

The Annual Report

Of Ministry & Administration

for 2019

St. Michael’s Episcopal Church

Presented at the

Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 26, 2020

16 Bradley Avenue, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

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**Parish Staff**

The Reverend Mary D. Lindquist, *Rector*

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

Ms. Jeanie Crosby, *Parish Administrator*

Ms. Susan Dedell, *Director of Music*

Mr. John Laamanen, *Sexton*

Ms. Darlene Rutnik, *Financial Administrator*

The Reverend Thaddeus Bennett*, Priest Associate*

The Reverend Alfred Cramer, *Priest Associate*

The Reverend Jean R. Smith, *Priest Associate*

The Reverend Phillip Wilson, *Priest Associate*

**Wardens & Vestry**

Ms. Carolyn Taylor-Olson*, Senior Warden, class of 2021*

Mr. Ricky Davidson*, Junior Warden, class of 2022*

Ms. Janet Brocklehurst, *class of 2020*

Mr. Mark Horton, *class of 2020*

Ms. Jeanette Landin, *class of 2020*

Ms. Imogene Drakes, *class of 2021*

Mr. Christopher Wesolowski, *class of 2021*



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**St. Michael’s Episcopal Church**

Brattleboro, Vermont

**Annual Meeting of the Parish**

**Sunday, January 26, 2020**

**Agenda**

Call to Order

Annual Slide Show

Opening Prayer

Verification of Quorum

Appointment of Clerk of the Meeting

Minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting

Reports Received by Title

Report from Rector and Acknowledgements

Report about the Discernment and Discipleship Ministry

Review of proposed 2020 budget

Report of the Nominating Committee

Candidates for Vestry & for Delegates to Diocesan Convention

Adjournment

Annual Meeting MinutesSt. Michael’s Episcopal Church
January 27, 201912 PM Undercroft, St. Michael’s Episcopal Church

1. **Call to Order and Opening Prayer** (Mary Lindquist, Rector)

The meeting was called to order by the Rev. Mary Lindquist at 12PM. The congregation watched the traditional slideshow of the year’s events. It followed with an opening prayer by Mary.

1. **Verification of Quorum** (Mary)

There was a count taken of 74 adult members present. Mary declared a quorum.

1. **Appointment of Clerk for 2019 Annual Meeting** (Mary)

Mary asked for a MOTION to appoint Joanne Patalano as clerk for the annual meeting. The MOTION was moved by Jeff Hiam, seconded by Ruth Tilghman and passed unanimously.

1. **Minutes of the 2018 Annual Meeting** (Mary)

Mary asked for a MOTION to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2018 Annual Meeting. The minutes were included in the 2018 Annual Report. The Annual Report was distributed through the website and in hard copy at the meeting. The MOTION was MOVED by Nancy Barber, seconded by Judy Davidson and passed unanimously.

1. **Reports Received by Title** (Mary)

Mary pointed out that the Ministry and Committee reports (listed in Appendix A below) were part of the Annual Report. She elicited questions and comments about the reports. There were none. Mary asked for a MOTION that these reports be received by title. The MOTION was moved by Fred Bump, seconded by Laura Andrews and passed unanimously.

1. **Report from Rector and Acknowledgements** (Mary)

Mary expressed thanks, appreciation and gratitude to:

* Judith McBean, outgoing Vestry Sr. Warden, applauding her leadership during sabbatical.
* Lynn Billington (not present), outgoing Vestry member, for her open-hearted service.
* John Byrnes (not present), outgoing Vestry member for his thoughtful hard work.
* Joanne Patalano, outgoing Vestry clerk, for her timely and efficient skills in minute-taking.
* Wayne Cook for outstanding financial stewardship.
* Anne Cook (not present) and Lucia Osiecki for their direction of the successful tag sale ministry.
* The sabbatical team (none present) for creatively planning group workshops and events.
* Reverends Jean Smith and Phillip Wilson for shepherding the congregation during sabbatical.
* Rev. Duncan Hilton for implementing a creative and productive Ministry for Discipleship and Discernment (MDD).
* Susan Dedell for her extraordinary music ministry.
* John Laamanen, sexton, for his efficient dedication to maintenance of the church.
* Jeanie Crosby, parish administrator, for going beyond-the-call of duty and bringing her interpersonal skills in working effectively with ministry leaders and teams.

Mary said that the agreement to support the MDD, Duncan Hilton, is half-way through. It began on July 1, 2017. She informed the group that the Vestry will review its support and commitment to this ministry in the upcoming year.

Mary announced the appointments of:

* Carolyn Taylor-Olson as the new Vestry Senior Warden.
* Carol Beninati as the new Vestry clerk.
* Judith McBean as the new assistant Treasurer.

1. **Ministry for Discernment and Discipleship (MDD)** (Rev. Duncan Hilton)

Duncan gave a brief report on MDD. Full reports about these ministries and committees are in the Annual Report. Duncan expressed gratitude to those in his leadership teams and to Mary for her trust and support. Duncan invited two team leaders, Cary Gaunt and Dan Dobson, to share their experiences.

Cary spoke briefly on her participation on the Discernment for the Layperson team and on the Missional Leadership workshops. Daniel Dobson spoke about his experience with the Future of the Tag Sale team and his involvement with the Missional leadership workshops. Both expressed the rewards they received personally and in serving the community.

1. **Proposed 2019 Budget** (Wayne Cook)

Wayne Cook, Treasurer, presented the Draft Budget 2019 dated 1/21/19. The basics of the budget were reviewed at an open meeting on 1/27/19 at 9AM. Wayne highlighted the successful pledge campaign. He went over the payment type options. The most efficient methods are automatic bill pay and bank-to-bank auto transfer.

1. **Rock Point Campaign Update** (Judith)

Judith briefly updated the congregation on the Rock Point campaign. The church pledged $20,000. To date, the church has received about $8,000 in pledges towards the campaign; $6000 paid to date. The balance will come out of the church budget.

1. **Report of the Nominating Committee** (Judith McBean)

Judith McBean spoke on behalf of the Vestry Nominating Committee. The Vestry nominated three candidates to the Vestry. They are Judy Davidson, Ricky Davidson and Christy Fritz (not present). Mary asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were none. Mary asked for a MOTION to accept and elect the slate of the three nominees for 3-year terms. The MOTION was moved by Joyce Morgan, seconded by Laurie Palmer and passed unanimously.

1. **Candidates for Vestry and for Delegates to the Diocesan and Bishop’s Election Conventions** (Mary)

Mary presented the recommendations for delegates to the 2019 Annual Diocesan Convention on October 26, 2019 and the Special Convention for the Election of the 11th Bishop of Vermont on May 18, 2019. The candidates for delegates to both conventions are Bruce Lawrence and Jenny Karstad. Mary asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were none. Mary asked for a MOTION to accept and elect the slate of candidates for delegates to both conventions. The MOTION was moved by Nancy Barber, seconded by Shirley Hodgdon and passed unanimously

The alternates for Diocesan Convention are Anne Cook, Greg Lesch and Janet Brocklehurst. Carolyn Taylor-Olson, Vestry Sr. Warden will also attend as a delegate.

