

The Guardian

SEPTEMBER 2019

FROM THE RECTORY

MARKED AS CHRIST'S OWN FOREVER

Yesterday, I met with the Ridgway family to help prepare them for the baptism of Oliver (4), Juniper (2), and Rosalind (9 months). I tried first of all to sit with Oliver and Juniper to talk a bit about baptism and about what in the world we would be doing with them in church on their baptism day. We talked about the water of baptism, how some people take a real bath and are submerged in water, while other people (like most of us) only get a few drops of water sprinkled on our head. I told them that in the winter the Altar Guild even heats the water for those who are baptized, though we thought that this wouldn't be necessary on September 15, when they will be baptized.

We then moved on to the special oil, called Chrism, with which I would anoint each of them. We decided that the Chrism, especially blessed by a bishop, smelled very good, even though it was a bit greasy. I told them that after I sprinkled them with water, I would dip my thumb in the Chrism and make the sign of the cross on their foreheads, saying, "You are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own forever." This mark, I said, is permanent, even though you can't see it. You will be marked forever at Christ's own.

This marking is my very favorite part of the baptismal service. The water part is beautiful too, but can be a little awkward as I usually have to concentrate on holding a baby while leaning over the font and scooping water. With the anointing, however, I can really look at the person's face and say these beautiful and holy words.

I remember these words at other times when I have the privilege of anointing people with prayers of healing or giving people ashes on Ash Wednesday. Even as I say "remember you are dust..." I remember they are

"marked as Christ's own." Sometimes the same people whom I have anointed or given ashes to become ashes themselves, in their deaths. And at their funerals, I remember. Marked as Christ's own. Returned to be with the One to whom they have been marked and to whom they belong.

We have a very old and beautiful stone baptismal font at St. Michael's that was made around the time when St. Michael's was built in the 1850s. A few years ago, we decided we would not be able to use this font anymore because it was so heavy and difficult to move. Indeed, the font was not made to move, but to stay in one place. However, through the many renovations of our church, it ended up needing to be moved.

The font has been living in the hallway between the Common Room and the Nave, and we have wondered what we should do with this historic and sacred vessel which has held the water of baptism for hundreds of our ancestors.

Recently, we have come up with the idea of placing the font (the top part that holds the water) at the entrance of St. Michael's Memorial Garden. I really love this idea because not only is it a way to continue to honor our history and the beauty of the font, but it makes so much sense theologically. We are marked as Christ's own in our baptisms and received as Christ's own in our deaths. We are planning to have a special blessing for the baptismal font and to remember those who are interred in our Memorial Garden on Sunday, September 15th at 9:30 am after a short forum about the Memorial Garden in the Meeting Room beginning at 9 am. We will then go to the church to celebrate the baptisms of Oliver, Juniper, and Rosalind at the 10:15 service.

KIDS & YOUTH OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

September 8 marks the beginning of our program year at St. Michael's! On that day between 9:15 and 10 am, there will be an Open House for parishioners, kids, parents and all who are interested in supporting and participating in St. Michael's ministry for children and youth. Come check out Godly Play, Youth Discipleship Group, the Choir Schools & more! There will be food, an art project for kids, play, bouncy house and balloons. Invite your friends who have children to come and check it out. We will also be commissioning/praying for the teachers and leaders during the 10:15 am liturgy. Please join us for this special day!



STM

**FUNERAL FOR LYNN BILLINGTON,
SEPTEMBER 7, 10 AM**

Lynn Billington died on August 16 after a brief and rapid decline from the effects of cancer. Lynn was very active at St. Michael's, serving on the Altar Guild, the Vestry and the Pastoral Care Team, to name a few. We will miss her gentle, kind presence in our midst. There will be a funeral at St. Michael's for Lynn on Saturday, September 7, at 10 am. A reception will follow in the Undercroft. All are welcome.

