

The Guardian

MAY 2019

FROM THE RECTORY

PRACTICING JOY

*So, friends, every day do something
that won't compute. Love the Lord.
Love the world. Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it.*

Excerpt from Manifesto:
The Mad Farmer Liberation Front,
by Wendell Berry

*Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift
and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found.*
—from the Collect for the Fifth Sunday in Lent, The Book of Common Prayer

In the middle of the Great Vigil of Easter, as we sit in the dark with our candles and after we have heard some stories of our salvation history, the priest says, “I call upon you, therefore, now that our Lenten observance is ended, to renew the solemn promises and vows of Holy Baptism.” I’m always surprised and delighted by these words – “What, our Lenten observance has ended?” It feels like a great weight is lifted. And I am relieved to begin to experience the joy of Easter.

Easter, as you know, is not just a day, but a season, a fifty-day season, even longer than Lent. And yet, how many of us who observe Lent by taking on new practices or giving up old ones take on new practices during the Easter season? How do we keep a holy Easter season?

The contrast between Lent and Easter in our liturgy is stark. In Lent we wear earth-colored vestments and the church is as plain as we can possibly make it. In Easter, we dress it up with beautiful vestments, flowers and much color. There is something about Easter practices that should bring us closer to the abundance of God’s grace and love, the beauty of life and the present moment, the many blessings we enjoy.

Here are some ideas: Plant something, sit outside in the sun, go for lots of walks outside (see Sarah Benton’s piece later in the newsletter on a new walking ministry), share meals with friends, keep one day as Sabbath, feed the birds, dance, play music, sing, cuddle your loved one/pet/family, play, learn something new, take naps, sleep in, reach out to someone you’ve lost touch with, pray in new ways, hold things more loosely, do things that may not “compute,” be unproductive, be inefficient, look at the stars.

As I ponder Lenten and Easter practices, one of the interesting things is that some of the “disciplines” I have taken on during Lent have proved to be great sources of joy. So I will keep doing them and they will become my Easter practices. This makes sense. If we choose practices that draw us closer to God, even if the practices are difficult at first, we truly discover that “our hearts have become fixed where true joys are found.”

May your Easter Season practices draw you closer to God’s love and grace!

NEWS OF THE PARISH

“OUT OF THE LION’S MOUTH: 2019”**MAY 4, 7:30 PM****MAY 5, 4 PM**

Yes, they’re back! Satraps, lions, poor vain and foolish King Darius (this time with two sidekicks called Cyrus and Xerxes), and of course, Daniel. Paul Dedell’s “Out of the Lion’s Mouth,” featuring the singers of both Senior and Junior Choir Schools, will be presented Saturday, May 4 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, May 5 at 4 pm. These performances feature Marian Wojcik as Daniel, Caleb Fritz as King Darius, Bill Shontz as guest clarinetist and the voices of the Choir Schools with narration by Jayne Fritz. This modern take on a medieval mystery play is a quirky new look at a fascinating old story – Daniel in the Lions’ Den.

“Out of the Lion’s Mouth” was the first in a series of 4 such plays written by Paul specifically for the Choir Schools. He explains, “I began by wanting to write something using a children’s choir and the story of Daniel in the Lions’ Den just jumped out. It offered some great opportunity for humor, as well as being a story that is surprisingly relevant. I liked the idea of having a children’s chorus sing the role of the officious and corrupt Satraps, who were jealous of Daniel because the King preferred him. They also resented him because he was a cultural outsider, a Jew who was taken captive after the Babylonian conquest of Judea.”

Paul says “The lions in the story gave me a lot of pleasure. In the original story, they are merely ferocious. I embellished upon that and decided that they would be both proud of their ferocity and pleased with their cushy job in the arena. I enjoyed thinking about how much fun the kids would

have singing the raucous lion song, with its rather ridiculous lyrics.” For the current production, Paul has added a part written specifically for Clara Fritz as Lioness-in-Chief. “I couldn’t resist writing a rather vampy tango for Clara to sing to Daniel. She has such a great comedic presence, and happens to actually know how to dance the tango!”

Caleb Fritz takes on the role of King Darius. Paul explains “King Darius is vain, easily swayed, and desirous of keeping his power. Even so, he sees qualities in the honest Daniel that he admires and trusts. The music I wrote for him is more complex – sometimes pompous and smarmy, sometimes wistful and questioning. Caleb is fantastic in this role! Daniel is played by Marian Wojcik. She sings in a beautifully pure and unselfconscious manner. Like the character of Daniel, she herself is thoughtful and has a brave heart. Although the character is male in the original story, the part was written to be played by either a boy or girl soprano.”

