they refer to our spiritual lives. How often do we view light as a positive thing and darkness as a negative? Light may mean many things to us...a mental illumination, a revealing or understanding (you know the light bulb that appears above someone's head in a cartoon.) It may be the expression in someone's eyes, the sparkling rays of light reflecting on water, or the realization that all color depends on it. We use light to overcome darkness...the candles here tonight, using a flashlight outside at night so we don't stumble. Studies have shown that light can penetrate a mother's womb and stimulate the fetus growing there. And going back to Calvin and Hobbs- Calvin is terrified of the dark and wants to go inside to turn lights on. What is the darkness that we are terrified of? Darkness can represent the unknown or anxiety and how about the mire? I had to look this one up to get a complete picture of the definition, which starts out as wet spongy earth...whoa, perhaps we may feel unstable and ungrounded or that the world around us is unstable. And then it goes on to describe mire as mud, muck, ooze, slime, and sludge, going on to say heavy, deep and troublesome or intractable situation, unhappiness, distress, or gloom.

*"We are given the gift of Christ's light,
not only for our dependence on God to
sustain us through life and death, but
to share that gift of light with others."*

Jack and I have a very dear friend in Boston named Patty, who has been blind since birth. I remember a time when we drove her home to her apartment and when we entered, it was absolutely pitch black! Patty walked in and went about her business, functioning just fine. But I felt completely paralyzed. I said, "Patty, I can't see a darn thing! Where are the lights?" It was at that moment that I knew she really was blind. She immediately found a switch to turn on the lights. Back to our scripture reading, Jesus said, "If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going." Well now, that was pretty obvious for me, but certainly not for Patty. But then of course we know that our eyes only see physical reality, and what Jesus was saying here was not physical but implying that our lives need a connection

NEWS OF THE PARISH

with God who provides a light to our path. Patty has no concept of physical light, but I know for certain that in her blindness, she in her faith can “see” the light. Is it not true that if we can be blinded by the light, that in reverse we can see through the darkness?

The last verse of our reading states that Jesus hid from them. To me, this emphasizes that though his person is obscured, His light is ever present in our lives and in this world. This is an everlasting light. We are given the gift of Christ’s light, not only for our dependence on God to sustain us through life and death, but to share that gift of light with others. Jack and I lived in Cape Elizabeth, ME before we moved to Brattleboro. We lived near the end of the Cape known as Two Lights. We had the good fortune of having the light from one of the light houses flash in our bedroom window at night. This image had a great impact on me...the lighthouse being firmly planted and a source of constancy. The circle of the light was a daily reminder of the infinite love of Christ.

As a result of that image of a lighthouse, I was moved to write a poem. I share it with you now.

THE LIGHTHOUSE

Prominently poised on a rock- laden shore,
Projecting a reminder to mortals evermore
Of God’s light, piercing through the souls
Of those whose vessels approach life’s shoals.

A beacon of love transcending life’s gain,
A ship sights the signal but struggles in vain
To challenge the currents it’s known there before,
But God’s kindly light will lead to safe shore.

Christ’s light must shine through us,
All lighthouses are we,
To love, be a beacon
For all ships at sea.

NEWS OF THE PARISH

ST. MICHAEL'S PRIDE SERVICES, JUNE 11

St. Michael's invites you to join us for our own celebration of June as PRIDE month. On Sunday June 11, we are inviting the community to be with us as St. Michael's celebrates PRIDE Sunday. At both the 8:00 am and 10:15 am services, our worship and liturgy will reflect the joy of our diversity as human beings and the sermon will include reflection by Janet Cramer from a family perspective.

In addition we will host a special 9:00 a.m. Forum on "What is it like to grow up gender fluid?" led by Jake Mattson and his family. An 11-year old member of St. Michael's, Jake will speak to us about his experience of not having a fixed gender identity. Jake, who lives in Colrain, Massachusetts, often speaks at schools and other public venues to help people understand gender fluidity.

The PRIDE services and Forum are a great opportunity to invite friends from the community to join us.

