

The Guardian

OCTOBER 2023

FROM THE RECTORY

WITNESS

ST. MICHAEL'S STEWARDSHIP SEASON OCTOBER 22–NOVEMBER 12

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. —Acts 1:8

This passage from Acts is from the Pentecost story. It predicts that the Holy Spirit will “come upon” the people and this Spirit will send them out into the world to be witnesses of God’s love and power in Jesus. The literal translation of witness is: “attestation of an event or fact, from personal knowledge.”

The Stewardship Team chose this passage from Acts as our campaign theme because we feel strongly that as followers of Jesus we are called to reflect and attest to God’s love and hope to our world, a world so desperate to know this love and hope.

We have been blessed by the presence of two part-time priests at St. Michael’s in the last few years, Duncan and adwoa, who have so beautifully witnessed to God’s love in Christ, not only to our congregation, but also to our wider community. Currently, through her leadership of the Psalm Study at The Works and upcoming pastoral presence to our neighbors in need at Loaves and Fishes, adwoa’s ministry testifies to God’s love in Christ, compassionately and unapologetically.

These two priests have brought unique gifts and energy that have helped grow our spirituality, mission, and witness. In the past, we have depended on grants to help us fund our part-time priests. St. Michael’s is now preparing to fully support a part-time priest as part of our operating budget. In order to make this a reality, we are asking our parish family to increase (as able) your annual pledges for 2024. We recognize that this is a big ask, considering that many of you dug deep to support our Building Hope Project. As you pray about your pledge, please reflect on our church’s commitment to open hearts everywhere to God’s love and the clergy leadership we need to pursue this mission.

Our intentional focus on stewardship will begin on Sunday, October 22. In the middle of October, you’ll receive a packet of materials asking you to prayerfully make a pledge to St. Michael’s for 2024. We ask you to return your pledge card on Commitment Sunday, November 12 during the 8 am or 10:15 am services. You also can mail your pledge card to St. Michael’s or pledge online through St. Michael’s website.

We thank you for your generosity to our common ministry. May we continue to witness to God’s love in Christ through our commitment to the ministry that God has given us.

Mary
Mary Lindquist
Rector

NEWS OF THE PARISH

ST. MICHAEL'S FEAST DAY, OCTOBER 1

While St. Michael's official feast day is on September 29, we will be celebrating our patron angel-saint on Sunday, October 1 at both services. Did you know that St. Michael is the only "saint" who is an angel? Did you know that St. Michael is the "arch-angel" or head of angels, as recognized in Judaism, Islam, Baha'i and Christianity? Do you know that we share our patron saint with the local Catholic church? Please note that we will have incense at the 10:15 am service that day.

STM

ADULT FORUM SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

October 1: The Season of Creation Liturgy: Where is the Season of Creation liturgy from? What has been your experience of this special liturgy? How do words affect our experience of worship and our relationship with God? Kim Peavey, the author of our modified Lord's Prayer, will be present to talk about how she created this prayer. Led by Mary Lindquist and Kim Peavey.

October 8: Mark Kutolowski, our special preacher for St. Francis Day, will talk about his community, Metanoia, in Thetford, Vermont.

**October 15: Our Housing**

Crisis: Saying something is a 'crisis' makes it seem New — Now.

Chris Hart and Janet Cramer present the background of housing issues in Brattleboro, look at the "Missing Middle" and explore construction planned and other options tried or promoted for housing not just the unhoused" but new workers, new families and older residents wanting to retire in their community or nearer local family.

October 22: "ADDICTED: Our Strength Under the Influence" — Local author and parishioner Susan Avery will speak about her recently published book

which addresses the story of her family experience with the life-altering reality of addiction.

October 29: Building Hope for the Earth, led by Cary Gaunt. Specifics of this forum are forthcoming!

STM

**CELEBRATING ST. FRANCIS DAY
ON OCTOBER 8**

Come participate in our last Sunday in the Season of Creation with the celebration of St. Francis' Feast Day! Mark Kutolowski will be our preacher and forum leader (see below) and we will bless animals in the afternoon.

Mark Kutolowski is the co-director of Metanoia of Vermont, <https://www.metanoiavt.com>, a lay contemplative community where residents and guests seek to follow the Way of Christ through work, prayer and study in relationship with the land. Mark is an Oblate of Saint Benedict and a Centering Prayer teacher. He has spent the past 25 years exploring the intersection of Christian faith, embodiment, and relationship with the natural world. Mark and his wife Lisa live at Metanoia with their two young children.