Paul uses a vaguely “Babylonian-Judean” sound for the instrumental music, which is scored for klezmer clarinet and piano. Guest clarinetist Bill Shontz joins Susan Dedell at the piano for this production.

You really won’t want to miss this truly enjoyable hour-long production! There is no admission fee, but donations of any amount will be gratefully accepted and will help fund further Mystery Play Projects.

ATTENTION NEW ATTENDERS – PLEASE JOIN US FOR BRUNCH!**Sunday, May 12 following the 10:15 am service****John Daly’s home, 21 Bradley Avenue**

If you are new to St. Michael’s in the last year (or if you still feel new to St. Michael’s), we hope you will join us for a festive brunch on Sunday, May 12 right across the street from St. Michael’s at the home of John Daly. The brunch will begin right after the 10:15 am service, so come right over!

This brunch will be an opportunity to spend time together and learn more about St. Michael’s. Children are welcome. If you can attend, please sign up in the Common Room or contact the church office (254-6048) or email Mary Lindquist at mary@stmichaelsvermont.org

NEWS OF THE PARISH

MAY FORUMS

May 5 -- Kate Judd, the leader of the Brattleboro Area Jewish Community and the Cantor of the local Synagogue, will discuss the spiritual practice of Judaism and the sacred literature and traditions on which it is based.

May 12 -- "Who will be our next Bishop?" The forum will be led by the delegates to the voting convention on May 18: Jenn Karstad, Bruce Lawrence, Carolyn Taylor-Olson, Duncan Hilton, Mary Lindquist, and Thad Bennett.

May 19 -- TBA

May 26 and June 2 -- Recently the United Methodist Church General Conference voted a rejection of tolerance of homosexuality, an issue festering in the UMC since 1972. Recently it was announced that spouses of gay Bishops in the Episcopal Church will not be welcome at the 2020 Lambeth Conference, a matter that strikes home to us because Thomas Brown will soon be a bishop and his husband, Tom Mousin, will not be welcome.

In his book *The End of White Christian America*, Robert Jones, a sociologist of religion, details the slow decline of the mainstream as well as evangelical/conservative churches. He identifies gender issues and race as the two defining issues of our time that have the power to wreck the institutions we know.

Come and discuss with us the implications of the UMC act, Lambeth decision, and the broader conditions of religion in America.

David Carr, Jeff Lewis, Annamarie Pluhar, Judy Davidson and Jean Smith



TAG SALE MINISTRY

The one-day spring tag sale will be held on Saturday, May 18 from 9 am to 3 pm. The sale will be in the Undercroft and under a tent on the lawn.

I. Donations-- Is there still a closet that needs spring cleaning? Are those 5 boxes that have been sitting in the garage just crying to be gone through to make room for the new canoe? Are your neighbors down-sizing? Donations will be accepted through May 14. If you have any questions about what you can donate or assistance is needed, please contact Sherry Stimmel or Susan Nichols.

II. Current Spring Tag Sale Sorting Times: Tuesdays, 1pm-3 pm and Thursdays, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm. Additional times will be established as needed and we will let you know about those times.

III. Contacts:

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EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

CONNECTION CONSTRUCTORS

Are you feeling disconnected or isolated from others in your home or personal life? Would you like someone to talk or visit with every now and then? Would you like to be more connected with people in the St. Michael's parish?

St Michael's has a newly formed missional group called Connection Constructors. We believe that God has given each and every one of us unique and valuable gifts that we can share with others in our community. Our goal is to help our neighbors struggling with loneliness and isolation by offering companionship and sacred listening and by connecting them with others with shared interests and gifts. We believe that connecting around shared gifts and interests can be mutually beneficial for both visitors and those visited, for people who are experiencing isolation and those who are not.

On May 19, we will be hosting a special Coffee Hour that we like to call a Matchup. During this time, we will be introducing people to each other based on shared interests and gifts.

During this Matchup, we will participate in music, prayer, and St. Michael's first ever Bake-off! So bring your best baked goods and be prepared to shake hands with someone you don't know. Hope to see you there!

Caleb Fritz

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COME TO EVENING PRAYER, MAY 19, 5 PM

The Episcopal Church, through the Book of Common Prayer, has a rich tradition of liturgies that can be used by individuals and small groups to enhance their spiritual practices. The so-called Daily Office, which includes Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Evening Prayer and Compline, is often enhanced by Plainsong chant settings, many of which can be found in the 1982 Hymnal. Join us for a simple chanted Evening Prayer service in the Chapel of Mary Magdalene, the First Apostle, on Sunday evening, May 19, at 5:00 pm. The simple service lasts approximately half an hour and includes prayers and readings – all are welcome!