**FROM THE LIBRARY SHELVES**

"The History of St. Michael's Church
Brattleboro Vermont 1853-1978"
by Paul Carnahan
published by St. Michael's Episcopal Church 1982
105 pages, 7" x 10"

The author, the son of our parishioners John and Mary Carnahan, had just graduated from Swarthmore College when he wrote our history. His research is astonishingly vast and broad beginning with 1724 settlement at Fort Dummer and concluding with 125th anniversary of the founding of the parish.

The Episcopal faith came to this area in 1818 when Christ Church in Guilford was consecrated. By mid-century the arrival of the railroad in Brattleboro and the consequent growth of the once-sleepy village meant that an Episcopal church was wanted in the burgeoning town. Christ Church soon began to lose its parishioners to Brattleboro's ascendancy. Guilford had been the largest town and the most prosperous in the state thanks to its slate quarries, but when the railroad by-passed the town it gradually reverted to rural inconsequence. St. Michael's was built on Main Street where Key bank stands today. Never a prosperous parish, when a century later the land upon which it stood became quite valuable, the land was sold and the church was hauled up Main Street in May of 1953 to its present location.

A connoisseur of the printed word will note that the book is a pristine example of the work of The Stinehour Press of Lunenburg, Vermont, the foremost printer of the last half of the twentieth century. On the other hand, the binding was contributed by a parishioner who was an owner of the huge Book Press on Putney Road and, though free, it is, unlike the printing, unexceptional.

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NEWS OF THE PARISH

SUMMARY OF APRIL VESTRY MEETING

The Vestry met on April 20, 2017 and continued our Bible study by Dwelling in the Word. This method has us in small groups and has helped us get to know one another better as we explore a new Scripture each month.

Vince Johnson, Co-Chair of the Building and Grounds Committee, came and presented roof bids gathered to repair the slate on the North Side of the Sanctuary. We discussed the bids and recent leak repair and took counsel from Treasurer Wayne Cook who stressed we must prioritize paying back the Building Loan to the Diocese over the next two years. We agreed to study this over the next few months. We have asked Vince to present the bids to the Endowment Committee next week.

We reviewed the letter going out to Parishioners about pledging for a renewed Building for the Future Capital Campaign. We are hoping this will help generate funds needed to pay the remainder of the loan.

We learned more about Mary's plans for her Sabbatical next April-August and proposal she has prepared for funding. The Lilly Grant decision on this proposal will be made in August 2017.

Building and Grounds Committee has been quite active. In their report they brought concerns about the large maple right outside the Church door which is now showing signs of great stress. They will continue evaluating this tree but have had a professional opinion that it will eventually need to be taken down and replaced. The Spring Cleanup was set for April 22.

We went over our contract with the Horizon Learning Center now finishing the first year here at St. Michael's. The transition has been smooth and the school is full with a waiting list!

We are all looking forward to the Vestry Retreat which will be held April 27 & 28 at the Lower Hallelujah Farm. We plan to be prayerful, work hard, and play a little. We are grateful to the congregation for this gift of time apart

from regular lives to focus on the way that God is speaking to us and leading us as your Vestry.

Submitted by
Deb Jones, Senior Warden



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Wayne Cook, Treasurer

NEWS OF THE PARISH

IF IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD, DOES IT TAKE A VILLAGE TO GROW OLD SUCCESSFULLY?

Thirty people convened at the Adult Forum on April 30 to discuss this question. Janet Cramer and Annamarie Pluhar lead the forum with a wide ranging discussion; this is a report on ideas that emerged, with a suggestion for where to go from here.

We started by asking, “What does it mean to age successfully?” The responses:

- Staying in my house as long as I can
- Being independent
- Staying involved, building my social capital
- Move to a one-level home before it is too late
- Creating new communities
- Asking for help
- Trusting that one is listened to
- Need a witness to get help
- Not denying the reality that we will die - which as Christians we should all accept
- Huge lack of affordable housing
- Communal living for women
- Intergenerational connections
- Aging can be more towards something positive.
- Having a plan for going forward
- The new conditions don’t work with the old strategies.
- Big business will take over unless we do it ourselves.
- Life Planning - should there be a committee? A forum?
- What is the balance between dependency and independence?
- Should we have a forum for personal biography? We used to have teams – that was where people knew more about each other.

*“What does it mean
to age successfully?”*

This discussion led to a larger conversation about the problem with “Stuff.” We all have too much of it. It’s hard to sort through. There was much discussion about the fact that the next generations don’t want family treasures that have been passed down from previous generations. This is hard to accept. Most importantly it’s emotionally challenging to deal with the past and let it go.

