

The Guardian

SEPTEMBER 2022

BUILDING HOPE FOR THE EARTH

OPEN HOUSE

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 5–7 PM

THE RECTORY YARD (ACROSS FROM ST. MICHAEL'S PARKING LOT)

Come & see what St. Michael's is launching:
A ROOF, SOLAR & ENERGY TRANSFORMATION PROJECT!

Interactive Informational Stations, Food, Inspiring Conversation & a Mystery Raffle

Prayer & Address by Building Hope Team Leaders, 5:30–5:45pm

Come as you are, Come as you can!



KIDS & YOUTH CHRISTIAN FORMATION KICK-OFF

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 9:30–10 AM

THE RECTORY YARD

Back to school means back to formation programs for children and youth at St. Michael's. It has been difficult to gather during the last two and a half years, but now we are ready to rebuild community and welcome children, youth and families back into the life of the church. Our mission is that every child experience God's love and know how precious they are to God and to us in the church!

On Sunday September 11, please come at 9:30 for games and food, to register for Sunday School, and to get inspired for this new year in the life of our church. At 10 am, kids will be invited to the church to begin new classes in Godly Play (ages 3–10) or Holy Mayhem (grades 5–8). High School youth will go to church before attending an "Exploring Confirmation Lunch" (see article on page 2) at Panda North (1332 Putney Road, Brattleboro).

Please contact Mary Lindquist, mary@stmichaelsvermont.org, if you have any questions!

FROM THE RECTORY

CELEBRATING CREATIONTIDE AT ST. MICHAEL'S

Call it synchronicity, God's grace or dumb luck, but we happened to schedule our "Building Hope for the Earth" Open House and the public opening of the "Building Hope" Capital Campaign on the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, as was declared by Pope Francis in 2015. The movement which began in the Eastern Orthodox Church spread widely among Protestant, Catholic and Anglican congregations and Pope Francis asked us to observe a Season of Creation from September 1–October 4 as a response to the climate emergency. We will recognize this World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation at our Open House on September 1 and will observe the Season of Creation at St. Michael's this fall.

Beginning with our Sunday liturgy on September 4, we will integrate prayers, readings, music, sermons and a Eucharistic Prayer that reflect

- our sorrow and repentance for the ways we participate in the exploitation and destruction of the earth,
- a renewed commitment to the transformation of our own relationship with God's creation,
- and a pledge, with God's grace, to work for the healing and restoration of the earth.

We hope you will join us for this special season!

Mary
Mary Lindquist, Rector

NEWS OF THE PARISH

CONFIRMATION CONVERSATIONS

What does it mean to affirm our baptismal vows? Many of us were baptized as children, which means that our parents chose to bring us up in the Christian faith. As we become adults, we are given the opportunity to choose for ourselves whether we desire to affirm our baptismal vows by being confirmed by the bishop or whether we decide not to take this step right now. This class will be an exploration of what it means to be a Christian. Who is God? Who is Jesus? Who am I? What difference does it make? We will look at scripture, church history, prayer and worship and practices of social justice.

Mary Lindquist and Adwoa Wilson will be offering this once-a-month class over the next academic year, culminating in a retreat next spring and the possibility of being confirmed. We plan to meet after church, sharing lunch and (we hope) lively conversation. Our first gathering will be held on Sunday, September 11,

12-2 pm at Panda North. Kids can carpool from church with Mary and Adwoa.

Please contact Mary if you are interested in taking part!

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EXPLORING THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
CLASS BEGINS THIS FALL!

Are you new to the Episcopal Church? To St. Michael's? This fall, Mary Lindquist will be offering a six-session class beginning the week of September 19. In this class, we will explore the history, theology and spirituality of the Episcopal Church and the Christian faith in general.

The class is open to anyone interested in learning more about how the Episcopal Church lives out its Christian faith. Although the class is especially suited for those seeking to be baptized, confirmed or received in the Episcopal Church, it is open to all who want to brush up on their knowledge or those who are just curious.

