

The Guardian

MAY 2018

FROM THE RECTORY

From the Senior Warden:

Dear Friends:

Greetings and welcome to Sabbatical time!

A Sabbatical time is an important period in the life of the congregation. It offers a time to revitalize and to gain a new perspective. For Mary a sabbatical is more than a vacation from routine. It is more than a break from meetings, sermons, budgets and people (yes us!). The sabbatical is a season for spiritual renewal, rest and a change in perspective. It is a time to deepen her relationship with God, herself and her family.

That being said, a sabbatical can be a time of anxiety and uncertainty. A sabbatical forces a transition in roles for the priest, lay leaders and the congregation as a whole. "Who is in charge?" "What do I do if...?" (See the following list of questions to help with this). The Vestry shares leadership responsibilities with the rector and when the rector is away, they are the legal agents of the parish. If that does not inspire confidence, consider this -- St Michael's has a history of using interim times wisely and successfully. We have all heard stories of the big move from Main Street to Bradley Ave. More recent history confirms that the Holy Spirit continues to guide us:

- 1998- Father Paul Thompson retired after over 30 years at St. Michael's. The Rev. Jean Jersey was hired as our interim -- the first woman priest to serve at St. Michael's.
- 2000- We call Rev. Thomas Brown, a 29-year old, openly gay priest to his first church. (Can you believe that he was only 29?)
- 2009- During the interim after Fr. Brown's departure, flying in the face of conventional wisdom, we undertook a 1.2 million dollar capital campaign and building project!
- 2011- In the middle of rethinking and renewing our beloved Parish building, we called the Rev. Mary Lindquist to serve as the first full time woman Rector of St. Michael's.

So be of glad heart! We have a history of listening to the Spirit, taking uncertain times and growing and changing with them. This sabbatical time looks to be no different. Thanks to the Sabbatical Planning Committee, to Mary and to the Lilly Foundation, we have an exciting time ahead.

I invite you to enter into this time with intention and an open heart. Take time to rest, to renew a spiritual practice or to try something new. Play and pray! In just 4 months we will welcome Mary back, renewed in body, mind and spirit!

God Bless and Happy Sabbatical!

Judith McBean

Senior Warden

FROM THE RECTORY

MOST ASKED SABBATICAL QUESTIONS:

1. **How long will Mary be gone?** 4 months. Mary's last day is 4/29 and she returns 8/26/18
2. **What will Mary do?** Details are available on the website, in The April Guardian and the bulletin board.
3. **Will Mary's family go with her?** Mary will begin her sabbatical time while everyone is still in school and will continue into the summer vacation. This will allow Mary some individual time for study and prayer before embarking on a family trip.
4. **Who is in charge while Mary is gone?**
 - Liturgy and Liturgical planning: Clergy (Jean and Phillip) with Susan Dedell.
 - Oversight of Pastoral Care: duties will be shared by Revs. Jean Smith and Phillip Wilson with the Pastoral Care Team
 - The Senior and Junior Wardens (with Vestry) will work closely with the parish staff to oversee finances, use of the parish facilities, as well as other ministries and activities.
5. **Who will pay?** The sabbatical time is being generously funded by the Lilly Endowment's National Clergy Renewal Program.
6. **What if questions or conflict arise while Mary is away?** The vestry will exercise authority to resolve all issues concerning parish life.
7. **Who do I call?** Jeanie, the Parish Administrator, will be the best first contact as she will know how to reach all of us. Jean and Phillip are available for pastoral emergencies and both the Senior Warden (Judith McBean) and Junior Warden (Carolyn Taylor-Olson) for anything else.
8. **Will we be in contact with Mary while she is gone?** In short, NO! If the church burns down, maybe.
9. **What do we do if we see Mary around?** Well, say "Hi"Don't ignore her, but remember she is really not here!
10. **How will we get "reacquainted" when Mary returns?** Mary's first Sunday back will include a "Welcome back" liturgy followed by the Annual Parish Picnic on 8/26/18. The Sabbatical Planning Committee will design an opportunity for sharing of experiences (Mary's and ours!)
11. **How can I learn more?** Read the Guardian, check the website. Please speak with any member of the Sabbatical Planning Committee (Jeff Lewis, Leigh Marthe and Christy Fritz). Email a Vestry member or call Jeanie...

A MESSAGE FROM MARY

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. Ephesians 1:16-18

I love this prayer from the Letter to the Ephesians and as I prepare to leave for sabbatical, I echo its sentiments for you. I do and will pray for you, that as the Body of Christ called St. Michael's, the eyes of your hearts will be enlightened, that you may continue to know the hope to which he has called you.

I am very grateful to you all for supporting me in taking this Sabbath rest and I pray that it will be a deep time of renewal and growth for you too! Thanks to all who are picking up the work, large and small, that I will not be able to do for this sabbatical season. It is a huge gift. Until then, have fun, pray and play, flourishing in God's grace. I look forward to our reunion!

Yours in Christ,

Mary

NEWS OF THE PARISH

REMEMBER THE SPRING TAG SALE, MAY 4 & 5 BAKED GOODS AND OTHER ITEMS NEEDED FOR TAG SALE, MAY 4 & 5

There is ample opportunity (and plenty of work) for everyone interested in helping. We need additional help throughout the week, but especially on Sunday April 29 to set up tables and on Saturday May 5 to clean up after the sale. We also need a few strong people and another truck to move items from the rectory garage to the tent on Friday May 4 around noon. If you have questions, please contact Anne Cook at 802-896-9446 or anek.cook@gmail.com.

