



The Annual Report
Of Ministry & Administration
for 2017
St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Presented at the
Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 28, 2018

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PARISH STAFF

The Reverend Mary D. Lindquist, *Rector*

The Reverend Duncan Hilton, *Minister of Discernment & Discipleship*

Ms. Jeanie Crosby, *Parish Administrator*

Ms. Susan Dedell, *Director of Music*

Mr. John Laamanen, *Sexton*

Ms. Darlene Rutnik, *Financial Administrator*

The Reverend Thaddeus Bennett, *Priest Associate*

The Reverend Alfred Cramer, *Priest Associate*

The Reverend Jean R. Smith, *Priest Associate*

The Reverend Phillip Wilson, *Priest Associate*

WARDENS & VESTRY

Ms. Deborah Jones, *Senior Warden, class of 2018*

Mr. Bruce Lawrence, *Junior Warden, class of 2018*

Mr. Douglas Lilly, *class of 2018*

Ms. Lynn Billington, *class of 2019*

Mr. John Byrnes, *class of 2019*

Ms. Judith McBean, *class of 2019*

Ms. Janet Brocklehurst, *class of 2020*

Mr. Mark Horton, *class of 2020*

Ms. Jeanette Landin, *class of 2020*



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St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Brattleboro, Vermont

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH

Sunday, January 28, 2018

AGENDA

Call to Order

Annual Slide Show

Opening Prayer

Verification of Quorum

Appointment of Clerk of the Meeting

Minutes of the 2017 Annual Meeting

Reports Received by Title

Acknowledgements

Report from the Vestry about Rock Point

Report from the Discernment and Discipleship Leadership Team

Report from the Rector

Report from the Sabbatical Planning Team

Report concerning Finance and Capital Campaign

Distribution of proposed 2018 budget

Report of the Nominating Committee

Candidates for Vestry & for Delegates to Diocesan Convention

Adjournment

**St. Michael's Episcopal Church
Brattleboro, VT
Annual Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2017**

1. Call to Order and Opening Prayer by Mary Lindquist, Rector

The meeting was called to order by Rector Mary Lindquist at 12:00 pm. Mary opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Verification of Quorum by Mary

Mary asked those present to count-off in order to determine if there was a quorum. 64 members counted off. Mary noted that there were 65 members present at the 2016 Annual Meeting and that 64 members was enough to meet a quorum.

3. Appointment of Clerk for 2017 Annual Meeting by Mary

Mary asked for a MOTION to appoint Joanne Patalano as clerk for this annual meeting. Administrator Jeanie Crosby usually takes the minutes. Jeanie was not present and was away on vacation. The MOTION was moved by Ruth Tilghman, seconded by Joyce Morgan and passed unanimously.

4. Minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting by Mary

Mary asked for a MOTION to approve the minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting. The MOTION was moved by Ed Sbardella, seconded by Nancy Barber and passed unanimously.

5. Reports Received by Title by Mary

Reports from the Rector, the Vestry and various committees and ministries were distributed in the Annual Report which was available on the website and in hard copy at the meeting. Mary asked for a MOTION that these reports be received by title. The MOTION was moved by Ruth Tilghman, seconded by Lori Palmer and passed unanimously.

6. Acknowledgements by Mary

Mary spent time acknowledging various parishioners, including Lori Palmer, Anne Cook, Sue Dyer and Jane Sbardella for their ministry work; to members of the Vestry including outgoing members; to Treasurer Wayne Cook, to Administrator Jeanie Crosby, Sexton John Laamanen and Bookkeeper Darlene Rutnik; to Susan Dedell and to all the Priest Associates: Thad Bennett, Phillip Wilson and Al Cramer.

Mary announced that Deb Jones will be the Vestry's Senior Warden this year.

7. Report from Building and Grounds Committee by Deb Jones

Deb Jones presented highlights of the work of the Building and Grounds Committee. The Building and Grounds Committee Report is in the 2016 Annual Report.

8. Report from the Stewardship Committee by Bruce Lawrence

Bruce thanked the Stewardship Committee for their work on the pledge drive. The Stewardship Committee Report is in the 2016 Annual Report.

9. Report concerning Finance and Capital Campaign by Wayne Cook

Wayne talked about the capital campaign and about the deficit concerning the loan from the Diocese. The load needs to be paid by April 2019. He asked parishioners to consider extending their pledge or making a new pledge to help cover the deficit. The Capital Campaign Committee Report is in the 2016 Annual Report.

The floor was opened to questions and answers. Wayne answered all questions raised.

10. Distribution of Proposed 2017 Budget by Wayne Cook

The 2017 budget was distributed in hard-copy. (The agenda had a typo in this item. The agenda listed "Distribution of Proposed 2016 Budget." It should have read "Distribution of Proposed 2017 Budget.")

Wayne presented the highlights of the budget. He explained why certain income and expense line items that are noted in the 2017 proposed budget were marked "moved to non-operating." He answered all questions from the floor.

12. Report of the Nominating Committee by Sarah Benton and Mary

Sarah Benton spoke on behalf of the Vestry Nominating Committee. She presented the names of the three candidates recommended by the Committee. They are Janet Brocklehurst, Jeanette Landin and Mark Horton. Mary asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor. There were none. Mary asked for a MOTION to accept the slate of the three nominees. The MOTION was moved by Ruth Tilghman, seconded by Jenn Karstad and passed unanimously

Mary asked for a motion to elect Janet Brocklehurst, Jeanette Landin and Mark Horton to the Vestry for a 3-year term. The MOTION was moved by Diana Bingham, seconded by Betsy Bates and passed unanimously.

13. Candidates for Vestry and for Delegates to the Diocesan Convention by Mary

Mary presented the recommendations for delegates to the 2017 Annual Diocesan Convention. The candidates for delegates are Karen Guthrie and Jeff Hiam. Mary asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were none. Mary asked for a MOTION to accept the slate of candidates for delegates. The MOTION was moved by Ruth Tilghman, seconded by Jenny Karstad and passed unanimously

Mary asked for a motion to elect Karen Guthrie and Jeff Hiam as delegates to the 2017 Annual Diocesan Convention. The MOTION was moved by Joyce Morgan, seconded by Liz Vick and passed unanimously.

The Senior Warden Deb Jones will also attend as a delegate. The alternates to be elected for Diocesan Convention are Judith McBean and Bruce Lawrence. Chris Chapman said he is interested in being a delegate in 2018.

14. Open discussion by Mary

Mary invited those present to ask questions about any of the work and ministries of the Church. One parishioner requested that we add Jean Jersey's picture to the wall. Another parishioner asked that we more formally solicit parishioners regarding paying off the loan related to the capital campaign.

Mary announced that she would be taking a sabbatical in 2018 and that Susan Dedell will also be taking a sabbatical this summer and fall.

Liz Vick thanked Mary for her leadership and spiritual guidance and for the gifts she brings to our congregation.

15. Adjournment

A MOTION was made by Carol Hesselbach to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Marjorie McCrum and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Patalano,
Clerk for Annual Meeting 2017



Rector's Report

The Lord has done great things for us. – Psalm 126:3

One of the reasons I appreciate our Annual Meeting every year is that it gives me the opportunity to step out of the day-to-day tasks and routines of church life in order to see the big picture. It forces me to reflect on what has happened over the course of a whole year in our parish and to reflect on how these events relate to our history. If God is on the move at St. Michael's (and we trust God is), where do we see this movement? How does this movement relate to that which has happened before? How does it relate to who we are called to be in the future?

I am now in my seventh year as St. Michael's rector and I think 2017 has been the most interesting and exciting year yet. I have been preaching and writing about the importance of being led by the Holy Spirit in our ministries together for a few years now. And truly that Spirit has been active in our church in ways that have consistently enriched and deepened us. But in 2017, the Spirit led us in ways that were surprising, unexpected and, to be honest, a little bit scary. And it is St. Michael's response to this surprising and risky call that is for me the big story of 2017.

