

The Guardian

FEBRUARY 2019

FROM THE RECTORY

Living by the Stars

Mingle the starlight with your lives and you won't be fretted by trifles.

— Maria Mitchell, First American woman to be a professional astronomer, 1818-1889

Some years it feels like we are just finishing the season of Christmas when we need to start preparing for the season of Lent. However, this year, the season of Epiphany is extra long. Lent does not begin until March 6. Why? Because the first Sunday after the first full moon after or on the vernal equinox does not happen until April 21 this year. This is how we determine the date of Easter. And the seasons of Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost are all determined by the date of Easter. And the date of Easter is all determined by the phases of the moon.

Isn't that wonderful?

In our world of technological mastery and control, our Christian seasons are determined not by our wills, but by the heavens.

Last week I attended a missional workshop led by our Priest for Discernment and Discipleship, Duncan Hilton. In the gathering, we were directed to name issues that were breaking our hearts in our communities and in the world. Some of the issues named were climate change, opioid addiction, isolated populations of people, and animal suffering.

In addition to these societal ills, some people identified their struggle with the ever-increasing pace of life we experience in our culture. We named this common concern "rhythm of life." And we noticed that though our

concern with rhythm of life was different from issues like climate change, it was also related. Is it possible that attention to our rhythm of life might actually affect things like climate change and opioid addiction? We think so.

Some of the questions asked in the small group were, "How are we called to live by time and with time and in time as Christians? How is a Christian rhythm of life different from secular notions of time? Is it possible to have a Christian rhythm of life while living in a culture that views time differently?"

While we do not have answers to these questions, we have many starting points: The Christian rhythm of life is the Christian liturgical year, which is circular rather than linear. We live in different seasons of the church year, each with its own time, theme, color and pace. We also thought about the daily offices in the Book of Common Prayer which sanctify our days by giving us prayers for morning, noon, evening and night. And finally, we mentioned the importance of Sabbath as time set aside for ourselves and creation rest and commune with God.

I'm not sure where our wonderings will lead us, but if you are interested in these questions and want to explore them with others, please let me know. Meanwhile, don't forget to mingle the starlight with your lives.

NEWS OF THE PARISH

ROCK POINT SUMMER CAMP

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



- Senior High Camp (ages 14-16) – June 30-July 5
- Junior High Camp (ages 11-14) – July 7-12
- Intermediate Camp (ages 10-12)- July 14-19
- Elementary Camp (ages 7-10)- July 21-26

BISHOP SEARCH UPDATE

The Bishop Search Committee for the Episcopal Church in Vermont is now in the phase of interviewing and reference-checking interested candidates. They are expected to announce a slate of candidates by the end of March. Please keep this search process in your prayers!

To learn more about the process and timeline for selecting the next Bishop of Vermont and check for news and announcements by visiting the website: www.BishopSearchVT.org

STM

COME CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF ST. BRIGID
ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 5:30 PM

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

FEBRUARY FORUMS

February 3: No forum is scheduled. John Carnahan will lead his tour of the stained glass windows at a later time.

February 10: Community Asylum Seekers Project (CASP) --- The Outreach Committee is sponsoring this forum about CASP, a non-profit corporation formed by local Vermonters with the mission of providing a safe haven in our communities for asylum seekers who leave their homelands to escape persecution and violence. Without a sponsor, many asylum seekers today end up in immigration prisons until they can prove their asylum claims in court. Even after release from detention, most must undergo a lengthy waiting period before becoming eligible for work authorization. CASP welcomes them into a host home or a community where volunteers provide housing, warm clothing, food, and emotional support for the adjustment to life in the US. Currently, we have 4 Spanish-speaking asylum seekers in Brattleboro. Come and hear from Steve Crofter and Doug Cox about how you can support CASP through many kinds of volunteering and also financially.

February 17: What is Prayer? How does it work? What kind of power does it have? When we ask for something for ourselves or others are we insulting God who already knows our need? Do prayers change God's mind and heart or just ours? Come join the conversation led by Jean Smith and let us hear why you pray and your experiences of prayer.