PREP WEEK, APRIL 29 – MAY 4: On Sunday April 29, table setup will begin after the 8 am service. Work bee hours will run Monday-Friday 9AM-4PM with the possibility of one additional evening session, Monday 5 PM to 7:30 PM if folks have signed up.

GENERAL DONATION DEADLINE IS TUESDAY MAY 1. Please place all new donations in the closets by May 1.

PLEASE – No televisions, computers, mattresses/box springs, magazines, encyclopedias or old travel books as we have to pay to dispose of these items.

Remember we have very limited storage space so **PLEASE** hold all FALL, WINTER and CHRISTMAS items until after this sale.

Thank you,

Anne Cook

Each day of the tag sale, we sell wonderful food for workers and buyers. You may donate baked goods such as brownies, cookies and coffee cakes to be sold. This year, we are also looking for folks who want to purchase or donate funds for the following items: 6 packages of club rolls for sandwiches, 100 plastic forks and spoons, 75 plastic forks, 100 4" paper plates, square dinner napkins, and individual small bottles of water or seltzer. Please contact Craig Newbert by May 2 at 246-4530 or craig_newbert@comcast.net with any questions or to say what you will donate. Thank you!!

STM

DIAPER SUNDAY, MAY 13

Sunday, May 13 is Mothers' Day. It is also one of the two annual Diaper Sundays at St. Michael's. Twice a year the St. Michael's Outreach Committee allocates funds to purchase diapers for the Parks Place Diaper Bank in Bel-lows Falls. We also invite parishioners to complement the effort by bringing a bag of disposable diapers on May 13 to add to the gift. We anticipate need for a variety of sizes, but especially for the smaller sizes. Spring brings forth new life - of all kinds!

STM

THANKS TO ST. MICHAEL'S VOLUNTEERS AT THE OVERFLOW SHELTER!

Many thanks to all who participating in making and serving meals at the Groundworks Over-flow Shelter this last winter. Your generosity, attention and love were greatly appreciated by those who partook. A special thanks to LIZ VICK who generously organized this ministry for St. Michael's!

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

SABBATICAL LAY PREACHING

While Mary will be away for 16 weeks on her sabbatical, we at St. Michael's will continue our work of prayer, worship and service. The Sabbatical Planning Committee (Leigh Marthe, Christy Fritz, and Jeff Lewis) thought it would be a good opportunity to invite lay members of the parish to preach at Sunday worship to broaden the voices we hear and enrich the experience shared with us. We have invited seven people to take a Sunday; Jean Smith and Philip Wilson will share the other Sundays offering us a broad spectrum of voice and visions.

Open to all is the Bible study group initially designed to help those who have taken on the preaching role. The six session, bi-weekly, Bible study group led by the Sabbatical Planning Committee begins on May 3: 6 to 7:30 pm in the Meeting Room. We hope to deepen our relationship with Scripture—its history, story and meaning for our lives. In these sessions we will combine discussion of Bible passages from the lectionary probing the spiritual significance and focusing on the meaning for us today. Preachers and their pulpit dates area:

- May 13 – Imogene Drakes,
- June 3 – Bill Ames,
- June 24 – Tom Cain,
- July 8 – Caleb Fritz,
- July 22 – Matt Bickford,
- July 29 – Mark Horton and
- August 5 – Jesse Ridgway.

Please come to the Thursday evening Bible study! Moving minds, hearts and souls by interacting with the Word can only be good for us all!



Photo of new acolyte, Asa Taggart

Photo from Rocky Point Camp Reunion

IMOGENE DRAKES WILL BE OUR LAY PREACHER ON MAY 13!

Imogene moved to Brattleboro two years ago to work at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and is the mother of two wonderful sons and grandma to three handsome young men. Imogene was born into the Anglican family and loves to serve God!



PLAY & PRAY WEEKEND, MAY 26 - 27

Please join us Saturday and Sunday May 26 - 27, over Memorial Day weekend, for the St. Michael's Play & Pray Weekend at Hallelujah Farm. We will gather for workshops, games, meals, walks, prayer, music, quiet, and fun. Please contact Leigh Marthe, leigh_marthe2000@yahoo.com or by phone at 603-208-7726, if you have questions or would like to help in the planning or activities of the weekend.

Registrations for people who would like to stay overnight are due no later than May 13 (for an adult overnight room, a donation of \$50 is expected). People who will participate in day activities must register by May 20 to allow for planning for meals and activities. Registration forms are available in the Common Room or on St. Michael's website www.stmichaels-vt.org under "news." The schedules for Saturday and Sunday are detailed on the form. The cost of all meals and activities is covered by the Lilly Endowment grant supporting Mary's sabbatical and the related congregation expenses.



EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

ST MICHAEL'S SABBATICAL PRAYER VIGIL

In our hopes to enter the sabbatical season in partnership with Mary, St Michael's is offering an opportunity to hold space for deep prayer and reflection while Mary is at the Centering Prayer retreat at St. Benedict's in Snowmass, CO from May 15-24.