About a year ago, I began meeting with a small group of parishioners (Christy Fritz, Jeff Lewis and Leigh Marthe) to help plan my 2018 sabbatical time and apply for a sabbatical grant. As we met together, prayed and reflected on St. Michael's past, present and future, our conversations started growing larger and larger. Suddenly we found that we no longer were speaking about sabbatical plans, but rather, we were dreaming about possibilities that seemed so exciting and compelling that we felt we had to share them with the whole congregation. In short, *we felt St. Michael's was being called to make an intentional and sacrificial commitment to discern how to follow Jesus at this time and in this place. We recognized that the Christianity of our past would not be the Christianity of our future. We affirmed that in our changing world, God is doing something new. St. Michael's, we discerned, was being called in this time of health and vitality to step into that new thing.*

Through presenting this vision to the Vestry, we became clear that the ministry we were envisioning was a ministry of discernment (to explore and prayerfully act on the Spirit's leading) and discipleship (to deepen our identity and practice of following Jesus in all we do and to have the tools to share this faith). The Vestry, to their credit, was open to this idea and the possibility of a three-year experiment: the hiring a half-time person to help us move forward with this call.

After a series of congregational meetings in May and June, we extended a call to Duncan Hilton to be our half-time Minister of Discernment and Discipleship beginning in July, 2017. The process of coming to this decision was not always easy or smooth. It went much faster than many of us felt comfortable with and we

did not have a traditional job description to roll out. There were many questions about why we needed to support this ministry initiative, what it was going to look like and how we would afford it.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Sometimes we have to trust that we are being led by a presence that doesn't show up on power point slides or in strategic plans. Trusting in this presence and the change it will bring is one of the most difficult tasks of being a community of faith. We could have easily decided that we couldn't take this step. But we didn't. I'm grateful, amazed and proud that the people of St. Michael's decided to say YES to this call and to trust that God was at work in our midst. Even after a short six months, Duncan and his ministry with us have already born much fruit. (See the report of the Leadership Team and the Minister for Discernment and Discipleship to read more). It is clear that we are engaging with our faith on a deeper level and something wonderful is being created.

And reviewing 2017:

- In February, we held our second Women's Retreat with the theme, *Let your Life Speak*. Thirty-five women participated.
- We offered a timely and well-attended Lenten series entitled, *Joyful Resistance*.
- The Plattsburgh State Gospel Choir offered a wonderful concert at St. Michael's in March and parishioners hosted many of the choristers.
- In April, St. Michael's hosted a poetry reading with many poets from our community.
- In May, Winged Productions and the Choir School performed "Theophilia," an original mystery play by Paul Dedell.
- In May and October, St. Michael's put on two Tag Sales with combined proceeds over \$12,000.
- In July, we welcomed Duncan Hilton to St. Michael's.
- In July, St. Michael's sent 13 children to Rock Point Camp in Burlington, Vermont.
- In August and September, Susan Dedell enjoyed a much-deserved sabbatical.
- In August, St. Michael's paid off its loan for the Building for the Future Project.
- In August, St. Michael's received a \$49,862 Lilly Grant for Clergy Renewal. This grant will cover the costs of my sabbatical as well as the congregational costs for special programs and pastoral coverage while I am gone (May 1-August 21).
- In September, Paul Moberly was ordained as a priest in Annandale, Virginia
- In October, 6 groups of 40 people began participating in Discipleship Groups.
- In October, St. Michael's received a \$25,000 grant from the Narthex Project and a \$15,000 grant from the Episcopal Church of Vermont for the support of the Ministry of Discernment and Discipleship.
- On All Saints' Day, we held an All Saints' Brunch with storytelling about the saints we have known in our lives.
- In December, we offered an Advent Discernment Workshop with Sarah Moore and Duncan Hilton.
- In December, we collected 141 pledge cards in support of our ministries in 2018. This number of pledge cards is the highest in our pledge records from the last fifteen years.

Thank you

- Thank you to Deb Jones who served as Senior Warden for 2017. Deb's deep and abiding faith, courage and love have upheld and guided us through a year of much change. Deb was always ready to listen, to pray and to boldly trust in the Spirit. And not only that, but she finally was able to get the vestry to complete an inventory of our furnishing (which we had been planning to do for years) and she makes a mean carrot cake!
- I am grateful to Bruce Lawrence for serving as Jr. Warden for 2017. Bruce's gentle and faithful presence and leadership have served us so well over this last year. Bruce is an encourager and a calm and wise guide.

- Thank you to Deb Jones, Bruce Lawrence and Doug Lilly, our outgoing Vestry members. Each has brought tremendous gifts for ministry and leadership to the Vestry. We will miss them greatly!
- Thank you to Wayne Cook, our indefatigable treasurer. Wayne has worked countless hours together with our bookkeeper, Darlene Rutnik, to keep the finances well-organized and balanced. Wayne's generosity, devotion, intelligence and care for St. Michael's are tremendous and we are so blessed to have him serve St. Michael's in this capacity.
- Many thanks to Joanne Patalano, who served as clerk in 2017. In my tenure, we have never had a clerk who studied harder about being a clerk or who has a faster turn-around to our meeting minutes! This is honestly such an important ministry and Joanne has really put her heart into it. Joanne's attention to detail and tremendous organizational skills have been a real asset to our Vestry.

I cannot be more grateful for the Staff of St. Michael's Church. While I receive much public support for St. Michael's ministry, it is really our tremendous staff who should be thanked for doing so much so well. This year, we were happy to welcome Duncan as a new staff member who fit right in from the start. Thank you to Jeanie Crosby, Susan Dedell, Duncan Hilton, John Laamanen, Darlene Rutnik, Phillip Wilson, Jean Smith, Al Cramer and Thad Bennett. I feel so fortunate to share in the work of ministry together.

Of course in all we have done and all we do, we are upheld and guided by the powerful love of God in Jesus Christ. God has blessed us richly this year and it is my hope that we continue to grow together in our trust and our love of God through our ministry in Christ's name.

Yours in Christ, Mary

WORSHIP

The Holy Eucharist was celebrated on 52 Sundays.

There were 55 mid-week celebrations of the Holy Eucharist.

During 2017 we offered 52 weekly Contemplative Services Thursdays at 5:30 pm and 52 sessions of Saturday morning Centering Prayer.

Holy Baptism was celebrated 4 times (Noah Weaver, Ryan Cogliano, William Nohl, Olivia Meije Osborne).

The Blessing of a Marriage was celebrated 1 time (Noah Coburn and Beth Ruane).

Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate was celebrated 1 time (Paul Moberly).

Home Communion was conducted 27 times.

Holy Communion was brought to nursing home residents (Pine Heights, Thompson House and Hilltop/Bradley House) once a month.

Services were held at Springfield Prison 15 times, 6 of which included Holy Communion.

The Burial office was conducted on 10 occasions (Barbara Hoag, Roberta Brown, Stephen Space, Bruce Hesselbach, Frank Hildreth, Fran Nevins, Tim Buchanan, Marion Boese, Evelyn Burtis and William Glover).

Average Sunday attendance in 2017 was 142.



Reports from Worship Ministries

ALTAR GUILD

Liturgy begins and ends with the work of the Altar Guild. It is a behind-the-scenes ministry which involves caring for the sacred vessels, the bread and the wine, the fair linens, hangings, candles, torches, and flowers.

Members prepare for Sunday and Wednesday services, funerals, weddings, baptisms, musical events, and special services. Duties include flower arranging, silver and brass polishing, washing, ironing, dusting, watering plants, filling candles, marking the Bible lessons, posting hymn numbers and mending. We have 5 teams that consist of 3-4 people serving a 2-week stint every 8 weeks. We have 4 business meetings a year. Two of them include workbees. These involve cleaning, polishing and readying the church for Christmas and Easter.

Lucia Osiecki hosted a pot luck luncheon at her home in May. It was a beautiful day and we enjoyed fellowship in a lovely relaxed atmosphere.

We welcome Ken Jacobs to the Altar Guild and have thus doubled our male Altar Guilders! Our members range from 11 to 100 years old.

