



# The Guardian

FEBRUARY 2018

## FROM THE RECTORY

*The Lilly Endowment for National Clergy Renewal Programs provides an opportunity for pastors to step away briefly from the persistent obligations of daily parish life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection. Renewal periods are not vacations but times for intentional exploration and reflection, for drinking again from God's life-giving waters, for regaining enthusiasm and creativity for ministry. — The Lilly Endowment for National Clergy Renewal website*

One of my most persistent anxiety dreams is that I am getting ready for the 10:15 am worship service at St. Michael's that is about to start. I am in the sacristy searching for my alb (robe) but I can't find it. I can find albs that are too short or too long, but I can't find the one that fits. Meanwhile, time is marching on and the whole congregation is waiting for the service to start. It is now 10:30 or 10:45am and people are beginning to leave. I am paralyzed with worry that I've ruined the service and disappointed people with my incompetence.

I love my vocation as a priest and my job as the Rector of St. Michael's and feel truly called to this ministry. Yet, the opportunity to "step away briefly from the persistent obligations of daily parish life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection" is one that I am very excited about. I am very grateful for the opportunity to do this in 2018, beginning a time of sabbatical on May 1 and returning to St. Michael's on August 21.

St. Michael's is generous in allowing me to take this time away and the Lilly Endowment is generous in covering all the costs including the special sabbatical activities that St. Michael's will engage in while I am on sabbatical. This time is meant to be a time of renewal for the congregation as well.

I will write more about my plans for sabbatical in the newsletter over the next months. It will be interesting to see if my sacristy anxiety dreams persist while I am gone! Meanwhile, I am very much HERE at St. Michael's through the season of Lent and part of the season of Easter. This is such an exciting time for the life of our parish, I am looking forward to seeing what will unfold in these months and during the time of renewal.

AND... Some words from the Sabbatical Planning Committee

Below is an excerpt from the Sabbatical Planning Committee's Report for the Annual Meeting:

While Mary makes arrangements for her sabbatical, we have begun to build on the work of discipleship groups, contemplative practices, outreach ministries already in place and to remain open in discernment that will allow us to explore and examine our story as community of faith within a larger community. To that end, we have focused on a few activities that will mirror Mary's itinerary and activate the congregation during the period of the sabbatical:

- We are expecting that lay people will serve as preachers for about half the Sundays Mary is away. We hope to use that commitment as a place to build some useful Bible study for the preachers and our congregation. We are engaged in conversation with an experienced UCC pastor to bring us a new perspective on interacting with the Scripture. Then we will work with his teaching to support and extend our new understandings, help the preachers, and create a stronger awareness of Scripture in our spiritual life.
- We will hold a prayer vigil during Holy Week and while Mary is in retreat at a monastery. This will allow us to hold Mary in prayer and to experience our own contemplative practices in a focused way. This window of contemplative focus might invite sharing what we are already doing and allow new people to experiment in this unique and meaningful way of worshiping together.
- We plan to offer an intergenerational "Play and Pray" weekend of activities at Hallelujah Farm during the Memorial Day Weekend.

We look forward to the many ways the Holy Spirit will continue to move us all through this time of rest and renewal with the opportunity sabbatical can allow.

*Christy Fritz, Jeff Lewis, Leigh Marthe*



## EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

### COME CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF ST. BRIGID - THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST AT 5:30 PM IN THE CHAPEL FOR HOLY EUCHARIST, BLESSING OF CANDLES AND CONTEMPLATIVE SERVICE

The Feast of St. Brigid invites us to honor this beloved Irish woman, patron saint of babies, blacksmiths, boatmen, brewers, cattle, chicken farmers, children whose parents are not married, children with abusive fathers, dairy workers, fugitives, infants, mariners, midwives, nuns, poets, the poor, poultry farmers, printing presses, sailors, scholars and travelers!

This service will follow the pattern of a mid-week Eucharist, except that in place of a homily, there will be a time for people to share about a woman who has been a light in their life in honor of St Brigid. We will also include a time to bless candles in honor of Candlemas. Duncan will be our celebrant. The service will last about an hour.

Note: Before Saint Brigid (born circa 450 AD - died in Kildare in 523), there was Brigid the Irish goddess of most all the above! This is not uncommon in Christianity and reveals the Sacred Feminine and how She continually shines through.