We will support her daily prayer schedule, asking parishioners to sign up to cover the periods of time in prayer, either at our chapel or in our own homes.

Prayer offerings can take many forms and information about different ways to pray, including the practice of Centering Prayer, will be provided at the chapel. We also encourage recording prayers and reflections from your time to share with the community.

Please be considering the schedule to find a time that you may be able to participate and be sure to sign up for session if you are able. The schedule below will be posted in the Common Room starting April 29. If you are not able to come to the Common Room, please contact the Church office at 254-6048 or jeanie@stmichaelsvermont.org to sign up for a prayer time.

We hope to experience the deep renewal that prayer may bring. We also look forward to hearing from God and holding each other close in prayer while we are apart.

Weds. May 16	Thurs. May 17	Fri. May 18	Sat. May 19	Sun. May 20	Tues. May 22	Weds. May 23	Thurs. May 24
7:45-8:15am	9:00-9:30am	7:45-8:15am	7:45-8:15am	7:45-8:15am	7:45-8:15am	7:45-8:15am	8-8:30 am
8:15-8:45am	9:30-10:00am	8:15-8:45am	8:15-8:45am	8:15-8:45am	8:15-8:45am	8:15-8:45am	
12:15-12:45pm	12:15-12:45pm	11:45am-12:15pm	11:45am-12:15pm	12:15-12:45pm	11:45am-12:15pm	11:45am-12:15pm	
12:45-1:15pm	12:45-1:15pm	12:15-12:45pm	12:15-12:45pm	12:45-1:15pm	12:15-12:45pm	12:15-12:45pm	
1:15-1:45pm	1:15-1:45pm			1:15-1:45pm			
6:00-6:30pm	6:00-6:30pm	6:00-6:30pm	6:00-6:30pm	6:00-6:30pm	6:00-6:30pm	5:15-5:45pm	
6:30-7:00pm	6:30-7:00pm	6:30-7:00pm	6:30-7:00pm	6:30-7:00pm	6:30-7:00pm		

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

ADULT FORUMS IN MAY

May 6: "Healing at St. Michael's" -- The Healing Team will present a forum on sacramental healing and anointing in our church. We will address why we have this lay ministry, what is it all about for our parish, who prays, when do we pray, and how is this done. Members of the Healing Team will talk about this lay ministry and demonstrate the nuts and bolts of participating. All are welcome!

May 13: "Bringing Restorative Justice/Practices Out Into Our Communities" -- Restorative Justice/Practices (RP) address conflict not by assigning guilt and punishment, but by fostering a reckoning between conflicted parties and guiding them to figure out how to repair harm that has been caused and to restore relationships that have been damaged or shattered. Even though RP is increasingly being recognized and practiced by schools and the Vermont Department of Corrections, it has not yet extended into most people's lives as we deal with daily conflicts and stresses. Restorative community Justice of Southern Vermont has a mission to build a large corps of trained RP practitioners who will be available to offer facilitated conflict resolution free of charge to all members of our community. Our mission will be realized when our entire community deals with conflict in a constructive restorative manner, freeing us from the negative ramifications of a retributive and punitive approach to "justice." A short video will be shown. Dan DeWalt and Susan Gunther-Mohr lead.

May 20: "Foyer Evangélique Orphanage" -- For a number of years, St. Michael's has been supporting the Orphelinat Foyer Evangélique Universel in Croix-des-Bouquets in Haiti through our Outreach Committee. Ever since they opened their home and their hearts to children in need of a home and a family as a result of the awful 2010 earthquake, Pastor Duckens and Deslourdes Janvier have worked with selfless dedication to meet the needs of thirty-five children and to surround them with the affection and emotional support of true parents. St. Michael's Episcopal Church and HOST (Haiti Orphanage Sponsorship Trust), a grassroots non-profit based in Brattleboro, VT, have been supporting these orphans until they graduate from high school. The mission of HOST is to ensure that the needs for food, education, medical attention and other essentials of the Foyer Evangélique Universel Orphanage children are met. HOST also researches and promotes collaboration with organizations that can help address the residents' unmet physical and/or developmental needs, and assist with longer term sustainability. Pastor Duckens will be with us at the Forum.

May 27: To be determined



VESTRY

Senior Warden:

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Junior Warden:

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EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

NOTES FROM APRIL 15 FORUM ON HOSPITALITY

Twenty of us gathered to reflect on Hospitality @ St. Michael's in the spirit of our upcoming Sabbatical focus on Renewal. It was a cold and icy morn but there was so much warmth in the room! We reviewed some of the many ways hospitality happens here and shared our dreams and ideas. These are a few highlights from that time together:

