

The Guardian

AUGUST 2024

FROM THE RECTORY

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Dear St. Michael's,

Happy Summer! — This month, I am taking a step back from our beautiful life at St. Michael's to report a bit on the election of our new presiding bishop. — I am excited about his vision for our church.

—Mary

"It's a great day in the Kingdom." These were the words Rt. Reverend Sean Rowe used to open his sermon at the closing Eucharist of the General Convention held in Louisville, Kentucky at the end of June. Sean Rowe, Bishop of Northwestern Pennsylvania and provisional bishop of Western New York, was elected by the House of Bishops on the first ballot.

Rowe went on in his sermon to compare the plight of the Episcopal Church in the United States with the church in Ephesus addressed in the Letter to the Ephesians:

Like the church in Ephesus, we're small, countercultural. We're not struggling to survive in the cult of Artemis, but there are other cults in our midst.

We are standing firm in the face of those. We're holding fast to our promise to uphold the full inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons as children of God. We're proclaiming and investing in our longing to become a Beloved Community. We're committing to caring for God's creation and respecting the dignity of every human being.

And we are not backing down in our proclamation of the Gospel just because other people who understand it differently are bigger or think they're more powerful or louder or have a vision that denies humanity. (Full text and recording of the sermon are available at episcopalnewservice.org)

In his opening words to the Convention following his election, Rowe drew on the words of Thomas Merton in his vision to meet the present moment with "courage, hope and faith." Rowe went on to state:

Our ministry together in the next nine years comes at a critical time for the Episcopal Church. It is not too strong to say that we're facing an existential crisis. Not because the church is dying, or because we have lost our belief in the salvation of God in Jesus Christ. But because as the world around us changes, and continues to change — it changes all the time — and God is calling us more deeply into the unknown.

Rowe will follow Michael Curry in the office of presiding bishop on November 2. While it is traditional for presiding bishops to be installed in a large service at the National Cathedral in Washington DC, Rowe has "decided to begin this ministry in a new way," with a simple service at the church center in New York that will include everyone via livestream, thereby reducing our collective carbon footprint.

Mary Lindquist, Rector

NEWS OF THE PARISH

TREE DEDICATION IN HONOR OF JEAN SMITH'S MINISTRY AT ST. MICHAEL'S SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 9AM

When Priest Associate Jean Smith and her husband, Peter, moved to Connecticut last winter, we promised to plant a flowering cherry tree in honor of Jean's very fruitful ministry with St. Michael's. Now, thanks to the work of Judy Davidson, the tree is planted! We invited Jean to come back to St. Michael's on Sunday, August 11 so that we can offer prayers of dedication for the tree in thanksgiving for her ministry. We will gather outside with the tree following the 8 am service (approximately 9 am) and then share some food and fellowship in the Undercroft prior to the 10:15 am service. Please join us for this special occasion!



THE ANNUAL PARISH PICNIC IS COMING AUGUST 25!

On Sunday August 25, we will celebrate summer with our Annual Parish Picnic. Please join us for this celebration at Kate & Dana McGinn's beautiful home on Lake Spofford from 12–4 pm. The Vestry will provide hot dogs, hamburgers and drinks. Please bring a side dish or dessert and your bathing suit for swimming and outdoor activities. There are also plenty of chairs for porch-sitting.

Directions to the McGinn's house will be available at the church.

Please RSVP by August 20 by emailing Kate at kjmcginn17@gmail.com or by signing up in the Common Room.



IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

- **August 11, 9 am:** The dedication of Jean Smith's tree dedication, followed by a light breakfast in the Undercroft
- **August 25, 12–4pm:** St. Michael's Annual Picnic at the McGinn's Residence on Spofford Lake

- **September 1:** The beginning of the Season of Creation, September 1–October 6.
- **September 8:** The beginning of the program year, with Sunday School, Adult Forum and Sunday Choir resuming.



INTERESTED IN JOINING THE CHOIR?

Keane Southard

It's August, which means it won't be long until the St. Michael's choir resumes again after Labor Day when our summer break ends. My first year leading the choir was filled with learning how things have been done here at St. Michael's, as well as the choir adjusting to some of the ways I operate that are different from what they were used to. But it was a joy making music together, singing familiar anthems (some in a different way than the choir was used to) as well as learning some new ones, including a couple of my own compositions.

We are always looking for new choir members, and we particularly need more sopranos (highest voices) and tenors (typically high male voices, or very low female voices). You need not be a polished or trained singer, although having some experience singing in a choir and/or some familiarity with reading music is of course helpful.