February 24: "Why is religion still around in this scientific and rational thinking world?" This the question Elaine Pagels, a scholar in early church thinking, asks in her new book: *WHY RELIGION, A Personal Story*. Phillip Wilson will lead a discussion based on this book that relates on person's willingness to hold onto religion in a world that belittles anything that cannot be scientifically replicated. Elaine Pagels relates how her return to religion was a response to the deaths of her son and husband in quick succession. Sacrificing nothing of her academic rigor, she talks about her relationship between the mysteries of life and 21st century reason. This book invites us to ask the same questions.

NEWS OF THE PARISH

MUSIC PROGRAMS FOR THE ENTIRE CONGREGATION

As I contemplated my work at St. Michael's at the end of this past year, I realized that one thing that I've always wanted to do is offer music programs for those in the congregation who are probably not in the choir, but who have an interest in music. After being approached by a few members of the congregation regarding different "wish lists," it seemed like now was the time!

A two-part series is on tap to begin in February. On Saturday, February 2 from 10:30-11:30 and on Saturday, February 9 from 10:30-11:30, I'll give a short course in musical notation: it's history, why it looks the way it does, and how to more readily understand it in a prac-

tical, useful way. No one develops great music reading skills in 2 weeks, but my hope is to provide a practical short course that helps give everyone a better understanding of how to make sense of music notation and how to feel more confident and joyful when you approach written music.

As a teacher, I've always loved working with various ages and experience levels of people, and I expect that we'll have a lot of fun! Whether you're a novice, or want to review some rusty knowledge, you are encouraged to come!

Susan Dedell

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THOUGHTS FROM THE ELDERS LUNCH

On January 22, 34 of St. Michael's elders gathered in the Undercroft for a time of fellowship, discussion, and a delicious lunch. The elders ranged in age from early 60s to 98! Madelyn and Wendell Howard won the prize for longest-time members; Madelyn attended Sunday School at St. Michael's in the 1940s. We happened to plan the Elder Luncheon for John Carnahan's 90th birthday, which was wonderful to celebrate together!

Some of the questions we discussed during the lunch were:

- How has St. Michael's changed since you've been part of this community?
- What do you celebrate and what is difficult about growing older?
- How has your relationship with God changed as you've grown older?
- How can St. Michael's better nourish your spiritual life and support you as important members of our community?

We had such a great time that we are hoping to offer the Elder Lunch on a quarterly basis, with the next lunch landing in early April. In the future, we will address different topics and themes, but leave plenty of time for conversa-

tion and enjoying the company of friends, both new and old.

Enormous thanks to the fabulous cooks who came together to create such a beautiful meal: Adwoa Lewis-Wilson, Deb Jones & Lucia Osieki, Rosie Wojcik and Cliff & Wylene Wood.

If you would like to help with one of the future Elders lunches (planning, shopping, cooking, serving or cleaning), please let me know. — Mary



NEWS OF THE PARISH

THANK YOU

Thank you for all the birthday wishes and for the wonderful celebration at the Elders Luncheon. I was overwhelmed! Thanks to all --
John Carnahan



PLEASE SIGN UP TO HOST COFFEE HOUR!

Please sign up or contact the Church office (254-6048, jeanie@stmichaelsvermont.org) about reserving a date for you to host coffee hour in the next few months. Available dates are:

- February 17 and 24
- March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31
- April 7, 14 (Palm Sunday- coffee hour between services), 21 (Easter) and 28

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR RONNY JOHNSON
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 16

There will be a memorial service at St. Michael's for parishioner Ronny Johnson on February 16, beginning at 11 am. All from St. Michael's are invited.

PHOTOS FROM BISHOP ELY'S VISIT WITH CONFIRMATIONS ON JANUARY 6



EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

6 Things to Know About the Missional Training on January 12*Duncan Hilton*

1. Twenty-one people gathered in the meeting room on Saturday Jan 12 for a full-day Missional Leadership Training. I co-led the training with a former colleague and current BU seminarian Hazel Johnson. Cary Gaunt has been an incredible help with the design and facilitation of the November, December and January trainings.

2. The learning for the day included four modules: 1) public narrative – communicating why you’re called to leadership through storytelling 2) 1:1 relationship-building 3) building a team 4) developing a strategy. Each of the modules included a brief teaching, time in small groups trying on the practice, and then debriefing.