We talked about “ageism” - the only “ism” everyone will experience - and how aging is changing. Internalized ageism is the self-concept that “I’m too old to...” It is inhibition to change and withdrawing from active relationships.

The group also talked about what it means that “It takes a village.” We explored how the village of the parish might support aging.

- Church might have as a ministry helping families after a death in clearing out a home etc.
- What about “elder orphans”? Those with no kids, spouse etc.
- Pastoral care team visiting folks?
- Renewment – (<http://projectrenewment.com>)

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE?

One idea is to help parishioners with Life Planning: the work of locating one’s important personal documents, making advance directives for health care and how to leave legacies of both resources and the knowledge that go beyond finances. The Diocese of Olympia (WA) has developed materials that are in the possession of Bill Ames and Janet Cramer. They welcome interested participants to begin life planning work the week after the Fourth of July. Please write or talk to them if you are interested in joining such a group.

That’s one idea. Do you have others? What do you think is important for us to do and consider as we look at the reality that we will all age? Should we try and be a village? How do we do that? Talk to Annamarie or Janet about what you’d like to have happen or come talk to us. There will be a listening time on Sunday, August 27 at the normal Adult Forum time of 9:00 AM.

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

RIVER PILGRIMAGE COMES TO BRATTLEBORO: SUNDAY, JUNE 25: JOIN US FOR A DAY OF CELEBRATING OUR CONNECTICUT RIVER

From May 31-July 9, River Pilgrims of all faiths will be paddling portions of the Connecticut River from its headwaters to its mouth in Long Island Sound.

Rejoice in and give thanks for the miracle of all life that is made possible by the grace of God through water. This spiritual journey of renewal, restoration, and reconciliation, is shaped by the Christian tradition around a series of activities along the Connecticut River, from the Source to the Sea.

Water is central to life, and living, flowing rivers have played an integral role in ecological, social, economic and spiritual practice worldwide since time immemorial. The Connecticut River is a prime example of a river carrying the lifeblood of a region. We'll be joined by members of the Pilgrimage on Sunday June 25, in worship, food, paddling and contemplative practice.

The first part of the morning will take place at St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 16 Bradley Avenue.

9 AM: Adult Education Forum: "Honoring the Living Waters of our Earth and Our Lives" with reflections on "Water Justice" and "Watershed Discipleship" led by Cary Gaunt and Fred Taylor

10:15 AM: Sunday Service of Worship: Theme of Sacred Water, with Guest Preacher, Rev. Stephen Blackmer, founder of "Church of the Woods" and Initiator of the River of Life Pilgrimage

12:00 PM: St. Michael's "Strawberry Spectacular" fund-raiser for international outreach – with Strawberry Shortcake, sandwiches-fixings and perhaps a few river songs!

1-3 PM: Opportunity for paddling on the Connecticut River; meditative walking; and reflective sharing. Canoes and Kayaks will be available from the nearby canoe rental service for a reasonable charge: bring your canoe or kayak if you have one, or just come and bring your love of water. We will gather at the boat launch north of the Marina Restaurant (28 Spring Tree Road)

For more information on the Pilgrimage, go to kairosearth.org/river/

STEPHEN BLACKMER, FOUNDER OF CHURCH IN THE WOODS, TO PREACH ON JUNE 25

Stephen Blackmer is founding executive director of Kairos Earth and chaplain of Church of the Woods. Steve comes to this with 30 years of conservation experience, having founded and built conservation organizations including the Five Rivers Conservation Trust, Northern Forest Alliance and Northern Forest Center. A midlife shift led him to Yale Divinity School and ordination as a priest in the Episcopal Church, carrying the question in his heart and mind: "How can being a priest deepen my work to conserve the Earth? What does the Christian tradition have to offer to this work? How can the Christian tradition be re-understood and re-imagined in a time of need? How can the conservation movement recover its understanding of the Earth as holy ground?"

NEWS OF THE PARISH

ACCOLADES

The Vestry wishes to express our appreciation to all who helped with the Spring Tag Sale. It is an enormous undertaking! Your hard work and commitment were nothing short of amazing. The weather required even more flexibility. Thank you for this important service to St. Michael's and the community.

