

The Guardian

MARCH 2022

FROM THE RECTORY

FROM THE BACK OF A MINI-VAN ON INTERSTATE 90...



As I write this, I am in our mini-van with Kurt, Jonah, Ori and Bibi, plus Juniper (our dog) and Ollie (my sister's dog who we are taking care of while she and her family are in Florida). It is amazing and comical that we, along with luggage and dog beds, can all fit. Today is the first day of school vacation and we are making our way to my parents' house in Conesus, New York for a visit. Jeanie has been waiting for my newsletter pieces (which I am finally getting to) and I'm sure I'm the last to turn my assignments in! There are years where January and February feel a little more spacious than the rest of the program year, but 2022 is an exception. Our days have been full at St. Michael's. Below are some updates about what has been happening.

- **Hybrid worship returns** — On February 13, we opened the doors of the church for in-person, Sunday morning worship again. It was wonderful to sing together again and share the Eucharist. We will continue with our "church in the cloud" (livestream worship) and rejoice that there are many ways we can join together to worship God.
- **Becoming Beloved Community** — On January 25, the BBC Covenant Groups began to meet, welcoming 40 individuals who have committed to participate for eleven weeks. The groups meet every Tuesday evening for 90 minutes on Zoom. We begin with prayer and worship in the big group, then split into five small groups for conversation about *The Church Cracked Open* and other resources that address racial history and racial healing. We end by returning to the big group for check-in and prayer. I am so grateful that so many people have said yes to this opportunity, which has been deep, challenging and intimate. What we are experiencing is not

Continued

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primarily a book group, but an opportunity to practice becoming the beloved community through the deepening of our relationships with one another and with God. In addition to the Covenant Groups, the BBC team began offering monthly storytelling opportunities!

- **Welcoming new leaders** — At our Annual Meeting on January 30, we elected three new Vestry member (Rosie Wojcik, Chris Hart and David Treadwell) and three delegates to Diocesan Convention (Carol Hesselbach, Valerie Abrahamsen and Annie Landenberger). I named Annie Landenberger as my Sr. Warden for 2022 and the Vestry elected Chris Hart as the Jr. Warden. We then had a Vestry retreat on February 11 and 12 (please see Annie's article in this issue), followed by our first Vestry meeting with our new members on February 17! I am thankful to the Vestry for putting in so many hours over the last few weeks as we get oriented to our ministry for this year. I am especially grateful to Annie, who did not have the benefit of serving as a warden before now and has hit the ground running.
- **Our Afghan Families** — St. Michael's has welcomed two Afghan families over the last few weeks and is about to welcome a third! While I am not directly involved in this initiative, it has been truly amazing to see how many people are engaged in making meals, contributing and organizing clothing and household goods, offering medical care and transportation, sharing tea and conversation and so much more. In addition, St. Michael's Tag Sale Ministry hosted an online auction to benefit the St. Michael's Interfaith Refugee Fund!
- **Building Hope for the Earth** — The initiative, formerly known as the roof/solar/renewable energy initiative, is led by a gifted group of individuals from St. Michael's (Chris Chapman, Jonathon Davis, Cary Gaunt, Chris Hart, Alan McBean, Judith McBean and Steven Meyer) who have been meeting every two weeks from 7–8:30 am. This is definitely a group of early-risers!

While we consider *Building Hope for the Earth* as one project, there will be two phases to the project: 1) Replacing the sanctuary and Bradley wing roofs and 2) Transitioning St. Michael's energy use from fossil fuels to 100% renewable energy. The roof replacement is relatively straight forward and we have hired a contractor for this job which we plan to complete this summer and fall. The renewable energy part of the project is a bit more complicated and we are learning a great deal as we research the best ways to proceed. We are making progress by first making sure we do all we can to make our buildings as energy efficient as possible. We have already begun to transition our lighting systems to LED. In addition, we are researching the cost of transitioning our heating and cooling systems to electric mini-splits, as well as sending out a Request for Proposals for the possibility of solar power. While we expect to complete the roofs by the fall of 2022, we do not yet know the timeline for the renewable energy transition. The Capital Campaign Committee is organizing a phased campaign to support both parts of the project. It is all very exciting and a bit overwhelming. Stay tuned!