1. **Adjournment**

A MOTION was made by Rick Melanson to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Josh Fritz and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:54 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Joanne Patalano, Clerk

Appendix:

**Reports Received by Title (Agenda Item # 5)**

RECTOR’S REPORT

WORSHIP

* Altar Guild
* Sacramental Healing
* Music Ministry

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

* Christian Formation Team/Adult Education
* Minister of Discernment & Discipleship
* Discernment & Discipleship Leadership Team
* Christian Formation for Children and Youth
* Godly Play
* Youth Forum
* Teen Discipleship Group
* Contemplative Christianity

MISSION & MINISTRY

* Outreach Ministry
* Pastoral Care Ministries
* Social Justice Ministry
* Schroeder Fund Committee
* Poetry Writing Group
* Prison Ministry
* Buildings and Grounds
* Sabbatical Planning Committee
* Stewardship Team

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

* Vestry Report
* Treasurer Report
* Endowment Committee
* Nominating Committee

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**Rector’s Report**

**Get to the Balcony**

*Looking back at 2019*

There is a leadership adage that helps me think about my role as rector of St. Michael’s: Get to the balcony. The idea is that as a leader you can’t just be on the dance floor. Sometimes you have to pull away from the action, get to the balcony and see things from a larger perspective. Or as Walt Whitman described it, a leader needs to be “both in and out of the game.” While much of my vocation means being involved in the day to day tasks of the church, I am also called to step back, see the wider perspective and “get to the balcony.” And writing a reflection about the year that has passed is definitely a balcony moment!

So instead of listing off things we have done or events that have happened this year, I want to share some of the subtle and not so subtle things I have noticed.

* **The impact of the Discipleship and Discernment Initiative**. In November, we conducted a number of Small Group Conversations in an attempt to understand what the impact of the Discipleship and Discernment Initiative has been. There is a separate and more detailed report about the findings contained in the Annual Report, but I want to share some of my insights gained from these conversations and from my own observations.
	+ I’ve noticed a **shift in culture** and community self-understanding. The words “discernment,” “experiment” and “discipleship” are not just part of our vocabulary as a congregation, but also part of who we are. Our understanding of listening for God’s call in our individual lives and as a congregation has deepened over these last 2.5 years and it affects the way we make decisions and think about who we are as a faith community.
	+ I believe that this way of experiencing ourselves as disciples who have gifts that we are called to share has supported the formation of many leaders within our community. The **increase in** **lay leadership** was noted in the Small Group Conversations and it has been vital to have such a skilled Minister for Discipleship & Discernment (Duncan Hilton) to offer support for emerging leaders of all ages.
	+ There is a **deep path** that has emerged in our parish for those who are called to it. There are opportunities for prayer and formation every day of the week and sometimes multiple times a day. Providing so many opportunities for devotion and community is a fruit of this ministry; while Sunday mornings are important to us, there are many other ways to connect than Sunday morning.
	+ I’ve noticed an **energetic shift** in the congregation. Not only does it feel like people at St. Michael’s have more energy to share (noted in the Small Group Conversations), but the capacity for the congregation to sit in silence, to focus with attention, to allow for the deeper rhythms of the Holy Spirit to emerge has definitely increased in the last few years. There is also more willingness for people to share from their own experiences of God within a worship setting.
* **Tikkun olam.** This is a Hebrew expression that means “repair the world.” The Vestry has been very engaged in finding ways for us to manifest our faith with actions in our community and in the world. We had a very important conversation centered around the Black Lives Matter sign last summer which made us aware of both the deep sorrow we experience in struggling with the brokenness of our world and our deep desire to act as a community to bring healing and hope. The conversation about mission continues to engage us, as there seems to be a movement within St. Michael’s for collective action aligning with faith.
* **Playfulness**. There seems to be an uptick in fun or fun events offered. There have been the “Langlican” bowling outings, “Summer Fun” offered for kids last summer, and the Elder Luncheons which were offered three times in 2019. It is good to be together in community with no agenda but to enjoy each other!
* **Saying goodbye, saying hello**. We have had to say goodbye to some very precious people this year who have moved away: Doug & Mimi Lilly, Deb Jones & Lucia Osiecki, Wayne & Anne Cook. It has been difficult for us to say goodbye to these beloved people who have done so much for our church. In addition, we said goodbye to Priest Associate extraordinaire Thad Bennet and to Tom Ely as the Bishop of Vermont. We are fortunate however, that we have also been able to say “hello” to many new people who have joined our congregation. And, the Episcopal Church in Vermont elected it first African American Bishop, Shannon MacVean-Brown, who will continue to lead our diocese in new ways.
* **The Daily Office**. There has been a bit of an Anglican revival at St. Michael’s in the last couple of years or so. It started with offering Evening Prayer and Compline on occasion, then grew into a commitment to do Morning Prayer every weekday during the season of Lent. As Lent was coming to an end, those of us who were practicing Morning Prayer didn’t want it to end, so we kept on through the spring, then the summer and now the winter. We are re-discovering the gift of the Book of Common Prayer and the gift of developing a daily praying community.

**Thank you**

* Thank you to Carolyn Taylor-Olson who served as Sr. Warden for 2019. Carolyn did such a great job, she will continue to serve as Sr. Warden in 2020! Carolyn has led the Vestry with immense skill, passion and prayerfulness. She was able to navigate some tough conversations and has made the Vestry Listening Corner (listening to parishioners on Sunday mornings) an indispensable part of our ministry together.
* Thank you to Ricky Davidson, who was called on at the last minute to run for Vestry and was immediately elected Jr. Warden. Ricky has been a wonderful and faithful presence on the vestry, bringing a deep background in boards and nonprofits as well as a great sense of humor and warmth.
* Thank you to Janet Brocklehurst, Mark Horton and Jeanette Landin, our outgoing Vestry members. You each have brought tremendous gifts for ministry and leadership to the Vestry. And wow, did a lot happen these last three years! We will miss you greatly.
* Thank you to Wayne Cook, our treasurer in his final year of service at St. Michael’s. Wayne was a faithful and detail-oriented treasurer and we are tremendously grateful for his stewardship of St. Michael’s finances.
* Thank you to Bruce Lawrence who said YES to becoming St. Michael’s new treasurer. It is no small task to take on the oversight of our financial life, but Bruce has been diligent and thoughtful in growing into this position. We are so grateful for his commitment to St. Michael’s.
* Many thanks to Carol Beninati who has served as our vestry clerk this year. Carol has been a wonderful clerk—dedicated, fast, efficient, accurate and fun to have at our Vestry meetings!
* Thank you to Daniel Dobson and Liz Vick who fearlessly stepped into the leadership of St. Michael’s Tag Sale Ministry this year. Daniel and Liz brought amazing skill, creativity, openness and dedication to this ministry. Well done!
* Thank you to Jeanie Crosby who supports me and St. Michael’s way above and beyond the call of duty. She manages so much – from offering a listening ear and sage advice, to editing the newsletter to figuring out who to call when there is a leak, a beeping alarm or no heat!
* Thank you to our Priest Associates - Jean Smith, Phillip Wilson, Thad Bennett and Al Cramer. St. Michael’s is so enriched by their ministry – preaching, celebrating, pastoral care, adult formation, social justice, prayer and more.
* Thank you to Duncan Hilton for leading us in ways that have so deepened our faith and relationships to one another and to the community at large. Thank you for the gift of being part of the creation and nurture of a L’arche Community in Southern Vermont and for the passion, dedication and support in helping us listen for God’s call that has made such a difference to our congregation.
* Thank you to Susan Dedell for her spirited and masterful musical and pastoral leadership at St. Michael’s. Her creativity, openness and sense of adventure inspire me and the rest of the parish. Thank you to all who with Susan offer their gifts for music that makes our worship deeper and more radiant.
* Thank you to John Laamanen for your faithful and dedicated service to St. Michael’s - for shoveling, cleaning, mopping, setting up and taking down and so much more. Thank you for showing up at all hours of the day and night to help us with our ministry. St. Michael’s would not be the same without you!
* Thank you to Darlene Rutnik our dedicated and wise bookkeeper. Thanks for keeping us organized. and paying our bills on time!
* God has blessed us richly this year and it is my hope that we continue to grow together in our trust and our love of God through our ministry in Christ’s name.