STM

**ST. FRANCIS DAY BLESSING
OF THE ANIMALS**

All people, creatures and critters are invited to a special celebration in thanksgiving of our pets and animals!

When: Sunday, October 8, 4 pm

Where: The Rectory Lawn (across the parking lot from St. Michael's, 18 Bradley Avenue, accessible entrance available on Bradley Avenue).

What: A brief time of singing, readings and prayer, followed by a time of blessing each pet individually.

Who: You, your pet or a picture of your pet, or a stuffed animal, plus your animal-loving friends and neighbors!

NEWS OF THE PARISH

DO YOU LOVE TO SING? WEEKNIGHT REHEARSALS BEGIN OCT 12

Keane Southard

I sit down to write this just a day after the choir has returned to singing during the 10:15 service, and of course this was also my first time directing the choir in worship here at St. Michael's. I'm grateful for all of the choir members and the wonderful comments of support I've already received from members of the congregation. I'm busy planning ahead the music for the coming weeks and months, including an anthem from my own pen that we will be performing on October 8 for the celebration of St. Francis Day using the "Prayer of St. Francis."

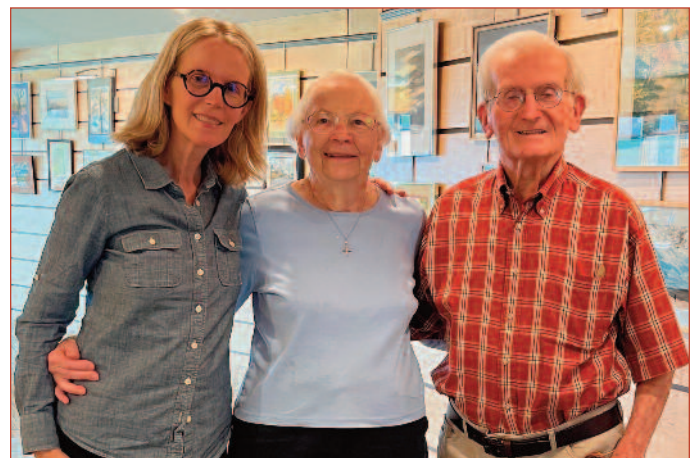
Do you love singing but don't feel ready to jump right in with the choir on Sunday mornings yet? In the last

newsletter, I mentioned that we'd be starting up an optional weekly weeknight choir rehearsal that will focus on developing singing and musicianship skills in addition to rehearsing the music for each Sunday so that such people can build up their skills and confidence until they feel comfortable enough to join on Sundays. We have now set the time for those rehearsals: **Thursday evenings 6:45 pm–8 pm starting October 12.** No musical background or experience necessary, so come give it a try if you love to sing, or tell a friend about it! (Established choir members are also encouraged to attend!)

STM



*St. Michael's Youth Group
with Jess Mattson, Service
Dog Trainer*



*Mary & John Carnahan, where they now live in
Randolph, at Morgan Orchards Senior Living*

“RESPONDING TO OUR NEIGHBORS” UPDATE

On August 23, about fifty people gathered in the Undercroft to pray and share about our distress at the crisis of homelessness in our community, as well as to explore how we at St. Michael’s may be called to respond. Our gathering ended by asking people to sign up to begin to explore and do research about different paths of action.

Below is a report of some of the ideas that were brought to our gathering; words written by parishioners are in italics. To be clear, we are in the beginning stages — research, prayer, exploration. We do not have the capacity to pursue every idea, but hopefully one or two significant ways of serving will open up to us as we find out more. Indeed, some ideas have already been acted on, like providing more volunteer support for Loaves & Fishes. If you are drawn to one/some of these ideas, or if you have things to share, please contact the Vestry through our office email: info@stmichaelsvermont.org

- **Relational** — one of the gifts of the church is relationships and community. How can we overcome the divide in our town between those who have housing (most people from St. Michael’s) and those who are unhoused? How can we offer friendship, a sense of belonging, a listening ear, a recognition of the presence of Christ in one another?

- **Oral history project** — One parishioner has spoken to the director of Brattleboro Memorial Library about meeting with individuals who are unhoused to hear their stories, write them up and share them.