- We talked about ways we had been welcomed and understand how important it is to greet and genuinely welcome new folks that come. Some of us have trouble remembering names and it can be overwhelming for visitors to meet so many people all at once. A small group will explore using name tags again for those who would wear them.
- We want to be mindful of people who attend and suddenly are unable to make it to church and reach out to them as they are missed.
- We would like to better know our fellow parishioners who attend different services and discussed ways we could do this. When we looked around the room we saw the Forum seems to be a place where people from both Sunday Services are really visiting and sharing with one another. Gratitude was expressed to the coffee team who has warm beverages ready before the first service ends till the last person leaves! And to all those who bring the treats! Special occasions such as the beautiful breakfast and meaningful sharing that happened on All Saints Sunday and the Lenten Suppers came to mind. It was suggested we plan some field trips – like lunch at Weston Priory. We were reminded of times coming up where we can work together, play and pray such as the Spring and Fall Clean up days, the Memorial Day Weekend Play and Pray Weekend at Hallelujah Farm, and a trip to visit Rock Point in August (more information coming shortly). Another wonderful idea was for Board Game and or Movie nights open to the community some Friday nights with Popcorn or Pizza!
- Some of the history of hospitality traditions in the past were shared by long time members. We talked briefly about the open to the community dinners and how much people enjoyed them. We have had some parishioners express a desire to have that happen again and there seems to be some energy around that prospect. There had been a very organized group in the ECW (Episcopal Church Women) some members would like to reactivate /rename it to reflect inclusivity for all who would participate.
- We would like to get a freezer, so we could keep some baked goods and prepared meals on hand- ready to go as needed.
- We are grateful for members who are sharing love through hospitality in the community through Loaves and Fishes, the Prison Ministry, Shelter dinners and so many other volunteer activities in our community and beyond.
- Our Pastoral Care Team is very active through visitation, prayer, transportation and organizing meals. When a need is announced many parishioners step up to help. Please contact Jenn Karstad or Darcey, our Pastoral Care Team Leaders, or Jean Smith with any need you have identified.

Well there was so much more that we are planning to meet again! Stay tuned! There is a Hospitality Basket in the Common Room with note cards. Please fill one out if you want to speak with someone in more detail, have a question, ideas or want to get more involved in any aspect of Hospitality @ St. Michael's. Thank you for all you do!

PASTORAL CARE NEED?

If you have a pastoral care need while Mary is away, you may contact Jean Smith by email at revjrsmith@comcast.net or by cell phone at 973-568-0896, Jenn Karstad by email at artemisias_vt@yahoo.com or by phone at 802-579-7743, Darcey at 802-380-1251, or Jeanie at the Church office, jeanie@stmichaelsvermont.org or 254-6048.

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

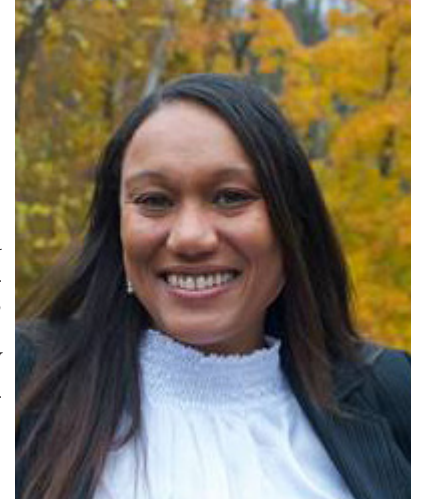
SHELA LINTON COMES TO ST. MICHAEL'S

Tuesday May 15, 2018

6:00 -6:30 Coffee and Desserts

6:30-7:30 Meeting with Shela

Upstairs Meeting Room at St. Michael's



Shela Linton, co-founder of The Root Social Justice Center, was born and raised in Brattleboro. She's been an advocate for social justice since high school at Brattleboro Union High School. In 2014, she was honored as a "Hometown Hero" -- One of 50 Phenomenal Women Who are Making a Difference in America, by Glamour magazine. In May of 2017 the Brattleboro Area Interfaith Initiative presented her its Unsung Hero Award.

Shela was a scheduled presenter as part of the Lenten Series: "Our Stories: Family, Race and Belonging within our Community," but was snowed out. It is so important in our conversations about race that we hear from someone in our local community that we rescheduled this time to be with Shela. During the Lenten Series we listened 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 as we together look for ways to increase racial healing.

**31ST ANNUAL AIDS WALK**

On Saturday, May 19, from 10:00 A.M. to noon, St. Michael's will team with others in our community and beyond to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS with the 31st Walk for Life.

Each year in May we gather at the River Garden to remember our family and friends who have died from HIV-related illnesses, to call attention to the effects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in our own community, to honor those who make a difference in this challenging work, and to thank the community for 31 years of support.

We will begin with a brief ceremony to reflect on the memory of those who have died. Following a brief walk through downtown, we will gather again at the River Garden for a presentation honoring Howie Peterson,



special music, prizes for fundraising, and a light lunch.

Please consider becoming a member of the St. Michael's team to walk, to gather donations, or both. There will be an information table and donation forms beginning Sunday, April 22 in the Undercroft following the 10:15 worship service.

St. Michael's has been a faithful supporter financially and as a presence at the Walk. To sign up, get a donation form, make a do-

nation to the AIDS Project of Southern Vermont, or for more information, please contact me at dpcarrs@gmail.com or by cell phone at 214-534-8725.

Thank you for your support and participation.

David Carr

The Feast of Pentecost will be celebrated on Sunday, May 20. Don't forget to wear RED, the color of the Holy Spirit!



CELEBRATING OUR VETERANS

On Saturday, June 2, 2018 we will celebrate the opening of a handicapped and wheelchair accessible nature trail at the Ames farm, and any and all are invited to attend. The dedication will begin at 10:30 am. The entrance to the trail is from Route 63 in Northfield, MA located 1.5 miles south of the intersection of routes 10 and 63. Exit at the Northfield exit off route 91 south and follow Route 10 East and over the Connecticut River to the intersection with Route 63, then turn right (south) for 1.5 miles. The trail entrance is on the east side of the road. There is plenty of parking room in the Route 63 break down lanes. Several Commonwealth and local dignitaries have been invited.