Yours in Christ, Mary

 **Worship**

The Holy Eucharist was celebrated on 52 Sundays.

There were 60 weekday celebrations of the Holy Eucharist.

During 2019 we offered 52 weekly Contemplative Services Thursdays at 5:30 pm and 52 sessions of Saturday morning Centering Prayer.

There were 5 baptisms in 2019: Ruth Venman-Clay; Oliver, Juniper and Rosalind Ridgway; Rowan Eklund.

There were 10 Confirmations: Christy Fritz, Clara Fritz, Caleb Fritz, Jonah Johnson, Kierstan Landin, Linda Marcille, Don Marcille, Margery McCrum, Alexander Meima, Nancy Tierra and Brian White.

There was 1 person received into the Episcopal Church: Megan Buchanan

There were no Marriages celebrated at St. Michael’s in 2019*.*

Home Communion was conducted 26 times.

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

Services were held at Springfield Prison 15 times, 8 of which included Holy Communion. There were a total of 103 inmates at the services over 2019.

The Burial office was conducted on 5 occasions, Ronny & Christopher Johnson, Robert Michalke, Lynn Billington, Lois Avery and Sumiko Mansfield.

Morning Prayer was prayed daily since the beginning of Lent, (115 times), Compline was prayed twice a month, plus once a week during Lent(29 times), and Evening Prayer was prayed at least 3 times in 2019.

There were many special services: St. Bridget’s Day, All Saints’ Taize Service, Advent Lessons and Carols, The Festival of Lights, The Longest Night.

Average Sunday attendance in 2019 was 144.

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**Reports from Worship Ministries**

**Altar Guild**

Our former Rector and new Bishop of Maine, Thomas Brown, wrote the following: “As a member of the Altar Guild, you have been called to a particular ministry that is both essential to the community’s worship, and beneficial to your own prayer life and spirituality. In short, serving on the Altar Guild places you at the very center, the heart, of this parish. Your commitment enables the rest of the parish to praise God, and that is a primary aspect of our Christian Faith.” I think these words are a summation of our ministry.

St. Michael’s Altar Guild consists of about 20 members that serve in various roles. Again this year, we had 2 work bees which involved cleaning, polishing, and readying the church for Christmas and Easter. Business meetings followed with an extra business meeting in September with the team leaders. Instead of the usual purple vestments and altar hangings during Lent we chose a markedly simple setting.

We lost 2 dear members of the Altar Guild in August - Lynn Billington who died and Lucia Osiecki who moved to New Jersey. They were both dedicated members who are sorely missed. We are very fortunate to have 2 new members - Marisa Birri and John Byrnes. A hearty welcome goes out to both of you. The end of the year we went from 5 teams to 4 teams increasing the team members from 3 to 4 members. This will allow for away time and other reasons. Thank you to Caroline Hammerlund for taking over the Wednesday services and to Mary Carnahan for training her and being a back up.

*Jane Sbardella and Craig Newbert*

**Sacramental Healing**

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

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

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

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

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

We have a yearly retreat for discernment and recommitment. We offered an Adult Forum on Healing in April 2018.

We have a shared leadership structure where individual team members take responsibility for arranging meetings, minutes, and other administrative tasks on a quarterly basis. Our current members include: Megan Buchanan, Janet Cramer, Robin White-Diamondstone, Judith Junkins, Greg Lesch, Jeff Lewis, Margit Lilly, and Carolyn Taylor-Olson. Sarah Benton was with us for part of this year as well as Jean Brodie who joins us in discernment.

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

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

**Music at St. Michael’s**

Another banner year for all!

St. Michael’s has an outstanding adult choir, with 30+ members on the full roster and an average Sunday attendance averaging 20-25 people. The St. Michael’s Choir rehearses every Sunday morning during the program year from 8:45-10:15, with additional rehearsals scheduled periodically in the evening or as a weekend retreat. This past year we added a couple of very meaningful programs to our calendar: we sang a setting of the St. John Passion on Palm Sunday; had two extra Taize services; and did a very beautiful Advent Lessons and Carols which included the O Antiphons for the first time. The choir members are diverse in age (including some of the senior members of the teen choir school), theological points of view (what lively conversations can happen!), and personal backgrounds just to name some of the most obvious things that individuate each person.  But there is a true unity of purpose and intent and a genuine acceptance and love amongst all, which is a sign of the Holy Spirit working in and amongst us.  Looking at the host of red robes at the communion rail, I am often overwhelmed by a sense of joy and gratitude for the choir as a whole as well as a deep fondness for each person.

The Choir Schools of St. Michael’s had a terrific past year, with a total of 30 different young people participating in 2019. We now have three “levels”:  Teen Choir; the Choir School; and — new this year — a program for very young kids called “Little Squeaks”.  The Squeaks are beautifully led by Choir School alum Jayne Fritz.  In addition to learning and singing choral music of all kinds, participating in the annual Festival of Lights, and occasionally singing on a Sunday morning,  the two upper levels of choir school staged a wonderful production of  “Out of the Lion’s Mouth”.  This coming spring, look for another great production, “The Man who Defied God.” The Choir School is open to all children who love to sing, regardless of church affiliation, and I am grateful that our parish supports this outreach to provide spiritually nourishing music to young people. I am truly joyful as I witness the growth in musical skills, leadership, teamwork, and community of each member of the Choir School at both age levels.

For all of this bounty, I give thanks, knowing that all of this is made possible by God, whose power working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.   *Susan Dedell*

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**Reports from Christian Formation**

**Christian Formation/Adult Education**

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

Mission Statement

The Adult Forums will offer a diversity of topics covering:

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

In the context of:

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

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

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We take this opportunity to thank Chris Triebert (who stepped back a year ago and we forgot to acknowledge her) and Benson Bobrick (who recently resigned) for their active contributions to the work of the Committee and are pleased to have added Nancy Ames and Zach Young to our roster.

Our forums leaders are our clergy, our parishioners, and guest speakers. What follows is a summary of our topics for the year September 2019 to February 2020.

2019: St. Michael’s Memorial Garden, with Mary Lindquist; Discipleship Year 3, with Duncan Hilton & his team; Report on Consecration of our new Bishop Shannon (Clergy and parishioners who attended); The Role of Animals in our Spiritual Lives, with Thad Bennett; Asylum Seekers at our Southern Border, with guest Sharon Lehmann and parishioner Brian Morgan; VT Interfaith Action Group, with guest Daniel Quipp; Water 3, with Bill & Nancy Ames; Controlling One’s Addiction, with Susan Avery and guest; Talk with Bishop Shannon; The Continuing Racial Divide, with Phillip Wilson; an Advent series with Adwoa Lewis-Wilson.

2020: The Church Directory, with Annamarie Pluhar; and What it Means to be an Episcopalian, with Duncan Hilton and Panel.

We sincerely thank all our presenters this year and all in our parish for your enthusiastic participation in the Sunday Adult Forums. Our speakers have been a good mix of clergy, parishioners, and guests and their topics compelling. We will continue our pursuit of the topics listed above in our Mission Statement.

Please speak to any committee member if you have any suggestions for topics or speakers.

