

# The Guardian

DECEMBER 2016

## A BLESSED ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SEASON

**Sunday, November 27**

*First Sunday of Advent*

**Sunday, December 4**

*Second Sunday of Advent, St. Nicholas Fair*

**Saturday, December 10**

*The Greening of the Church, 9:00 a.m.*

**Sunday, December 11**

*Third Sunday of Advent*

*Advent Lessons and Carols, 4:00 p.m.,  
reception following*

**Saturday, December 17**

*Festival of Lights with St. Michael's Choir School,  
4:00 p.m.*

**Sunday, December 18**

*Fourth Sunday of Advent*

*The Longest Night Service, 4:00 p.m.*

**Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24**

*Christmas Pageant and Holy Eucharist, 4:00 p.m.*

*Festival Candlelight Christmas Eve Service  
with Holy Eucharist, 9:00 p.m.*

**Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25**

*Festival Holy Eucharist, 10:00 a.m.*



## FROM THE RECTORY

**SLEEPERS AWAKE!**

*To clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world.*

—Karl Barth

Two days after the elections in November, I traveled to Michigan to visit with three of my best friends from seminary. All of us have very full lives, but we make it a priority to come together every couple of years to renew our friendships, pray, and rest. When we planned this gathering more than a year in advance, we reasoned that it would be a good time to gather: the kids would be settled in school, Advent would not yet have started, and the presidential election would be over.

Turns out, we were wrong about our timing, among other things. It was not the best time to be gone from our faith communities; and yet, it was also a balm to us personally to be together as we tried to sort through our feelings of surprise, confusion, grief, and un-grounded-ness. What was going to happen next? How are we called to lead? What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus in this time of such deep division within our nation? How do we listen deeply to one another, especially to those whom we might initially disagree? How do we stand with people who are afraid and vulnerable? What do we support and what do we resist?

One thing my friends and I spoke about was how the election this year has resulted in a deep sense of awakening—awakening to how we in our country don't understand each other, awakening to our responsibility to be engaged in our nation's political process, awakening to the complacency with which we take for granted the freedom and the power we possess as citizens.

One of the big themes of Advent is *waking up*. While there are times when we awake after a good night's sleep that are gentle and pleasant, the Advent call to wake up is more like the jolt of a loud alarm amidst deep sleep. Waking up can be painful. Sometimes all we want to do is go back to sleep.

And yet, waking up is a good thing. In our awakened state we know things we didn't know before, we engage in life more fervently, with more awareness, more commitment, more humility, more courage.

So let us stay awake. Keep praying. Keep listening. Keep hoping. Keep connected with one another and with God.

*Eternal God, God of wisdom, God of love, hear our prayer. Hear our call. Bless our nation... Bless, we pray, those of us who struggle and those for whom we struggle and those with whom we struggle. Be with and in our nation. Bless, we pray, those who seek higher office. Help them to be Your servants and the servants of all humankind. And give to us the capacity to be healers in these wounded times and among wounded lives. Hear our prayer. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

—The Reverend Dr. Otis Moss, Trinity Church, Chicago,  
composed for an Interfaith Post-Election Prayer Call  
for the Healing of our Nation on November 9



*Yours in Christ,  
Mary*

## NEWS OF THE PARISH

**ADVENT BOOK STUDY BEGINS NOVEMBER 30**

Join an Advent study of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's 1937 classic, *The Cost of Discipleship*. We will meet from 5:15–6:30 p.m. on Wednesday evenings at the church to discuss Bonhoeffer's reflections on the Sermon on the Mount and what it means to follow Christ, especially in a time political turmoil. We recommend buying the book (\$10) and reading the first section before the first meeting on November 30. Led by Jeff Hiam and Duncan Hilton.

**ST. NICHOLAS DAY FAIR DECEMBER 4**

Did you know that Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, c. 342, was generous to seafarers and to sailors, and more especially to children? This year at St. Michael's we will celebrate St. Nicholas Day on Sunday, December 4, immediately following the 10:15 a.m. service. At the Fair we create ornaments for our trees, door swags for our doors, goodies from the kitchen, and gifts for members of the family. If you would like to help with this wonderful parish event, please contact Lydia Taggart at (413) 773-5554 or [lydiafn@comcast.net](mailto:lydiafn@comcast.net).

**THE GREENING OF THE CHURCH DECEMBER 10**

All are invited to the greening of the church on Saturday, December 10, at 9:00 a.m. This is when parishioners of all ages are invited to adorn the church with greens and decorate the Christmas tree. Please join us for this festive gathering!

