

# The Guardian

MARCH 2023

## LENT

### ST. MICHAEL'S 2023 LENTEN STUDY

#### *THIS HERE FLESH: SPIRITUALITY, LIBERATION AND STORIES THAT MAKE US*

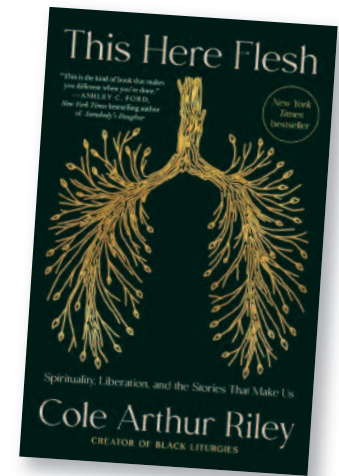
TUESDAYS, 5–6:30 PM IN LENT

St. Michael's Lenten Series this year will be a book study on "This Here Flesh." Cole Arthur Riley's 2022 debut book is a mix of memoir, theology and poetry, structured around single-word chapters (Dignity, Place, Wonder, Calling, Lament . . .) The book offers a doorway into authentically expressing our own experiences of God, ourselves and one another. The five sessions will be a combination of prayer, conversation and sharing facilitated by Mary Lindquist and adwoa Wilson.

**When:** Tuesdays in the Season of Lent, from 5–6:30 pm (February 28, March 7, 14, 21 & 28).

**Where:** This will be a *hybrid offering*, which means that you may gather in-person in the Meeting Room at St. Michael's or you may attend on Zoom.

**Next Steps:** Please obtain a copy of the book and read the introduction and the first two chapters prior to our first gathering, if possible. There are many copies on hold at *Everyone's Books* in Brattleboro (25 Eliot St.). This book is also available on Kindle and Audible. If you need help with book costs, please let Mary or Jeanie know.



### OTHER LENTEN POSSIBILITIES

#### *DIOCESAN LENTEN SERIES: A SEASON OF THE SPIRIT*

"Lent is traditionally a season of self-denial and reflection, penitence, and discipline," the Rev. adwoa Wilson says. She adds "However, author Martin L. Smith notes that 'it is also a time of freedom, when the Spirit of God urges us to be open to the central experiences of Jesus's life.' In *A Season for the Spirit: Readings for the Days of Lent*, Smith offers daily meditations that guide the disciple through a journey of self-discovery in order to discover how Christ enfolds every aspect of her life and enfolds her into every aspect of His Mystery."

During Lent, members of the Diocese of Vermont are invited to read *A Season for the Spirit* together and to take part in three online gatherings for conversation:

- Thursday, March 2 at 7 pm
- Thursday, March 16 at 7 pm
- Thursday, March 30 at 7 pm

## LENT

The conversations will be followed by Compline with the Green Mountain Online Abbey at 8 pm. Join the conversations through the Green Mountain Online Abbey LINK or dial in at (646) 876-9923, meeting ID: 531110497#, password: RockPoint.

Follow the diocesan Facebook page during Lent to see and respond to daily reflections and questions from Bishop Shannon and adwoa Wilson.

**Another recommendation for individual study:**

*“Bless the Lent We Actually Have: 40 Days to Read, Reflect, and Bless Our Imperfect Lives”* from Kate Bowler. A professor at Duke Divinity school and author, Bowler has a podcast called “Everything Happens.” Her memoir, *“Everything Happens for a Reason (and Other Lies I’ve Loved),”* describes her experience being diagnosed with stage IV cancer in her mid-30s. Check out and download Bowler’s daily devotional guide for these 40 days at: <https://katebowler.com/blessthislent/>

## NEWS OF THE PARISH

**PANCAKE SUPPER, SHROVE TUESDAY  
FEB 21, 5:00–6:30 PM**

The Outreach Committee invites you to come celebrate Shrove Tuesday, or Mardi Gras as it is called in New Orleans. It is a merry prelude to the solemnity of Lent, with homemade pancakes (including gluten-free pancakes for those with gluten allergy), real Vermont maple syrup, sausages, applesauce and fruit. Costumes encouraged!