If you would like to learn more about the duties of Altar Guild, please contact Jane.sbardella@gmail.com

Jane Sbardella and Craig Newbert

SACRAMENTAL HEALING

“Rise and go; your faith has made you well.” Luke 17:19

As followers of Christ, we believe that we are called to continue his ministry of healing. This healing takes many forms—physical, spiritual, and emotional—and is an important part of the church’s ministry.

A “healing team” of prayer companions from the parish feels called to this ministry to support those who request prayers of healing for themselves, for others, and in thanksgiving. Everyone who comes for prayers is also anointed with oil that has been blessed by the Bishop. The blessed oil is sent to each parish at the end of the Diocesan Convention in November.

The sacrament of healing is scheduled on most Sundays. At the 8 o’clock service, it follows the service proper. At the 10:15 o’clock service, it is available during communion. No prayer request is too big or too small. We know it may not always be easy to come forward whether it is for the first time or the one hundredth time.

Our team meets once a month for meetings that offer spiritual support for each other and an opportunity to read and discuss faith, prayer, and what it means to heal and be healed. Confidentiality is essential to our work; we do not discuss any concerns or prayer requests brought to us by parishioners outside of the “sacred space” of the prayer encounter.

We have a yearly retreat for discernment and recommitment; this year, a one-day session was held at St Michael's church in November. Healers from St Mary's in the Mountains joined with our entire team for this day of reflection and meditation.

We have a shared leadership structure where individual team members take responsibility for arranging meetings, minutes, and other administrative tasks on a quarterly basis. Our current members include: Megan Buchanan, Janet Cramer, Robin White-Diamondstone, Judith Hildreth, Jeff Lewis, Margit Lilly, and Carolyn Taylor-Olson. Betsy Bates, Sue Dyer, and Sissi Loftin have participated this year and have recently stepped down.

We invite members of the parish who would like to learn more and explore sharing in this ministry, to speak to a member of the Sacramental Healing team.

For the Sacramental Healing ministry, *Janet Cramer* and *Carolyn Taylor-Olson*

MUSIC AT ST. MICHAEL'S

St. Michael's continues to be blessed with many musical gifts and an enthusiastic and supportive parish and staff. We have an excellent adult choir and a thriving choir school. Both choirs not only provide musical ministry to the parish, but serve as an outreach to the wider community. St. Michael's also generously hosts Winged Productions, which offers a variety of events that enrich both our parish and the wider community.

This past year, I was on sabbatical for 3 months, during which time 4 wonderful musicians provided musical leadership. Karen Guthrie, who carried the bulk of it, continues to inspire me as a musical and spiritual model. Mayu Allen did a wonderful job at the organ as well, and you all might be interested to hear that she is having a marvelous time at her new job as an organ builder/technician at Fisk Organs in Gloucester. Christopher Wesolowski and Bruce Griffin each led a service, giving their unique talents and spirit with generosity and skill. I thank them, and I thank the parish for giving me this opportunity for rest and refreshment.

The St. Michael's Choir is a talented, lively, and committed community of diverse people. Currently numbering 28 regular members, the choir serves as music ministers in a variety of services and offerings. They are "on duty" for approximately 40 weeks of the year, providing music leadership and inspiration on a weekly basis, with particularly intense work during the seasons of Holy Week/Easter and Advent/Christmas. Highlights of our past year include a memorable Holy Week; the 3rd presentation of Paul Winter's extraordinary *Missa Gaia* on the Feast of Saint Francis; and a beautiful Advent Lessons and Carols. The Choir rehearses at 8:45 on Sunday mornings with additional Thursday evenings throughout the year and has an annual weekend retreat. The level of commitment and joy in the choir continues to touch me deeply.

The Choir School has taken solid root, and we now offer two separate programs. Level One (ages 8-11) meets on Thursdays at 3:45-4:30, and Level Two (ages 11-16) meets on Tuesdays at 3:45-4:45. As we almost complete our fourth full year, it is apparent that these choristers are growing and contributing much to all of us. The older students presented "Theophilia," an original mystery play, and it was a wonderful exploration of loyalty, faith, and the power of community. The younger choir school students are really starting to soar, and participated very fully in this year's "Festival of Lights." It is great to see them rise up as a community of friends, as well. For me, one of the most rewarding sights is the Choir School students mingling with the adult choir members in the (very crowded!) choir area — everyone working together and lifting their voices in praise and prayer. The Choir School programs are free and open to all children who love to sing, regardless of church affiliation.

Finally, I want to say that after traveling a bit in my sabbatical, I can report that St. Michael's has some of the best congregational singing anywhere. Amen and Praise God!

Respectfully Submitted, Susan Dedell, Director of Music



Reports from Christian Formation

CHRISTIAN FORMATION/ADULT EDUCATION

The “Sunday Forum Committee” schedules forums for the church year that starts in September. The committee meets over breakfast on the first Wednesday of the month; if you want to come to a meeting, please contact Nancy Barber for the date and time. The forums are held each Sunday from 9-10AM in the Meeting Room. All are welcome.

Mission Statement:

The Adult Forums will offer a diversity of topics covering:

- different interests (outreach, scripture, contemplative Christianity, spirituality, tradition, community interests, etc.),
- experiences of faith,
- the basics of Christianity and the Episcopal Church (for both those new to the church and those who want to rediscover their roots) and
- specialized topics (for deeper understanding)

In the context of:

- small, high-commitment/confidential small group offerings,
- open, low-commitment offerings (forums), and
- a balance between content and discussion.

All offerings are to be connected to our context (Christian, faith community); all topics should ask the question, “How does this connect to our faith?” or “So what?”

Our Forum leaders are our own clergy, as well as some of our parishioners and an occasional guest speaker. A summary of our topics for the year January 2017 to January 2018 follows:

- Learning about ordination into the priesthood and what that involves (St. Michael’s has a long history of supporting candidates for ordination) and an update from a parishioner (a candidate for the Diaconate) who has been working with young people here in Brattleboro and in Jerusalem and Bethlehem on peace-building.
- Social justice and our own St. Michael’s Prison Ministry; health issues including Brattleboro Hospice, thoughts about how we teach our young people about issues of racism, diversity and justice; the local AIDS Project; communicating in difficult situations; the Second Amendment and Gun Regulation.
- Reflections on “the other” in scripture and history; thinking of Jesus as “the King,” a short series on living inside Advent Stories, translation of the Bible into English, and the new American Bible.

We sincerely thank all our presenters this year, and all in our parish, for your enthusiastic participation in the Sunday Adult Forums. This has been a rich forum year indeed. We welcomed Benson Bobrick and Chris Triebert who joined the committee this year. Please speak to any committee member if you have any suggestions for topics or speakers.

Respectfully submitted: *Bill Ames, Nancy Barber (chair), Benson Bobrick, Mary Lindquist, Annamarie Plubar, Ruth Tilghman, Chris Triebert, and Phillip Wilson*

MINISTER OF DISCERNMENT + DISCIPLESHIP

What's Happened

I am grateful for my six months of service at St. Michael's as Minister of Discipleship and Discernment. Along with being part of the running of the church both at the parish and diocesan level - preaching, attending the annual diocesan and clergy conferences, attending staff meetings, and preparing for priestly ordination - I can see that there have been distinct but overlapping stages in the ministry. These stages have been:

- **Relationship-building** in July and August. This involved conversation with many of you at the church, or over coffee, or at your homes, as well as visiting with pre-existing ministries and committees. It also involved conversations with local clergy, town leaders, and folks living on the margins in Brattleboro.
- **Launching** in September and October. This involved a creating a vision and structure for the ministry and presenting it at the Sep 17 Adult Forum; applying for and receiving grants to help fund the ministry; creating the format and recruiting people for the discipleship small groups; and creating the leadership team that meets twice/month to steer the ministry (Megan Buchanan, Christy Fritz, Jeff Hiam, and Darcey Mercier), and the advisory team which offers input on the ministry (Mary Lindquist, Sarah Benton, Karen Guthrie, Deb Jones, Greg Lesch, Jeff Lewis, Leigh Marthe).
- **Practicing** in November and December. This has involved my regularly attending two discipleship small groups – one with my leadership team and one with the teens – while 4 other groups met independently with about 40 people involved in total. It also involved supporting the leadership team to take initiative with ministries like the All Saints' Brunch and the Advent Compline services. In early December it involved creating and designing the discernment format and workshop with my former colleague Sarah Moore.
- **Reflecting** in January. This has involved an afternoon retreat with the leadership team to reflect and plan; coordinating a process for the discipleship group participants – both individually and in groups - to reflect on their own experience; and planning the Jan 24 gathering of all the participants to share their experiences before moving forward with the next stage of the small groups.