### POETRY WRITING GROUP MEETS ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Please note that the Poetry Writing Group will meet on Tuesday February 13, rather than the usual Wednesday. The meeting begins at 7 pm and all writers of poetry are welcome.



### SHROVE TUESDAY ANNUAL PANCAKE SUPPER

St. Michael's Outreach Team members will once again put on the annual pancake supper on Tuesday February 13, serving from 5:00 until 7:00 pm. Costumes and bright colors are welcome! The supper benefits the tiny village of Kaioguchu in Kenya by funding a water purifier for the village. Brian and Joyce Morgan will be traveling there in February and hope to take a water purifier with them.



### ASH WEDNESDAY OBSERVED ON FEBRUARY 14

The Season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 14. The liturgy, which includes the imposition of ashes and Holy Eucharist, will be offered at three different times at St. Michael's: 7:30 am, 12 pm and 5:30 pm.

### PHOTOS FROM CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



## EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

## “THIS IS US: FAMILY, RACE AND BELONGING WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY”

FIVE TUESDAY LENTEN SERIES:  
FEBRUARY 20 + 27 AND MARCH 6, 13, 20

You are invited to come together during the Tuesdays in Lent to share a meal and listen for ways to live out our Baptismal Vow to seek and serve Christ in all persons.

We begin with a simple meal together. We move to the Meeting Room to listen to people in our parish family and the community tell their stories of living in a society where issues of race are always a factor. Speakers will share their challenges and joys and will look for ways to increase racial healing.

5:00 – 6 pm, Simple supper in the Undercroft

6:00 -- 7 pm, Program in the Meeting Room

7:00 -- 7:20 pm, Closing Worship

Here is a sample of some of the conversations in this Lenten series:

- Members from the parish will tell stories about what is like to parent children of color. What issues do they face?
- Maurice Harris from St. Michael's will tell stories of challenges and joys growing up and living as a black man today.
- Sheila Linton, an African-American woman from Brattleboro, will share her story of growing up and living in this area as a person of color.
- Stories of white people becoming aware of privilege and racism and how it has called them into action.

We close each evening with worship, giving us the opportunity to respond to what we have heard and at the same time hear to call to ways we can live out our Christian commitments.

In this Lenten Series of “This is Us: Family, Race and Belonging within our Community,” St. Michael's is responding to the call of both the wider Episcopal Church's Presiding Bishop Curry and Vermont's Bishop Ely to make racial healing a priority in our lives as the People of God. We are following the lead of our Diocese by beginning with “Acknowledgment” of the racial division in our lives.

From our own parish Maurice Harris, Jeff Hiam and Nicholas Porter were part of the planning team that created a Racial Reconciliation Clergy Day. Their goal was to have this concern brought to the individual parishes, which is what we are doing during this Lenten Series.

The Social Justice Ministry is responsible for the planning of this year's Lenten Series. On that Ministry are: Janet Brocklehurst, Pam and David Carr, Jeff Hiam, Sissi Loftin, Jean Smith and Phillip Wilson.

## HELP NEEDED FOR THE LENTEN SUPPERS

At 5:00 p.m. on Tuesdays during Lent, we will gather for a community supper before the Lenten program. This year we will again have soup and homemade bread. We hope to also serve pizza and salad.

We need help to make this happen! You could:

- Make a soup (2-3 people to bring pots of soup to share)
- Make a salad
- Bring 2 large cheese pizzas

- Help set up at 4:45 p.m. (set tables and set out food)
- Help Clean up (clean up food and dishes)

Signups are available in the Common Room

Thank you for your help!

*Ruth Tilghman, Rosie Wojcik & Deb Jones*

## DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE MINISTER OF DISCIPLESHIP AND DISCERNMENT



Dear St. Michael's,

Thank you for all your encouragement and support on the occasion of my ordination to the priesthood, as well as hospitality to my family and friends who came to celebrate with us. There were many memorable moments for me: receiving

the stole and chasuble from my parents and turning around to your applause, losing my capacity to speak as I distributed communion, getting to introduce family and friends and former parishioners to St. Michael's folks at coffee hour, and seeing those beautiful cakes!

One question I've been asked a handful of times is, "Do you feel different?" The short answer is "Yes" and "No." The answer is "No" because, there aren't major changes to my living situation or my work week, except for presiding at the Eucharist. The answer is "Yes" because I'm aware of what an honor and privilege it is to preside at the Eucharist. And the answer is "Yes," because I feel the excitement and uncertainty, perhaps like committing to someone in marriage, of having taken vows that will set the course for the remainder of my life in ways far different than anything I can imagine or anticipate.