STM

**WANT TO BE A PART OF COSA
(CIRCLES OF SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY)?
TRAINING SEPTEMBER 13 - 14**

Following up on the exploration this past year about how to respond concretely to the opioid crisis as a Christian community, St Michael's is coordinating with the Greater Falls Community Justice Center to have a training for volunteers interested in participating in Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA). COSA volunteers "work in groups of three to five (plus a staff person) for a minimum of one year to provide mentoring and support for someone (a core member) as he or she transitions from prison to community." More information is available at <http://cjnvt.org/about-us/volunteers-needed/>. If you are interested but haven't yet signed up, let Duncan know. The training will happen the evening of Friday September 13 through the afternoon of Saturday September 14 in Bellows Falls.

NEWS OF THE PARISH

SAFE CHURCH TRAINING AT ST. MICHAEL'S, SEPTEMBER 14

Safe Church Training is required of all church volunteers who work with children and youth, as well as pastoral visitors. There will be a training at St. Michael's on Saturday, September 14, from 8:45 am - 3 pm.

Safe Church, a program in effect throughout The Episcopal Church, is grounded in the call to "seek and serve Christ in all persons" and to "respect the dignity of every human being," as outlined in our Baptismal Covenant. "Honoring Our Relationships," the title of the training curriculum, is a proven approach to building a safer church community.

You may register at <https://form.jotform.com/50365047404954>



ADULT FORUM SCHEDULE

It is September --Time to return to the classroom, even for the church! Below is a schedule of forums for September:

- September 15 – **"St. Michael's Memorial Garden: History, Theology and a Blessing."** Did you know that St. Michael's has a Memorial Garden where many of our parishioners' ashes are interred? You may have walked through it and not even known it! On this day we hear about the history of the Memorial Garden, then at 9:30 am we will walk out to the Garden for a special blessing and the internment of the ashes of Bob Michalke, one of the founders of the Memorial Garden.
- September 22 – **"Discipleship & Discernment: Year 3 and Beyond."** Come hear what is happening in our Discipleship & Discernment ministry in this third and final year of our three-year experiment. Led by Duncan Hilton.
- September 29 – **"The Consecration of the 11th Bishop of Vermont."** Hear about "the consecration weekend" from those who attended the Consecration and/or the clergy lunch with the Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry.

TICKETS FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE 11th BISHOP OF VERMONT

The Ira Allen Chapel and overflow spaces at the University of Vermont seat a total of well over 1,000 people so there will be ample seating for those who want to attend the consecration on Saturday, September 28. There will also be a professional online broadcast so parishes can organize local watch parties. There will be a clear announcement soon about the process for laypeople and the public to obtain tickets, which will be reserved on a first come, first served basis using the online site Eventbrite. We will send you more specifics about reserving tickets as soon as we have them.

For those planning to go to Burlington for the consecration, the doors at Ira Allen Chapel open at 9:15 am and guests must be seated by 10:15 am. The procession begins at 10:30 am, and the liturgy begins at 11:00 am. A light reception will follow in the Grand Maple Ballroom at the Davis Campus Center at approximately 1:30 pm.

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

A LETTER FROM THOMAS BROWN

Dear Friends,

Something your rector said, following the episcopal election in Maine, has stuck with me: “a congregation forms a priest” — and when I survey the decade that we had together, it’s so clear that Mary is absolutely right. Many of my closest teachers, and sometimes greatest challengers, now rest upon another shore and in a greater light.

I’m filled with a measure of gratitude for our ministry together and, even more, for God’s mission with which you’re engaged right now. When Tom and I joined you on Maundy Thursday, it was very clear to us that you are flourishing with God’s love. That wasn’t a surprise, only a blessed reminder of what’s always been true about you.