**LESSONS AND CAROLS DECEMBER 11**

Mark your calendars for 4:00 p.m., December 11, and bask in the beauty of the cherished Service of Lessons and Carols! In our green-filled church, we read and hear the story of Christ's coming among us, interspersed with carols, hymns, and choir anthems sung by our extraordinary choir. Although this service now seems like an ancient Anglican tradition, in fact it was

“formalized” for a service on Christmas Eve in 1880 by the Bishop of Truro (England). It has been in continual use throughout the world ever since, and we here at St. Michael's rejoice to celebrate the Nativity of Jesus together in this most anticipated magical service.

**FOR ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS RECEPTION**

The reception after the Lessons and Carols service is both a St. Michael's tradition and a wonderful way to provide hospitality to visitors to our church. We are asking the congregation to help by bringing food.

- If you are able to help, and your last name begins with A–J, please bring sweet finger food.
- If your last name begins with K–Z, please bring cheese and crackers or fruit.

Food may be dropped off at Coffee Hour on December 11 or before the Lessons and Carols service later that day. Please contact Ruth Tilghman at 258-1765 or [ruthtilghman@gmail.com](mailto:ruthtilghman@gmail.com) with any questions. Thank you ahead of time for your help!

**FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS DECEMBER 17**

On Saturday, December 17, at 4:00 p.m., the parish is warmly invited to attend a service that features the voices of The Choir School in readings, anthems, prayers, and candle lighting. These young people will be sure to touch your hearts, and whether you have children or not you will find yourself experiencing the mystery and joy of the season in a way that is especially transmitted through the leadership of our children. Like the Service of Lessons and Carols, hymns and carols will be sung by the congregation as well. 'Tis truly a special service!

**LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE DECEMBER 18**

The holiday season can magnify what is going on in our lives, including pain and loss. “Peace on

## NEWS OF THE PARISH

Earth,” or even peace in our hearts, may seem an impossible dream. Sadness and memories may seem overwhelming at a time when joy and celebration are expected. The Longest Night is a service of hope for all who carry sorrow of any kind. Join us at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 18, in this inclusive service, during which we honor the burdens we bear and claim the promise of light that follows even the darkest night. We hope that the music, readings, candles, and chants may help us to find the comfort we need and strengthen the connection we share. All are welcome.



## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

We are very grateful for the pledges St. Michael's has received for our ministry in 2017. As of November 16, we have received 100 pledges totaling \$217,212. Of the 100 pledges we have received so far, 43 have increased their pledges from last year and we have received 7 new pledges. This is wonderful news and we are so grateful for the generosity of our community!

Our goal this year to support our ministry in 2017 is to receive 130 pledges for a total of \$245,000. This goal is a stretch, but we know it is attainable. If you have not had a chance to turn in your pledge card yet, please do so soon! You may put your pledge card in the offering plate at a Sunday service or mail it to St. Michael's. If you did not receive a pledge card, there are extras at the back of the church, or you may contact the church office and we will send one to you (802-256-6048). Thank you for your love and commitment to our ministry together.



## THANK YOU, CLARK AND SUSAN!

It is hard to overestimate the importance of communication in our ministry at St. Michael's. The word “communication” is related to the word “communion” for a good reason—it acts as a way of binding us together.

For the last few years, Clark Anderson (editor) and Susan Kochinskas (graphic designer) have been quietly and faithfully putting together the *Guardian* newsletter every month. It is time for them to step down from this ministry after countless hours of service, attention, labor, and love. Please let Susan and Clark know how appreciative you are of their ministry and service to St. Michael's.

The new editor and designer of the *Guardian* will be announced soon. In the meantime, please say a prayer of thanksgiving for Susan and Clark!



**PARISH FINANCIAL UPDATE:  
OPERATING INCOME/EXPENSES  
FOR JANUARY–OCTOBER**

***Total Pledges Received:*** \$202,990 vs. Budget of \$198,426 (102% of Budget)

***of which: Total Pledges Received in October:*** \$38,403 vs. Budget of \$19,836 (194%)

This is the amount of income from pledges alone that we have received. The first line shows the amount so far this year; the second line shows the amount for just the month noted.

***Total Operating Income:*** \$287,676 vs. Budget of \$277,412 (104% of Budget)

This is our total income and includes rental income, fund raising (including pledges), memorial gifts, altar guild flower income, hospitality, tag sale, and other miscellaneous income.

***Total Operating Expenses:*** \$273,315 vs. Budget of \$275,519 (99%)

This is the dollars needed to run the church, including salaries, utilities, repaying our building loan from the Diocese, outreach, rectory expenses, administrative expenses, mission and ministry, worship and music, congregation development, grounds upkeep, and snow removal.

## OUR MISSION &amp; WORK. . .AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

Dear St. Michael's Parishioners,

We write to you about the recent closing of CHABHA, Children Affected by HIV-AIDS in Rwanda and Burundi.