Supper is from 5:00 to 6:30 in the Undercroft, with a voluntary contribution of \$7 each or \$20 for a family of three or more. All proceeds from the supper will support Saint Michael’s Interfaith Refugee Ministry.

Helpers are needed for set up, cooking, and clean up: contact Brian Morgan at 802-451-8551 or [morgan.bg@gmail.com](mailto:morgan.bg@gmail.com).



**ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22  
12 NOON AND 5:30 PM**

The Season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday which lands this year on February 22. Ash Wednesday, a reminder of human mortality and the need for reconciliation with God, marks the beginning of the

penitential Lenten season and is commonly observed with ashes and fasting. The 40-day period represents Christ’s time of temptation in the wilderness. The liturgy, which includes the imposition of ashes and Holy Eucharist, will be offered at St. Michael’s at 12 noon and 5:30 pm. All are welcome.



**LENTEN ADULT FORUM SERIES:  
“WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN  
TO GOOD PEOPLE?”**

**IN-PERSON, SUNDAYS 9–10 AM  
IN THE MEETING ROOM**

As we approach the mysteries of Jesus’ suffering in Lent, beginning with Jesus’ temptations in the wilderness and ending with Jesus’ death on the cross, St. Michael’s Adult Forums will center on the question of “Why do bad things happen to good people?” through the lenses of theology, the life of Jesus, grief, and our own experiences of suffering and loss. All are welcome, regardless of whether you can come to all the sessions in the series.

**February 26: Exploring Theodicy** — Why does a good, all-powerful God permit evil to exist? This has been a theological and existential problem since the

## NEWS OF THE PARISH

very beginning of human existence. Christian theologians have different approaches to this question. We will explore some of the major approaches in this session. Led by Mary Lindquist.

**March 5: New Testament Perspectives:** An exploration of the theme “When Bad Things Happen to Good People” in the New Testament. Jean Smith leads.

**March 12: Cancer: Bad Things Happening to Good and Bad People Alike** — Agnus Mikijaniec, Oncology Nurse Practitioner at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, will lead a discussion on cancer and how people respond both emotionally and physically. What are the stories, both negative and positive, that people tell themselves when they have cancer? Why me? Where do people find hope when given a diagnosis? Are miracles related? Have you ever seen one?

**March 19: Grief Observed** — Join Lars Hunter, Hospice Bereavement Coordinator, as he shares about his experiences working with people who are in hospice care and their families. What are best practices for grieving? How does faith make a difference?

**March 26: Our Own Experiences of Suffering and Loss** — We will invite a few people from St. Michael’s to share about their own experiences of loss and grief. How did/do they navigate these experiences? How does their faith connect with these experiences? What changes over time?

### CHRIST CHURCH GUILFORD AWARDED IMPORTANT STATE GRANT

The Board of Directors of Christ Church Guilford is thrilled to announce that it has received a significant matching grant from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP). Governor Phil Scott, VDHP and the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation have announced that grants totaling \$321,363 have been awarded to 20 municipalities and non-profit organizations in six counties to facilitate the restoration and rehabilitation of Vermont landmarks and important historic buildings and structures.

Christ Church has received the highest award level available, \$20,000, to make necessary repairs to the roof of our beloved Mother Church. The Christ Church Board has already raised over \$6,400 from generous donors toward this work, and the receipt of this grant will enable the Board to appeal for additional support from other sources. We encourage additional donations to do the roof work and other necessary repairs to the building so that we can reopen and begin sponsoring events of importance to our community.