WALKING/HIKING MINISTRY

On the trails with God and each other -
new walking/hiking ministry?

As the temperatures warm up and the days are getting longer, I love being outside. After two knee replacements and being able to do more physically, one of my goals is to hike and be out in God's creation. After reaching out to Mary about the idea of beginning a new ministry of walking/hiking to include praying and reflecting in the context of our faith, I invite those interested into a conversation to share ideas. I think this would be a great intergenerational way of being together once a month or even more.

Please get in touch with me by email at swbentonvt@gmail.com or by phone at 579-2185 and I will set up a time for us to meet and engage in conversation in early May.

Sarah Benton

STM

**DISCIPLESHIP GROUP & MISSIONAL TEAM
CELEBRATION AND REFLECTION**

Wednesday May 29

Anyone is welcome to join discipleship groups and missional teams from 6-8 pm at the church. The arc of the evening will be enjoying a potluck meal, praying together, groups sharing and celebrating what's happened this year, and then all of us discussing how to move forward through the summer and beyond.

NEWS OF THE PARISH

ELDERS LUNCHEON REFLECTION

Janet Brocklehurst & Sissi Loftin

We were unable to attend the first Elders Luncheon so we were looking forward to this event, and it met our expectations and way more. The great things included:

1. Seeing friends we hadn't seen in a very long time - for us it was Pat Laubach, Ruth Struthers, Herb Meyer and Wendell & Madelyn Howard (wearing special earrings!)
2. A beautifully decorated room, wonderful inviting atmosphere, and lots of hugs. Mary greeted each of us and warmly pointed to seats waiting for us.
3. Singing favorite hymns and Susan giving us some history of the hymns and of the hymnal. We appreciated having the words kindly provided for us. Vestry members Carolyn Taylor-Olson and Christopher Wesolowski supported our singing.
4. Delicious food from parishioners Cliff & Wylene Wood, Steve Guerriero, and Deb Jones & Lucia Osiecki (with gourmet presentation) served graciously by Cliff Wood, Rosie Wojcik and Jayne, Caleb and Clara Fritz. The portions were generous and elegantly served on our church china. We felt connected to earlier meals which had been a church tradition.

Thank you so much! It really lifted our spirits for the whole day and beyond!

We heard some people were not there because they didn't have a ride. Please let Jeanie Crosby in the church office know next time and we'll get you there. Don't miss it!

BISHOPS COMING AND GOING

We are blessed to know two bishops in our communion who in this year are on the move, coming and going.

Rev. Thomas Brown, a previous Rector at St. Michael's, is Bishop-elect of Maine. We were the first parish to call him as Rector (at age 29) and he served us for nine years. After consulting with Thomas about his liturgical needs as a bishop, we decided to gift Thomas a purple cassock. On June 22 of this year, we will present the purple cassock of Bishops to Thomas Brown as a gift from the parish of St Michael's in honor and remembrance of our time together. The Vestry is asking for donations toward our gift. The cassock will run anywhere from \$800 to \$1,000 and will be made by J&S Sewing in Newcastle, England. To make a gift toward Thomas' purple cassock, you may send a check to the Church office or place a check in the plate on Sundays made out to St. Michael's Episcopal Church with a memo saying "cassock".

Rev. Thomas Ely, Bishop of Vermont, has been with us for 17 years and is stepping into retirement. With a house in Newfane, he and Ann will be our neighbors in Southern Vermont.

Episcopal Churches throughout Vermont are collecting gifts to be given to Tom upon his retirement. We will collect gifts on behalf of the parish of St Michael's in conjunction with the Diocese of Vermont. Any amount is generous. To make a gift for Tom and Ann's retirement, you may make a check out to St. Michael's Episcopal Church with a memo saying "Ely." Checks may be sent to the Church office or placed in the plate on Sundays.

Let them be blessed.