Mary
Mary Lindquist
Rector

NEWS OF THE PARISH

ASH WEDNESDAY IS MARCH 2!

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten Season. St. Michael's will offer Ash Wednesday services at 12 pm and 5:30 pm in person, in the sanctuary. The 5:30 pm service will also be available on livestream through our Vimeo channel.

STM

RESOURCES FOR THE SEASON OF LENT

St. Michael's usually offers a Lenten study series during this important season. Because many of us are already engaging in the BBC Covenant Groups on Tuesday evenings, we will not be offering a special Lenten study this year. However, we do recommend the resources below to help you in your personal Lenten practice.

- St. Michael's will be offering a booklet called *Vincent van Gogh and the Beauty of Lent*. Booklets are available online or in print at the church. Here is the pdf version of the booklet: <https://www.stmichaels-vt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/SALT-Van-Gogh-DIGITAL-1.pdf>
- We also recommend a wonderful online speaker series on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm from Paraclete Press called "Stability." You can find more information here: <https://stability2022.com/>

STM

**LOOKING FOR SOME
MID-WEEK INSPIRATION?**

Try Wednesday Centering Prayer and Noon Eucharist! We are expanding our mid-week offerings in the Chapel of Mary Magdalene.

11:30–11:55 am — Centering Prayer — While many people practice silent meditation in the beginning or end of the day, sometimes it is just what we need in the midst of our day. Come enjoy some silence every Wednesday at 11:30 am.

12–12:30 pm — Eucharist with the saints —

Centering Prayer is followed by a brief 30-minute liturgy which includes scripture, prayer, reflection on the saint of the day and Eucharist.

Join us for one or both of these opportunities every Wednesday beginning on March 9.

STM

**SATURDAY MORNING CENTERING PRAYER
RETURNS MARCH 5**

Join us any Saturday morning at 8 a.m., beginning March 5, for the practice of Centering Prayer in the Chapel of Mary Magdalene.

Centering Prayer is a type of contemplative prayer, wherein we are invited to be "totally open to God... totally available, all the way down to that innermost point of your being; deeper than your thinking, deeper than your feelings, deeper than your memories and desires, deeper than your usual psychological sense of yourself — even deeper than your presence."

(*Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*, Cynthia Bourgeault, p. 22, with thanks to the Wisdom Waypoints website at <https://wisdomwaypoints.org/2021/08/centering-prayer-and-inner-awakening/>).

The Saturday morning practice offers a brief introduction and reading, followed by a twenty-minute period of sitting together in silence, the heart of the practice.

In the next seven-minute period, we are welcome to enter the church sanctuary for a walking meditation, remain sitting in silence in the chapel, or leave, as we wish.

There will be a second twenty-minute period of silence in the chapel, for those who would like to stay, and a final prayer. We depart in silence.

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A little more on the practice of Centering Prayer, from the Contemplative Outreach website at <https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/centering-prayer-method/>:

“Centering Prayer is a receptive method of Christian silent prayer which deepens our relationship with God, the Indwelling Presence...a prayer in which we can experience God’s presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself.

The Guidelines

1. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within.
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God’s presence and action within.
3. When engaged with your thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.”



ADULT FORUMS LENTEN SERIES 9–10 AM IN-PERSON + ON ZOOM

We will be attempting to run the Adult Forum in a hybrid format! Please come to the Meeting Room if able. If you are watching on Zoom, the link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85665668852?pwd=UG1JaHNSc1F3ZGU0NkwwTXQ1WGUzZz09>.

Our Lenten series on “Dilemmas of Faith” will present us with the opportunity to explore how we discern right from wrong. What would Jesus do? Are there clear answers? Or ambiguous answers? How do we choose? Guiding us will be five of the Ten Commandments.