Our son, Jeff Ames, served for 22 years in the United States Marine Corps retiring two plus years ago as a Gunnery sergeant. Jeff served in 12 different areas of the world including Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, the Ukraine, Okinawa, Japan and 6 other locations. His principal responsibility was for rolling stock and equipment maintenance and readiness, and, as Company Sergeant, he oversaw and directed the activities of 300-500 men. "For these men," Jeff once said, "I stand between them and the officer corps for better or worse." Along the way, Jeff received several service medals and is now 80% disabled.

The nature trail is dedicated to Jeff. A group of wheelchair vets from the VA hospital system will help dedicate

the trail with a roll thru. The trail itself is 3/8 of a mile in length and meanders through the forest and next to a beaver pond where there is a viewing platform accessible to all. The trail property has been given to the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust which will supervise and maintain the property. We are creating an endowment for the property for maintenance and supervision. Any contributions are welcomed and should be sent to the Mount Grace land Conservation Trust, Old Keene Rd., Athol, MA.

It would not be right if Nancy and I failed to give enormous credit to the Lane Construction Company. That is a story in itself, but suffice it to say, they put up most of the funds to build the 6 foot-wide trail – an extensive undertaking in landscaping for wheelchair accessibility. They supplied specialty materials, machinery, and labor. At the same time the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust has donated hundreds of hours of labor to finish and landscape the trail, create parking area, viewing platform and create appropriate signage for the entrance and for the trail itself. Our thanks extend to several Native American groups, whose permission for the trail to pass through sacred ground did in many ways make the trail a possibility from the outset.

Thanks to All,

Bill and Nancy Ames

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL CONFERENCE, INSPIRE: THE CHURCH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

by Megan Buchanan

Mary and Duncan invited members of the Discipleship and Discernment Leadership Team to accompany them to a conference at Yale Divinity School on April 5th and 6th. Christy Fritz and Megan Buchanan attended. There were well over a dozen inspiring speakers with a wide variety of backgrounds, nationalities, ministries and leadership roles. Round-table conversations followed each of the sessions, and we were inspired by the other attendees and their ideas and work, as well as the YDS students who sat and spoke with us.

Here are some of the things still stirring in us after the conference:

- Shane Claiborne (Christian author, leading figure in the New Monasticism movement) shared about the need for more robust and practical theology of place. He said, "Jesus spent real time in little towns." He said that we need to be able to read our neighborhoods like we read scripture. I wonder from whom we can learn about this, what we may already know, and how to do this work together as a parish?
- Leaders from the Riverside Church (NYC) shared about how they think of their ministries as experiments and so they try to apply a version of the scientific method? 1) hypothesis 2) observation 3) method 4) conclusion. I wonder about applying a similar method to the Discipleship ministry. What is our hypothesis? What are we observing and how? What conclusions can we draw? I also wonder about the opportunities and limits of applying the scientific method to ministry.
- A former seminary president shared repeatedly that, "Uncertainty is the new normal. Thanks be to God." I know that one important way to navigate uncertainty is storytelling. I wonder what the stories are – personal, collective and from the tradition – that can provide hope, inspiration, and direction in this moment.
- I really enjoyed the Yale students who sang, read poems, led Tai Chi and played music in between listening to the many speakers. Similarly, I was impressed by the wonderful music we experienced in our worship at Yale -- everything from traditional Anglican chant to praise and worship music.
- Javier Viera (Vice Provost and Dean of the Theological School, Drew University Theological School, Drew University) talked about the hurricane, how they're reimagining without a game plan, how they're confronting the uncertainty. Deep reflective process focused on needs. Be fierce. Youth are re-claiming identity. Search for identity out of a death. Difficulty with mega church; is it about growth for numbers and sustainable entertainment. I believe that death and surrender are important. I don't want to feel empty in our own space. I want to make sure we're building on real heartbreak. I like listening to the earth.
- What is the role of the church in our contemporary society? Church is the conscience. I love the simplicity and challenge in this. Shane said, "Jesus spent real time in little towns." Mothers making guns into plowshares. I think part of it is NE that people don't let their pain be revealed. I thought about our front lawn as a place of prophetic lament (e.g. t-shirts on sticks of people who've died of heroin).
- Sung Morning Prayer in the small St. Luke's Chapel where some of the Berkeley (Episcopal) students live was profound; the canticles stayed with me for days. Would love to have more of the Daily Office at St. Michael's or gather together in our homes.
- A lot of important talk about repairing the earth and repairing relations with people of color. Watershed discipleship. White Christianity as abstract narrative of redemption. Reverend Steve Blackmer (Church of the Woods, NH) gives communion bread and wine back to earth - Can we do that, too? Everything comes from the earth.