Respectfully submitted, *Bill Ames, Nancy Ames, Nancy Barber (chair), Mary Lindquist, Annamarie Pluhar, Ruth Tilghman, Phillip Wilson; Zack Young*

**Minister of Discernment & Discipleship**

In the fall of 2017, the Discipelship and Discernment leadership team at the time ( Megan Buchanan, Christy Fritz, Jeff Hiam, the Rev. Duncan Hilton, Darcey Mercier) drafted the following mission statement:

*The St. Michael’s Discipleship Ministry is an experimental movement made up of individuals called to explore, create and reclaim the practice of following Jesus in community in this particular time and place. Our hypothesis is: if we draw on the scriptures, tradition, reason (12-step group structure principles, community organizing principles, Christian history) we can create a ministry that will: 1) Manifest the fruits of the Spirit in individuals (Galatians 5:22) - Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control; 2) Deepen relationships with God and with other people inside and outside the parish; 3) Form new leaders and ministries inside and outside the church.*

In 2019 the mission has stayed the same although the leadership has changed. Megan and Darcey stepped off the team in June and Adwoa Lewis-Wilson joined over the summer. Below is a description and reflection on the ministry in 2019 based on the five elements of the ministry: 1) Disciplemaking, 2) Mission, 3) Shared Leadership, 4) Collective Genius (Drawing on the wisdom of many), 5) Communitas (Embracing liminal spaces – inward and outward).

**Disciplemaking**

Through the first half of 2019, all of six of the discipleship groups that formed in year continued to meet. In the spring of 2019, one group decided to stop meeting; meanwhile the teenagers created a second group. Thus, the overall number of groups remains at six. One group meets weekly; others meet twice/month or monthly. Participation has remained essentially steady over the last two years – some groups lost members and others added members. Each group has 4-8 core members with a current total of 35 core members across all the groups. Another 33 people have visited a group 1-3 times over the last two years. The biggest impact of the ministry continues to be the depth of the relationships that have formed through creating a space where people can share intimately about their lives. Groups have adapted the meeting liturgy in many different ways while generally sticking to the basics of the format: preamble, sharing from the heart, and reflection on spiritual disciplines.

Beginning in Lent 2019, a small group of people committed to praying Morning Prayer together daily in the chapel at 8 am. The group committed to continuing this practice after Easter and continues. Attendance has ranged from one to eight on any given day with an average of 4-5 people. Other activities have also focused on worship and formation. Megan organized a St. Brigid’s Day service. Adwoa created an Advent Booklet containing reflections from contributors across the parish. Christy has made “worship bags” with resources for families to celebrate Lent, Ordinary Time, and Advent at their homes. During Holy Week, Darcey created a Holy Thursday Seder. The team also organized a Holy Saturday service and a Maundy Thursday Nightwatch vigil. The Wednesday discipleship group leads Compline for the wider community when they meet twice each month.

**Mission**

In 2019 this element of the ministry – exploring how to support, bless, and celebrate the work God is doing already in the wider community – developed new programs and sustained previous ones. Three missional trainings in 2018 led to a culminating missional training in January 2019 where participants learned the practices of praying the neighborhood, public narrative, 1:1 relationship-building, team-building, strategy, and creating an effective action.. Out of this training, four teams formed: an opioid crisis response team focused on recruiting volunteers for Circles of Support and Accountability; an animal rescue team focused on fundraising and volunteer recruitment for local shelters; a Connection Constructor Team focused on building relationships with isolated people in the community through matching members of the parish and isolated people around shared gifts and interests; and a tag sale team focused on fundraising through putting on a tag sale. Three people from St. Michael’s, including myself, continue to participate weekly in a Circle of Support and Accountability group at the social justice center in Bellows Falls.

In the summer of 2019, based on relationships that had deepened through missional training and discipleship groups, the team decided to focus missional energy on exploring developing a L’Arche community in Vermont. Including people from St. Michael’s and the wider community, social events in August, October, November, December of 2019 and January 2020 (e.g. karaoke, singalongs) have involved 25-35 people. A smaller group has committed to meet regularly in the winter and spring of 2020 to enter the next stage of L’Arche reflection and discernment while also continuing to convene the social events.

Other activities have continued from the previous year: celebrating the Eucharist monthly at the Shell Gas station on Canal Street and singing hymns monthly with Peter Johnson and others at the Gathering Place.

**Shared Leadership and Collective Genius**

Beyond the Discipleship and Discernment leadership team and the missional teams, an important part of shared leadership (ministering in teams) and collective genius (drawing on the wisdom of many for guidance and inspiration) has been the work of the Discernment for Lay People Team (DLT). This group first met in the spring of 2018 to explore how to teach and practice discernment in the parish. During Lent of 2019, they created a 5-week teaching series based on Ignatian practices. Over the summer they led a teaching series on various spiritual disciplines supportive of discernment. In December they offered a series of evening dinners and workshops on praying with the imagination and the Advent stories. They are in the midst of planning a retreat for January 2020.

**Communitas**

This element is about embracing thresholds, both inner and outer. Along with the aforementioned Nightwatch and discernment retreat, the ministry has done multiple house blessings for people as they move into a new home. The team has also recognized the importance of play and embracing the threshold between prayer and play. Adwoa has hosted two “Play ‘N’ Pray” events at her home. Twice in 2019 the ministry organized “Lane-glican” outings, parish-wide Sunday trips to Brattleboro Bowl.

**What’s Next**

I’m proud of how the friendships formed in discipleship groups have led organically to missional activity as well as more frequent prayer in community. I’m proud of the many types of spaces we’ve created – deep and discerning; playful and irreverent; worshipful. I hope that this continues in the final chapter of my time as Priest for Discipleship and Discernment at St. Michael’s. The focus for this winter and spring will be facilitating a collective discernment process around the future of the discipleship groups; leading the L’Arche Exploration through the Reflection stage in conversation with the national office; exploring training and partnership opportunities across the diocese related to the DLT; and codifying ministry practices so that they can be continued at the parish beyond my tenure.

**Small Group Conversations Summary - Fall 2019**

Review Committee of Christy Fritz, Judy Davidson, Jeff Lewis

Advising: Mary Lindquist, Jeanie Crosby

Overview:

In November 2019, Small groups convened across St. Michael’s parish membership to comment on the state of the parish in the recent past and since the Ministry of Discernment & Discipleship (MDD) began two and a half years ago. The comments will help the Vestry and Rector prepare for the near future. Duncan Hilton, specifically called to launch this ministry, has a three-year term, substantially supported by external grant funds, that ends in June 2020. These conversations and the subsequent deliberations of the Vestry and the Rector are intended to help prepare the ground for financial and program planning in the coming year.

85 people participated in groups of about 6, plus a facilitator and a scribe. The total notes run to 49 pages. We have also prepared a collation of key quotes organized by the interview questions to provide a flavor of the discussions. The Review committee has prepared this document to summarize the major points from our perspectives—to ‘sugar down’ the 50 pages of notes to the sweetest syrup.