March 5 — “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor’s.” How do we understand this in our consumer culture? With social media? *Annamarie Pluhar will facilitate.*

March 13 — “You shall not bear false witness” — *Led by Mary Lindquist.*

March 20 — “Love God with all your heart” — What do you have to believe to love God? What if you doubt more than you believe? Can you do both at the same time? How do you pull all THAT off? *Led by Phillip Wilson.*

March 27 — “Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery” — The family therapist, Virginia Satire, taught that all positive values have shadow sides. The commandment not to commit adultery does not cover the shadow of being faithful in a relationship that harms the people in it. These are dilemmas of faith. *Janet Cramer facilitates.*

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ANNUAL MEETING ADDRESS ON INTERFAITH REFUGEE MINISTRY

Jean Smith

When I asked Mary what she would suggest as a perspective for this report, she said, “Look at the big picture.” To me that means our biblical texts. Both testaments, Hebrew and Christian, are accounts of grief, surprise, and holiness — the basis for what Walter Brueggemann calls “hopeful imagination.”

The work with refugees, people in exile, is not a *service project*, unless we mean God’s service to us for our growth in faith. It is an exercise in hopeful imagination. It is ministry, and **like all ministry**, an adventure in faith. Understanding this definition has shaped our planning meetings as well as the everyday activities with our partners in this effort.

Initially, we had to get clear in our own minds and hearts about **what** is it that we are doing. Because only then could we know **how** we would attempt to do it. It would always be about community, God’s voice and presence, our learning and theirs, a benefit to refugees and to us.

As most of you have heard, St. Michael’s did not initiate this community-wide action. The Brattleboro Development Corp. and ECDC, the Ethiopian Community Development Council, were already collaborating when we joined their effort along with the Brattleboro Area Jewish Center. Medical practitioners, the hospital and schools, and even the Moover bus were in on the plans by late summer. Currently along with co-sponsorship groups formed by other churches here in Brattleboro, groups in Bennington and Bellows Falls are participating.

But I get ahead of myself....The small team at St. Michael’s was eager to share our excitement at the prospect of offering welcome and hospitality to the new arrivals. Mary and the vestry lent their support as did so many of you. You signed up and signed on to the adventure, offering prayers, skill and experience, hoping it would take the shape of loving welcome.

On December 4, 2021, ECDC offered an initial training to educate us in their role and function and what aspects of the welcome and assistance would be ours as co-sponsorship groups. They would match us with a family and provide case managers for them. Several weeks later we learned that we at St. Michael’s were matched with a family of 4 due to arrive in late January.

Our team of volunteers was working toward that date when we heard from Thomas Huddleston (a member of our congregation and director of Co-Sponsorship groups for ECDC) that there was another family on a military base who would be a good match for us. Did we want to take that step? What would we answer? Our team was working feverishly to raise funds and to collect furniture and housewares and were relying on help from the Tag Sale team to gather bedding. Loaves and Fishes was purchasing food in accord with Afghan tastes and tradition. Team members were meeting with the schools about their design of special classes and with the hospital about health assessments, Medicaid, and other benefits.

How to respond to the idea of a second family when we weren’t quite ready for the first? We have responded, “Yes.” This other family was ready and eager to leave the military base and to begin life anew here. So, although surprised and not exactly confident in our plans, we said, “Yes, of course, send them asap and we’ll catch up.”

The Mohammadi family arrived, and we formed a second circle of support and worked with ECDC to complete a second Memorandum of Understanding. The last weeks have been busy, really busy. We’ve all made mistakes, had our differences of opinions, learned much and delighted in some especially happy moments for our newest neighbors.