The two of us, Susanna Grannis, founder of CHABHA, and David Lowenguth, Director of CHABHA since 2010 until very recently, send out great thanks to you. Many members of the parish saved change, donated money, and participated in events held on behalf of CHABHA. In addition, the gifts to CHABHA through the Outreach Committee made a big impact on the work in Africa. All in all, St. Michael's has been wonderfully generous over nearly ten years. Your generosity has meant thousands of children received health care, school fees, psychosocial care through home visits, gatherings, Life Skills Weekends, and skills training programs in Project Independence.

Your generosity has extended beyond needed financial support. St. Michael's has been the physical home for CHABHA for as many years, and we are so grateful for that. Also significant have been the human links made during visits to Rwanda. Several parishioners traveled to Rwanda and met many of the children. We visited in their homes, participated in the weekly gatherings that meant so much to the children, helped set up the first library, taught some girls how to make bags, and interacted with the young local leaders. Many more St. Michael's parishioners came to an evening of sharing that we visitors provided on our return.

Always, the words of *Jesu, Jesu* (#602) tell this story best: "Neighbors are rich and poor, neighbors are black and white, neighbors are nearby and far away...These are the ones we should love...This is the way should live with you..."

Why must CHABHA close? The scope of the AIDS epidemic, still a terrible presence in sub-Saharan Africa, has shrunk, and world attention and funding to sustain our organization has shrunk. The ongoing conflict in Burundi has meant that the children we were supporting and their families have scattered for safety. CHABHA's partner organizations are working to secure funding to help our children and we hope to honor commitments made for this year. There remains some funding for the Girls' Club and the weaving program ISANO.

We extend thanks from the children, leaders, donors, and Board of Directors. We have loved the work and the people, and we have loved sharing with you.

*With gratitude,  
Susanna Grannis and David Lowenguth*

*(A note from Susanna: Joe and I miss St. Michael's very much and feel great gratitude for all the support and care we received. God's love shines on its people and programs.)*

### DECEMBER LECTIONARY

*Sunday, December 4:* Isaiah 11:1–10, Psalm 72:1–7, 18–19, Romans 15:4–13, Matthew 3:1–12

*Sunday, December 11:* Isaiah 35:1–10, Psalm 146:4–9 or Canticle 15, James 5:7–10, Matthew 11:2–11

*Sunday, December 18:* Isaiah 7:10–16, Psalm 80:1–7, 16–18, Romans 1:1–7, Matthew 1:18–25

*Sunday, December 25:* Isaiah 52: 7 – 10, Hebrews 1: 1–4, John 1: 1–14



**ROTA FOR DECEMBER 2016 · 8:00 AM AND 10:15 AM SUNDAY SERVICES**

Position	December 4	December 11	December 18	December 25
<b>8:00 A.M. SERVICE</b>				
<b>Lay Assistant</b>	Anita Crosson	Wayne Cook	Wayne Cook	<b>NO 8 a.m. SERVICE</b>
<b>Lector</b>		Jeff Lewis		
<b>Intercessor</b>	Kiersten McKenney	Anne Brown	Doug Lilly	
<b>Sacramental Healing</b>	Jeff Lewis	Janet Cramer	Jeff Lewis	
<b>Usher</b>	Judy McGee	Anne Cook	Judy McGee	
<b>10:15 A.M. SERVICE</b>				
<b>Crucifer</b>	Miranda Smith	Peter Johnson	Mikael Mattson	Wayne Cook
<b>Torch Bearers</b>	Nathaniel Johnson Kierstan Landin	Marian Wojcik Annelise Fedoruk	KC Mattson Jake Mattson	
<b>Element Bearers</b>	Judith Hildreth Sue Dyer	Ken Jacobs Ricky Davidson	Betsy Bates Nancy Barber	
<b>Lay Assistant</b>	Jeff Hiam	Annamarie Pluhar	Greg Lesch	Wayne Cook
<b>Lector</b>	Carolyn Taylor-Olson	Jenn Karstad	Martin Leggott	Annie Landenberger
<b>Ushers</b>	Susan Nichols & Darcey Mercier	John Daly & Leigh Marthe	Jeff Hiam Ricky Davidson	
<b>Sacramental Healing</b>	Margit Lilly	Robin White-Diamondstone	Megan Buchanan	
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Carol Hesselbach Madelyn Howard Lynn Billington Judy Walker	Susan Dyer Elise Burrows Pat Laubach Laurie Chiperfield	Susan Dyer Elise Burrows Pat Laubach Laurie Chiperfield	Jane Sbardella Lucia Osiecki Kiersten McKenney
<b>Coffee Hour</b>	Deb Jones	Bill & Nancy Ames Betsy Bates	John Daly	Ken Jacobs
<b>Counters</b>	Anne Cook Judy McGee	Jeanette Landin Judith Hildreth	Ricky Davidson Jared Rediske	Wayne Cook Sherry Stimmel

If you cannot make it, please find your own replacement; then call Jeanie in the Office at 802-254-6048, ext. 104. Thank you.