* Broadly, people noted, whether they described the timing or not, that the parish mood has picked up in energy and lightened in tone in the past few years. Activities of the sabbatical period were mentioned along with the MDD launch and Duncan’s arrival. Most people were not focused on the connection of the sabbatical, Duncan’s arrival, and the MDD; it all feels natural and flowing.
* As an interesting historical parallel, some members of many years noted that there were tri-annual small group meetings for the purpose of evaluation and re-purposing during Paul Thompson’s ministry and a lot of small group opportunities including the Cursillo movement, which gained strength in the 80’s.
* There were no worries expressed about our financial capability to do whatever we determine to do.
* Many people commented approvingly on the active presence of children from infants to teenagers and how that had grown in the last few years.
* Time and again, people noted music was noted as both filling personal spiritual needs and as an attraction to others.
* Worship, the liturgy, is a key focus for many people. Sunday morning services and other worship opportunities are a touchstone for their week. Similarly, many noted positively the increased variety of worship experiences including Morning Prayer, Compline, Vespers, Holy Week, St. Brigid’s day.
* Prayer was similarly mentioned as an increasing opportunity and focus from the Healing Team to Discipleship Groups.
* Lay leadership of so many programs was described as a great and rising strength.
* Particular notice was given to intergenerational interaction for teens and elders.
* There was widespread appreciation for Mary’s leadership, presence and preaching.
* There was strong awareness that the additional professional leadership Duncan has brought to St. Michael’s is key to gains of the last few years.

We end with the observation the while people liked BEING who we are now, they were also aware that we are BECOMING new. This gentle tension, a ‘both/and’ not an ‘either/or’, describes a congregation in personal and community discernment about our place and places in the world. We are not done yet.

Thank you. *Christy, Judy and Jeff*

 **Christian Formation for Children and Youth**

Christian Education for children and youth continues to be a strong and important ministry at St. Michael’s. Here are some changes that happened this year: The Youth Forum that met in the Spring was changed to a new class at a new time: Holy Mayhem for middle school and upper elementary kids that meets during the first half of the 10:15 am church service. In addition, a second Teen Discipleship Group was started and we offered Sunday summer activities for kids called Summer Fun.

**Godly Play**

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

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

This year we have had between three and ten young people at Godly Play. The stories follow the liturgical year, with Old Testament stories often told in the Fall and Parables told after Easter. Of course, the children hear Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week and Easter stories.

Storytellers and doorkeepers this year included Christy Fritz, Jayne Fritz, Josh Fritz, Susan Heimer, Annamarie Pluhar, Rosie Wojcik, Miranda Smith, Rich Cogliano, Jesse Ridgeway and Nancy Waldron.

Respectfully submitted, *The Godly Play Team*

**Summer Fun**

With a recognition that there was not much happening for young children on Sunday mornings for the summer, we created Summer Fun, a time for children to gather and play, make crafts and/or sing on Sundays in the summer during the first half of the 10:15 am service.

**Holy Mayhem**

This year, a new group for tweens was started called Holy Mayhem. Holy Mayhem is for kids in grades 5-8 and they meet from 10-10:45 am every other Sunday using the Spark re:form curriculum. While they discuss some heavy topics like, “Who is God?” and “ What is the Trinity?” they also do lots of fun stuff together. Holy Mayhem is led by Zach Young and Lydia Taggert.

**Teen Discipleship Group**

During the summer, the Teen Discipleship Group met every other Tuesday. We shared food and fellowship and then proceeded to the Lectio Divina. Due to a significant expansion, the Teen Discipleship Group split into two different groups starting in September 2019. One group is for grades 7-9 and another for 10th grade and up. The group now meets every other Sunday from 12-1. With both groups combined there has been a total of 12 teens participating. This year we also added some extra activities during the holidays including a Friendsgiving and a Secret Santa Swap. The goal of this group has been to continue to provide a space for teens to share about their struggles and hopes, what God means to them, and what they feel called to do. It also provides support for each teen throughout his or her individual spiritual journey.

Submitted by *Jayne Fritz*

**Contemplative Christianity**

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

* The Centering Prayer group met faithfully every Saturday morning, alternating between practicing centering prayer meditation and reading James Finley’s The Contemplative Heart.
* We offered the opportunity to come together in silent meditation every weekday from 6-7 am in the Chapel of Mary Magdalene, the First Apostle.
* We celebrated our Contemplative Service on Thursday evenings from 5:30-6 pm in the Chapel. These services are led by Jean Smith, John Daly, Parker Huber, Margit & Jack Lilly, Erika Alin, Carolyn Hammerlund and Mary Lindquist.
* Many practitioners participated in retreats at Hallelujah Farm and other venues.
* Participants in the contemplative ministry at St. Michael’s include both community members and St. Michael’s parishioners. We welcome all people who have an interest in contemplation as a tool to deepen their relationship with God and with one another.

✠

**Reports from Mission and Ministry**

**Outreach Ministry**

‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food? We saw you thirsty and gave you something to drink? We saw you a stranger and welcomed you? We saw you sick and took care of you? We saw you in prison and visited you? “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

Matthew 25:37-40. Episcopal Relief & Development Mandate. “Joel’s Prayer”

At our annual retreat in March 2019 we re-examined and updated our Mission Statement.

Mission Statement: The Outreach Ministry of St. Michael’s Episcopal Church initiates, and supports efforts through which we, committee and parishioners alike, can manifest our Christian beliefs by helping those in need, locally, nationally and internationally through charitable organizations. This work involves not only our “treasure”, but also our “time” and “talents”. Distribution of our resources is limited to meeting needs for heat, shelter, health, and food insufficiency.

The Outreach Ministry’s resources come from various sources. At the end of each year the Committee formulates a budget request, which we submit to the Finance Committee and Vestry to be included in the Parish’s Annual Budget. The resources that originate from the Vestry after the Annual Meeting are disbursed in three, approximately equal, areas: local, i.e. Windham County; national; international. In addition, the Outreach Ministry has been fortunate to benefit from 50% of the two annual Tag Sales, the proceeds of which are disbursed exclusively among local organizations. The Committee membership appreciates the excellent results of the 2019 St. Michael’s Tag Sales and congratulates the Tag Sale Ministry membership.

The Committee also undertakes various complementary fundraising efforts. For example, in 2019 the proceeds from parking fees at the Heifer Parade that amounted to $550 were allocated equally between Groundworks and CASP (Community Asylum Seekers Project).

The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper last February generated $574 which was allocated to the Windham County Heat Fund. The Pancake Supper was better attended than in previous years, largely because the Parish was invited on the previous Sunday to make Mardi Gras masks to be worn on Shrove Tuesday. As faithfully as always, Mary Abell and Don Erwin sent up King Cakes from New Orleans, which are always appreciated, especially by our younger brethren!

Two Diaper Sunday events resulted in 3,500 and 4,912 diapers (a new record in honor of our new Bishop Shannon), respectively, being delivered to the Parks Place Diaper Bank in Bellows Falls and to Groundworks.

In conjunction with the Social Justice Ministry, Outreach celebrated MLK Day by collecting and bagging a multitude of basic hygiene items for Groundworks, Loaves & Fishes, and for the Springfield Prison. This was the first of the BoB efforts, but it was so successful that it will be repeated.

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

Despite all this, the need is always greater than our resources. The Outreach Ministry has concluded that again in 2020 it will have to focus its efforts on the following areas: food insecurity; heat/shelter - physical and environmental; health. A comprehensive listing of 2019 disbursements follows at the end of this report.

While we often use ‘Joel’s prayer’ as our opening prayer, we are always cognizant of and guided by her exhortation of ‘giving from our abundance.’ It is, however, sad that the Joel Hill Ministry Expo did not take place this year, but the Outreach Committee will consider other ways to accomplish that goal at its 2020 Retreat.

In May, 2018, St. Michael’s was privileged to host Pastor Duckens Janvier, founder and Director of the Foyer Evangélique Orphanage in Haiti. Through the Outreach Ministry, St. Michael’s has been supporting this orphanage for a number of years, and the Outreach Committee voted to disburse the entire remainder off its international budget to help the Orphanage survive the current humanitarian crisis in Haiti.