- **Making connections** — For those who are able, be intentional about those we meet in our daily lives on the street; make eye contact, learn names, treat with respect and dignity.

- **Building community** — *Be involved in spiritual care and community building/support for our struggling neighbors. People getting drug treatment are more likely to relapse if they don’t have adequate social and spiritual strength to stay the course. People who*

are fleeing domestic violence or who lost a job and are homeless need real human engagement support in addition to logistics and practical services. The faith community is uniquely suited to assist in this arena — maybe forming a few community centers?

- **Concrete/Relational**

- **Offer more support for existing organizations** that work with the unhoused, like Loaves & Fishes and Groundworks. Loaves & Fishes is one of St. Michael’s existing ministries (shared with Centre Church) that already involves many volunteer parishioners. How can we support this ministry more strongly? Given that the demand for food through Loaves & Fishes has increased dramatically in the last few years and existing volunteers are out straight with the labor of preparing food, how can we offer support to the people who are waiting in line for food? Another need is for Loaves & Fishes to build a website where people can donate money directly to this ministry.

- **Laundry Love** — Doing laundry is expensive and labor-intensive. There are programs like “Laundry Love” that involve concrete help with the cost and labor of doing laundry, while offering human connection.

- **Provide a meal at St. Michael’s** on a day when other local feeding programs do not offer coverage.

- **Resume/Job seeking/Interviewing help:** meet with people to help find employment.

- **Concrete**

- Find ways to provide more housing or places to sleep, especially as winter is upon us.

- Explore unused spaces in Brattleboro.

- **Big Picture**

- **Research** what has worked well in other faith communities around the country. Research what is already happening in our community so as not to duplicate efforts. Speak directly to neighbors in need about what is falling through the gaps.

NEWS OF THE PARISH

- **Advocacy:** Organize for St. Michael's to raise its moral voice and advocate for more substantial, research-informed state and town programs.
- **Gather stakeholders:** Provide space and facilitation for community discussion forums so stakeholders with different interests and perspectives

(including those with the current housing, treatment, etc. needs) can hear each other and increase the chances they can work together to improve the community for everyone. Faith communities have the capacity to hold deeper, more caring conversations than do town councils, for example.



BUILDING HOPE FOR THE EARTH CELEBRATION, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29

Last September, we kicked off the Building Hope for the Earth Campaign, which aligns with St. Michael's long-term goal of producing 110% clean, renewable energy by 2030. We are so thankful to God and to you for all that we have accomplished so much towards this huge goal through the Building Hope Initiative:

- We researched best ways forward to achieve our goal.
- We received an energy audit as to how we could best conserve the energy that we produce.
- We raised over \$800,000 which has allowed us to:
 - Replace all our lightbulbs with LED.
 - Replace all our roofs (except for half of the Rectory roof that was replaced recently).
 - Insulate the sanctuary and Bradley Wing roofs.

- Outfit the Rectory and the most-used spaces in the church with heat pump technology that relies on clean electricity, not oil.

The last phase of our plan for this phase is to **install solar panels** on all south-facing roofs. We had hoped to be finished with the solar panels this summer, but because of many delays, this part of the project has been pushed to the beginning of October.

Nonetheless, we want to celebrate all that we have accomplished through your generosity so far! So please mark your calendars for Sunday October 29, following the 10:15 am service, for a special ribbon cutting and celebration. We will say special prayers, enjoy food and give tours of all the work that has been done.



IMOGENE DRAKES

NAACP Outstanding Community Service Award

Imogene Drakes Ph.D., St. Michael's parishioner and former vestry member, will receive the prestigious Windham County NAACP Outstanding Community Service Award at the Fourth Annual Freedom Fund Dinner on Saturday, October 21, at 5 pm at The American Legion in Brattleboro.

Dr. Drakes, Laboratory Director at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, serves as chair of the hospital's Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee where she has fought for health equity for all residents at the hospital and in the community at large. She has been a leading force behind the NAACP's Health Justice Committee and is a board member of Groundworks where she helps expand awareness of our most vulnerable community members. Dr. Drakes lives her mantra of "Our nation is only as strong as its weakest people."