Here are some updates to reflect changes in the last couple of weeks in February. The Noori family has

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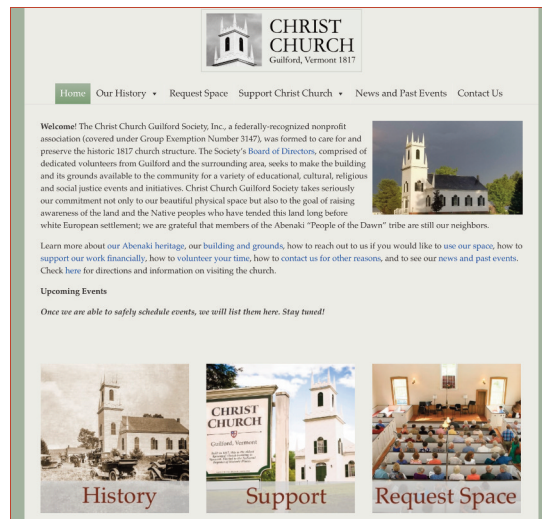
arrived and is settling in with the help of our first circle of support. And now we are forming a third circle of support for a new family, the Musavvis, who are supported by a team led by Deb Bunker and composed of people who are outside of St. Michael's but interested in cooperating with us to share resources, knowledge, and experience. We, for our part, are really pleased to be able to extend the Interfaith Refugee Ministry deeper into the community. These families will have known

unimaginable terror and grief too for their country, family and for **all they have left behind**. They have courageously trusted God and now us in their hopes for a new beginning.

For almost half of last year and now in this New Year we have entered into this new Interfaith Refugee Ministry. We wonder where this adventure in faith will lead us now and in the years ahead. We don't know, but we are excited and hopeful at the prospect.



NEW CHRIST CHURCH GUILFORD WEBSITE



The Board of Directors of the Christ Church Guilford Society has been meeting regularly for over a year to discern the mission of Christ Church Guilford, St. Michael's Mother Church, and to ensure the viability of our beautiful, historic building. The Board currently consists of Valerie Abrahamsen, Andy Burrows, Jack Lilly, the Rev. Mary Lindquist, Ed Meade, Kate McGinn, Anne Montgomery, and Linda Rice.

Christ Church has recently unveiled a new website, thanks to local company MuseArts Web Design — <https://www.christchurchguilfordsociety.org> — and we are gearing up to undertake some essential repairs so that we can sponsor events of interest to the wider community. Some of these events, which we hope to host this summer and fall, will include concerts

featuring local artists, as well as lectures focusing on social and racial justice issues. We will use the new website's Home page and other media to announce events. In order for them to succeed, we need various kinds of help.

If you think your talents, skills and interests would mesh with our mission, you can find a list of our committees and a form on the Support Christ Church page to use to indicate your interest (<https://www.christchurchguilfordsociety.org/support-christ-church/other-ways-you-can-help/>). Even if you cannot help us in the planning stages, we look forward to seeing you at these events — you'll have a great experience while supporting our beloved Mother Church!

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VESTRY RETREAT 2022

The February 11–12 Vestry Retreat, like last year's, was held on Zoom. Though all wish for a time we can retreat again in person, it was, nonetheless, a productive and potent time.

First, we got acquainted. Sharing photos of ourselves as children and then reflecting individually on who we are and where we've come from spiritually and in life, we peeled away a couple layers to find both our uniqueness and our common ground. I came away with anecdotes and insights filling my head, eager to get to know my fellow 8 — and Mary — better over time. Such cohesion inspires community: that's the intent.

On Saturday Mary opened us with a most appropriate piece of scripture (Matthew 2: 1–12) and prayer. We then reviewed the 2021 Vestry covenant — our agreements on how we want to work together respectfully. It was agreed that the document holds water still, even with its one pandemic-specific paragraph.

The roles and responsibilities of the vestry were reviewed with annotations, starting with a look at our canonical charge and then covering St. Michael's-specific expectations. Two duties, new this year, were introduced: first, Mary has pointed out that after each live service when she's been greeting congregants, she's been wishing she had a co-greeter with her, especially one who could talk more with newcomers and just-visitors. Thus, the Vestry rota of duties now includes Sunday greeting. The other added role is that of new liaison triads: in addition to being a link between a ministry/team and the vestry, each member has now been asked to serve on a team of three that will connect with one of our three 2022 initiatives.

We heard a succinct St. Michael's history update from Mary accompanied by a beautiful slide show before Jeff Lewis joined us to update on the Refugee Resettlement Ministry.