St. Michael’s has also continued its Love Brigade chapter, whereby parishioners may write postcards of support to victims of hatred around the country. Many hundreds of colorful postcards composed by many parishioners of all ages have left St. Michael’s. Hatred, it seems, is not a commodity in short supply nowadays…

The Committee has been fortunate to welcome Linda Parker to its membership in 2019. Linda is a relative newcomer to St. Michael’s, and we welcome her participation.

While the Committee has gained Linda, we were chagrined to lose Judith Hildreth Junkins once it got too dark to drive in the evening, and Craig Hammond, who has joined the Board of Groundworks, which is entering its active Capital Campaign.

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

Organizations Funded From Outreach Ministry Funds in 2019:

**Local:**

Brattleboro Walk In Clinic $1,900.00

Parks Place Diaper Bank $632.42

Pancake Supper (sterno) $38.66

Windham County Heat Fund $2,974.00

Southern Vermont AIDS Project $400.00

Putney Food Shelf Family Food Bag Program $1,000.00

Loaves & Fishes $1,400.00

Groundworks Collaborative Overflow Shelter $2,171.0

Community Asylum Seekers Project $1,943.06

Brattleboro Thanksgiving Committee $250.00

Carry Me Home $500.00

Kurn Hattin Homes $500.00

 Local Total: $13,709.42

**National:**

St. Thomas Community Health Center, New Orleans $2,000.00

Kurn Hattin Homes $1,333.34

W. Bratt Congregational Church for Team Brownsville $1,000.00

 National Total: $4,333.34

**International:**

Foyer Evangélique Universel Orphanage, Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti $3,833.33

Carry Me Home $500.00

 International Total: $4,333.33

**TOTAL:** $22,375.81 (of which $13,000 from Church budget, and $9,375.81 from Tag sales and fundraising)

Respectfully Submitted,

*Brian Morgan*, Convener pro. tem.

**Pastoral Care Ministries**

Pastoral Care at St. Michael’s is made up of many different ministries.

**Pastoral Care Visitation** – Pastoral visitors are parishioners or clergy who are available to visit those who are homebound, in the hospital or just in need of a visit and prayers. The Pastoral Care Team meets the second Saturday of each month from 9-10 am. We pray together, share a reflection and share about how we can support those in our parish in need of support.

**Intercessory Prayer** - The Intercessory Prayer Team meets on the First Monday of the month at 3 pm in the Chapel. Those involved in the Intercessory Prayer Team commit to praying for certain individuals every day for three months (this time can be renewed as long as the prayers are needed). In 2019 this team was led by Anita Crosson.

**Prayer Shawls** –The Prayer Shawl Team knits prayer shawls and baby blankets for people who are sick or recovering from surgery and for those celebrating joyful occasions like welcoming a new baby. The team meets on the second Thursday of the month from 10:30 am-12:00 pm at the home of Joan Pinilla, who is the leader of this ministry.

**Transportation** – The Transportation ministry involves connecting people who are willing to offer transportation to those who need help with transportation. Often, volunteers help bring people to church or to medical appointments.

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

**Funeral Receptions** – When a member of our church dies, we organize food for a reception following the funeral. Jenn Karstad organizes this ministry, in coordination with the Hospitality Committee.

**Hospitality**—The Hospitality Committee is made up of Christopher Wesolowski, Jenny Karstad and Rosie Wojcik. They oversee and manage the organization of Sunday Coffee Hour and special events that involve food like the Easter Vigil reception and the Annual Meeting lunch.

**Social Justice Ministry**

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

We plan to do this by:

 Educating ourselves and others to issues of inequality, their origins and effect upon people;

 Relating the Christian Gospel to current issues of social justice;

Building and strengthening a community of awareness and response to issues of justice locally and globally;

Connecting with other churches, faith traditions, and secular organizations to bring about greater justice.

**Current members** of the Ministry are: Nancy Ames, Joyce Vining Morgan, Rosie Wojcik, Wylene Wood, Cliff Wood, Janet Brocklehurst, Sissi Loftin, and Jean Smith, convener. Our meetings are open and new members are always welcome.

**Activities of past year:**

The committee worked to create the 2019 Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday morning celebration and were honored to hear parishioner, the Rev. David Carr preach. We hoped to begin a new tradition by inviting parishioners to volunteer for a Day of Service project. Two groups gathered: one to paint the community room at Ledgewood Heights and another to sort and pack donated non-food items for the BOB Drive for Ground Works.

An invitation was extended to The Rt. Rev. Gayle Harris, Suffragan Bishop of the diocese of Massachusetts, to preach and lead the Forum for the 2020 MLK celebration. The opportunities for the Day of Service are differing activities in support of the BOB Drive, Carry Me Home, and Loaves and Fishes.

The committee designed the service for our Gay Pride Celebration in June at which Alex Porter preached and Lars Hunter from St. Mary’s in the Mountain led a conversation about life as a trans man.

Sissi Loftin and Rosie Wojick organized and led a study group using the curriculum, “Sacred Ground” as prepared by the national Episcopal Church. Meeting bi- weekly for a ten session program from August- December, we read two excellent texts, Waking up White by Debbie Irving and Jesus and the Disinherited by Howard Thurman in addition to following a film-based dialogue series on race and faith. Both the videos and texts were important, and our supportive conversations often took us more deeply into the curated materials. The course will be offered again in 2020 and those interested are encouraged to be in touch with Sissi Loftin.

In September the Ministry team began reaching out to organizations involved in social justice work in Brattleboro and surrounding communities to compile a list of volunteer activities for the congregation. An up-dated list will be available with contact information.

In November Nancy Ames began spearheading a new social justice book club. The group met twice to work on organizational matters and has chosen, Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson as its first book. The group will invite middle and upper school students to join if anyone in that age group is interested in reading the young adult version of this or other selected books. The group always welcomes those who haven’t come previously and meets once monthly following the 10:15 service.

At year’s end the Ministry announced two events to be offered in the winter of 2020. On the evening of January 30, we will host a film showing of the film, “Healing Justice,” produced by the world trust organization and a part of the Sacred Ground Curriculum. The showing will be followed by a panel discussion.

On February 13, the Social Justice Ministry will co-sponsor an event with the local chapter of NAACP in which Jeffrey Deskovic of NYC will speak about his foundation’s work to exonerate and support wrongly convicted men and women. Respectfully submitted*, Jean Smith*

**Seasonal Overflow Shelter Meals Ministry**

Parishioners of St. Michael’s have been preparing homemade dinners for guests at the homeless shelter in Brattleboro for many years. The Seasonal Overflow Shelter, run by Groundworks Collaborative, is currently housed at the Winston Prouty Center (formerly the Austine School) in a dorm-style building. [Groundworks plans to construct its own Shelter on South Main St. in Brattleboro by next winter].

Each evening from November through April, 33 homeless men and women have the option of signing up to be brought to the Shelter from the Drop-in Center in the center of Brattleboro. At the Shelter, they are offered a hot, nutritious dinner and a warm bed to sleep in, along with shower and laundry facilities. Medical and social services are also available to the guests, many of whom struggle with addiction or other serious issues. In the morning, a van takes them back to the Drop-in Center.

In 2019, 25 St. Michael’s volunteers provided dinners for approximately 35 people once a month for 5 months, for a total of 175 meals. This is a thoughtful, much appreciated and truly Christian service to people who have very little. Thank you so much to every one who helps make this ministry a success!