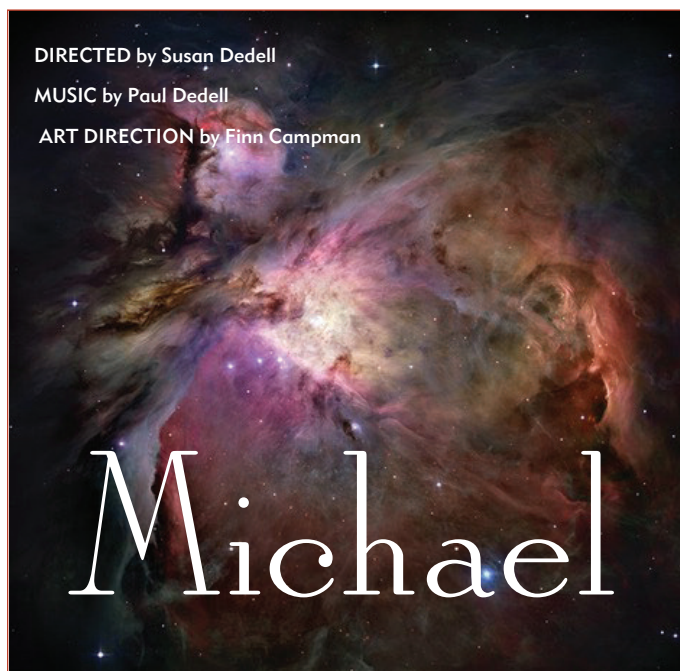
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Please email Mary if you are interested in attending at mary@stmichaelsvermont.org, or call the church office at 802-254-6048, ext 104 by September 7. Possible times for meeting are Tuesdays, 5–6:15pm, or Wednesdays from 10–11:15 am. This class could be in-person or on Zoom depending on participants' preferences.

STM

**ADULT FORUMS WILL BEGIN AGAIN
--ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2. STAY TUNED!**

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“MICHAEL,”

A CONTEMPORARY MYSTERY PLAY

**7:30 pm Friday, Sept. 30; 7:30 Saturday, Oct. 1;
and 4 pm Sunday, Oct. 2**

Susan Dedell

If you've been reading past Guardians, bulletins, and e-blasts about an upcoming mystery play, you'll have seen a whole lot of talk about dragons, but not so much about Michael. But as the title of this

production shows, this is a play about Michael, the Archangel. So, let's get a little background on Michael!

Michael's name in both Hebrew and Arabic means “who is like God?”. It is the name itself that forms one of the basic questions at the center of this new mystery play. Indeed, who is like God?

Michael appears as an angel in the Old Testament, the Quran and, perhaps most famously for Christians, in the book of Revelation. All three Abrahamic religions consider Michael as the defender of the faithful, as well as the bearer of souls to God. Early Christians identified Michael as the leader of all angels and placed Michael — along with Jesus — at the right hand of God as intercessor and healer. Michael became increasingly associated with the fight of good versus evil and as such became the patron saint and protector of various countries, military organizations, and rulers.

It is therefore no surprise that so many churches, cities, institutions, and people have been named after Michael. And yet in scripture itself, not that much is written of Michael. As creators of this mystery play, it was the name itself — Who is Like God? — that provided creative fodder to explore Michael's role and persona.

And yes — there are dragons in this story! For how could we explore Michael (and the name of Michael) without them?

As in Christianity, where they are most vividly depicted in the book of Revelation, dragons are present in Judaism, where they were referred to by the name ‘tannin’ (monster) and were considered to be created by God on the 5th day of creation. Tannins took many forms, most frequently as serpents, reptiles, or the great fish of the sea Leviathan. In Islam, dragons stand for both the darkness of destruction and the light of the divine. These dragons symbolically represent both creation and chaos and the balance of those forces which makes life possible.

Where does all of this take our production? What happens when Michael encounters dragons? Who are these dragons? For that matter, who is Michael? Most

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importantly, what might we discover for ourselves in this huge, cosmic, mythic tale?

We are joined in our production by our friend and colleague, Finn Campman, who designed the dragons and created amazing and evocative video. Violinist Kathy Andrew, co-concertmaster of Vermont Symphony and longtime friend, joins percussionist extraordinaire Steve Rice and me in some amazing music written by Paul. Singers and actors from St. Michael's complete our production. And all of this in one hour! Make plans to see this at least once, so mark your calendars!

STM

WATCH FOR HOSPITALITY TEAM SURVEY!