Join in honoring Imogene by attending The Freedom Fund Dinner. Tickets are available online at The Windham County NAACP website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fourth-annual-windham-county-naacp-freedom-fund-dinner-tickets-662669360897>



SUMMARY OF SEPTEMBER 21ST MEETING OF THE VESTRY

The meeting opened with a reflection by Rosie Wojcik about “hope” and the question “In this season what are you hoping for?” Jesus’ parable of the landowner hiring people throughout the day influenced the idea that people may yearn to be invited to do meaningful work for God’s Kingdom. The question was raised “How do we facilitate helping people find the work they need to do?” Discussion included that it was not a matter of “getting” people to “do things,” but an invitation to ministry, “matchmaking,” and a recognition of gifts that an individual might not even notice in themselves.

The Treasurer's report featured the news that Gwen Mousin has agreed to be the treasurer beginning in January; until then, she will assist Tom Cain, who will move into the role of assistant treasurer in the new year. Tom and the Audit Committee have just completed the Diocesan Annual Audit, with a very comprehensive checklist concerning finances and procedures. Thank you to the Audit Committee of Chris Hart, MJ Woodburn, and Brian Morgan for helping Tom. The electricity bill went up due to the installation of mini-splits, but costs should go down once the solar panels kick in although it was pointed out that it will really be a year before we can really predict what the savings will be. Otherwise, expenses are running about as planned.

The Rector's report featured the dilemma of funding needs for our mother church, Christ Church Guilford owned by our diocese, which needs a matching grant to repair the beautiful historic building. A dedicated local committee has been working hard to raise money and execute a clear architectural plan for rebuilding, with the hope of making it useable again for community events. Our shared history was discussed, including the fact that we were very grateful to have had the use of the church grounds during the pandemic. It was agreed that it feels like a very spiritual place with deep Vermont roots, and we’d like to save it if we can. Motion was passed to donate up to \$5,000, including Schroeder Fund money and other funds designated for relevant purposes that could be tapped. The Christ Church committee will be asked to come and share their vision.

The vestry also worked on writing and revising a Letter of Agreement for our Assistant Priest, Adwoa Wilson, approving a 3-year commitment for a position of $\frac{1}{3}$ time priest with St. Michael’s which she will balance with a $\frac{1}{3}$ time position with the diocese.

Discussion continued regarding our “Responding to our Neighbors” forum and an agenda for a Vestry Forum for overall ministry. “Direction and Discernment” will be a focus as we as a congregation consider what we can do, exploring the process. David Treadwell noted the “seeds scattered” at Loaves and Fishes, with an effort to really learn what people need. Steve Guerriero and Paul Gallagher spoke about how the Refugee Ministry has changed people’s lives.

In other news, the installation of solar panels, delayed because of weather, is scheduled to commence with the full crew here in mid-October. Our Building Hope Celebration is scheduled for Oct. 29th with a ribbon-cutting after the 10:15 service. The Common Room Project is chugging away, with the painting of the space now completed, (special thank you to Ross Kinney and Vince Johnson), and decorating will begin soon. Rosie Wojcik noted that the Hospitality ministry is hoping to make Coffee Hour sustainable. The Annual Picnic, Aug. 27th at Spofford Lake, was wonderful! Special thanks go to Kate and Dana McGinn and the vestry for hosting. Thanks go to Annie Landenberger and Breeze for the Loaves and Fishes musical fundraiser. Foyer Groups are underway. Annie may organize another group if there is interest, especially a possible Zoom group. She says she would also like to recruit other writers to help with communication and write profiles of parishioners for the *Guardian*.

Susan Heimer, Vestry

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

LECTIONARY FOR OCTOBER

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

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

OCTOBER 2023 CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

October 4	Nancy Ames
October 5	Valerie Abrahamsen
October 6	Ori Johnson
October 9	Judith Reichsman, Keira Caponcelli
October 10	Janet Cramer
October 11	Brendan McElhinney
October 12	Christy Fritz
October 14	Liz Harrison
October 15	Joanna Brown
October 16	Dan Houder, Judith Junkins
October 17	Dana McGinn, Jack Lilly
October 18	David Birri
October 21	Mary Lindquist, Ed Sbardella, William Boggess
October 24	Lifei Osborne
October 25	Karren Meyer
October 29	Steve Harrison
October 30	Melanie Boese

ANNIVERSARIES

October 1	Christine & Richard Gauthier
October 8	Larry Earle & Jay Pomponio
October 9	Heddy & Zsolt Pomazi
October 11	Louise LaChance & Aldrich Wright
October 22	Anita & Jim Crosson

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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.–Thurs. 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)