Respectfully submitted, *Liz Vick*

**Schroeder Fund Committee**

Members: *Ruth Tilghman, Susan Heimer, Hollis Carlisle, Linda Parker, Pam Carr and Alix Fedoruk*

Doug Lilly resigned, and we thank him for his dedication and good stewardship to the Schroeder Fund. Susan Heimer agreed to join the committee.

*Education*: We supported Jack Karn with his discernment to the deaconate at Iona Seminary with both tuition and books with funds totaling $2500.

We supported 9 children and young people to attend Rock Point Camp with funds totaling $2500.

**Total for Education: $5000.**

*Outreach:* The money allotted for outreach goes to support the Help Fund. We also give our time by serving on the Help Fund Committee. The Help Fund meets on Wednesdays at noon and all the social services agencies in the area can attend. SEVCA (Southeastern Vermont Community Action) runs the meetings and is treasurer. The Help Fund gives grants up to $250 to individuals and families for: housing deposits, car repairs, back utility payments, and moving and storage expenses. The goal is to keep families and individuals in housing. At the weekly meeting, requests for grants are vetted. This is important because other agencies who may know more information about the person who is requesting, and we will know if the request is viable. The mission is to keep people in their housing and to help others obtain housing. We give $536.91 per month.

**Total for Outreach: $6442.92**

**Prison Ministry**

**Our Community of Faith Behind Bars**

We are so much more than the worst thing we have ever done. And more than anywhere I have learned this in my prison ministry with the men, inmates, in the prison in Springfield, Vermont. I have absolutely loved every single moment I’ve spent there, and I’ve looked forward each month to our time together.

My ministry has essentially been to lead and host worship, once each month, for an hour and a half. Up until I began, these worship services always had a sole Christian focus, that is by Christians for Christians. But I joined with a rabbi friend and we decided to offer an interfaith service instead. We have no Muslim imam in our area who also could join us, but we realized we could easily include Muslim prayers and readings from the Quran, with Muslim inmates assisting us. Why did we pursue this path? We believed and still believe more than ever that we need to rediscover our common humanity and a common ground where at least there, in this prison, we could find God in and through one another.

And we have. Mostly we have been Christian, Jew and Muslim, all of us from the Abrahamic tradition but regularly almost always Buddhists, agnostics and atheists also join us. Perhaps our most devoted and faithful worshipper is an atheist. Many are barely literate, but as they read scripture aloud the Holy Spirit stumbles right out to every one of us. Of inmates with Christian backgrounds, many are lapsed in their particular observances. Many are fundamentalist and evangelical, but of course that only rounds out our circle, our own unique community of seekers and believers.

We have our own liturgy, one created by our experience together, which begins with the words “United by the wish that we could meet anywhere but here.” We have our own songbook or hymnal, but often we simply sing favorites of the inmates. Much that we’ve done is impromptu. Sometimes an inmate is clearly feeling agitated and needs help. Sometimes an inmate breaks out and sobs. Sometimes an inmate wants to sing Amazing Grace at the top of his lungs. And sometimes we just stop, and pray. Once when I asked where they find a sanctuary just to find peace and quiet and time with God, one inmate said, “Right here in this room, this chapel. And you want to know why? Because there’s no microphone here.”

We have special times together; baptisms, bar mitzvahs, seders, Ramadan observances, holiday carol sings during Advent, and when possible, Christmas Day worship. I have met many times one on one with inmates, for what have amounted to some of the most heartfelt exchanges I’ve ever had with anyone. Forgiveness, remorse, anger, grief, wishful thinking, loneliness, bargaining, acceptance…. all that’s real in the life of imprisonment, comes out. We include St. Michael’s practice of Lectio Divina. We’ve followed the lead of the Jesuit theologian and paleontologist Theilhard de Chardin who once led a Eucharist in the Gobi Desert of Mongolia and realized he had neither bread or wine; so he decided the whole earth would become his altar, with the human toil and sufferings of the day offered up as his bread and wine.

In December I visited the prison for the last time. During that month we hosted one of the most popular and well attended of our annual events, our Holiday Carol Sing led by the Hallowell Singers. My last day was Christmas Day, where we exchanged gifts of the Spirit, broke bread and shared the Holy Eucharist. All these December events were assisted by our own parishioner Cliff Wood and his dear wife, Wylene. Cliff is now taking over this ministry, with great enthusiasm and a great welcome by the prison. He’s very comfortable in his new role, having taught college level courses at Sing Sing Prison in Ossining, NY. He is blessed with an amazing time ahead of him, as I have been for many years. And whether it has been me or now Cliff, we have definitely been blessed to have the support St. Michael’s in this ministry. Support of a parish as I have had is indeed rare. Thank you thank you dear friends!

*Craig Hammond*

**Tag Sale Ministry**

1. Financial Report

Annual revenue for 2019 was $14,690 (Fall = $7891; Spring = $6,799)

1. 2020 Sale Dates

Spring Sale – May 2, 2020

Fall Sale – October 3, 2020

1. Tag Ministry Reporting and Communication Structure for 2020

**Core Leadership Team**

**Core Leadership Plus**; Core Team with select advisors that attend meetings as needed and get meeting minutes and agendas.

**Tag Sale Ministry Group**; Any church member involved in the Tag Sale in any way and will receive minutes and are invited to regular meetings and hopefully will attend Sunday meetings (two scheduled prior to Spring Sale: January 26 and April 19).

**Entire St. Michael’s congregation**; will receive Tag Sale communications by Guardian, E-Blasts and Bulletin.

1. Ministry Goals for 2020 are:

Financial: Increase 2018 annual revenue by 10%. Hence $16,160.

Examples of proposed methods – vendors, price and display everything, food, silent auctions on specialty or single item donations.

Sale Day Presence: More attractions, creative publicity, music, something for the kids to do while parents attend the Sale, more signage.

1. Vestry Approval, December 19, 2019, to purchase an additional 20 x 20 tent similar to the one currently owned by the Church.

Respectfully submitted: *Daniel Dobson and Liz Vick; Co-Chairs*

**Buildings and Grounds**

THE CHURCH

*Leaks:* Because of ongoing leaks, the Vestry approved B&G to secure three bids for replacing the church roof and installing solar panels.

*Caulking:* Repairs to church windows and wood joints continue to be done. If interested in helping, contact the co-chairs.

*Doors:* Two exterior doors at the entrances of the elevator and playground were replaced by Ross Kinney and Vince Johnson.

THE GROUNDS

 *Trees:* A new maple in front of the church didn’t survive; Josh Fritz replaced it.

*Clean Up:* Held in the spring and fall with much help from the “Garden Fairies”, an ad hoc gardening crew. Special care and a blessing was given to the Memorial Garden where the old Baptismal Font now resides. Thanks to Bruce Lawrence, Ross Kinney, Josh Fritz for your work.

THE RECTORY

 *Appliances:* A new fridge was installed while the family was on vacation.

DAYCARE

*Entrance:* Approved by the Vestry and the Town Fire Inspector, the entrance to daycare is currently being reconfigured with a new door and storage space by Ross Kinney and Vince Johnson.

TO DO LIST for 2020

ROOFING AND INSTRALLATION:

*Church:* Obtain three bids and approval from Vestry to install a metal roof and solar panels for the Church (grants are available)

*Dunham Wing:* Built in the fifties, this wing has no installation in the roof, walls or windows.