There was disappointment that I couldn’t invite the whole parish to attend the consecration in June. The tradition in Maine is to ordain and consecrate bishops in the cathedral in Portland, and I wanted as many people from Maine to be present as possible. Still, there were a goodly number of you, and they carried the prayers and best wishes of the whole congregation and, in some sense, all of the Diocese of Vermont. Your bishop-elect was here! Meanwhile, six weeks into this new ministry I’m slowly finding my way; I’ve put nearly 4000 miles on my new truck.

Here is a photograph of me in the purple cassock you had made for me. It’s taken outside the summer chapel in Kennebunk Beach on 28 July. It’s beautiful, and so long as I don’t eat much at coffee hours, it will last and fit me for the next 20 years. Every Sunday then I think of you—not only about our past but also, and especially, about your future as the people of God called to be St. Michael’s Church. Thank you for this generous gift, for your prayers and for your friendship. Tom and I look forward to seeing many of you on 28 September in Burlington as you welcome your own new bishop.



Faithfully in Christ,

Thomas

MUSIC IS ALIVE AT ST MICHAEL'S

Yes, it's true! We are truly blessed with the gift of music. Whether you participate actively in one of our programs or not, music touches most of our lives with a true power to connect us more deeply to the spirit of God and to one another. Read below to see what's happening! If you have any questions, or want to participate, please feel warmly welcomed to talk to me directly at church, or at dedellsusan@gmail.com, or at (802) 348-7735.

ST MICHAEL'S CHOIR (starting on Sunday September 15)

28 amazing adults and 7 experienced teenagers currently form the St. Michael's choir. We rehearse weekly on Sunday mornings at 8:45-10:15, with additional evening rehearsals scheduled throughout the season in preparation for major programs. A day-long retreat mid-winter helps form us spiritually and musically. The choir sings on a weekly basis starting mid-September through June, additionally singing the annual Advent Lessons and Carols, a major work during Holy Week, and occasional other services such as Evening Prayer and Taize. Although there are no formal auditions for the choir, prior musical experience and music literacy skills are recommended.

THE CHOIR SCHOOL PROGRAMS (starting on Thursday September 19)

- Teen Choir School: for singers 13-18, meets Thursday at 4:45-5:45. Prior musical experience highly recommended. This group will continue to expand musical skills in harmony, leadership, and ensemble.
- The Choir School: for singers 8-12, meets Thursday at 3:45-4:30 (social/snack time starting at 3:30). This group forms the foundation for building strong musical skills in areas of vocal production, music literacy, and interpretation and musicality. New singers are welcome!
- NEW: Little Squeaks: for beginning singers, 5-7, meets Thursday at 3:45-4:45 (social/snack time starting at 3:30). Choir School Alum Extraordinaire Jayne Fritz leads this group in song, movement, rhythm, and story.

DIOCESAN CONSECRATION CHOIR (Saturday September 28)

Even if you are not currently singing in one of the St. Michael's Choir programs, you are welcome to join others from across Vermont in a consecration choir that will sing in celebration of the consecration of Shannon MacVean-Brown as Bishop of Vermont. The music is a South-African style piece called "Freedom, Come", readily learned by almost everyone! There will be a rehearsal for this historic and joyful event here at St Michael's on Saturday, September 21 at 10:00 am. Everyone is welcome, but there are a couple of things to keep in mind.

- All singers must be capable of climbing stairs. The choir will be sitting in the balcony of Ira Allen Chapel, and there is no elevator to it, so individual mobility will be necessary.
- All singers must be in the balcony to rehearse the morning of the Consecration, (Saturday, September 28) at 8:30. In addition to the full choir, there will be lots of other musicians (gospel choirs, a brass quintet, a baroque ensemble), all of whom need to practice — so it will be a joyfully crazy morning! This means an early morning start for those of us here in the south, or a plan to stay closer the night before.

ST. MICHAEL'S FEAST DAY, SEPTEMBER 29

St. Michael's Feast Day will be celebrated on Sunday, September 29 (the actual day!) at both services. Please join us as we honor our Patron Saint and our life together as the Body of Christ called St. Michael's.