FROM THE PRIEST FOR DISCERNMENT & DISCIPLESHIP

Duncan Hilton

Key Learnings from *Doing the Math of Mission: Fruits, Faithfulness, and Metrics*
by Gil Rendle

Given that the ministry of discernment and discipleship is an ‘experiment,’ as we near the end of this program year I’ve been wondering about how to measure the results of the ministry. Last year I sent out an online survey to discipleship group members and we also gathered all the groups for discussion and

reflection. Are there better methods for measurement? What exactly are the right questions to ask? Can discipleship even be measured? These were the questions I brought to my reading this month of *Doing the Math of Mission*. The author, Gil Rendle, is a senior consultant with the Texas Methodist Foundation. Here are three key takeaways from the book:

#1. Counting and Measuring Are Different. Rendle argues that too often in church we confuse counting and measuring. We tend to count resources and activities – new members, Sunday attendance, pledges, event attendance - but we don’t measure the outcome we want these resources and activities to accomplish. Counting questions are “How many, how often and how much”; measuring questions ask about change. One example of a question focused on measuring is, “Over the last year, how far have we progressed toward the difference that we believe God intends us to make.” (Rendle, p. 17)

#2 Measuring Requires Clear Descriptions of What Can be Different if God Gets Involved

Rendle argues that discipleship can be measured although the measurement may be qualitative, rather than

quantitative. The hard part, he argues, isn’t coming up with a method (he has a handful of suggestions about methods); rather, the hardest part of measuring a ministry is specifically describing the difference God is calling a community to make in this chapter of its life. Applying this to the ministry of discipleship and discernment, we can count how many people have been involved in discipleship groups and missional trainings and events, but more importantly we need to ask and answer with specificity, “What changes in conditions, attitudes or behavior are we attempting to effect in the people involved in the ministry?” and “How can we know that those changes have happened?” (Rendle, p. 27)

3. Plan Focused on Possibilities Rather than Problems

In order to inspire a church or community, Rendle contrasts the difference in motivating energy between questions focused on problems versus questions focused on possibilities. When focused on problems, one asks: “Why do we have this problem? What caused it? What are obstacles to solving it?” When focused on possibilities one asks, “What would it be like if the problem were solved? What would you see, hear and feel? Imagine the problem is solved. What has been gained?” (Rendle, p. 22) The second set of questions tends to draw out more energy and creativity.

I look forward to reflection and planning with you all this spring and trying to apply this wisdom to the ministry of discipleship, so that we can be clear about the fruits of the ministry to date, and make thoughtful changes for Year 3.

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER
FROM THE LIBRARY SHELVES

Symbolism in Liturgical Art
by LeRoy H. Appleton & Stephen Bridges
Charles Scribner's Sons New York 1959
5 ½ x 8 inches 120 pages

This practical handbook illustrates and explains the symbols most commonly used in Christian religious art and liturgical practice. This particular volume belonged to the Reverend John Norris under whose Rectorship the church was moved from Main Street and the Bradley wing constructed.

Rather than attempt to discuss all one hundred and thirty-four symbols encompassed, let us consider the symbols contained within one stained glass window at St. Michael's with which we all are familiar: the Folsom window above the altar. Mr. Folsom, the United States Representative to The Hague, had previously given the St. Michael window in the east wall. This chancel window he gave in memory of his mother in 1870 when the church was a mere thirteen years old. The three lancet windows and the small quatrefoil window in the peak are according to historian Paul Carnahan "...made with brightly colored pot metal glass combined with a more subdued grisaille for the background."

The authors state that symbols do not necessarily copy natural objects but express visually a truth for which many words would be required. That said, let us begin our consideration. The window's theme is the Eucharist. The central window's most prominent symbol is the Lamb of God clumsily bearing a Latin cross-emblazoned banner signifying the triumph of the Resurrection. Our Lamb, incidentally, has an undocked tail contrary to good contemporary agricultural practice.

In the side lancets are a pair of kneeling winged angels, presumably St. Michael. In the earliest centuries, the Divine Will was symbolized by the Hand of God. But angels as instruments of this Will almost entirely supplanted the Hand in later times. In the mid-nineteenth century, the principle of flight was not yet well understood and the angels' wings appear far too heavy for efficient lift-off. Further, the means of attachment is awkward and the wings are comprised of a substance

that appears akin to peanut butter. Be that as it may, a close scrutiny reveals a slight discrepancy between angels, a matched pair rather than book-ended duplicates.

St. Michael has his own cross, one with apple-shaped ends. But often the ends are depicted as trefoils suggesting the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. His cross appears throughout our window: in the roundels above and below the angels and above the lamb. Further, in the green background diamonds the cross is repeated.

The borders of the lancets depict branches from the Tree of Life (Genesis 2:9—"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food..."). To emphasize the Eucharistic theme, grapes adorn the branches and, in the central lancet, wheat sheaves are an added accompaniment—thus the wine and the bread.

The uppermost bosses depict the crown of thorns indicating the divinity of Christ.