Two books that I read while spending three days on a pre-ordination retreat at Holy Cross Episcopal Monastery in upstate New York helped me to understand my "Yes" and "No" answer to that question. L. William Countryman in *Living on the Border of the Holy* emphasizes that the binary between lay/ordained is in many ways false because everyone is in a sense a priest; by our baptism we all belong to the fundamental priesthood of all believers. The ordained, sacramental priest is simply an icon for this more fundamental priesthood. Being a sacramental priest is an important role, but it never replaces or surpasses the responsibility each of us has as people baptized into the fundamental priesthood of all believers.

What exactly then does change when one becomes an ordained priest? What is the priest's role? Michael Ramsey, former Archbishop of Canterbury, in *The Christian Priest Today* (written in 1972, hence all the masculine pronouns) has a wonderfully concise summary, "Man of theology, man of reconciliation, man of prayer, man of the Eucharist; displaying, enabling, involving the life of the Church – such is the ordained priest." Ramsey offers this advice to be faithful to the role: be humble, thank God, confess your sins, accept humiliations, do not worry about status, have a sense of humor, strive not to be liked or loved but for people to say at the end of one's days, "He made God real to us."

I can see that nothing has shifted in my most primary identity as a member of the priesthood of all believers but I have been granted and accepted additional responsibilities to the church. I hope that I can serve this community as a preacher, teacher, reconciler, and minister of the sacraments with humor, gratitude, and humility.

I look forward to participating with you in these winter months in all that is emerging with this ministry: the reflection and re-launch of the small groups, the Centering Prayer Workshop, the St. Brigid's Celebration, the Theology Study Group, the celebration of the Feast of St. Brigid, the Lenten Contemplative Retreat at Hallelujah Farm, and continued discernment about missional ministry.



## EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

## ADULT EDUCATION FORUMS FOR FEBRUARY

**February 4:** There will not be a Forum on February 4.

**February 11:** “Discipleship and Discernment Ministry - What’s Happened So Far and Future Directions” -- Come hear from Duncan and leaders and participants in the Discipleship and Discernment Ministry about what has happened in the small group ministry and a vision for moving forward. The forum will include time for people to share their stories of being involved in the small group, a presentation about what’s next, and a time for questions and answers.

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Adult Forums in Lent will explore the topics of “Diminishment and Empowerment” in human relationships, in the ways we treat each other in our work and community, in the assumptions we make about each other and within our laws and institutions. To diminish any person is to deny their place and heritage in the family of God. Empowerment is nothing less than the work of God to reclaim that heritage.

**February 18:** To introduce this series, Phillip Wilson will lead a discussion with examples from the time of our biblical heritage to today of ways we diminish each other and ways we reclaim our dignity and heritage. We will particularly look for subtle ways we do this without even knowing we are doing it.

**February 25:** Diminishment and Empowerment: focusing on Women. The “Me-Too” movement has brought to our attention one of the more significant ways women have been diminished. We will explore this and others, from economic and legal ways to subtle attitudes we carry without even being aware. At the same time we will celebrate ways women have fought for and claimed their heritage as full children of God. We have invited Shari, a member of the Women’s Freedom Center in Brattleboro, to help lead this discussion.

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH NEWS

**Rock Point Summer Camp**

It is hard to imagine summer camp in the middle of the winter, but we know that parents are already making plans for summer. Last summer, St. Michael’s sent 13 kids to Rock Point Camp. Rock Point is in Burlington, Vermont and is the camp run by the Episcopal Church in Vermont. St. Michael’s offers partial scholarships to all the kids from St. Michael’s who would like to attend. Please let Mary Lindquist know if you are interested in a scholarship. The website with the registration material is at [www.rockpointvt.org/camp](http://www.rockpointvt.org/camp) Below are the dates for this summer:

Senior High Camp (ages 14-16) – July 1-6  
 Junior High Camp (ages 11-14) – July 8-13  
 Intermediate Camp (ages 10-12)- July 15-20  
 Elementary Camp (ages 7-10)- July 22-27