Reflection on Six Months of Ministry

- Mary shared last year in her annual meeting "Rector's Report" some of her insights from her Missional Leadership Cohort: that God's Spirit goes before us; that it is the minister's job not to create programs but to listen for movement of the Spirit; and that we discern the Spirit primarily by listening deeply to those around us and God's Spirit within us. I hope that this ministry has **stayed true to those principles**. I'm hoping that the discernment workshop on Dec 2 was not a one-time event but the beginning of using a simple and practical method that can guide this ministry and help us all to live into a desire to abide by the Spirit's biddings. I believe that we can only be in relationship with the Spirit to the degree that we are connected to ourselves and one another. I'm heartened that 94% (15/16) of the people who completed the online survey about their experience in the discipleship groups reported that they came to know people in a more intimate way than they normally do in church.
- I was surprised and delighted by the **level of interest in the discipleship groups**. A priest in Nebraska who had started a small group ministry said that, based on his experience in a similar-sized parish, perhaps a dozen people would be involved. The fact that 40 people were involved speaks to me of an openness and thirst that I feel fortunate and proud to be part of.
- I have been **appreciative of the support**, not just from St Michael's, but from beyond Brattleboro. The spiritual teacher and author Rev. Cynthia Bourgeault was generous in letting us use excerpts from her writing to frame the small group format and the discernment workshop. An Episcopal Priest who also works as an adjunct Professor at Harvard Divinity School teaching Discipleship,

when I told her about the vision for the ministry, applauded this parish for putting its resources toward discipleship and discernment.

What's Next

- In many ways, I don't know. Per Mary's insight from last year, I don't see it as my job to create programs but to create contexts and equip people for discerning the movement of the Spirit. It is my experience that the Spirit often surprises. That said, I do have some hunches. 94% (15/16) people said that they want to **continue with a discipleship group** in some form. I hope that this will include new forms, perhaps "open" groups that meet weekly but allow for people to come and go based on their schedules, so more folks from the parish and the wider community can explore being part of a group. I hope that the groups continue to both deepen relationships but also deepen people's commitment to the spiritual disciplines that are part of the format (prayer, stewardship of money, regular worship, discernment, working with the poor, study of scripture).
- I felt very moved by the sharing of stories that happened at the All Saints' Brunch in November. I hope that we can continue to create spaces where people can **share stories** about what God has done and is doing in their lives.
- The 5 elements of the ministry are 1) Disciplemaking, 2) Mission, 3) Shared Leadership, 4) Collective Genius (drawing on the wisdom of many), and 5) Communitas (embracing liminal spaces – inward and outward). So far the focus has been primarily on Disciplemaking, Mission, and Collective Genius. I hope that the discipleship small groups and a deepening commitment to the discipline of working with the poor will be the seed of more **missional ministries** that connect us even more deeply with people and communities beyond the parish.

It has been a delight to facilitate the teen discipleship group. I've been moved by their interest and commitment. I hope that the discipleship ministry can find even more ways to be **intergenerational**.

FROM THE DISCERNMENT + DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM: The Discipleship and Discernment Leadership Team was formed by Duncan Hilton in September and began meeting twice per month in October with a twofold purpose: to be a discipleship group and to develop the ministry. The members are Christy Fritz, Jeff Hiam, Megan Buchanan and Darcey Mercier. The group met from 5-7:30 pm for a potluck supper at either Duncan or Megan's home, followed by our discipleship group meeting (with a rotation of leadership), and then a ministry planning session. We also held a retreat where we brainstormed our individual roles and created the following Statement of Shared Purpose:

"We gather to build a community and culture of spiritual discipline and devotion that helps us to grow in closer union with Christ. We devote ourselves to following Jesus' example and obeying the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We desire to surrender our lives to Jesus, dying to ourselves and giving our lives in worship and service to our Lord. We encourage one another in our calls to discipleship, offering deep listening and hope. We aim to practice in our own lives and leadership team the spiritual disciplines that we share with the parish and beyond. Together we pray, laugh, plan, listen, reflect, share, attend retreats and workshops, study scripture, design, lead and attend special worship gatherings, and break bread. We know that we cannot teach what we do not practice. And we trust that the more we practice together with God as our witness, the more wisdom we will have to offer the parish and community."

2017 activities of this ministry included: an Adult Forum on Discipleship, two *Introduction to Small Groups* workshops, the launch of six small groups that met six times each from Nov-Jan with forty people participating, a House Blessing for Duncan's residence and the clinic downstairs, an All Saints' Brunch with shared storytelling - initiated by Laura Lewis, and an All Saints' Liturgy with our team in the Guilford cemetery. Duncan shepherded a teen discipleship group as well as the leadership team group. Duncan and Christy also developed an evaluation plan to be used in January 2018. Other offerings were the Discernment workshop (22 people attended) including the creation of a training and practical guide for making decisions, and three Advent Compline services. Christy's inspired work for the St. Nicholas Fair (Advent packets for

home celebration/worship) and Megan's help with the ordination reception and stole-making (with Lori Palmer's expert assistance) sprung from the work of this shared ministry.

We look forward with joy to the year ahead and continuing our work together, praying for the continued guidance and inspiration from the Holy Spirit! *Respectfully submitted, Megan Buchanan*

EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

Education for Ministry, or what is commonly referred to as “EFM,” is a program designed for lay persons to deepen our knowledge, experience, worship and spiritual lives. It is a program that meets weekly and, over the course of 4 years, studies Hebrew Scripture, the New Testament, Church history and the evolution of the Church in the present times. Through weekly conversations, we learn to think theologically on the readings in a manner which helps one move toward our individual ministry in today's world.

Individuals enroll in EFM one year at a time. The curriculum has recently been revised providing more current and enlightening reading. The weekly meetings and discussions reflect the meetings of the early Church asking "What does my faith mean when I leave the walls of St. Michael's and go into our community each day?"

St. Michael's has had a vibrant EFM group for many years. There will be informational meetings in the Spring for individuals to explore if they would wish to enroll in the program for September 2018.

Submitted by *Linda Rice, EFM Mentor*

CHRISTIAN FORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Christian Education for children and youth is made up of many programs: Workshop Rotation, Godly Play, Youth Forum and special activities. We have a Sunday morning rhythm of having education for all ages from 9-10 am and Godly Play for young children during the first half of the 10:15 am service. Youth Forum now meets after the 10:15 am service (11:45-12:45 pm) every second and fourth Sunday.

WORKSHOP ROTATION

Workshop Rotation classes are held from 9-10 am on Sunday mornings for kids age 2-10 years old. In this curricular model, children study one story for 4-5 weeks using different approaches every week (drama, art, science, video, cooking, etc.). The strength of the curriculum is that it is very active and engaging for the children, and we can incorporate many different adults from St. Michael's to share their gifts with the children. Many thanks to the Workshop teachers and assistants from 2017 who each oversaw one story series: Lydia & Eben Taggart, Marie Lawrence, Richard Cogliano, Mary Lindquist, Karren & Steven Meyer, Gwen Mousin, Kate McGinn and Jane Sbardella.

GODLY PLAY

Every Sunday at 10:15, the children of the parish are welcome to come to Godly Play. While the adults are participating in the Liturgy of the Word, the part of the service that includes all the readings and sermon, the children have a Liturgy of the Word that is tailored to younger minds. Bible stories are told with the help of props that illustrate the stories. Children are encouraged to listen to the story and then to wonder about the story. After the story telling, children are invited to do respond to the story in a variety of ways. Their choices are art or playing with the props of a particular story.