The Hospitality Team is reforming and blossoming this season, after a period of dormancy during the first years of Covidtide. This important ministry supports church events by providing food and welcome to all members of our congregation. Weekly offerings, such as Lemonade on the Lawn and Coffee Hour, are opportunities for volunteers. Other opportunities are special seasonal events such as Advent Lessons and Carols, St. Nicholas Day and the Easter Vigil and significant gatherings, such as funerals and celebrations of all kinds. This new team welcomes participation by all, and we are grateful for the support of all past helpers — bakers, cheese slicers, coffeemakers, table setter-uppers, and more!

Please be looking for a survey that will be sent via email in the coming weeks which will list ways you can join and support the re-emergence of this ministry.

Note: we plan to host Lemonade on the Lawn as long as we can through the fall, staying safe and out of doors. We need volunteers to bring simple food to share — please sign up in the Common Room. Thank you! We look forward to being together in fellowship in the coming seasons.

*Rosie Wojcik
Cliff Wood
Megan Buchanan*

REFUGEE MINISTRY UPDATE

Nancy Ames

Despite the hardships they have endured, each and every one of our Afghan families have heartwarming stories to tell. This month as we update you on the progress of this ministry, we highlight the Khawaja family. The most exciting news, you may have already heard, is that Zarghana delivered a beautiful baby boy on July 14 - our first American citizen and the apple of his parents' eyes. (Under the circumstance, we might say the pistachio of their eyes!) In one of God's moments of grace, the baby, who has been named Zahidullah, was born within hours of the passing of Daniel Dobson, who was instrumental in developing the programs and support systems that enabled the re-settling of the Khawaja family.

There is other good news. The father, Wahid Shah, is thrilled to have gotten his driver's license and the family has found an apartment to rent where they will hone their independent living skills. They expect to sign a lease in September. Zarghana has endured numerous dental procedures and now can show off a lovely new smile. Toddler Laila is picking up English skills each and every day. One of her favorite expressions is "Good Job," which she repeats with delight when her mother earns praise during her English lessons.

This very good news comes as a result of the collaboration between the family and teams of hardworking volunteers. We are grateful to everyone who has worked tirelessly to help our families adapt to their new lives in America.



Christian Formation Kick-off

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MEDITATIONS ON THE INNER LIFE OF WORDS, A SERIES

Benson Bobrick

SAMSON AND DELILAH

“Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)

The Dungeon of thy self; thy soul...”

Imprisoned now indeed. —John Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, ll. 155-6.

All the great stories of the Bible, like those of the great pagan myths, are archaic tales of true meaning. Though some may be grounded in historical fact, they are also moral parables of the lives we live. It is probably not too much to say that if we could stand back from our own personal histories and see them as they are — once the incidental or secondary facts are stripped away — we would find that at times we have reenacted, at least in part, some of the great archetypal dramas—the story of the Fall, of Cain and Abel, Samson and Delilah, Joseph and his Brothers, the Tower of Babel, the Prodigal Son, and so on — in our lives.

The symbolic names of the characters, places, and events in the stories often help to give them their universal cast. The story of Samson and Delilah — of profligate abandon and redemption—is a case in point.

As the story unfolds, we learn that Samson’s birth has been foretold by an angel and that his life will be consecrated to God. As a sign of its consecration, he is obliged to abstain from alcohol and forbidden to shave his head. His parents name him Samson, which in Hebrew means “child of the Sun,” and before long, as a sign of his divine calling, he begins to demonstrate superhuman strength. But as a youth (like Youth itself), he is also restless, rebellious, and subject to unruly desires. On impulse, he marries a Philistine woman against his parents’ wishes; provokes a bloody feud with her relations; consorts with a harlot; and (in culmination of this errant course) eventually falls in

love with Delilah, a treacherous figure who brings about his fall.

Who is she, exactly? We don’t really know. We are told only that she comes from the valley of “Sorek,” which means “valley of the delectable vine”; while her name connotes “languorous weakness,” a state that will undermine Samson’s strength. Samson’s former illicit encounters were not fatal, because they were ephemeral: that is, he was captive to a transient desire. But Delilah is different. She represents complete surrender, body and soul. By embracing her, Samson embraces the vine (that is, is utterly drunk with desire); while strong drink itself is one of the things, as we know, he has been forbidden to try. He is also, as we know, not allowed to have his head shaved. So when Delilah discovers the secret of his strength, and his seven locks are shorn, his strength falters and his light is dimmed — for by his hair is meant the rays of the Sun.* Immediately thereafter, his world goes utterly dark when his eyes are gouged out.