**St. Michael’s Play and Pray Intergenerational Ingathering**

Mark your calendars for St. Michael’s Play and Pray Intergenerational Ingathering which will take place over Memorial Day weekend at Hallelujah Farm in Chesterfield, New Hampshire. This gathering is part of St. Michael’s sabbatical renewal time. We’re hoping that this will be a time for all ages of people to come together in community and have fun, spend time together and enjoy a beautiful, holy setting. More to come on this event soon! If you are interested in helping, please contact Leigh Marthe at [leigh\\_marthe2000@yahoo.com](mailto:leigh_marthe2000@yahoo.com)

## EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

## MARCH 23-24 LENTEN CONTEMPLATIVE RETREAT AT HALLELUJAH FARM

One of the spiritual disciplines of the discipleship ministry is setting aside time regularly for prayer; this is a rare opportunity to practice silent prayer for an extended time with a community of support. While this will be the primary emphasis during the retreat, we will also practice *Lectio Divina* or “sacred reading” (the ancient monastic practice of listening to the Spirit speak to our hearts through Scripture), Sacred Singing and Chanting (no prior singing experience necessary!) Conscious Practical Work (a practice of presence and attention), and celebration of the Eucharist. Most of the retreat will be in silence but there will be time for 1:1 conversations of spiritual friendship.

Prior experience with silent prayer or meditation may be helpful but is not required. We will make available an optional instruction or review of the practice of Centering Prayer, a method of silent prayer within the Christian contemplative tradition. The retreat may be of special interest to people who attended Fr. Bill Sheehan’s workshop in January.

**Retreat Coordinators:** Cary Gaunt, Karen Guthrie, Rev. Duncan Hilton, Michael Pittman

**Date and Time:** beginning Friday, March 23rd at 6 pm with a light supper (people are welcome earlier in the afternoon for optional retreat time) and ends Saturday evening after supper, around 7:00 pm.

**Cost:** All are welcome at Hallelujah Farm and we are grateful for your support in the amount you feel you can afford. As a guideline, suggested contributions for one overnight stay and four meals is \$125.

**Venue:** Guests receive the hospitality of Sandy & Roger Daly at beautiful Hallelujah Farm. Accommodations are in shared double rooms.

**Information & Registration:** Contact Jeanie in the office or email Duncan at [duncan@stmichaelsvermont.org](mailto:duncan@stmichaelsvermont.org).



## SUMMARY OF VESTRY MEETING - JANUARY 18, 2018

- There was an opening prayer from Mary.
- Reflections were discussed by outgoing Vestry members Deb, Bruce and Doug as to their three years of service and they were thanked by Mary on behalf of the Vestry.
- Thank you cards were forwarded to Annie Landenberger and Miranda Smith for producing the Christmas pageant and to Thad Bennett, Megan Buchanan and Deb Jones for their help with Duncan’s ordination. Great work in each case.
- Minutes for Vestry meeting Dec 21/17 were accepted as presented.
- Wayne presented the Treasurer’s report and announced December was the best month ever with income of 275%. Expenses were also high at the end of the year but overall were 101% of the budget. He made mention that more people need to sign up for altar flowers due to expense.
- 2018 budget was presented for review and higher costs are expected for fuel, electricity, water/sewage, custodial supplies and plowing.
- All in all, 2018 looks good particularly with a rising stock market.
- The parochial report to diocese was reviewed and accepted. Overall attendance down slightly but numbers remain strong.
- The Schroeder Fund was reviewed and discussed, particularly the continuing education fund and whether this should come more under Vestry oversight. There will be more discussion later.
- Mary reported all is well with pre-school. Their rent will increase slightly to cover added expenses of electricity, snow plowing and water/sewer. Mary attended a Discernment + Discipleship leadership team meeting, which she noted is going well. Preparations are finalizing for upcoming annual meeting.
- Election of junior warden is set for meeting post the annual meeting.
- Discussion of Rock Point Fund is scheduled for annual meeting by Deb.
- Nothing from Building and Grounds at this time.
- A prayer by Judith closed the meeting at 8 pm.

Respectfully,

*Doug Lilly*

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER  
FROM THE LIBRARY SHELVES

**Everyman's Book of Saints**

by **C. P. S. Clarke, M. A. Rector of Donhead St. Andrew**  
published by **A. R. Mowbray, Ltd. & Morehouse Publishing Co.**  
**London & Milwaukee 5"x7" 357 pages**

St. Simon Stylites has come down through the ages known as "The Silly Saint" or more kindly as "The Pillar Saint." Beset from an early age by an appalling passion for self-abnegation, he was ejected from the monastery by his fellow monks who were thoroughly irritated by this offensive upstart (for, in the words of Mark Twain, few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example—and, in those of this reviewer, nothing is as instructive as a bad one). For three years he lived as a hermit on a Syrian mountainside. Thereafter, he ascended the mountain peak where he mounted a pillar upon which he would spend his earthly existence. The pillar at its outset was ten feet high but over the years its height was increased until it reached sixty feet. From this height, standing erect with his hands stretched to the sky where he apparently assumed heaven to be located, the saint lived and preached and counseled the multitudes that came to learn from him. And upon this pillar, without ever descending, he died. A church was built subsequently around the pillar, but poor Aleppo has suffered distressingly from the recent war and only a shambles remains.