We also want to thank Winged Productions, the remarkable cast members, stage crew, set designers and costume team of the wonderful Mystery Play –Theophilia performed last month at St. Michael's. The depth of talent revealed was truly magnificent and we are so grateful for all the hours of practice put in to make this an incredible event! BRAVO!!!

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THANK YOU

I would like to thank everyone who volunteered to help provide Overflow Shelter suppers, whether bringing food and drink, or serving, or both. Our groups did a wonderful job of offering pasta, salad, bread, dessert, beverages, and our friendly hospitality. Residents were certainly ready to eat and enjoyed the hot meal after a cold day outside.

Laura Lewis was missed for her coordination as she was looking after George. But I want to express our thanks for all the work she has done for many years organizing St Michael's volunteers for the Overflow Shelter suppers.

Janet Brocklehurst

SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC, SUNDAY, JUNE 11, ON THE RECTORY LAWN

All kids, parents, participants, teachers and helpers in Sunday School at St. Michael's (Godly Play, Workshop Rotation, Youth Forum) are invited to a lunch picnic in your honor on Sunday, June 11 following the 10:15 am service on the Rectory Lawn. Please come and help us celebrate a wonderful year together!

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STRAWBERRY SPECTACULAR, JUNE 25

The Outreach Team announces that the Strawberry Spectacular will take place in the Undercroft at noon after Lemonade on the Lawn on Sunday, June 25. \$7 per adult and \$3 per child (12 and under). Proceeds will go towards international refugee support.

Also, we are re-purposing the former CHABHA coin jars. Please bring your coin jars, preferably full, for Coinreach!

Simultaneously we will conduct a potted perennial plant sale! Rather than a silent auction, we will price donated perennials for sale.

You know how much you relish strawberries! Don't be shy!

The Outreach Team

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DIAPER SUNDAY AT ST. MICHAEL'S

Diaper Sunday, combined with an Outreach contribution, finished with 4,391 diapers, which have been delivered to the Park Place Diaper Bank in Bellows Falls!

NEWS OF THE PARISH

JERUSALEM PEACEBUILDERS (JPB) LEADERSHIP CAMP VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Dear Beloved Volunteers,

I am reaching out to mark the dates for the JPB Leadership Camp in Brattleboro this summer. We are in session July 16 to July 30. I am in need of kitchen volunteers from 10-1 pm for lunch and from 3:30 to 7 pm for dinner prep and clean up. For you who would like to do shopping at your convenience, I am happy to enable you to help as well.

We look forward to a stellar summer of peace building and good food!

Please let me know when you can volunteer and I will mark it down on the volunteer calendar. My email address is dmpinvt@yahoo.com

Peace and thank you,

Dorothy Porter

JACK KARN IN JERUSALEM

Jack Karn, candidate for the Diaconate from St. Michael's, has been working through Jerusalem Peace Builders (JPB) and the Episcopal Service Corps in Jerusalem. He is working as the sacristan at St George's Cathedral as well as teaching at three schools building leadership for peace. He also has been recruiting young Muslims, Jews and Christians for JPB camps here in the US. Jack meets with our Discernment Committee monthly via Skype and will return to St. Michael's in late June when he and the Committee will continue to discern his call to the Diaconate.



EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

JUNE LECTIONARY

Sunday, June 4, Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21 or Numbers 11:24-30;
 Psalm 104:25-35, 37: 1 Corinthians
 12:3b-13 or Acts 2:1-21;
 John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39

Sunday, June 11, Trinity Sunday

Genesis 1:1-2:4a;
 Psalm 8 or Canticle 13 (or Canticle 2);
 2 Corinthians 13:11-13;
 Matthew 28:16-20

**Sunday, June 18**

Exodus 19:2-8a;
 Psalm 100;
 Romans 5:1-8;
 Matthew 9:35-10:8(9-23)

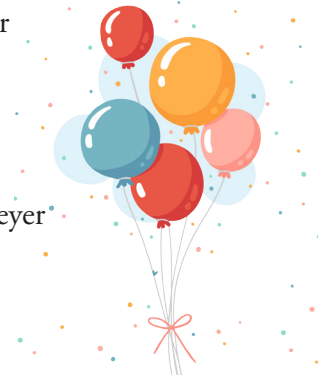
Sunday, June 25

Jeremiah 20:7-13;
 Psalm 69: 8-11, (12-17), 18-20;
 Romans 6:1b-11;
 Matthew 10:24-39