STM

**WELCOME BABY ATTICUS!**

Congratulations to Beth Ruane and Noah Coburn, new parents to Atticus Chance Coburn. Atticus was born in Arizona and adopted by Noah and Beth in mid-August. We are so happy to welcome him as the newest member of our church!

A LETTER FROM LUCIA & DEB

Dear Church Family—

Well we are now “Joyzee” girls, having officially landed here on August 3. That was only a few weeks ago, but it feels like months.

We would like to heartfully thank all of you for the fantastic send off you gave us after both church services in July. “Wow!” is all we can say. The hugs and well wishes, cards, food, decorations...all done with such love that we feel deeply. It was a teary goodbye, but when we are a family, it would be expected. We will miss all of you and feel we will carry you with us for a long time to come.

Thank you again for thinking of us in your caring way. May God bless each of you!

Love from

Lucia & Deb

YEAR 3 PLANS FOR THE DISCIPLESHIP AND DISCERNMENT MINISTRY



I love plans: making them, following them, and reflecting on them. And I sense that what has seemed to be most effective and most faithful about this ministry has not happened through careful planning but through commitment to wisdom summarized by Henri Nouwen: “Pay attention to the people God puts in your path if you want to discern what God is up to in your life.” I’m proud of how the gifts and passions of various individuals have shaped the outcomes of this ministry while we have also stayed true to the mission of exploring, creating, and reclaiming the practice of following Jesus in community in this particular time and place.

As we approach a season of planning, I am trying to honor both the importance of planning and the recognition that faithfulness is just as much about attention, people, and openness to change. I remember a line from a Christian author who described the commandments in the Christian life as “guideposts” rather than “hitching posts.” Perhaps it is right to approach planning in a similar vein – not as listing outcomes to be tied to, but rather as naming signs that will guide us. In that light, here are those signs as summarized by me and Mary in our proposal to the Diocese of Vermont for year 3 of this ministry.

- Follow through with the projects launched in year 2, including:
 - formation of a St. Michael’s team that partners with the Greater Falls Community Justice Center to support people transitioning out of prison and addiction through the creation of a St. Michael’s Circle of Support and Accountability (COSA) team
 - development of the Discernment for Lay People team and its practices
 - carrying out of Connection Constructor actions from its May 2019 gathering
- Focus collectively on one missional project that includes people beyond St Michael’s, perhaps starting a L’Arche community (www.larcheusa.org) in Vermont
- Engage in communal practice of the Daily Office and celebration of the major feasts and other occasions of the liturgical year
- Explore partnerships and training more broadly in the diocese, perhaps through satellite discipleship groups, Zoom trainings, and day-long retreats or trainings
- Continue with the discipleship groups while also facilitating a discernment process across groups about if and how they continue beyond year 3
- Create a transition plan at St Michael’s to ensure that the practices from the ministry can be continued beyond the Priest for Discipleship and Discernment’s tenure

ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH TAG SALE MINISTRY

An Update, August 2019

The date of the Fall Tag Sale is fast approaching -- Saturday, October 5, from 9AM to 2:00PM! The Tag Sale Ministry has been busy meeting throughout the summer, reflecting on lessons learned from the Spring Sale and planning to hopefully continue and make the Fall Sale another great success.

As we have met, we have been diligent to remind ourselves of the Ministry's mission and as we approach the Fall Sale, it is practical to review this commitment with the congregation.

The mission for the St. Michael's Tag Sale, as members of the Brattleboro and wider community, will be to inspire and reach out by:

- Raising funds to support church programs and local outreach.
- Creating the opportunity to build fellowship and community both within and outside the Church.
- Providing a service, especially to people in need, by recycling affordable, good quality clothing and household items.

Yes, there is always so much work to do. And some days can be trying, but the benefits to the community of our concerted efforts are incredible. We touch the lives of so many folks in the community, and the opportunity to build relationships as we stand side-by-side sorting or selling under the tent cannot be replaced.