When the church resided upon Main Street, it lacked the parish house and, therefore, the rising sun above Rattlesnake Mountain brilliantly illuminated the colors of the window as it does today the quatrefoil above in the peak. Whatever one might think of the alarming palette of colors employed in the Eucharistic window, the window then would have been, for better or worse, substantially more brilliant. The addition of the parish offices after the move to Bradley Avenue meant that the window thereafter must be artificially lit.

The inscription in clear glass against a black background states, for those whose schoolday Latin might be a touch fuzzy: "The death of His Saints is precious in the sight of The Lord." Presumably, it refers to the donor's mater.

Robert R. Anderson

NEWS OF THE PARISH

SUMMARY OF MARCH VESTRY MEETING

The members of the Vestry met on Thursday March 21, 2019. Reverend Mary Lindquist and eight members attended as well as the Treasurer and Secretary of the Vestry. Reverend Hilton Duncan and members of the Tag Sale Ministry also attended and gave updates. The Treasurer's report indicated that income is down but expenses are also down. One important highlight is that the church paid its highest monthly assessment to the diocese ever because of the high income received the previous month.

Dan Dobson and Liz Vick reported that the goals of the Tag Sale Ministry are to encourage fellowship, help people in need, grow the ministry and raise funds for outreach. Two tag sales are planned for this year. The first will be held on May 18 from 9 to 3 pm. The second is planned for the weekend before Columbus Day. Other activities including collaboration with the Outreach Ministry on a harvest dinner and a talent show are also being considered.

Reverend Duncan Hilton reported on the attendance at the Lenten Forum, Two-Way Prayer, Discernment evenings, and house blessings. Members of the Discernment and Discipleship meetings are engaged in raising funds for animal rescue, leading Morning Prayer, con-

necting with people who are isolated in the community, collaborating with the Community Bible Chapel to help people returning from prison and exploring living by the liturgical calendar, among other activities.

The Vestry reflected on topics discussed during the Vestry Retreat. One of the main themes that surfaced from that reflection was the importance of listening. The Vestry decided to follow through on that discussion by instituting a listening corner for parishioners to speak with Vestry members on the first Sunday of every month. Other topics discussed were difficult conversations and the Black Lives Matter sign.

Reverend Lindquist suggested the Vestry explore ways St. Michael's can be prepared to respond appropriately whenever disasters require a rapid response from the church. Mary also reported that Pastoral care currently includes attendance at the Elder Luncheon, exploring the possible start of a l'Arche community, and preparations for Holy Week and Easter.

Respectfully submitted,

Imogene Drakes

SUMMARY OF APRIL VESTRY MEETING

The Vestry met on April 11, 2019 for our monthly meeting.

- The meeting was opened with a time of reflections from the heart.
- Wayne reviewed the monthly Treasurer's report from March which was stable and encouraging.
- The Vestry engaged in a conversation to explore ways to have meaningful conversations about difficult topics.
- Mary provided the Rector's report. She will be on vacation from April 25th-30th.
- Carolyn provided the Warden's report. Vestry listening sessions will continue at coffee hour

after the 10:15 service on the first Sunday of each month. Please see Vestry members at the back of the Undercroft to express questions, concerns, or comments.

- Ricky gave a report from the Building and Grounds Meeting. Lots of projects are planned around the church for Spring and Summer. Discussions continue in regard to the best options for roof replacement in the future.
- The closing prayer was offered by Judy.

God's Blessings,

Mark Horton

NEWS OF THE PARISH

PHOTOS FROM ELDER LUNCHEON



NEWS OF THE PARISH

PHOTOS FROM SPRING CLEAN UP



VESTRY

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EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

MAY 2019 LECTIONARY

May 5

Acts 9:1-6, (7-20); Psalm 30,
Revelation 5:11-14, John 21:1-19

May 12

Acts 9:36-43, Psalm 23,
Revelation 7:9-17, John 10:22-30

**May 19**

Acts 11:1-18, Psalm 148,
Revelation 21:1-6, John 13:31-35

May 26

Acts 16:9-15; Psalm 67;
Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5;
John 14:23-29 or John 5:1-9

MAY CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

May 1	Holden McDowell
May 4	Carol Beninati, Bruce Landenberger
May 5	Bill Ames
May 6	Mark Mayer
May 7	Diane Pitcher, Beatrice Johnson
May 8	Opal Mayer
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

ANNIVERSARIES

May 2	Karren & Steven Meyer
May 24	Janet Brocklehurst & Sissi Loftin
May 27	Teri Robinson & Ross Kinney



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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