Online donations can be made through the website, <https://www.christchurchguilfordsociety.org/support-christ-church/donations-payments-deposits/>, or checks, made payable to the Christ Church Guilford Society, Inc., can be sent to the Treasurer, Christ Church Guilford Society, Inc., 16 Bradley Ave., Brattleboro, VT 05301. Thank you!

### *Altar Guild Work Bee*



## NEWS OF THE PARISH

## PRAYING TOGETHER

Lent is a wonderful time to deepen (or begin!) your prayer practice. Below are some opportunities to connect with others, both in person and online. Zoom Links may be found at St. Michael's website under "Prayer" or (for Compline) on the Diocese of Vermont Website.

Type of Service	What	Day & Time	Method	Place
Morning Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer	Prayer (both appointed and intercessory) & scripture, based on ancient Benedictine pattern for morning.	Every Weekday, 8–8:30 am	On Zoom Monday–Friday; In-person on Tuesdays & Wednesdays	The Mary Magdalene Chapel & Zoom room using this LINK
Contemplative Service	Simple chants, lectio divina & silent meditation	Thursdays, 5:30–6 pm	In-person & on Zoom	The Mary Magdalene Chapel & Zoom room using this LINK
Wednesday Eucharist	Similar to a Sunday service, but short, intimate & focused on the Saint of the Day with Holy Communion.	Wednesdays 12–12:30 pm	In-Person only	The Mary Magdalene Chapel
Breakfast with the Psalms	A conversation about the Psalm appointed for Sunday, ending with prayer	Wednesdays 8:30–10 am; come for part of all.	In-person only	The Works Café, 118 Main Street
Centering Prayer	Silent Meditation; 2 sessions of 20 minutes each.	Saturdays, 8–9 am	In-person only	The Mary Magdalene Chapel
Compline from the Book of Common Prayer	Prayer (both appointed and intercessory) & scripture, based on ancient Benedictine pattern for the end of the day.	Weekdays, 8–8:30 pm	On Zoom only through the Diocese of Vermont.	Zoom room only, using this LINK



## UPDATES

**BUILDING HOPE**

Our beautiful new sanctuary roof is finished! We have been enjoying the insulation and the sense of protection from the elements that our new roof has given us. It is amazing how much better the church sanctuary retains heat. The contractors from ARC Mechanical have started to install heat pumps and mini-splits in the Rectory and the church, so soon we will be using much less heating oil. We will also have a cooling system in many of our spaces in preparation for the summer. The roofers will be back in April to replace the Bradley Wing and Rectory roofs. Insulation will be added to the Bradley Wing at the same time. Finally, this spring and summer, the solar panels will be placed on one side of the church, the Bradley Wing and the Rectory so that we can start powering our electrical systems through solar power. Yay! It is so wonderful to see the work we planned become a reality.

**MUSIC DIRECTOR SEARCH**

The Music Director Search Committee has been working hard since the fall. While we have met some really talented and interesting people, we have not yet found THE person for St. Michael's. We are so thankful to Patty Meyer for helping us with music and conducting during this in-between time. Please continue to pray that we may find St. Michael's next Music Director, who will lead St. Michael's in this next chapter.

**MEDITATIONS ON THE INNER LIFE OF WORDS, A SERIES**

*Benson Bobrick*

*"If anyone says, 'I love God' but hates his brother, he is a liar, for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen."*

—1 John 4:20

*"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, 'Love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you.'"*

— Matthew 5:43-44

Throughout the *New Testament*, we are told that we must love one another, and that if we hate anyone, including our "enemies," we cannot love God. This is perhaps the hardest of all the obligations our faith imposes upon us; I suspect that every believer has struggled with how to obey it truly without feeling insincere.

Hate often seems justified, in the natural (or fallen) way of things, as a result of some dreadful personal encounter, or when we find ourselves confronted by a public figure promoting cruelty and injustice in the world. Can we truly love such "enemies," who otherwise fill us with loathing, while still hating what they do? Lesser enmities — with those near at hand, for example — are more easily answered by a simple expression of good will — whether our gesture is accepted or not. But the greater challenge remains. The traditional — and true — admonition is that we must remember that everyone has an immortal soul and is made in the image of God. Yet when it is put to us that way, it has the character of an abstract theological concept that is difficult to feel. And in human terms, at least, something must be truly felt to be real.