A Call for Tag Sale Support

Please donate time on our sorting days if you are able, even if it is only occasionally.

The following are times when we will need all hands on deck:

- Haul-out Day; Saturday, September 28. Times to be announced.
- Monday, September 30 – Friday, October 4. Sorting and sale set-up.
- Friday, October 4; All day. Set up tents and stock, bringing all
- furniture in from storage areas and setting up in tents that day. (We want to minimize that effort typically done early Saturday AM.)
- Sign – up sheets will be set up as sale day approaches.

Calling all of St. Michael's with strong backs for Oct 4 + 5:

Please review your calendars. Much help will be needed all day, October 4 and October 5. Your assistance would be most appreciated. If you would like to let Daniel Dobson know now of your availability on either or both of these days, email him at dbdrunner@dobsongroupinc.com. Thank you.

Take a moment to reflect on the St. Michael's Tag Sale Mission and then mark your calendars. We will need everyone's help for this sale.

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

FROM THE LIBRARY SHELVES

Living Faith**By Jimmy Carter****Random House New York 1996****5 ½ x 8 ½ inches 256 pages**

H. L. Mencken wrote that the world would be a better place if everyone were a bit tipsy. Former President Carter would have disagreed. For him faith and Bible study would achieve the same or a better result. You, gentle reader, must decide for yourself.

Born into what Mencken contemptuously termed the Bible Belt, Carter's rural Georgia upbringing shaped his life and his values. The strength of his family's values and the support of his hometown neighbors for one another gave him the inner strength to endure failures which would have felled a lesser person.

As a mid-shipman at the Naval Academy he taught Bible classes to the children of officers and enlisted men stationed at Annapolis. After graduation he served as an officer aboard the USS Sea Wolf, one of the two nuclear-powered submarines being designed and built under the supervision of the legendary Admiral Hyman Rickover. On board, he conducted religious services while standing between the torpedoes. Upon returning home to Plains, Georgia to farm peanuts, he taught Sunday School as had his father before him.

He ascended from farming to business to politics (if that can be called an ascent for there is an old chestnut that states that politics is the highest aspiration of the second-rate man). He served as governor of Georgia and subsequently ran for president against Gerald Ford, a good man but tainted by his appointment to office by the disgraced Richard Nixon. Further, the public tires of political parties that linger overlong in office (witness Prime Minister Churchill after the war promptly kicked out by an ungrateful electorate) and, after almost a decade of Republicans, Jimmy Carter, a moderate Democrat, was elected president.

His term in office was a mixture of a few successes (notably the Camp David Accord between Israel and Pal-

estine) and mortifying failures. He suffered the humiliation of a one term presidency. Like Obama, he tried to persuade the country that economic malaise was the new reality. The country disagreed and elected presidents who thumpingly proved them both appallingly wrong. In foreign affairs, he was perceived by our enemies as weak and the mortifying Iranian hostage crisis which he could not resolve might have been his final undoing (the hostages were promptly released by the fearful Ayatollah when hard-nosed Reagan took office). Despite the crushing burden of the presidency, Carter faithfully attended Washington's First Baptist Church and occasionally taught an adult Bible class.

Long before equal rights became a national obsession, Carter believed that the races should have equal rights. He had grown up in Plains mingling with both races as a part of everyday living and he knew people as friends and neighbors regardless of skin color. Looking back upon his childhood, he was appalled that he once had accepted the prevailing attitude of separate but equal (which was nonsense in reality and in practice). It was not that he was ahead of his time, but that he had known better.

Strong family values and faith allowed his marriage to survive for he was too often separated from his wife as a naval officer and subsequently pre-occupied with the miseries of public office. But he and Rosalynn read verses from the Bible at bedtime and discussed how their reading applied to their marriage. Strong as family was to Carter, he could not escape the embarrassment caused by his carousing, loud-mouthed, beer-swilling brother Billy who operated a filling station in Plains and delighted the sleazy media with his behavior (a brewer even named a brand of beer for him). Which brings us back to Mencken's contention...