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE MINISTER OF DISCIPLESHIP AND DISCERNMENT

It's been a whirlwind of a month – the focus and rhythm of the end of Lent, the burst and abundance of Holy Week and Easter (15 services from Palm Sunday through Easter), two days at Yale Divinity School the following week, and then shifting to reflection and planning for the coming program year in anticipation of Mary's sabbatical. When so much is happening, I find myself turning to bullet points to keep track:

**What's Happened**

- Planning and leading Contemplative Lenten Retreat at Hallelujah Farm with Karen Guthrie, Cary Gaunt, and Michael Pittman
- Re-launching the open discipleship group (averaging now about 10 people per meeting) and the teen discipleship group so that it is now led by the teens
- Jeff and Darcey continuing to lead the Theology Exploration Group
- Leading exploratory meetings with lay leaders at St Michael's about how to create a discernment team that could be available to help support people with major decisions in their lives
- Supporting the leadership team with developing services for Maundy Thursday Nightwatch and Holy Saturday service in the Retreat cemetery with about a dozen people attending each service
- Visiting the Springfield prison with Craig Hammond and Jim Levinson
- Celebrating communion with the cashier at the Shell gas station on Canal Street on the monthly Sunday when I'm not at St Michael's
- Visiting Paul Dedell's 7th Grade classroom at Hill Top to share my perspective on what it means to be a Christian
- Visiting Turning Point recovery community and attending their weekly lunch
- Attending the Yale Divinity School conference on the future of the church in the 21st Century with Mary Lindquist, Megan Buchanan, and Christy Fritz

What We're Learning and Wondering

- All six of the discipleship groups are continuing to meet and new people have joined the open discipleship group, so they seem to be meeting a need for spiritual friendship and intimacy. How can we offer even more depth and clarity about how to engage the spiritual disciplines so that the

groups have both relational depth and a clear direction?

- The leadership team of Megan Buchanan, Christy Fritz, Jeff Hiam, and Darcey Mercier has worked with great devotion and willingness. How can we continue to expand the leadership of the ministry and ensure that it stays accountable to the vision for the entire parish?

- Staff from the Riverside Church in New York presented at the Yale Divinity School about

how they approach their ministries as experiments and borrow from the steps of the scientific method (hypothesis, observation, collection of information, analysis, conclusion) to plan their ministries. Given the experimental nature of the discipleship ministry, how can we be clearer about these steps?

- Shane Claiborne, a church leader and activist from Philadelphia, spoke about how the challenge for the church at this moment in time is imagination and courage. How can we better engage our collective imagination and support one another in taking risks for Christ's sake?
- Shane also spoke about how we need to be able to read our local neighborhoods like we read scripture and about the need for a theology of place. How do we here at St Michael's learn to see and respond to our neighborhoods through God's eyes?

What's Next

- April-June is a time of research, reflecting and recruiting for the coming program year. On May 30, all the discipleship groups will gather again to reflect and decide independently how they want to continue meeting through the summer and beyond.
- Mid-June through mid-August will be a time for those called to leadership in the ministry for the coming year to develop their familiarity with the practices (e.g. discernment) so that they can offer them with greater depth to the wider parish in the coming year. I also hope to experiment with an electronic version – Skype or conference call – of the discipleship group so that I can stay connected while I'm working at L'Arche.
- Mid-August through September will be a time to reconnect and re-launch as I return from L'Arche, Mary returns from sabbatical, and the leadership team resumes meeting and planning. We already have a forum scheduled for September 23!

NEWS OF THE PARISH

THANK YOU VALERIE!

Valerie Abrahamsen was selected to serve on the Bishop of Vermont's Discernment and Nominating Committee. Many thanks to Valerie for representing St. Michael's in this important ministry!

**CHOOSING A NEW BISHOP FOR VERMONT: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCESS**

Valerie Abrahamsen, ThD

In February, the call went out from the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont for volunteers to serve on the Bishop Discernment and Nominating Committee (BDNC). I sent in my application and have joined nine other clergy and laypersons from around the diocese, plus our Chaplain, to embark on this important and spirit-filled undertaking. On March 17, as part of our initial working weekend, the Standing Committee of the diocese commissioned the BDNC at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Burlington. While you will be hearing more about our work as time goes on, I wanted St. Michael's parishioners to know the goals, timeline, and process as we get started.

For those new to the Episcopal Church or unfamiliar with the Diocese of Vermont, our current Bishop, the Right Rev. Thomas Ely, has served for 17 years and announced his retirement as of September 2019. (Bishop Ely has officiated at St. Michael's several times lately, but we may have even more chances to see him after his retirement, since he and his wife, Ann, have a home in Newfane and attend St. Michael's as parishioners when he is "off duty.") Bishop and Mrs. Ely live in a large home, owned by the diocese, at Rock Point on the shores of Lake Champlain in Burlington. The diocese consists of 45 parishes, and I was very surprised to learn that St. Michael's is one of only four Episcopal congregations in all of Vermont with a full-time rector. Needless to say, demographics will play a large role in our work on the BDNC.

According to the "charge" to our committee, we will constantly be "discerning," defined in the Vermont Parish Discernment Handbook as seeing and understanding God's will. Discernment is both an action of the Holy Spirit through prayer, meditation and the voices of other people and "an action of the intellect, perceiving the will of God through the gifts of individuals and the person's role in the

Christian community." The process of discernment will involve developing a profile of the diocese; identifying the gifts and strengths required in our next Bishop in order to move forward; and presenting to the Standing Committee a "recommendation for how best to move forward and how best to ensure an Episcopal presence in the diocese." A rough timeline of our work will look something like this:

- Gather data, listen to the concerns of the people of the diocese, and create the profile: April through mid-July 2018
- Post the profile and start receiving names: by mid- to late August 2018
- Screen candidates: October 2018
- Conduct online interviews with candidates: November-December 2018
- Determine finalist candidates: January to March 2019 (after which the Standing and Transition Committees take over)

Please keep me and the other members of the BDNC in your prayers; more later!