CELEBRATIONS

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

June 1 Madelyn Howard
 June 2 Laura Lewis, Cary Gaunt, Jane Sbardella
 June 3 Lynn Billington, Caroline Wojcik
 June 4 Phillip Stimmel
 June 5 Jonah Johnson, Deborah Jones
 June 7 Conor Landenberger
 June 11 Martha Moravec
 June 12 Betsy Bates
 June 13 John Byrnes
 June 16 Jake Mattson
 June 17 Jean Jersey, Herb Meyer
 June 19 Elisabeth Swift
 June 20 Jared Rediske
 June 21 Nye Ffarabas
 June 23 Craig Hammond
 June 25 Whitney Nichols, Kevin McElhinney,
 Michael Fedoruk
 June 27 Carolyn Taylor-Olson
 June 28 Judy Hueber, Oren Hesselbach
 June 29 Vince Johnson
 June 30 Zadie Olmstead



JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

June 1 Ramon & Maria Escalera,
 William & Sandra MacLean
 June 3 Bruce & Carol Hesselbach
 June 10 Greg & Kelli Allen,
 Douglas & Ann Bonneville
 June 15 Peter & Jean Smith
 June 16 Doug & Mimi Lilly
 June 18 Al & Janet Cramer
 June 21 Ron Bell & Gwen Mousin
 June 22 Kevin McElhinney & Carol Beninati
 June 24 Philip & Cherolyn Stimmel



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***The Guardian* Mailing List:** Contact Jeanie Crosby with address changes or requests to be added or removed from *The Guardian* mailing list. jeanie@stmichaels-vt.org or 802-254-6048.

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NEWS OF THE PARISH

SPRING TAG SALE

Well the Spring Tag Sale is over... sort of... We still have several high quality items out for auction, EBay and consignment which should certainly increase our final total.

I wish to thank my Co-chair Lucia Osiecki, the “dept. managers” and all those who volunteered. It is their hard work and dedication that makes this sale/ministry the success that it is.

I have heard it said that God never gives us more than he knows we can handle. When I sent out a call to move the tent sale to Thursday, the wonderful crew scrambled to rearrange their time and schedules, which allowed us to hold the Tent Sale under sunny skies. SO... THANK YOU Ron Lenker, Dan Drish, Craig Hammond, Michael Wilmott, Rich Melanson, Vince Johnson, Wayne Cook and Lucia Osiecki for hauling out and loading the tent and Jane Sbardella, Jean Smith, Linda Rice, Susan Wilmott, Lucia Osiecki and Ruth Tilghman for assisting in the sales. Without all of you, our tent sale would have been a washout... LITERALLY. Together we did handle what came our way.

Thank you Craig Newbert, Ken Jacobs and Judy McGee for manning the kitchen. The baked goods and sandwiches are always wonderful and the amazing chili was a definite hit on those two very rainy dreary days.

To the clean-up crew: you are all amazing. We closed our doors shortly after noon and everything was packed away and clean by 1:15; you would never know there had been a sale.

I am very pleased to say that despite the rain and the decreased foot traffic, as of May 8 the sale total is \$6,147.00. Again, thank you all for another job well done.

And to Lucia Osiecki and Judith Hildreth: my heartfelt thanks for agreeing to take on the Fall Sale.

Anne Cook





ST. MICHAEL'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

16 Bradley Avenue
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301-8429

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The Guardian

a Christ-centered community of practice awakening to the abiding presence of God



Our Worship Together

SUNDAYS 8:00 a.m., Quiet service of prayer and Holy Communion
10:15 a.m., Prayer, music, and Holy Communion, with childcare

WEEKDAY MORNINGS 6:00–7:00 a.m., Silent hour in chapel

WEDNESDAYS 12:00–12:30 p.m., Brief service of prayer and Holy Communion

THURSDAYS 5:30–6:30 p.m. Contemplative service of chanting, silence, and prayer

SATURDAYS 8:00 a.m., Centering Prayer