3. We began the morning by talking about the meaning of “missional leadership.” The discussion included how God’s mission is the renewal of all creation, that our job is to follow the Spirit’s bidding in that work, and that we know the Spirit’s bidding with the eyes and ears of our heart in relationship with one another and creation. Based on this relational understanding of mission, we also discussed how we would be learning a team-based model of leadership adapted from community organizing, the aim of which is to create star teams and not star players.

4. The outcome of the day was that we sorted into teams with four different focuses (1. Animal rescue, 2. Tag sale, 3. Climate change/living by a different rhythm, 4. Connecting with homebound people) based on the stories people shared in the morning and the spiritual practices that people had been learning and engaging in since the November workshop. The teams worked on

their structure (purpose, roles, norms) and began to develop their strategy for the coming months. Some teams left the training with concrete goals to work towards; others are still working through the focus of their projects and who is on their team.

5. What people lifted up at the end as positives from the day was the balance of head and heart and thoughtfulness in the agenda, the intergenerational aspect of the training (5 teens attended), and the energy and vulnerability in the storytelling. What people wondered about changing for the future was spreading out the training over more time; it was a lot packed into seven hours.

6. What’s next is that over the next few days, I’ll reach out to each of the team leaders about how I can support them going forward and also connect with people who were unable to attend to discuss whether there’s a team that they feel drawn to join. All the teams will gather mid-program on March 23 to deepen their learning and reconnect with the practices; otherwise they will meet independent of one another through the spring as they develop their projects.



SUMMARY OF THE DECEMBER 20, 2018 MEETING OF THE VESTRY

Daniel Dobson gave a short presentation on the future of the tag sale: a team has been convened to study the future format and frequency and a mission statement was also circulated.

The vestry considered and approved a letter of support for postulancy for Darcey Mercier to move to the next step in the ordination process to become an Episcopal priest.

The Treasurer gave details on the church's finances. Discussion ensued regarding the bill for toners which has increased due to increased use of the copier and a bill for electric work which needs more explanation. The vestry approved the Rector's request for a new sound system for the Undercroft.

The Rector's report included information on the new pledging by texting system, the moving of the annual meeting on January 27 to the undercroft, the Bishops' visit on January 6 to confirm or receive candidates, and a planned lunch for elders on January 22. Mary thanked Joanne Patalano for her service as clerk to the vestry. Vestry members also expressed their gratitude for Joanne's excellent service. Carol Beninati will become the secretary of the vestry in February, 2019.

The Senior Warden stated that Judy Davidson, Christy Fritz, and Maurice Harris are candidates for the vestry. Judith will be the assistant treasurer effective January 2019.

Regards,

Imogene Drakes

SUMMARY OF THE JANUARY 17 MEETING OF THE VESTRY

On Thursday January 17, 2019, the Vestry gathered for its monthly meeting. All members were present. Janet and Mary opened the meeting with prayers.

The outgoing Vestry members (Judith, John and Lynn) reflected on their experience over the past 3 years. We also thanked Joanne, who will be stepping down from her position as Vestry clerk, for her dedicated service.

Duncan and Jeff provided updates on the Ministry for Discernment and Discipleship. Missional groups are planning exciting projects addressing important concerns from climate change to animal rescue and more.

The Vestry approved a letter of support for Jeff Hiam moving forward in the ordination process to become an Episcopal priest.

Wayne reviewed an encouraging end of year Treasurer's report which showed income to be 103% of budget and expenses to be 96.5% of budget.

Thank you cards were sent to many parishioners who devoted themselves to helping with Holiday services and the Bishop's reception.

The Vestry approved the Annual Parochial Report to the General Convention of Episcopal Churches.

Mary gave the Rector's report and reminded of the Elders' Luncheon to take place on Tuesday January 22 at 11:30 am. Annual meeting will take place on January 27th.

Judith provided the Warden's Report and offered the closing prayer.

Sincerely,

Mark Horton

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

FROM THE LIBRARY SHELVES

The Religion of Abraham Lincoln**by William J. Wolf****The Seabury Press New York 1963****5' x 8" 219 pages**

Lincoln was not a church member. He stated this. Over time, many have ascribed denominational membership to him to no avail. Scholars and historians have tried to place his faith in a pigeon hole of their own making but this too has failed. His faith defies categorization. Yet no president has demonstrated his faith as publicly and deeply as Lincoln. And no president has endured such family suffering, vilification by friends and hatred by foes, and a horrible and devastating national tragedy as did Lincoln. And no president remotely can match the sublime words and cadences he has left us about our nation and its purpose.