That troubled me for a long time. Then one day I had a kind of epiphany while reading an essay by the great English poet, John Milton, in which he spoke of the steadfast followers of Christ — whom he described as

## NEWS OF THE PARISH

the “sad friends of Truth.” By “sad” Milton actually meant “steadfast,” for in the English of his day that was the primary meaning of the word. But (making full use of the language) he also brought its secondary sense of “sad” strongly into play. For, as Milton well knew, the root meaning of the word “sad” is to “feel the full weight of a thing.”

There is the sorrow we all know that is melancholy. And there is the godly sorrow that longs for the enlightened redemption of another, whose heart has become hardened in some way. That sorrow is a kind

of love. It must not be felt by us in any condescending sense, as if our “enemies” were somehow beneath us, or in more need of mercy than ourselves, but in the way we humbly grieve for our own sins and transgressions, when we reflect upon our lives.

For our own greatest “enemy,” after all, is within.

As always, Christ, “the Man of Sorrows,” showed the way. For he looked with the full weight of sorrow upon our fallen state, even as he sought to redeem us by his steadfast Love.

*Susan Dedell's celebration*



## NEWS OF THE PARISH

## LETTER FROM SUSAN IN MEXICO

To the dear people of St. Michael's,

Thank you, thank you, thank you.....

After 2 weeks in Mérida, Mexico, Paul and I have had time to settle in to a very different new rhythm of life — to catch our breath, and let our tangled emotions start to settle. Every day since that most wonderful of weekends, we think of something or someone connected to St. Michael's. We find ourselves recounting a memory of an experience we had or having a sense of a physical connection that transcends actual contact. You are — and will always be — deep in our hearts. You are — and will always be — a well of experienced love to be drawn on over and over again.

And what an amazing weekend of celebration and thanksgiving you gave us! Starting with gathering together for a quiet time of feeling God's blessings in the Saturday Taizé service; then that AMAZING party in that totally transformed undercroft; and finally, a grace-filled Sunday Eucharist — it was all blessed in every second. The Spirit was in full flight the whole time. And my heart was just so full of joy!

There is something about the spiritual energy at St. Michael's that I experience tangibly and have done so ever since I first entered that sanctuary those decades ago. I remember well when I met with the search committee and Paul Thompson and they gave me a few moments to go to the organ to get acquainted with the instrument before they came in to hear me play. I walked in to the empty sanctuary and instead of going right back to the organ console, I was drawn to the center of the nave's crossing. There used to be an altar rail, and I recall kneeling and gazing at the window above the altar, with that beautiful unusual aqua color just glowing — and I felt it then: the calming but invigorating breeze of the Holy Spirit. St. Michael's hosts the presence of God's love in a way that has nourished me through every season of my life while I was there. I think that is because the Spirit is given a home in the hearts of its people; it lodges in each of you, making a holy mosaic of loving energy.

Here in Mérida, we are getting to know our way around. It is very different here: climate; culture; food; language. We live in a comfortable house near the Parque Santiago where we go almost every day to buy fruit, vegetables, and fresh tortillas at the big covered market. There is also a weekly "Slow Food" market on Saturday where we go to buy eggs, cheese, meat, coffee, honey, and more. I love to cook, and it has been much fun working with a very different palate of food. Since cacao is native to this region, we are very lucky to have a chocolatería right up the street, and it is our particular luxury to go there for either iced or hot chocolate — rich and dark and often made with water rather than milk.