Maggie Thompson, Chair, Christ Church, Montpelier
 The Rev. Carole Wageman, Chaplain
 Valerie Abrahamsen, St. Michael's, Brattleboro
 James Biernat, St. Mark's, Newport
 Eric Davis, St. Stephen's, Middlebury
 Ann Guillot, Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Burlington
 The Rev. John Miller, St. James, Arlington
 The Rev. Christine Moseley, St. Mark's, Newport
 The Rev. Scott Neal, St. Paul's, White River Junction
 The Rev. Zarina O'Hagin, St. John's in the Mountains, Stowe
 The Rev. Lisa Ransom, St. James, Woodstock
 Corrie Wilcox, Christ Church, Montpelier

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

FROM THE LIBRARY SHELVES

Saint Michael the Archangel

Edited by Mirabai Starr

Published by Sounds True, Inc.

Boulder, Colorado 4"x 6" 120 pages

This reviewer recalls the days of his youth so long ago when Roman Catholic playmates were tormented at Saturday morning catechism classes by their priests who terrified them with the possibility, even probability, of sending their souls to roast in Hell everlasting. By decided contrast, Episcopalians, in those times referred to jocularly as The Country Club on its Knees, coped with their own but significantly lesser terrors such as the dreaded slice (too much right hand, not enough hip turn). Comparatively, strokes lost in the fairway rough, a form of Hell in its own right, were benign compared to the threats of the papist priests whose too frequent criminal pederasty in that more trusting age was as of yet unsuspected. Thus the need for a saint to intercede on one's behalf. Michael the archangel (as distinct from earthly saints conferred by the church) is the spiritual warrior who protects the faithful in the face of injustice, a ceaseless devotee of truth. In the Book of Revelation, Chapter 12: 7-9, a war occurs in Heaven and Michael defeats Satan who is thrown to earth and becomes a serpent called the devil. Episcopalians of the bygone day likely assumed less a need for intercession than their Roman brethren, but the craving for help when one feels helpless is a universal affliction. The name Michael means "Who is like God." By invoking his power, we invite into our lives the divine energy to overcome obstacles.

This little volume is pocket book in size which allows it to be easily carried about for those moments when the reader is seized with a need to invoke the saint. It is divided into an introduction followed by four chapters: Strength & Protection, The Calling, Guardian of Souls, and Compassion. It contains prayers to the archangel and, to a lesser extent, various texts invoking the saint set in italic.

The saint has his own symbol: a pair of, for want of a better description, crossed dumb bells. In our stained

glass window in the middle of the south wall of the nave, the symbol with trefoil knobs representing the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost surmounts the left panel depicting Michael astride in full armor lancing the evil dragon (his horse, by contrast, is not afforded any protection which seems a touch uncharitable). The right panel shows Christ triumphant with a pair of concussed enemies at His feet.

The window, our first stained glass window, was given by George Folsom, Jr. in 1869, twelve years after the consecrating of the church. An excerpt from Paul Carnahan's history of St. Michael's explains its creation:

"The window that Mr. Folsom installed was to the memory of his father, George Folsom, Sr., who had died in Rome on Easter Even, 1869. Artistically, this window, composed of two lancet-shaped panels, is perhaps the most important window in the church. Each panel contains large piece of painted glass, one depicting Christ Triumphant and the other St. Michael. Enamel painting on glass was a technique made popular during the Renaissance. Artists using the technique can produce windows that look more like paintings than do windows in which pieces of colored glass are joined together with lead to form an image. The two pieces of enameled glass at St. Michael's were undoubtedly made in Europe and were perhaps brought to this country by Mr. Folsom, Sr., who was the United States Representative to the Hague. The panels of painted glass are set in frames of characteristically bright-colored pot metal glass, which were probably made in America." The lower right one, notably brighter, was cleaned and repaired during the rectorship of the Reverend Paul Thompson.

The best-known paintings of Michael are two by Raphael who depicts the archangel in combat replete with a formidable and unaerodynamic set of wings. The earlier and smaller was painted in 1504, the larger dates to 1518. Both hang in the Louvre. However, a vast array of ecclesiastical art is devoted to the saint and the reader can search the Internet for these images.

RRR

CHRIST CHURCH CELEBRATES 200th BIRTHDAY WITH AUGUST 19 GALA*by Laura Lewis, with assistance from Joy Wallens-Penford, for Christ Church Guilford Society*

One late afternoon in June 1968, my family drove up Melendy Hill (not then so named) for the first time. The white church at the beginning of the road appeared to have a church service going on. The building, which looked like every picture of a classic old New England church, was surrounded by cars. We were hot and tired after several days of driving up from Louisiana without any air-conditioning, and we thought, "How nice, maybe it's a church we could attend" and drove on.