For the root of Delilah’s name (“layla”) means “night.”

Is this a love story gone wrong? Hardly. It is a tale about idolatry and what it does to the soul. That is why the final scene takes place in Gaza with the destruction of the temple of Dagon, the Philistines’ pagan God. As Samson’s strength returns, along with his hair, he cannot regain his sight, which played a role in his beguilement. But he now has inner light and understanding—the Sun, as it were, within—as he pulls the temple down.

**Ancient sun-gods were commonly portrayed with seven radiant beams emanating from their head; and in the story of the sun-god Helios and his ill-fated son, Phaeton, for example, Helios “entwines the Sun’s seven rays like strings” in Phaeton’s hair.*

NEWS OF THE PARISH

SUMMARY OF AUGUST MEETING OF THE VESTRY

The Vestry had a jam-packed meeting with plenty of moving parts for the near future. There was a lot of laughter and reflection on what it is to be a leader. Chris Hart led us in a discussion about what it is to “Become a Wise Leader.” Every one of the vestry members individually brings their own leadership abilities and it is clear that we’re a very diversified group which makes for a well-rounded board for our church.

Bruce gave his treasurer’s report that all is well with our financials at this point. Mary is planning liturgy and fall education programs, including Godly Play and Holy Mayhem, that will get the kids back in the routine of being in church again now that we’re able to congregate once more.

Great news is that Adwoa is back at St. Michael’s! We are looking forward to more of her powerful ministries. The pre-school has officially expanded to 2 rooms upstairs and they have put down new flooring in the Sunday School room and will be adding the new flooring to the nursery room. St. Michael’s will continue to have use of these two rooms on evenings and Sunday mornings. The lease for this expansion is still being worked out as well as agreements about moving around required when the renovations to the roof take place this fall.

There was much discussion about two major events: The Parish Picnic on Sunday August 28 and the

Building Hope Open House on Thursday September 1. We will have a very, very busy week but having the first Parish Picnic in person in 3 years is going to feel so special and really got the vestry buzz vibrating. We hope that many of you can attend one or both events. Early this fall we will be revamping the Common Room with the help of Adwoa.

Our committee reports were numerous. Alan McBean gave us the update on the roof project slated to start in October; there are still some inspections and subsequent planning to be done before the roofing starts. Jared Rediske gave us the rundown on the cash flow related to the roofing, insulation, solar and mini-splits payments. Steve Guerriero gave an update on the Refugee Ministry, including Nancy Ames joining co-leaders Jeff Lewis and Jean Smith, as our beloved Daniel Dobson has passed on to be with the Lord. Interviews for refugees have started and they are proving to be a bit of a grueling process. Annie Landenberger gave some encouraging news that she’s heard feedback from the community that the messages of St. Michael’s good deeds are very well recognized and that St. Michael’s really is doing so much for our community in so many aspects.

Finally, a big CONGRATULATIONS to Mary as she has her first child going off to college! We wish you well Jonah at UVM.

Respectfully submitted, Jared V. Rediske



Summer young kids gathering

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

LECTIONARY FOR SEPTEMBER

To see all the readings for each Sunday,
go to <http://www.lectionarypage.net/>.

You will find there the collects, lessons and psalms
for each Sunday and feast day.

SEPTEMBER 2022 CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

August 2	Caleb Fritz, Noah Coburn
September 1	Nan Tierra
September 3	Thad Bennett
September 4	Jacki Capponcelli
September 6	Ricky Davidson and Charles Daigneault
September 9	Sarah Benton, George Moore
September 11	Grace Xinqi Willingham
September 12	Margit Lilly
September 13	Laurie Kaiser
September 14	Jay Pomponio, Kyle Capponcelli
September 16	Eleanor Horton, Susan Daigneault
September 18	KJ White
September 19	Skyla Ragle, Elise Burrows
September 20	Krista Burtis, Ainsley Meyer, Christian Olmstead
September 22	Anne Montgomery, Alix Fedoruk
September 25	Scott McElhinney
September 26	Steve Guerriero
September 30	Mary McCarthy



ANNIVERSARIES

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

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The Guardian

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)