We then broke out into our initiative support triads and reported back with our discoveries and perceived needs. After that we heard a report from each liaison returning to the Vestry.

After digging into our mission and vision, keeping us honest and clear, Mary closed the retreat with a prayer.

Should you wish to know more or to see the documents referenced above, please let me know.

*Respectfully and gratefully submitted,
Annie Landenberger*

Ministry/team liaisons:

Adult Forum	Nancy Ames
Altar Guild	Rebecca Olmstead
Building and Grounds	Alan McBean
Building Hope	Chris Hart
Choir	Jared Rediske
Christian Education	Rosie Wojcik
Communications	Annie Landenberger
Outreach	David Treadwell
Pastoral Care	Rebecca Olmstead
Social Justice	Nancy Ames, Rosie Wojcik
Stewardship	Steven Guerriero

Initiative liaisons:

Becoming Beloved	
Community	Rosie, Nancy, Annie
Refugee Ministry	David, Steven, Rebecca
Building Hope	Alan, Chris, Jared

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SUMMARY OF FEBRUARY MEETING OF THE VESTRY

The Vestry met on February 17, 2022. The meeting structure was hybrid, with members meeting at the Church in-person and by Zoom. Steven Guerriero led us in a devotional discussion. We reviewed recent personal “glimpses of the divine” in our lives while using the readings of Thomas Merton and Mary Oliver.

February’s meeting is one in which there are many administrative duties of the Vestry. Bruce Lawrence led us in a review of the January budget and spending followed by the important task to approve the 2022 budget. The budget was approved and also showed that our projected operating income was greater than our projected operating expenses.

After a lengthy discussion, St. Michael’s Vestry continued our work towards our mission statement to “pursue stewardship of the earth” by making a resolution around our *Building Hope for the Earth* project that commits to pursuing an end to our reliance of fossil fuels and transition to 100% clean renewable energy by beginning a phased approach to transition its heating and cooling systems to all electric.

After a Rector’s and Warden’s report, members of the Vestry gave committee updates on the Becoming a Beloved Community and the Interfaith Refugee Ministry. We continue to “commit to deep generosity, and promote social, racial and economic justice.”

Rebecca Olmstead



EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

LECTIONARY FOR MARCH

Sunday, March 6: Deuteronomy 26:1–11; Psalm 91:1–2, 9–16; Romans 10:8b–13; Luke 4:1–13

Sunday, March 13: Genesis 15:1–12, 17–18; Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17–4:1; Luke 13:31–35

Sunday, March 20: Exodus 3:1–15, Psalm 63:1–8, 1 Corinthians 10:1–13, Luke 13:1–9

Sunday, March 27: Joshua 5:9–12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16–21; Luke 15:1–3, 11b–32

MARCH 2022 CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

March 2	Susan Kochinskas
March 3	Christine Hart, Kiersten McKenney, Callan McDowell
March 5	Joshua Fritz
March 6	Wayne Cook
March 7	Ladd Osborne
March 10	Gabe Reynolds
March 11	Teri Robinson, Marie Lawrence
March 15	Benson Bobrick, Jeffrey Hiam
March 16	Chris Chapman
March 19	Karen Guthrie
March 20	Bob Walker
March 22	Bruce Lawrence
March 24	James Wilmott, Joan Pinilla, Margery McCrum
March 25	Kate LeBlanc
March 28	Tom Woodbury, Elizabeth Moore
March 30	Craig Newbert
March 31	Jan Bennett



ANNIVERSARIES

March 7	Elizabeth Vick & Craig Hammond
March 16	Greg Lesch & Brian Bannon
March 23	Kate & Dana McGinn

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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 Eucharist
	10:15 am	Prayer, music and Eucharist.
WEEKDAYS	8:00 am	Morning Prayer (online)
WEDNESDAYS	11:30 am	Centering Prayer (in-person)
	12:00	Eucharist (in-person)
THURSDAYS	5:30 pm	Contemplative service (in-person and online)
SATURDAYS	8:00 am	Centering Prayer (in-person)