There is today a misassumption that the Civil War was about slavery. To Lincoln, it was the cause of war. But to most people it was about secession, the destruction of the nation built only two generations previous, and countless letters from soldiers affirm this. These fellows would not have volunteered to free slaves or, on the other hand, protect slave holders. But Lincoln was a realist: "Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish."

Lincoln hated slavery in many ways but he did not free the slaves except for those in the rebelling states until after the first and badly bungled Fredericksburg battle and then by doing so only as a destabilizing tactic for military advantage. He was a practical politician with a strategic mind and frustrated by the wartime incompetence surrounding him, particularly in his generals in general and McClellan in particular who had failed so spectacularly in the Peninsular Campaign and, when victory was virtually handed him, at Antietam. And it was the disgraced McClellan who ran as Lincoln's venomous opponent in the 1864 presidential election.

What did Lincoln believe? In 1863, and prior to Gettysburg, declaring a national fast day, he wrote "We have

forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own."

After the Gettysburg battle, he affixed the third Thursday of November as the national Thanksgiving: "A day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens." And shortly thereafter at the battlefield's dedication he delivered a brief address beginning with the words "Fourscore and seven years ago..." Although there are no texts from Scripture in it, the language reflects the cadences of the King James Version. In it he blended the hope of eternal life with the hope of eternal democracy. He concluded "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

After winning a second term (which he was expected to lose), his second inaugural address concluded: "With malice toward none; with charity for all; as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in." He had in frustration and in despair previously pleaded "Give me a general who will fight." Grant arrived from the west and brought total war which ultimately by April of 1865 would brutally smash the Confederacy. That same month, Lincoln was assassinated*

Robert R. Anderson

*Robert Todd Lincoln, the president's son, was a resident of Manchester, Vermont. His large home, Hilldene, graces the countryside outside the town and he was president for a quarter-century of the local Ekwanok Golf Club.

NEWS OF THE PARISH

Photo from Christmas Pageant



Photo from Christmas Day Lunch



STM

VESTRY

Senior Warden:

Judith McBean, jmcbean1959@gmail.com, 254-6975

Junior Warden:

Carolyn Taylor-Olson,
oltayols@gmail.com, 254-9255

Lynne Billington,
Billington_l@yahoo.com, 380-4309

Janet Brocklehurst,
janetbrocklehurst@gmail.com, 254-9509

John Byrnes,
john.byrnes@webbersupply.com, 254-6457

Imogene Drakes,
idrakes10@gmail.com

Mark Horton,

markhorton078@gmail.com, 251-0565

Jeanette Landin,

renplus2002@yahoo.com, 289-3836

Mary Lindquist,

mary@stmichaelsvermont.org, 254-6048

Christopher Wesolowski,

cmwvt@svcable.net, 365-9139

Wayne Cook, Treasurer,

wecooks.alot@gmail.com, 896-9446

Joanne Patalano, Clerk,

joannepatalano@comcast.net, 254-2294

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

FEBRUARY 2019 LECTIONARY

February 3:

Jeremiah 1:4-10, Psalm 71:1-6,
1 Corinthians 13:1-13, Luke 4:21-30

February 10:

Isaiah 6:1-8, [9-13], Psalm 138,
1 Corinthians 15:1-11, Luke 5:1-11

**February 17:**

Jeremiah 17:5-10, Psalm 1,
1 Corinthians 15:12-20, Luke 6:17-26

February 24:

Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Psalm 37:1-12,
41-42; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50;
Luke 6:27-38

CELEBRATIONS

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

February 1	Steven Meyer
February 7	Douglas Lilly, Chris Landin
February 8	Emma Allen
February 9	Richard Burtis, Susan Wilson
February 10	Sissi Loftin
February 11	Alan McBean, Jayne Fritz
February 12	Robert Anderson, Lucia Osiecki
February 13	Cliff Wood
February 16	Greg Allen
February 19	Ross Kinney
February 20	Laura Andrews
February 24	Kirsten Mattson
February 25	Anne Cook
February 26	Paul Love, Charlene Kemp
February 28	Leigh Marthe
February 29	Asa Taggart



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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