REPAIRS

 Replace fascia above the Administrative Offices of the Dunham Wing

 Repair the rotted foundation on the west side of the Church (Putney Road)

 Refinish new flooring in church from the heater leak

 Contract with local contractor to repair drainage system from renovation

 Repaint parking lot stripes and obtain two more Mobility Impaired signs

 Pour concrete pad for the dumpster and storm drain

 Update Rectory upstairs bathroom and replace south side of Rectory roof

Submitted by co-*chairs Vince Johnson and Bruce Lawrence with members Greg Allen, John Byrnes, Richard Cogliano, Jonathan Davis, Josh Fritz, Ross Kinney, Don Marcille, Alan McBean, Steve Myers and the “Garden Fairies.”*

**Stewardship**

Our Annual Pledge Campaign theme this year was, “One in Christ.” We sent out a stewardship brochure with photos and information about our life together. Linda Parker, Daniel Dobson and Annamarie Pluhar spoke to the congregation at the Sunday services about why St. Michael’s was important to them and why they supported our ministry together.

This year, we set two specific goals. We hoped to raise $260,000 and to receive 140 pledge cards. Our financial goal was a bit lower this year because we knew we were losing about $20,000 in pledge income because of some parishioners who had moved. We are happy to report that we reached both our goals. We received 142 pledges for a total of $ 261,155. In addition, 11 of these pledges were new. As you can see in the chart below, this is remarkable and shows a really broad support for our ministries at St. Michael’s. This is a sign of great health in our parish.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total pledged** | **# of pledges** | **# new pledges**  |
| **2011** | **$198,837** | **119** | **12** |
| **2012** | **$211, 693** | **128** | **11** |
| **2013** |  **$218,293** | **129** | **12** |
| **2014** | **$217, 293**  | **128** | **12** |
| **2015**  | **$215,878** | **123**  | **9** |
| **2016** | **$234, 724** | **128** | **9** |
| **2017** | **$262, 282** | **133** | **11** |
| **2018** | **$255,947**  | **141** | **13** |
| **2019**  | **$268,498** | **140** | **15** |
| **2020** | **$261,155** | **142** | **11** |

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

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**Reports from Administration & Finance**

**Vestry**

(to paraphrase I Kings 19:11-13)

***“… the Lord passed by … but the Lord was not in the wind, … the Lord was not in the earthquake, … the Lord was not in the fire, …a still small voice … said, “What are you doing here…?”***

This has been a year of “Listening” for your Vestry.

We began our year, after the Annual Meeting, with an overnight Retreat at Hallelujah Farm.

We created a Listening Corner time for the first Sunday of every month during coffee hour.

We held an All Parish Meeting to listen to the hearts of our parish family relating to the Black Lives Matter sign on the front lawn.

The Vestry provided hospitality for many events including a Newcomer’s Tea, a welcome Coffee Hour for Bishop Shannon, and for the Church Picnic.

We engaged in small group conversations to help review the breadth and depth of the Ministry for Discipleship and Discernment over the last two and a half years.

Another All Parish Meeting held in early January 2020 will help us to listen for “what God is calling us to do as St. Michael’s Episcopal Church”.

We look forward to another exciting year listening together and learning which paths God may send us as we seek “to restore people to unity with God and each other in Christ”.

With heartfelt thanks for those who have given of their time and talents this year: Janet Brocklehurt, Judy Davidson, Ricky Davidson (Jr. Warden), Imogene Drakes, Christy Fritz, Mark Horton, Jeanette Landin, Christopher Wesolowski, Carol Beninoti (clerk), and Wayne Cook and Bruce Lawrence (treasurers).

Special thanks to Jeanie Crosby, Church Administrator, our anchor in the Church Office.

Blessed thanks to our Rector, Mary Lindquist, for her spiritual guidance and support of our lay ministry.

With blessings and thanks, *Carolyn Taylor-Olson, Senior Warden*

**Treasurer**

In November 2019, long time treasurer Wayne Cook and his wife Anne moved south to continue their retired life. This left the position of treasurer open. I was asked to fill it and after much deliberation decided to step up to the new challenge. Since then, I have been learning the job. Wayne was an excellent treasurer and there is much he did behind the scenes that is still new to me, but when a question arises, he is just a phone call or email away.

In addition to “paying the bills” each month, one of the duties of the treasurer is to prepare an annual report at the end of the year for the congregation. The year 2019 was a good year for Saint Michael’s Episcopal. General Operating Income came in on budget. Our annual General Operating Income was estimated at $343,295 and thanks to the generosity of everyone the actual income recorded was $360,591. The General Operating Expenses were budgeted as $342,774 and thanks to hard work by everyone, the General Operating Expenses were right on the mark with $347,683 being expended as of December 31, 2019. If anyone would like a more detailed report, please let me know.

Another duty of the treasurer is to recruit parishioners to perform the annual audit of records of the church, including all finances. If anyone has any expertise in this area, please let Mary or me know. We will need some experience to help with this important task.

The 2020 budget will be voted by the Vestry in February and with everyone’s help and support we can have as successful a new year as we did in 2019.

*Bruce Lawrence*, Treasurer

**Endowment Committee**

The value of our collective endowment funds at the end of year 2018 was $1,591,632, with $50,764 in the General Investment Account and $1,540,868 in the undesignated and Restricted Endowment Funds. Compared with 2018 there is $243,727 more in the Endowment account, and a $7929increase in the General Investment Fund and due to capital gains .

The collective Restricted and Unrestricted Endowment Funds and General Investment Funds are invested through the Trust Department of the Greenfield Savings Bank, Greenfield MA.  We are working with the Senior Vice President and Senior Trust Officer, Stephen B. Hamlin, CTFA who is in the top quartile nationally for investment managers.

In 2019 Treasurers, Wayne Cook and Bruce Lawrence reported there was a monthly draw of $4953 ($59,436) from the General Investment Account to assist in funding St. Michael’s annual budget. Given the small size of the General Investment Fund there was no draw from it in 2019. The Restricted Endowment Account draw funds are used to support the Schroeder Fund, designated for social and educational needs.  At $362,627 the Schroeder fund is the largest component of our Designated-Non-operating funds.

At the suggestion of our Money Manager, St Michael’s moved $140,000 of funds held in the church’s checking account to a bank operated money market account so they could earn, rather than just sitting in the bank. They are available within a day. There is no charge from the bank for this service, which is outside of the regular money management contract. As a result, this account is now worth $140,664.

Vestry elected members of the Endowment Committee are: Janet Cramer, Chairman; Bill Ames, Doug Switzer, Steven Meyer and Steve Harrison. The Treasure, the current Senior Warden and the Rector also are members of the committee. The committee meets four times a year on the last Sunday of the month following the end of each quarter.  At that time they monitor the funds’ performances and recommend adjustments to withdrawal rates, should that seem appropriate to market conditions.

**As of December 31                  2015                2016                2017             2018                 2019**

Restricted Endowment        $1,361,332        $1,399,034    $1,460,013     $1,303,974       $1,540,868

General Investment Fund          $50,926          $40,425         $43,512         $41,971           $50,763

Respectfully submitted, *Janet Cramer, Chair; Committee members, Bill Ames, Steve Harrison, Steven Mayer, Doug Switzer, Mary Lindquist, Rector; Carolyn Taylor-Olson Senior Warden; Wayne Cook, Bruce Lawrencece, Treasurers*

**Nominating Committee**

We are pleased to announce this year's Vestry candidates for election for three 3-year terms: Nancy Ames, Rebecca Olmstead and Jared Rediske. The candidates who are nominated to be elected as delegates for the Diocesan Convention are. The Senior Warden will also attend as a delegate.

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

**Class of 2021:** Carolyn Taylor-Olson, Imogene Drakes, Christopher Wesolowski

**Class of 2022:** Judy Davidson, Ricky Davidson, Christy Fritz

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