If you are interested in trying out the choir, you can certainly come and sit in on rehearsals until you feel comfortable committing to singing with the choir during the services. Rehearsals are Sunday mornings at 8:45 am before the 10:15 am services. Contact me (keane@stmichaelsvermont.org) with any questions.



NEW FOYER GROUPS FOR THE FALL!

John Spooner

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We are happy to announce that, beginning in September, we will be forming new St. Michael's foyer groups. As you may know, during the past year, five St. Michael's foyer groups have been actively meeting, sharing meals, and forming new friendships. The participants all report that these foyers have been a rich and wonderful way to get to know each other outside of regular Sunday activities.

As a bit of background, church foyer dinner groups first arose in England in 1940, in the aftermath of the destruction during the German bombings. They began as groups of parishioners who believed that understanding between peoples can best come when they know each other better. Since then, foyers have been used in many parishes to encourage community and deepen fellowship within the parish family.

Here's how St. Michael's foyer groups will be formed. Those interested let us know a bit about who you are and what you are interested in. We will then organize groups of 6–10 individuals and designate a facilitator to help organize the group meetings via email. Over a period of 6–8 months, each group will arrange potluck meals at participants' homes or at an agreed-upon location such as a park or in the undercroft. Meals can be simple as a casserole or pizza and a salad.

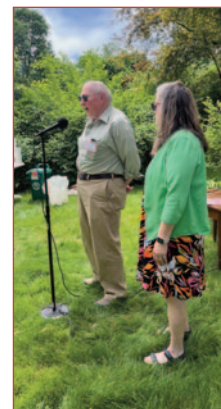
So if you'd like to join a group, please email John Spooner at jspooner52@gmail.com by September 10. Please include the following information:

- Your name, email, phone
- Names of any additional family members who wish to participate
- Additionally, you may if you choose indicate any particular interests you have or things you care most about. These might include things such as families with kids, couples, singles, LGBTQ+ issues, travel, or gardening

We look forward to hearing from you.

What are the elements of a vital community? Is it based on membership? Praise and acclaim? Secure resources?

St. Michael's Newcomers' Lunch



Sundae Sunday



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VITAL COMMUNITIES? — PART 1

adwoa Wilson

Or something...else. The Communities for Spiritual Vitality are based on the premise that vitality in a church is grounded in the vibrant spirituality of its lay leaders, undergirding and permeating their ministry among their peers and the world around them. We see a lot of that here at St. Michael's. Vestry members pray, share, and go on retreat together. Radically adventurous new ministries, like Skyberry House, emerge from the soil of shared daily prayer. The "Psalms Group" is slowly becoming an ecumenical and 'seeker' space, where lovers of Jesus and skeptics alike bring their heart to God and a text. In one way or another, we gather spiritually in community every single day at St. Michael's. Can you imagine St. Michael's without this network of spiritual vitality undergirding all that we do?

Yet so many churches feel like they are without that vitality. Because they are isolated or small, financially uncertain, aging, or not affirmed by their neighbors, they feel like they have lost their vitality. They do not regularly get to experience the Christian promise that our vitality and worth are grounded not in our worldly status but in our eternal one — loved by the Divine, joined together as Christ's body, guided from within by God's Spirit.

So, The Communities seek to support the development of this spiritually grounded identity in lay leaders through (1) exposure to spiritual practices; (2) creating space for leaders to have honest conversations with peers about the grief and hope of lay leadership; (3) to provide pastoral and spiritual companionship to leaders who may have very limited access to a priest. The Communities will do this through several means, including a web presence, currently in design. However, the core of the new initiative is to gather yearlong small groups of lay leaders from qualifying parishes in three in-person retreats and several Zoom meetings to experience all three of the components described above. We look forward to launching our first small cohort with a retreat at the end of August. The spiritual vitality of our St. Michael's community, as well as the practical support of many — from Jeanie's grant partnership to communications help from John Lent, and the collaboration of Program Manager Rev. Darcey Mercier (whom St. Michael's raised to the priesthood) — continues to be an ongoing blessing in this ministry's nascent steps.

Just over two years ago, our St. Michael's community responded to a period of prayer and discernment about

Planting new foliage at the Rectory*Digging dry well cover broken during roof construction*

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BUILDING HOPE FOR THE EARTH: AN UPDATE

Cary Gaunt



“Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer.”

—Maya Angelou

our stewardship commitments to earth and environmental justice with a bold commitment:

St. Michael's commits to its mission of stewardship of the earth by pursuing an end to our reliance on fossil fuels and a transition to 110% clean, renewable energy by 2030, tithing 10% of this energy back to our community.