We have also discovered the one and only Episcopal church in the Yucatan, only 8 blocks away from us! San Lucas is a small but vigorous body of believers, with one service in Spanish and one in English. The gift of this little church is felt by both of us keenly. On that first Sunday away from you all at St. Michael's, I was in a very tender place, but healing tears flowed on the opening collect, "Almighty God, to whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid....."



## NEWS OF THE PARISH

The differentness of our surroundings has been helpful for us, as we wrestle with leaving our beloved community at St. Michael's. Speaking for myself, I truly do feel a true sense of celebration, of completion, a savoring of meaningful work. But I also feel the grief that comes with any profound loss. I loved every aspect of my work. And, Paul and I love all of you very much.

I've written many individual messages of thanks to people in the last days, but this message of thanks is to you — that most unique and beloved church body. For an extraordinary rich celebration of food, fun, praise, and music, Paul and I thank you. For a hugely generous financial parting gift, Paul and I are humbly thankful. And for the blessing of belonging to a body of Christ that includes each of you, we thank you.

Loving you greatly,  
*Susan*



## SUMMARY OF JANUARY MEETING OF THE VESTRY

Anticipating a snow storm, the meeting of the Vestry was moved to Zoom. Rebecca opened with a prayer and a spiritual reflection on her Vestry service.

Bruce Lawrence gave his last Treasurer's Report. Tom Cain, who will take over from Bruce, also attended the meeting. Bruce happily reported that income for 2022 exceeded expenditures by approximately \$17,000.

Mary reported that the music director search continues. No permanent music director has been selected yet, but Zoom interviews were held, and in-person visits are planned for February. Patty Meyer will fill in providing music for Sunday services and working with the choir.

Guests Tom Ely and Cliff Wood joined the meeting to talk about the Swords to Plowshares Northeast organization. Swords to Plowshares Northeast is an organization, co-founded by Rt. Rev. James Curry, focused on reducing gun violence. To that end, they transform guns from buyback programs into useful garden implements. St. Michael's will host an event for this organization on April 29.

Guest Karen Guthrie talked about upcoming repairs to our pipe organ. The repairs will be separated in two parts. First, some pipes will be repaired or replaced,

which will improve the voicing of the organ. In the second part, repairs to the console will be undertaken some time in the next few years. St. Michael's is fortunate to have a skilled organ builder who is able to undertake these repairs. Funding for most of the first part has been secured thanks to a generous gift.

Annie Landenberger reported on the upcoming Vestry Retreat.

Rebecca Olmstead, whose term on the Vestry is ending, reflected on her time on the Vestry. Jared Rediske, who was unable to attend, sent a letter. Both members have greatly appreciated the opportunity to serve the parish.

Alan McBean reported on the state of the building project. The copper roofing on the church is completed. The rest of the roofing project will be started in early spring. The installation of the solar panels will follow soon after the completion of the roofing. The Common Room carpeting will be replaced soon.

Steve Guerriero gave a quick report on the work of the Refugee Committee.

Steve closed the meeting with a prayer.

—*David Treadwell*



## EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

## LECTIONARY FOR MARCH

To see all the readings for each Sunday,  
go to <http://www.lectionarypage.net/#march>.  
You will find there the collects, lessons and psalms  
for each Sunday and feast day.

## MARCH 2023 CELEBRATIONS

## BIRTHDAYS

March 2	Susan Kochinskas
March 3	Christine Hart, Kiersten McKenney, Callan McDowell
March 5	Joshua Fritz
March 7	Ladd Osborne, John Linscheid
March 10	Gabe Reynolds
March 11	Teri Robinson, Marie Lawrence
March 15	Benson Bobrick, Jeffrey Hiam, Michael Tolaro
March 16	Chris Chapman
March 19	Karen Guthrie
March 20	Bob Walker
March 22	Bruce Lawrence
March 24	James Wilmott, Joan Pinilla, Margery McCrum, Sherill Wilson
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. (in-person and online)
WEEKDAYS	8:00 am	Morning Prayer (online) and Tues. & Wed. in Chapel
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)