Robert R. Anderson

NEWS OF THE PARISH

SUMMARY OF THE AUGUST 15 VESTRY MEETING

Seven vestry members were present; Carolyn Taylor-Olson and Mark Horton were not present.

Meeting opened with a check in and reading led by Judy Davidson.

Wayne gave the Treasurer's report. Our income and pledges for July were below budget and so were operating expenses. Our overall expenses are in the negative due to paying an invoice from 2017. On the Treasurer's recommendation, the Vestry approved moving some of our endowment money to a different account where we would have a better interest rate. Also, based on the Treasurer's recommendation and reviewing the audit, the Vestry accepted the report from the audit committee.

The Vestry continued its conversation on the BLM sign. They discussed having more special meetings and having a recommendation for the congregation on this matter.

The latest listening session received feedback for the Vestry on a desire to have a recycling protocol and kitchen procedures to reduce our carbon footprint. The Rector gave a report including information on the Bishop-elect's consecration. The Rector also presented a grant application to the Episcopal Church of Vermont

to help support the Discipleship Ministry. The Vestry voted to approve the grant proposal.

Ricky, the Junior Warden, reported that safe church training is set for September 14 and most Vestry members will be in attendance. Also, he reported that the executive committee approved spending some money for tuition and books for our latest seminarian. The executive committee also approved printing of the updated church directory.

The Building and grounds committee reported it is getting two new doors and will be hanging those asap. A request came to improve the ramp inside the downstairs external door nearest the elevator.

Thank you cards were written.

The Vestry also talked about the upcoming church picnic. Judy and Janet will do the Vestry shopping for the picnic. Wayne and Bruce have agreed to work the grill again this year. Sunday School open house is set for September 8 and education programs will all begin on September 15, 2019.

Christy gave the closing prayer.



VESTRY

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EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

SEPTEMBER 2019 LECTIONARY

SEPTEMBER 1

Sirach 10:12-18 or Proverbs 25:6-7;
Psalm 112; Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16;
Luke 14:1, 7-14

SEPTEMBER 8

Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Psalm 1,
Philemon 1-21, Luke 14:25-33



SEPTEMBER 15

Exodus 32:7-14, Psalm 51:1-11,
1 Timothy 1:12-17, Luke 15:1-10

SEPTEMBER 22

Amos 8:4-7, Psalm 113, 1 Timothy 2:1-7,
Luke 16:1-13

SEPTEMBER 29

Amos 6:1a, 4-7; Psalm 146;
1 Timothy 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31

SEPTEMBER CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

September 3 Thad Bennett
September 4 Jacki Capponcelli
September 6 Ricky Davidson
September 9 Sarah Benton
September 11 Grace Xinqi Willingham
September 12 Margit Lilly
September 13 Iris Mayer
September 14 Jay Pomponio,
Kyle Capponcelli
September 15 Calvin Ronconi
September 16 Eleanor Horton
September 18 KJ White



September 19 Skyla Ragle,
Elise Burrows
September 20 Krista Burtis,
Ainsley Meyer,
Christian Olmstead,
Laura Panzer
September 21 Avery Bennett
September 22 Anne Montgomery,
Alix Fedoruk
September 25 Scott McElhinney
September 28 Corwin Elwell
September 30 Mary McCarthy

ANNIVERSARIES

September 3 Christine Triebert & Carol Ross
September 4 Becky & Robert Anderson
September 5 Alix & Michael Fedoruk
September 10 Kate & Andrew LeBlanc
September 11 Julie & Richard Cogliano
September 14 Judy & Jack Davidson
September 16 Margit & Jack Lilly
September 20 Marie & Bruce Lawrence
September 28 Judy & Bob Walker



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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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ST. MICHAEL'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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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