Every Godly Play session has a storyteller and a doorkeeper. The storyteller memorizes the story so that in the telling they can easily manipulate the props. The doorkeeper helps by introducing the children to the room, taking attendance and generally providing an additional adult presence.

Most Sundays we have two different sessions: one for the older children and one for the younger ones. Christy Fritz is usually a storyteller for the older children in the room across the hall from the Godly Play room. We are adding to our stories to enrich the program for all.

Storytellers and doorkeepers this year included Christy Fritz, Jayne Fritz, Josh Fritz, Susan Heimer, Mark Horton, Annamarie Pluhar, Miranda Smith, Lydia Taggert and Rosie Wojcik.

Respectfully submitted, *The Godly Play Team*

YOUTH FORUM

The Youth Forum for the 2017-2018 school year is made up of 13 students ranging from ages 11 to 15. This year began with the students asking questions such as

- “How do I listen for God’s voice in my life?”
- “Who am I really according to the Bible?”
- “How do I teach others about Jesus while respecting their personal beliefs?” and
- “Did Jesus still love the people who tried to kill him?”

The students worked on scavenger hunts of scriptures and people in the Bible, created a Gratitude tree with guidance from the Outreach Ministry, and learned various ways to pray. Robin White-Diamondstone visited, teaching the students about compassionate communication leading to the development of empathy, using Marshall Rosenberg’s book. They also learned they are joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17) and that they have the Greater One living in them (1 John 4:4). During Advent they learned about praying in color from Sybil Macbeth’s book, “The Season of the Nativity.” It is an honor to work with such a reflective gathering of young people. The Youth Forum is led by *Darvey Mercier*, with help from *Josh Fritz* and *Jack Lilly*, after church from 11:45-12:45 on the second and fourth Sundays each month.

CONTEMPLATIVE CHRISTIANITY

The Contemplative ministry at St. Michael’s is alive and well. We are a small group of faithful practitioners and are grateful to have added a few to our groups in the last year. Here are some highlights:

- The Centering Prayer group met faithfully every Saturday morning, alternating between practicing centering prayer meditation and reading Cynthia Bourgeault’s Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening and The Heart of Centering Prayer.
- We offered the opportunity to come together in silent meditation every weekday from 6 -7 am in the Chapel of Mary Magdalene, the First Apostle.

- We celebrated our Contemplative Service on Thursday evenings from 5:30-6 pm in the Chapel. These services are led by Jean Smith, John Daly, Parker Huber, Margit & Jack Lilly, Carolyn Hammerlund and Mary Lindquist.
- Many practitioners participated in retreats at Hallelujah Farm and other venues.
- Participants in the contemplative ministry at St. Michael's include both community members and St. Michael's parishioners. We welcome all people who have an interest in contemplation as a tool to deepen their relationship with God and with one another.



REPORTS FROM MISSION AND MINISTRY

OUTREACH MINISTRY

'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food? We saw you thirsty and gave you something to drink? We saw you a stranger and welcomed you? We saw you sick and took care of you? We saw you in prison and visited you? "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'" *Matthew 25:37-40. Episcopal Relief & Development Mandate. "Joel's Prayer"*

Mission Statement: The Outreach Ministry of St. Michael's Episcopal Church initiates, and supports efforts through which we, committee and parishioners alike, can manifest our Christian beliefs by helping those in need, locally, nationally and internationally through charitable organizations. This work involves not only our "treasure", but also our "time" and "talents."

The Outreach Ministry's resources come from various sources. Each fall the Committee formulates a budget request, which we submit to the Finance Committee and Vestry to be included in the Parish's Annual Budget. The resources that originate from the Vestry after the Annual Meeting are disbursed in three, approximately equal areas: local, i.e. Windham County; national; international. In addition, the Outreach Ministry is fortunate to benefit from 50% of the two annual Tag Sales, the proceeds of which are disbursed exclusively among local organizations.

The Committee also undertakes various complementary fundraising efforts. For example, in 2017 the proceeds from parking fees at the Heifer Parade were allocated to Dr. Laura Hammond's refugee relocation program in Somaliland.

The Pancake Supper last winter generated \$520 which was donated to the Carry Me Home program of shipping clothing to refugees in Greece (\$164 per 44lb box of clothing!),

The proceeds of the Strawberry Spectacular were applied to Pure Water For The World.

Two Diaper Sunday events resulted in 4,391 and 3,690 diapers, respectively (do the math!), being delivered to the Parks Place Diaper Bank in Bellows Falls.

In all these undertakings the sheer generosity of the parishioners of St. Michael's Episcopal has been stunning and deeply appreciated.

Despite all this, the need is always greater than our resources. The Outreach Ministry has concluded that again in 2018 it will have to focus its efforts on the following areas: food insecurity; heat/shelter - physical and environmental; health. A comprehensive listing of 2017 disbursements follows at the end of this report.

While we often use 'Joel's prayer' as our opening prayer, we are always cognizant of and guided by her adage of 'giving from our abundance.' It is also gratifying that the Joel Hill Ministry Expo has become an annual event and that forty or so outreach ministries within the St. Michael's congregation are highlighted.

Outreach hosted a number of guests at its meetings this year. In addition to hosting Dr. Laura Hammond of the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London for a Forum in August, we also hosted Bahati Kanyamanza, founder of CIYOTA (see below); Josh Davis, Director of Groundworks Collaborative; and Melanie Zinn, Director of Horizon Pre-School at St. Michael's, who introduced us to the Hearts of Fire church and school renovation project in Haiti.

St. Michael's has also introduced a Love Brigade chapter, whereby parishioners may write postcards of support to victims of hatred around the country. We have recently broached the 400 postcard barrier! Hatred, it seems, is not a commodity in short supply nowadays.

Committee members volunteer every Sunday to pick up unsold bread from Hannafords Supermarket and deliver it to the Putney Foodshelf. The Putney Foodshelf also sponsors a weekend food backpack program for children of needy families at Putney Central School. A number of parishioners participate in this program.

The Committee has been fortunate to welcome Alix and Julia Fedoruk to its membership in 2017. Alix has been active in organizing Greek dinners to raise funds for refugees, the most recent of which was hosted at the Centre Congregational Church. Julia, meanwhile, in addition to her leadership in Carry Me Home, has piloted some penpal relationships with refugee children, and the first responses have begun to arrive. She has also engaged the Youth forum in the Gratitude Jar Project in the Common Room.

We urge others to consider joining us. The Committee usually meets at 5:30 pm on the first Monday of the month. If you are interested in joining the Outreach Ministry, feel free to contact one of the Committee members: Janet Cramer, Susan Wilson, Lori Palmer, Shirley Hodgdon, Laura Lewis, Jeanette Landin, Judith Hildreth, Alix Fedoruk, Julia Fedoruk, Joyce Vining Morgan, Craig Hammond, and Brian Morgan. The more, the merrier!