Our first step toward pursuing these goals was to work with experts in energy efficiency, renewable energy, climate resilience, and organizational decarbonization to develop a thorough plan on how to proceed. By early 2022, we had a solid plan with a hefty price tag. Mary, the Vestry, and the Building Hope for the Earth Team all gasped at the proposed project budget and wondered how we could accomplish what we knew we must if we were going to authentically live our faith and moral obligations. It was not a matter of if we would proceed, but how.

Our Capital Campaign Committee assisted by members of the Building Hope for the Earth Team knew that the only way we could succeed was through the generous support of our congregation. The goals

were lofty and the path to success felt uncertain, until the weaving together of prayer, liturgy, learning, community, generosity, moral fortitude, and grace demonstrated what is possible when action meets faith. We know from James 2:26 that “faith without works is dead.” Faith with works, what we demonstrated in our St. Michael's Building Hope for the Earth Campaign, shows that the seemingly impossible can be made real.

St. Michael's is taking a comprehensive approach to getting off polluting fossil fuels, beginning with changes to how we light, heat, and cool our buildings. With your help, we:

In the Sanctuary and Bradley Wing

- Changed lighting to be more energy efficient with LED lights,
- Improved building comfort and efficiency by adding insulation and sealing air leaks through weather stripping and other means,

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- Replaced most of the oil heating with energy efficient electric mini-split heat pumps which also offer cooling in hot weather months, and
- Installed solar panels on all available roof surfaces.

At the Rectory, we also added solar panels and installed mini-splits. All this work was completed in fall 2023 and early winter 2024. Now, the church is beginning to see the results of these efforts. We are making a difference!

- **Roof repairs and replacement were completed!** Step one of implementing this project was ensuring that the St. Michael's Church and Rectory roofs were sound and durable.
- **Electricity is being generated from the sun!** The Rectory solar panels were activated in January of this year and the Church started generating in February.



They are working well, and we are using renewable power! Now that the sun is higher in the sky, we are generating more electricity than we use! For example, in May the Church generated 4,252 kwh of solar energy and used only 2,309 kwh, thus creating a credit of 1,943 kwh. These credits will be “banked” for future use in the winter months when sun is less potent. Over the next year we will assess our total electricity needs to determine how much additional power we need to generate from the sun or other renewable sources to achieve our 110% goal. The rooftop solar already in place should achieve most of our needs, but we anticipate supplementing from offsite solar resources.

- **Great progress is being made in phasing out fossil fuels!** We have dramatically reduced our reliance on fossil fuels already. The Rectory has used NO oil since the electric mini-split heat pumps were installed. Fuel use data are harder to collect in the Church, but we are well on our path to eliminating oil.
- **Spaces are cozier for occupants!** A benefit of adding insulation and sealing air leaks is that buildings are more comfortable. The offices and classrooms are no longer sweltering in summer and



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cold in winter. The next steps of the Building Hope for the Earth project will address the Sanctuary.

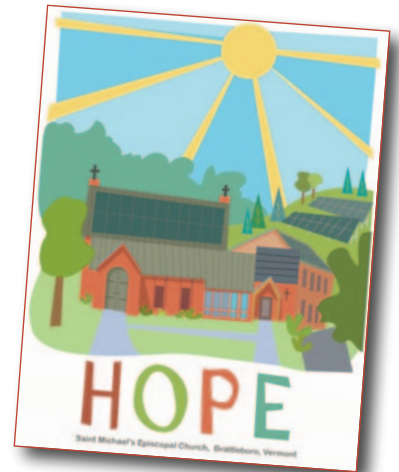
- **We are sharing our knowledge with others!** A central commitment of this effort was to share our approach and lessons learned with others. We have done this through open houses, written outreach, forums, and presentations at conferences. We plan to expand this outreach as we resume the project this year.

St. Michael's has accomplished so much already, but we always knew there would be more to do. After a winter and spring rest, the Building Hope for the Earth Team is reassembling to plan next steps. We have a solid foundation and plan from which to build as we:

- Assess how much additional solar energy is needed,
- Identify inefficient appliances and additional ways to reduce our electricity consumption,
- Consider further lighting enhancement such as occupancy sensors and other controls that dim lights when not in use,
- Explore options, like using computer graphics displays to show how much energy the sun is producing versus how much we are using, to better tell our story and
- Share our story more broadly.