There are over one-hundred and twenty saints included in this book, but not St. Michael for he is an archangel, a heavenly saint, and the author deals only with those of earthly existence. In our south-side window, the saint astride skewers the evil dragon.

One of the more surprising inclusions is Charles I, beheaded by his subjects in 1649. Notorious for his continual defiance of Parliament, the law, illegal taxation, and responsible for lamentably botched military excursions that, taken together, ultimately resulted in civil war (which, along with his head, he lost). Nevertheless, he was a staunch defender of the faith. "Let my condition never be so low, I resolve by the grace of God never to yield up this Church to the government of Papists, Presbyterians, or Independents." Recall that in 1534 Henry the Eighth had renounced the Pope and assumed the head of the English Church. Charles

was formally canonized by the Church of England after the Restoration (Cromwell and the Roundheads having badly mishandled governance and made themselves thoroughly loathed) as Charles the Martyr.

The obverse of that coin is St. Thomas Becket, martyred opposing King Henry II in 1170. Once the king's favorite, Thomas, appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury by Henry, ran afoul of him on several occasions particularly concerning the independence of the church—at one point Becket had excommunicated Henry. Subsequently, for a time king and archbishop co-existed peaceably, but another eruption ensued and Henry exploded: "Are there none of the dastards eating my bread who will rid me of this turbulent priest?" Thomas was promptly murdered by four dutiful knights on the altar steps of Canterbury Cathedral. In 1986, under the direction of our late beloved George Lewis, St. Michael's parishioners performed T. S. Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral."

St. Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy member of the Sanhedrin, was a secret disciple of Jesus (fearing the wrath of his fellow Jews). Risking his life, after the Crucifixion he asked Pilate for the body. Legend tells us in the year 63 he was sent by St. Philip from Gaul to bring Christianity to Britain. Upon landing in Glastonbury, he planted his staff which subsequently grew into a thorn tree that flowered annually at Christmas. A scion of an ancestor of that tree was planted in Washington in the Bishop's Garden at the National Cathedral (a century in its construction and paid for and given to the nation by Episcopalians). It, too, occasionally has blossomed at Christmas.

The reader, comfortable in cozy slippers and mellow whiskey and reclining by the fireside, may reflect upon the uncomfortable lives of what the book's editor calls "God's Heroes" and shudder. Mutilated, hacked, beheaded, drowned, mangled and worse, the martyrs make our troublous lives by comparison seem endurable if not downright serene.



EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

PHOTOS FROM DUNCAN'S ORDINATION





## EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

## FEBRUARY LECTIONARY

**February 4:**

Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-12, 21c;  
1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

**February 11:**

2 Kings 2:1-12, Psalm 50:1-6,  
2 Corinthians 4:3-6, Mark 9:2-9

**February 18:**

Genesis 9:8-17, Psalm 25:1-9,  
1 Peter 3:18-22, Mark 1:9-15

**February 25:**

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:22-30;  
Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

## CELEBRATIONS

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Steven Meyer
- 5 Andy Burrows
- 7 Douglas Lilly,  
Chris Landin
- 8 Emma Allen
- 9 Richard Burtis,  
Susan Wilson
- 10 Sissi Loftin
- 11 Alan McBean,  
Jayne Fritz
- 12 Robert Anderson,  
Lucia Osiecki
- 16 Greg Allen
- 19 Ross Kinney
- 24 Kirsten Mattson
- 25 Anne Cook
- 26 Paul Love,  
Charlene Kemp
- 28 Leigh Marthe
- 29 Asa Taggart



*The Guardian* is published monthly by St. Michael's Episcopal Church. News items, announcements, articles, etc., should be submitted to [jeanie@stmichaels-vt.org](mailto:jeanie@stmichaels-vt.org) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for consideration.

***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](mailto: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 6:00–7:00 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