Organizations Funded From Outreach Ministry Funds in 2017:

Local:

Brattleboro Walk In Clinic \$1,500.00

Parks Place Diaper Bank \$600.00

Windham County Heat Fund \$2,665.00

Southern Vermont AIDS Project \$500.00

Putney Food Shelf Family Food Bag Program \$1,000.00

Loaves & Fishes \$500.00

Groundworks Collaborative Overflow Shelter \$1,000.00

SIT Peace Camp Port-A-John for Barn Dance \$75.00

Project Feed the Thousands \$750.00

Jerusalem Peace Builders \$500.00

WSESU (Windham Southeast Supervisory Union) Summer Food Program \$500.00

Women's Freedom Center \$500.00

Wild Carrot Farm CSA (for Loaves & Fishes) \$500.00

Walk-In Clinic \$1,500.00

Local Total: \$12,090.00

National:

St. Thomas Community Health Center, New Orleans \$2,500.00

Love Brigade supplies \$96.46

Hurricane Relief via ERD \$3,474.14

National Total: \$6,070.60

International:

Foyer Evangelique Universel Orphanage, Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti \$2,500.00

Somaliland refugee resettlement \$485.00

Pure Water for the World \$500.00

Carry Me Home \$520.00

Hearts of Fire Haiti school project \$1,000

CIYOTA (Cobras International Youth Organization to Transform Africa) \$2,000.00

International Total: \$7,005.00

TOTAL: \$25,165.60 (of which \$15,000 from Church budget and \$10,165.60 from Tag sales and fundraising)

Respectfully Submitted, *Brian Morgan, Convener pro.tem.*

PASTORAL CARE MINISTRIES

Pastoral Care at St. Michael's is made up of many different ministries that continued to evolve in 2017. If you are interested in any of these ministries, please contact Jeanie at St. Michael's office, Jeanie@stmichaelsvermont.org

Pastoral Care Visitation – Pastoral visitors are parishioners or clergy who are available to visit those who are homebound, in the hospital or just in need of a visit and prayers. The Pastoral Care Team meets on the second Saturday morning of each month from 9:00 to 10:00. We pray together, reflect on a Bible passage or

article, and share who may need a visit. The team members support and share with one another, learning what it means to listen more effectively.

Intercessory Prayer - The Intercessory Prayer Team meets on the First Monday of the month at 3 pm in the Chapel. Those involved in the Intercessory Prayer Team commit to praying for certain individuals every day for three months (this time can be renewed as long as the prayers are needed). In 2017, this team was led by Anita Crosson.

Prayer Shawls –The Prayer Shawl Team knits prayer shawls and baby blankets for people who are sick or recovering from surgery and for those who have welcomed a new baby. The team meets on the second Thursday of the month from 10:30 am-12:00 pm. This ministry is led by Joan Pinilla.

Transportation – The Transportation ministry involves connecting people who are willing to offer transportation with those who need help with transportation. Often, volunteers help bring people to church or to medical appointments. This ministry is organized by Lynn Billington.

Meals – When someone is sick or recovering from surgery, we provide meals to help support them. We will be using *Mealtrain*, an online tool where people can sign-up to help with this ministry. This ministry is organized by Deb Jones.

Funeral Receptions – When a member of our church dies, we organize food for a reception following the funeral. Susan Wilmott and Laurie Chiperfield recently stepped down after 5 years of leading this ministry; Jen Karstad is now organizing this ministry.

SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

The following people lead this ministry as of 1/1/18: Janet Brocklehurst, David Carr, Pam Carr, Jeff Hiam, Sissi Loftin, Jean Smith, and Phillip Wilson as Convener. We keep in contact with members of the parish who are part of a large email list people who have expressed interest in Social Justice issues. The following Mission Statement defines and guides our efforts.

*The **MISSION** of the Social Justice Ministry of St. Michael's Church is to make real Jesus' vision of justice and love for all people as children of God, following where it leads and accepting its cost.*

We plan to do this by:

- educating ourselves and others to issues of inequality, their origins and effects on people;*
- relating the Christian Gospel to current issues of social justice;*
- building a community of awareness and response to issues of justice locally and globally;*
- connecting with other churches, faith traditions and secular organizations to bring about greater justice.*

Focus of this Ministry: While we support direct response to people in need, our focus is on the underlying systems that create that inequality and need. Our focus is systemic justice rather than acts of mercy.

Activities this past year of the Social Justice Ministry:

1. 2-evening showing and discussion of the film *13th*, a documentary on race relations.
2. Contributing Social Justice inserts to the Sunday Prayers of the People
3. Convening an all-parish meeting Sunday after services to focus on difficult issues of immigration, with Janet Brocklehurst's journey to citizenship as a prime example.
4. Pot Luck and Panel presentation on Vermont Rural Poverty. Three presenters from various agencies in our area, including Chris Hart of Brattleboro Housing Authority.
5. Sponsoring Adult Forums on justice issues: local, national, global
6. Assisting in planning of June 2017 Gay-Lesbian Pride service focusing on ways parents can support their Gay and Lesbian children. Janet Cramer was the Sunday's preacher.
7. Welcoming new members to the Ministry in Sept 2017, Pam Carr and Sissi Loftin, and thanking those leaving, Brian Morgan and Sarah Benton.
8. At 2-hour planning session led by Deacon Duncan Hilton, we chose to focus our efforts in 2018 on racial healing in the parish, community and the nation.
9. Meeting with Vestry to give a written report on our focus for 2018. A copy of that report, to which the Vestry gave its support, follows at the end of this 2018 Annual Meeting Report
10. Visiting Root Justice Center in Brattleboro and supporting its work financially.
11. Planning 2018 Martin Luther King Sunday worship and Adult Forum: Charles Mays, Jr.
12. Planning and leading a Five-Tuesday 2018 Lenten series: "This is Us: Family, Race and Belonging in our Community"

The Social Justice Ministry wants to hear additional ideas and issues that excite you. Our goal is to support and focus the people of St. Michael's as we live out our Baptismal Vow in an intentional way "striving for justice and peace among all people, and respecting the dignity of every human being."
Book of Common Prayer

SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY VESTRY REPORT: Nov. 2017

OUR GOAL FOR 2017-18:

Is to respond to the leadership of Presiding Bishop Curry in the National Church and Bishop Ely in the Diocese of Vermont that, like them, we at St. Michael's make racial justice and racial reconciliation a clear priority in the our parish life.

We believe that our baptismal vows and the Christian Gospel call us to focus on racial justice at this particular time in our national life: Charlottesville, black youth killed, white supremacy and race used to divide openly in our political life.

We recognize that dismantling racism is long-term work and at the same time, that each congregation is called to make a plan to enter into this work. The diocese suggests 4 levels of work: acknowledgement, engagement, reconciliation, and restoration.

Therefore we plan to do the following:

1. Organize and plan a Martin Luther King Sunday service with guest speaker, Charles Mays, preaching and leading Adult Forum.
2. Create an intentional racial justice program during Lent.
3. Including Racial Reconciliation in our prayers and worship, esp. Lent
4. Report to the Vestry on a regular basis as to the specifics of how it would lead in this priority

Resources:

1. St. Michael's is fortunate to have three people from our parish on the diocesan racial justice training team: Maurice Harris, Jeffrey Hiam, Nicholas Porter.
2. New York Trinity Institute materials on racism
5. Anti-racism materials used in dioceses and parishes around the country

We invite your response and questions.

SCHROEDER FUND COMMITTEE

Members: *Ruth Tilgman, Ronny Johnson, Hollis Carlisle, Lynn Billington, Pam Carr and Alix Fedoruk*

Dan Drish resigned and we thank him for his dedication and good stewardship to the Schroeder Fund. Pam Carr agreed to fill Dan's shoes!

Education: We supported Paul Moberly at Virginia Seminary with both tuition and books with funds totaling \$1250.

We supported Craig Hammond for a conference on prison ministry

We supported EFM for a scholarship for one person

We supported Jack Karn through Jerusalem Peace Builders for his continuing education with funds totaling \$339.38 and contributed to his psych exam for the diaconate through the diocese

We supported 9 children to attend Rock Point Camp with funds totaling \$2035.

We supported Duncan Hilton for his Retreat for the priesthood and a centering prayer training.

Total for Education: \$5390.88

Outreach: The money allotted for outreach goes to support the Help Fund. We also give our time by serving on the Help Fund Committee. The Help Fund meets on Wednesdays at noon and all the social services agencies in the area can attend. SEVCA (Southeastern Vermont Community Action) runs the meetings and is treasurer. The Help Fund gives grants to individuals and families for: housing deposits, car repairs, back utility payments and moving and storage expenses. The goal is to keep families and individuals in housing. At the weekly meeting, requests for grants are vetted. This is important because other agencies who may know more information about the family and we will know if the request is viable. The mission is to keep people in their housing and to help others obtain housing. We give \$500 per month and a one-time sum of \$160.92 at the end of 2017.