One exciting opportunity the Vestry is considering is joining the Episcopal Path to Creation Justice as a mentoring congregation. This new ministry within the regional Episcopal Dioceses weaves together the pillars of prayer, learning, acting, and advocating in order to “protect the beauty and integrity of all creation,” actions we have included as essential aspects of our Building Hope for the Earth project. Other ideas that are seeds of possibility might include creating pollinator gardens, adding electric vehicle charging stations, or implementing tangible ways to better support and engage our broader community.

With your generous support, St. Michael's Episcopal Church's big vision is becoming reality! Our actions demonstrate to others that faith combined with works make a difference in our often troubled world. For that, “the mountains and the hills will burst into song... and all the trees of the field will clap their hands” (Isaiah 55:12).



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SUMMARY OF JULY 11 MEETING OF THE VESTRY

- The Vestry met at Margery McCrum's house for their annual potluck dinner meeting.
- John Spooner led the opening reflection. Theme: the fleeting yet intense summer season.
- Minutes of the June 20 meeting were approved.
- Elizabeth Freese presented the Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA) for consideration of St. Michael's reinvolvement. St. Michael's formal ties with the VIA lapsed during the COVID-19 pandemic and this was an invitation to participate again. VIA works with legislators and community leaders around issues such as housing, racial justice, climate and corrections reform.
- Treasurer Gwen Mousin gave a brief financial update. Formal updates and financial discussions are going to be quarterly to streamline and better focus the energy of Gwen and the Vestry in this area.
- The Vestry is excited to host the Annual Parish Picnic at Spofford Lake on Sunday August 25 after the morning services. Details will be in the e-news and during the Sunday service announcements.
- Details of Rector Mary Lindquist's spring/summer 2025 sabbatical are being finalized.
- Follow-up to the Healing Ministry book study is being planned
- De-escalation training for those interested is being organized (to be run by Knowles Wentworth, the HCRS Police Liaison).
- Susan Heimer invited all to a fun-filled community fund raiser event for Skyberry House on July 20 at the Winston Prouty Campus.
- Closing prayer was offered by Paul Gallagher.

Prepared by Chris Meyer

St. Michael's at work at Loaves and Fishes



EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

LECTIONARY FOR AUGUST

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

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

AUGUST 2024 CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

August 2	Caleb Fritz, Laura Frey
August 11	Christine Triebert
August 16	Erin LeBlanc
August 17	Gregory Lesch
August 18	Avery Buchanan, Mary Carnahan
August 21	Judith McBean
August 22	Janet Brocklehurst
August 26	Susan Dedell, Betty Elwell, Grainne Buchanan
August 28	Fred Bump

ANNIVERSARIES

August 8	Duncan Hilton & Bethany Hobbs
August 10	Andy & Elise Burrows
August 20	John & Mary Carnahan, Lawrin & Pamela Crispe
August 22	Alan & Judith McBean
August 24	Susan & Paul Dyer
August 25	Christine Hart & Bill Morlock
August 30	Vince Johnson & MJ Woodburn
August 31	Ed & Jane Sbardella, Robert & Susan Kochinskas

LEADERSHIP

VESTRY

Christine Hart, *Senior Warden*
 chrishart312@gmail.com | 802-257-0452

Susan Heimer, *Junior Warden*
 heimer.susan@gmail.com | 802-387-2650

Paul Gallagher
 pkgall07@gmail.com | 203-809-8531

Cary Gaunt
 chg.watershed@gmail.com | 802-734-5009

Mary Lindquist
 marydail7@gmail.com | 802-254-6048

Margery McCrum
 sullariadoc@gmail.com | 802-258-4593

Chris Meyer
 cuba.vermont@gmail.com | 802-380-2385

John Spooner
 jspooner52@gmail.com | 917-847-9467

David Treadwell
 davidtreadwell@me.com | 734-657-0023

Rosie Wojcik
 rosie@wojnet.org | 802-380-1363

Gwen Mousin, *Treasurer*
 gmousin@gmail.com | 802-380-5888

Carol Beninati, *Clerk*
 writers@sover.net | 802-258-4636

STM

Linda Nelson in her Pride Sunday Dress!



The Guardian is published monthly by St. Michael's Episcopal Church. News items, announcements, articles, etc. should be submitted to jeanie@stmichaelsvermont.org by the 15th of the month for consideration.

The Guardian mailing list: Contact Jeanie Crosby with address changes or requests to be added or removed from *The Guardian* mailing list. jeanie@stmichaelsvermont.org or 802-254-6048.

Printed on recycled paper 100% post consumer, PCF

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)