**OUR MISSION & WORK . . . AND HOW YOU CAN HELP**

**REPORT FROM THE SAMHSA CONFERENCE: “COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS TO END HOMELESSNESS: ALIGNING PRINCIPLES, PROGRAMS, AND PEOPLE”**

The SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Homeless Programs Grantee conference in August was a prestigious opportunity for around 30 consumers who received full scholarships. There is clarity, respect, and commitment from national public policy leaders and their willingness to increase interagency cooperation and consumer input. An important development includes more interagency planning and cooperation, using a non-traditional combination of Medicaid and HUD funding to provide services to Medicaid beneficiaries in need of supportive housing.

I had the opportunity to share my Vermont legislative success story for the Medicaid for Working People With Disabilities (MWPD) program, and the issue of age discrimination in a workshop “Improving Positive

Peer Influence in the Everyday Workforce.” The National Independent Living Council recommends that all states adopt a similar policy change for the inclusion of all persons who qualify for the MWPD program regardless of their retirement-age status.

I met several younger persons who truly appreciate the “Baby Boomer” generation’s experience and wisdom. I was overjoyed to become reacquainted with a Social Worker, Catherine, from Detroit, who introduced herself during an interim break. Last December, she and her family attended the St. Michael’s Longest Night Service! I look forward to participating in the newly formulated SAMHSA Consumer Workgroup, and continuing my association with other national leaders.

*Whitney Nichols,  
Consumer Advocate/Peer Specialist*

## EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

## ADULT FORUMS FOR DECEMBER

*December 4, In the Fullness of Time*—Exploring the concept of a period of time “pregnant” with meaning, both in the past and present. What could it mean at this very time? Led by Phillip Wilson.

*December 11, Educating Ourselves about New England's Native Peoples*—The Dakota Access Pipeline protests rightfully have sparked an interest in the history and oppression of native peoples in the American West. However, there is much we need to know about the history of what native people have endured here in New England. Curious? Join in on a conversation that will broaden and deepen your understanding of New England's native past and present. Becca Balint holds an M.A. in history from UMASS Amherst. Her dissertation research was on Native American land claims cases. She also holds an Ed.M. from Harvard University School of Education. Her research there focused on Native American boarding schools.

*December 18, Christmas Dinner Ministry*—Sissi Loftin and Janet Brocklehurst will discuss the history of St. Michael's Christmas Dinner, which they initiated five years ago. We will talk about Christmas expectations and realities, and how the St Michael's community can provide an alternative.

There will be no Forum on December 25.



## THE LAST EDITOR'S CORNER

This is the last issue of the *Guardian* we will be putting together. It has been an honor and a pleasure to contribute to the St. Michael's community in this way. We have in fact really enjoyed it! But it's time to move on and let others with new ideas and new approaches step in. Thanks to everyone for working with us so seamlessly. Many blessings for the Advent and Christmas season!



*Susan and Clark*

## CELEBRATIONS

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

December 1	Liz Vick, Cindy Bacigalupo
December 3	Jonah Siegel
December 6	Ramon Escalera Jr.
December 7	Chris Mattson
December 8	Julia Fedoruk, Paul Dyer
December 9	Jeanette Perry
December 10	Clara Fritz
December 12	Jenny Karstad, Hailey Cogliano, Rebecca Mayer, Holly MacLean
December 14	Paula Ryan, Robin White-Diamondstone
December 15	Carol Hesselbach, MaKayla Panzer
December 17	Jessica Bennett
December 20	Merribelle Coles, Annabel Horton
December 22	Susan Avery, Ann Bonneville
December 23	Jean Smith
December 25	Joyce Vining Morgan
December 26	Jeanette Landin, Hugo Taggart
December 28	MJ Woodburn, Christine Gauthier, Stephanie Diamondstone
December 30	Annamarie Pluhar

## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

December 5	Brian & Joyce Vining Morgan
December 7	Michael & Susan Wilmott
December 21	Lucia Osiecki & Deb Jones
December 27	Bruce & Kerry Capponcelli



*The Guardian* is published monthly by St. Michael's Episcopal Church. News items, announcements, articles, etc., should be submitted to Clark Anderson, *editor*, by the 15th of the month for consideration.

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

**Susan Kochinkas**, *designer* • 802-387-2732, flockshm@sover.net

**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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# 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 a.m., Silent hour in chapel

**WEDNESDAYS** Noon, Brief service of prayer and Holy Communion

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

**SATURDAYS** 8:00 a.m., Centering Prayer

## Coming Up at St. Michael's Episcopal

PLEASE SEE FRONT  
FOR  
ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS  
SCHEDULE