Total for Outreach: \$6160.92

POETRY WRITING GROUP

The Poetry Writing Group at St. Michael's group was started about seven years ago by Megan Buchanan, who continues to facilitate. Our members and meeting schedule have varied somewhat over these years. The group has a steady core membership of 5 people, with others dropping in when their schedules allow. In 2017 we met once per month for 90 minutes on a weekday evening in the small meeting room behind the kitchen. The group met for the months of January - May and resumed for October - December. The group is open to everyone. Our intention is to make regular time in our full lives to write, to cultivate a fellowship of creative writers, and to experiment together.

The sudden death of one of our most devoted members, Bruce Hesselbach, in June was a shock and a devastating loss. His imagination, energetic spirit and intelligence are deeply missed.

In April 2017 during National Poetry Month, we had a public poetry reading in the Meeting Room featuring numerous parish poets. Reading from their work were Bruce Hesselbach, Nye Farrabas, Ross Thurber, Andy Burrows, Leigh Marthe and Megan Buchanan. Grainne Buchanan also sang a set of her original songs. Parishioners provided refreshments and some authors sold books. There were about 50 people in attendance. It was a wonderful gathering. *Respectfully submitted, Megan Buchanan*

PRISON MINISTRY

Three and a half years ago, Rabbi Jim Levinson and I, Craig Hammond, began our ministry to prisoners at Southern State Correctional Facility (SSCF) in Springfield, Vermont. Our approach has always been to host and lead our worship in an interfaith way. While we've led this worship ministry routinely one Sunday afternoon each month, we also host special services celebrating special holy days within our Judaic and Muslim and Christian traditions, such as the Advent season with a Carol sing with the Hallowell Singers, an annual Passover Seder, Rosh Hashanah, Ramadan, and this year a Christmas Day Holy Communion service. These have become very popular. When our Muslim brothers join us, we include in our worship Muslim (including Sufi and Quranic) readings, and one of our most devoted worshippers this past year has been a very kind and devoted Muslim.

Our sermon time is interactive, based on scripture but with profound sharing of our lives. These inmates know why they are in prison, and we're so fortunate to be the ones with whom they share the hard work they're doing. We go deep, and through prayer, honest love for one another, sometimes tears and sometimes alleluias, we always seem to come out the other end, into the light, amazed at what's just happened with God among us. Whatever the faith or even lack of faith some may have (and yes atheists are always welcome and do attend), Jesus is at the core of our time together. The men, including Muslims and Jews, know that Jesus is especially present with all people on the margins - the poor, orphans, widows, foreigners including refugees, the sick, the stranger, and prisoners - a place where in one way or another we've all spent time at some point in our lives.

When we celebrate our Eucharist, the inmates are hungry. They devour the bread. They dip into the grape juice. They do this with great reverence with one another, just as Muslims and Jews do with those outside their faiths at the end of Ramadan or at a Seder. We cement community, are led in a soulful "Amen" by Jim, and are sent out with a prayer often led by one of the inmates. They have often said we are their family; that is, we are present, we show up, we affirm their innate goodness, and we keep in touch.

We visit one on one with inmates. We organize special events, like the Holiday Carol sing in December. We provide books, prayer shawls, yarmulkes, and, this past year, deodorant. Yes, deodorant. We connect inmates with their families. We address issues of remorse, guilt, wishes to reconcile, cutting, considerations of suicide, paranoia, loss of family, and depression. We don't pretend to be their therapists, but so often they just need someone to listen. And so we do, and then some.

Many parishioners have volunteered as musicians and just as guests. The inmates love guests. Volunteers are golden. But perhaps the greatest gift is that you all as a parish have embraced this ministry as your/our own with your volunteering, with your support in our parish budget, with your presence in spirit and prayer. And because they know this, the inmates know that they are not alone, and that somewhere out there someone really does love and believe in them; and that among those “someones” are the people of St. Michael's. Thank you, and God bless you. If you'd like to learn more and perhaps get involved, please join us at our forum on prison ministry, the date of which I'll announce soon.

Craig Hammond and Jim Levinson

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

THE CHURCH:

Leaks/repairs/repainting were done in the Sacristy and administrative entrance.

Flooring in the Sanctuary damaged by the new heating system was replaced.

Lighting was repaired in the choir chandelier; the piano has a new standing light.

Roofing/Insulation estimates were obtained for the Church and the Dunham Wing.

THE GROUNDS:

There was a spring and fall clean up. Feel free to join us!

Trees: The maple out front was removed revealing extensive internal decay.

Locust limbs and a menacing pine behind the church will be trimmed and removed in agreement with a neighbor who is offering to pay.

Signage: New signs were posted for the entrances of daycare and the administrative entrance as well as for falling snow.

Drainage: We are waiting for the excavation engineer to repair the new drainage system in the paved parking lot.

Roadways: The town repaved Bradley Ave and hopefully cleaned the storm drain.

DAYCARE

New wood chips and timber to contain them were spread by the daycare parents

The entrance to daycare remains cluttered and isn't in compliance with fire codes

THE RECTORY

The kitchen faucet was replaced by a contractor.

The leaking overflow pipe in the downstairs tub was repaired.

A new chimney liner and rain cap were installed by a contractor

TO DO LIST for 2018

- Replace the maple by the front entrance.
- Repair the rotted foundation beams on the Putney Road side.
- Replace the roof of the Rectory on the Bradley Ave side.
- Replace the roof of the Church and install insulation (grants are available).
- Replace the roof of the Dunham Wing and install insulation.
- Replace two exterior doors (Elevator Entrance and Playground Entrance).
- Replace windows in Dunham Wing (Administrative Offices, Choir Office, Choir Room and Small Meeting Room).
- Replace the fascia above the Administrative Offices in the Dunham Wing.
- Secure two more Mobility Impaired Signs for the Bradley Ave entrance
- Repaint the stripes in the parking lot
- Update the Rectory's upstairs bathroom

Submitted by co-chairs *Vince Johnson and Bruce Lawrence with members Greg Allen, John Byrnes, Richard Cogliano, Joshua Fritz, Deb Jones, Ross Kenny, Alan McBean, Steven Meyers, Lucia Osiecki*

SABBATICAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

In early 2017, Mary invited we three (Christy Fritz, Leigh Marthe, and Jeff Lewis) to be the Sabbatical Planning Committee to work with her to develop the parish component to a Lilly Foundation Grant. We met often from January into the summer and resumed this fall to help with implementation.

Our discussions built on Mary's desire to have her sabbatical combine fun and learning. She planned to travel as well as to spend several weeks on a series of retreats focused on Centering Prayer, contemplation, and the life of service. Starting with her sense of mission, prayer and exploration (in spiritual and geographic terms), we talked about helping St. Michael's Parish undertake a similar exploration to deepen its spiritual knowledge and practice. We imagined mapping prayer, Bible study and story creation along with family events, and a vigil. As we move to implementation with the grant achieved and sabbatical to begin in late April, we, along with the Vestry which has the responsibility of formal planning for this period, are giving more concrete shape to these ideas. As we mused on influences of changes in the community and the ways our faith and practices might continue to inform our actions in the world, we began to talk about how to take the strong notions of discipleship at St. Michael's out into the world—to help figure out the new configuration of life for us, for the church, and for our community. This direction calls for discipleship, but also for discernment—we do not know now what we have to do. We have to set ourselves the task of finding out through prayer, contemplation, study, and engagement what the world and our faith need from us. This engagement is risky in that we do not know where it will lead and thrilling in that we are opening ourselves to the way of the Spirit in our place and lives.

That reflection led to the proposal to create a Minister of Discipleship and Discernment, a position now filled by Duncan Hilton. We have seen this begin to take shape in the Discipleship Groups, the Discernment workshop, and an orderly organizing effort to capture the energy of St. Michael's for what is yet to happen.

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 Prayer” weekend of activities at Hallelujah Farm during the Memorial Day time.