Newsletter readers who were here before that time may remember the concert that Rudolf Serkin gave that day to help save Christ Church from being taken away to Shelburne Museum. We liked music and were sad to have missed the concert. Over the fifty years since then, we have attended other concerts there and have worshipped in this oldest Episcopal church building in Vermont, the "mother church" of St. Michael's P.E. Church in Brattleboro.

Guilford neighbors had cut the trees and built the church, finishing it in 1817, but the first services were not held until 1818. Although the congregation declined steadily as the population center gravitated to nearby Brattleboro, the church has never been decommissioned since it ceased to be an active parish in the 1890s.

Time has gone on, and this year the church turns 200 years old. The board and friends of Christ Church Guilford plan to celebrate this milestone birthday with a benefit concert and silent auction.

At 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 19, the public is invited to a 200th Birthday Gala. Renowned instrumentalists James Winn, flute; Jaime Laredo and Lucy Chapman, violin; Kim Kashkashian, viola; and Mary Peckham and Sharon Robinson, cello, will perform a Mozart flute quartet, a Boccherini quintet, and The Schulhoff Duo. (Performers and repertoire are subject to possible change.)

An elegant Reception and Silent Auction—featuring getaways, dinners, fine art and crafts by Guilford residents, other special items and gift certificates—will follow on the lawn of Christ Church. In the event of inclement weather, these post-concert festivities will move

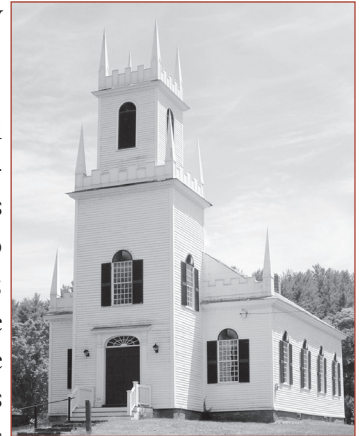
to Guilford Community Church nearby.

We know that this event will beautifully and appropriately honor Christ Church's 200th birthday. It will also be our annual fundraiser; there will be no Welcome Center day this year. We hope St. Michael's members and friends will support this project as enthusiastically as they have those "Coffee Break" days because we are going to need a lot of help!

Two hundred seats for this celebration are available in Christ Church, which is not fully handicap-accessible. Gala tickets are \$25 and will be available at Guilford Free Library, 4024 Guilford Center Rd., (802) 257-4603, and Everyone's Books, 25 Elliot St., Brattleboro, (802) 254-8160, beginning in mid-June. Payment may be made by cash or check payable to "Christ Church Guilford Society." Folks out of town may send checks for tickets to Anne Montgomery, 57 Indigo Dr., Guilford, VT 05301; see phone/email below.

- For information on sponsorship and patron tickets for individuals and businesses, as well as advertising in the commemorative program booklet, contact Anne Montgomery at amontgomery1254@gmail.com or (802) 257-2636.
- To offer items for the auction, contact Linda Rice at lindariceaprn@gmail.com or (802) 257-7982.
- To donate reception foods, contact Becky Anderson at (802) 257-0064.
- To volunteer your time to help with setup, production, or cleanup on August 19, contact Laura Lewis at (802) 254-4839.
- St. Michael's parishioners available to answer your questions include Linda Rice, Wayne Cook, and Kate McGinn. More news will be available as the date gets closer.

Thanks in advance for the various ways you may be able to join us in supporting this exciting event!



EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

MAY LECTIONARY

MAY 6

Acts 10:44-48, Psalm 98,
1 John 5:1-6, John 15:9-17

MAY 13

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26, Psalm 1,
1 John 5:9-13, John 17:6-19

**MAY 20**

Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14,
Psalm 104:25-35, 37,
Romans 8:22-27 or Acts 2:1-21, John
15:26-27; 16:4b-15

MAY 27

Isaiah 6:1-8, Psalm 29 or Canticle 13
(or Canticle 2), Romans 8:12-17, John
3:1-17

CELEBRATIONS

MAY BIRTHDAYS

May 1	Holden McDowell
May 2	Sarah Colson
May 4	Deborah Leggott, Carol Beninati, Bruce Landenberger
May 5	Bill Ames
May 6	Mark Mayer
May 7	Diane Pitcher, Beatrice Johnson
May 8	Opal Mayer
May 10	Sarah Nohl
May 11	Brian Morgan, Diana Bingham, Julian Siegel
May 12	K.C. Mattson
May 17	Brian White
May 19	Susan Dyer
May 21	Ruth Struthers
May 22	Oliver Pomazi
May 23	Chloe Hull
May 26	James Crosson, Sylvester Mayer
May 27	Karin Bleecker
May 29	Colby McGinn



MAY MARRIGES

May 2	Karren & Steven Meyer
May 19	Sarah Colson & Cliff Dempster
May 24	Janet Brocklehurst & Sissi Loftin
May 27	Teri Robinson & Ross Kinney



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

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The Guardian

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



Our Worship Together

SUNDAYS

8:00 am, Quiet service of prayer and Holy Communion

10:15 am, Prayer, music, and Holy Communion, with childcare

WEEKDAY MORNINGS

6:00–7:00 am, Silent hour in chapel

WEDNESDAYS

12:00–12:30 pm, Brief service of prayer and Holy Communion

THURSDAYS

5:30–6:00 pm, Contemplative service of chanting, silence, and prayer

SATURDAYS

8:00 - 9:00 am, Centering Prayer