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*

STEWARDSHIP

Our Annual Pledge Campaign theme this year was, “Deep Hope.” For this campaign, we did many things we had done in past years: we sent out a stewardship brochure with pictures and figures and asked a few people from the congregation to speak at our Sunday services about why St. Michael’s was important to them. Many thanks to Cory & Sarah Nohl, Steve Harrison and Janet Cramer.

This year, we set two specific goals. We hoped to raise \$270,000 and to receive 135 pledge cards. We felt that these goals were attainable, but would be a stretch with an increase of \$25,000 and 5 pledges over the 2016 goals. Although we did not achieve our total monetary goal of \$270,000, we received a record 141 pledges! And 13 of these pledges were new. As you can see in the chart below, this is remarkable and shows a really broad support for our ministries at St. Michael’s. This is a sign of great health in our parish. A chart of giving beginning in 2011 follows.

	TOTAL PLEDGED	# OF PLEDGES	# NEW PLEDGES
2011	\$198,837	119	12
2012	\$211,693	128	11
2013	\$218,293	129	12
2014	\$217,293	128	12
2015	\$215,878	123	9
2016	\$234,724	128	9
2017	\$262,282	133	11
2018	\$255,947	141	13

We are very grateful for your generosity and for your tremendous support of St. Michael's ministry. THANK YOU!!! The Stewardship Committee: *Janet Cramer, Bruce Lawrence, Mary Lindquist and Brian Morgan.*



Reports from Administration & Finance

VESTRY

What a great privilege it has been to serve as your Senior Warden in 2017. We have had a prayerful and thoughtful team consisting of Bruce Lawrence our Junior Warden, John Byrne, Janet Brocklehurst, Doug Lilly, Judith Mc Bean, Lynn Billington, Jeannette Landin and Mark Horton. We want to express our heartfelt thanks for Wayne Cook's continued service as our Parish Treasurer and for the detail and patience of our remarkable Vestry Clerk, Joanne Patalano. While Doug, Bruce and I will "retire" now, we are very excited about the new members you will install for 2018. We are most thankful to all of you for your interest, support and active participation in the workings of St. Michael's this past year. We have experienced true growth as a spiritual family!

We also want to thank Mary Lindquist, our Rector, for her continued encouragement, faith and vision and our devoted associate clergy: Rev. Jean Smith, Rev. Phillip Wilson, Rev. Al Cramer and Rev. Thad Bennett as well as our Minister of Discipleship and Discernment, the newly ordained Rev. Duncan Hilton. All of you continue to help us focus and keep Jesus as the center of all we do. We also want to thank our amazing Parish Administrator Jeanie Crosby for all she does to keep everything running smoothly around here. We appreciate hard working Sexton John Laamanen for always being ready to set up and take down furniture, sometimes many times in a week, and for his important role keeping our inside and out looking so inviting. Here are just some of the special tasks and topics the Vestry tackled this past year:

- Completed the Initial Inventory of Furniture and Fixtures long requested by the Diocese at each Annual Audit
- Supported hiring of Minister for Discipleship and Discernment after prayerfully processing committee presentations and inviting discussions and direct feedback from all in parish.
- Received monthly updates and gave feedback about the Ministry of Discipleship and Discernment since its inception
- 2017 Hospitality events undertaken by Vestry-
 1. Bought and grilled for annual Parish Picnic.
 2. Prepared and served Maundy Thursday Dinner.
 3. Prepared and hosted refreshments at Duncan's House and the Walk-In Clinic Blessing.
 4. Hosted the recent Afternoon Tea at the Hallelujah Farm to welcome new Parishioners.
- In response to Bishop Ely's request to the churches of Vermont, we agreed to help raise \$20,000 toward the Rock Point Campaign over the next two and a half years.
- Recommended Jack Karn for continued discernment for ordination to the Diaconate
- Proposed "Ministry of the Month" program to celebrate each of the many ministries, to pray especially for and to express gratitude for all those who participate.
- Reviewed and approved plans outlined for Susan Dedell's and Rev. Mary Lindquist's sabbaticals and endorsed grants written for these activities.

On Behalf of the Vestry, *Deb Jones, Senior Warden*

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

The value of our collective endowment funds at the end of the year was \$1, 503,640, with \$43,512 in the General Investment Account and \$1,460,013 in the Restricted Endowment Funds. Included in the Restricted Endowment Fund is \$40,000 received from the Lilly Fund and designated to support the Rector's Sabbatical in May 2018. Those funds are invested in a short term CD at 1.25% interest.

The combined Restricted and Unrestricted Endowment Funds are invested through the Trust Department of the Greenfield Savings Bank, Greenfield MA. Over the 10 years St. Michael's has had its funds invested through the bank they have grown at 9.86 percent. This puts the Senior Vice President and Senior Trust Officer, Stephen B. Hamlin, CTFA in the top quartile for investment managers nationally.

The committee decided to continue the draw of 3% from the General Investment Account to fund St. Michael's Annual budget. After a discussion that included the list of recommended changes in stock holdings made by a committee of the Diocese, the committee instructed our fund manager to rebalance our accounts to remove cigarette and alcohol stocks from our portfolio. Treasurer Wayne Cook noted the need for funds to retire the Building for the Future Diocesan Loan, as donated funds were coming to an end. Following a special meeting called for August 6 2017, the committee agreed to use the rebalancing process to make available \$110,000 for an early repayment of the diocesan loan, saving the parish \$3,386 in interest charges. Though there were concerns that the market might correct and reduce the available resources, as of this report it is still at an all-time high. The fund values have come close to the market value prior to the withdrawal of unrestricted funds for the loan repayment.

In December 2016 the Vestry elected members of the incoming Endowment Committee: Janet Cramer, as Chairman, with a one-year term; Doug Switzer, a one-year term; Bill Ames, a two-year term; and Steven Meyer and Steve Harrison with three-year terms. Mary Lindquist, Rector, the Treasurer and the Senior Warden are also members of the committee. The committee meets four times a year in the month following the end of each quarter. At that time they monitor the funds' performance, work to align the holdings to St Michael's values and recommend adjustments to withdrawal rates as appropriate to market conditions.

As of December 31	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Restricted Endowment	1,413,667	1,450,209	1,361,332	1,399,034	1,460,013
General Investment Acc.	42,276	41,324	50,926	40,425	43,512

Respectfully submitted, *Janet Cramer, Chair, Mary Lindquist, Rector, Deb Jones, Senior Warden, Wayne Cook, Treasurer, Bill Ames, Steve Harrison, Steven Meyer, and Doug Switzer.*

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

The Capital Campaign began in 2011 with pledges of \$821,110 for improvements to St. Michael's, which would cost ~\$1.4 million. We stated the campaign would go for 5 years ending in 2016. In September, 2017 we paid off the Diocese loan (Butterfield Loan) using funds from pledge dollars and \$110,000 in funds from the "unrestricted" endowment.

- We got a loan from the Diocese in 2012 for \$450,000 payable in 7 years.
- We paid off the loan early due to market conditions and the favorable growth of our unrestricted funds.
- We reaped the benefits of saving 20 months of future interest.
- We present a forward movement into the future rather than looking backward.
- We can concentrate on future projects that need to be accomplished.
- We can feel great about paying off the \$450,000 loan ahead of schedule.

God blessed us with abundance of every kind. We, in turn, need to be good disciples in the midst of that abundance. Join us as we discover the new and marvelous ways Christ is calling us to be disciples.

Wayne Cook, Treasurer

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

We are pleased to announce this year's Vestry candidates for election for three 3-year terms: Imogene Drakes, Carolyn Taylor-Olson, and Christopher Wesolowski. The candidates who are nominated to be elected as delegates for the Diocesan Convention are Nancy Barber and Christy Fritz. The Senior Warden Judith McBean will also attend as a delegate. The alternates to be elected for Diocesan Convention are Bruce Lawrence and Annamarie Pluhar.

Class of 2018: Deborah Jones, Bruce Lawrence, Doug Lilly

Class of 2019: Lynn Billington, John Byrnes, Judith McBean

Class of 2020: Janet Brocklehurst, Mark Horton, Jeanette Landin

