

June/July/August 2026

The Guardian

Shield the joyous!(from An Order for Compline, *BCP*.)

THE BODY OF CHRIST

Today is Saturday, May 9, and the rain that has been coming down all day in Brattleboro is just starting to abate. This morning, I was in the Chapel sitting in silence with a few others practicing Centering Prayer. While we were sitting, people were gathering outside (in the rain!) for a Buildings and Grounds workday.

Meanwhile, three members of the Altar Guild came to church to prepare the altar, flowers, hymns, and bulletins for tomorrow's service.

Following Centering Prayer, the Pastoral Care Team met to check in about members who need support right now.

Later this afternoon, I met with the people who had been preparing for the sacramental rite of Confirmation and renewal of Baptismal vows — and their sponsors — to prepare for the Bishop's visit tomorrow.

And the Parish Discernment Team met in the Meeting Room with Gabriel Sistare, who is discerning a call to the priesthood.

I share this not by way of raising up how “busy” we are — by no means are we called to be busy or to equate busyness with importance or success. I share this story because it is on days like this that I consider Paul's words about the Body of Christ. *Indeed, the body does not consist of one member, but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you.' No, you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*

And this is how I feel on days like this: Look at the Body of Christ, look at people who are giving of their particular gifts to pray, to prepare the altar, to care for the grounds and building, to care for the pastoral needs of the congregation, to learn together about what it means to be a Christian.

Look how we need each other and need God and how this need makes us one. It is truly a miracle and a gift to behold.

Mary— *Mary Lindquist, Rector*

NEWS OF THE PARISH

**CONGRATULATIONS CONFIRMANDS!**

On Sunday, May 10, St. Michael's welcomed the Rt. Rev. Dr. Shannon McVean-Brown, Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Vermont. During this service, she confirmed eight people and did a renewal of Baptismal vows with one.

Congratulations to all and thank you to their sponsors (in parentheses) who presented and supported them! Bobby Crocker (John Daly, sponsor); Rachel Fox (Elizabeth Fisher); Vangie Holvino (Jane Sbardella); Kira Storm (Biddy Neilson); Cary Storm (Caroline Hammarlund); Leo Storm (Patty Meyer); Xanthe Veltkamp (Judith Reichsman); Jenna Webb (Joan Pinilla); Sher Wilson (Renewal of Vows, David Treadwell, sponsor)

STM

CELEBRATING GRADUATING SENIORS JUNE 7

Celebrating Graduating Seniors: Jonas Ackermann-Hovis, Cara Fisher, Bibi Johnson, Asa Taggert and Avi Wiltermuth will be graduating from high school this year. In addition, Jonah Johnson (UVM), Andachew Mousin (UNH), Eden Summerlin (UVM) and Vivian Summerlin (UVM) are also graduating from college!

Jonas will be attending Dickinson College in Pennsylvania to study biology in the Pre-Health program; Cara will be attending Landmark College in Putney to study math and science; Bibi will be attending the Rhode Island School of Design to study illustration; Asa will be studying physics at Clark University in Massachusetts and Avi will be attending University of Minnesota in Duluth to study technical theater.

We will say special prayers over those who are able to join us during the 10:15 am service then come together for a celebratory coffee hour.

STM

EXPLORING THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH: SUMMER SESSION BEGINS JULY 1

Exploring the Episcopal Church is a great class for those who are new to St. Michael's, those new to church or those not new who want to brush up on the basics of theology, church history, scripture, prayer and worship in the Anglican tradition. Summer is a great time to study for those who have a lighter work schedule during this season (educators, for example).

We will meet in person at a time to be determined on Wednesdays July 1, 8, 15, 22; August 5 and 12.

If you cannot attend in person, but would like to participate via Zoom, this is also possible. Please let Mary Lindquist know if you would like to participate, mary@stmichaelsvermont.org.



DESIGNING AND BUILDING THE NEW EASTER VIGIL CROSS, 2026

For those who attended the Easter Vigil last year, you may remember Caleb Webb and Gabriel Sistare carrying the cross through the dim, candle-lit nave. This year Caleb and Gabriel carried a new cross.

Our new cross is about 5 feet 6 inches tall. The main wood is fir and the base is pine. In order to avoid fasteners, which can take away from the beauty of the piece, Caleb decided to use a half-lap joint. The stain was chosen to reflect the dark brown of our church's timber frame beams.

Although volunteering to build the new cross was originally a way to employ his carpentry skills, the process became much deeper. Caleb remarked that building anything for the church and our community, especially something that will be enjoyed by future parishioners, is a spiritual journey.

What started with two pieces of fir, a jar of stain, and a pile of tools, became a beautiful, deep brown cross to carry us through many, many Easters to come.

—Jenna Webb



SKYBERRY HOUSE SHARES GOOD NEWS

This August we will be two years into our ministry begun at St. Michael's and modeled as a Catholic Worker House of Hospitality.

We are deepening into the process of finding folks who feel a calling to be hosts at our House of Hospitality, in which our primary mission is to provide interim housing to unhoused individuals, with a special interest in families and children. Currently, five house members are living at skyberry — our Host Coordinator and the additional four, formerly unhoused residents. We cherish the opportunity to provide structure and stability for those who have undergone the trauma of not having a place to call their own. We have just begun the discerning phase for a potential host, while one candidate is transitioning out.

Several months ago, we welcomed a new guest to skyberry who is looking forward to graduating from high school and to beginning college work in the fall. We are all learning together. skyberry is regularly engaged and working on the ground with our unhoused siblings in the greater community. We provide weekly charitable food distribution, laundry services, transportation, support navigating social service and state agencies, letter-writing to prison inmates, advocacy for hotel shelter, interagency collaboration, and meetings with referral families and individuals. We are grateful to be growing our friendships with the many who live on our streets.

We at skyberry are tying up our role of fiscal sponsor for the Beloved Emergency Winter Shelter, which provided overnight shelter to the unhoused from December through March at the First United Methodist Church (a combined Methodist/Baptist church on Town Crier Drive). We contributed to the creation of the handbook for the operation of the shelter, ensuring that health and safety guidelines were in place, oversaw grants and donations, and managed the finances. We are grateful for shelter director Cristina ShayOnye for steering the ship and for the many donors who gave generously, and we give a

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big shout-out to the dedicated staff and numerous volunteers, including a skyberry board member, and a skyberry host who provided weekly foot care alongside hospitality to our guests. This committed team ensured Beloved was a place that not only provided warm, safe shelter, but also a hot meal, snacks, and other supports and comforts.

This summer, we will be passing the role of fiscal sponsor to the Vermont Village School, which has volunteered to take over fiscal sponsorship of the overnight shelter for the winter of 2026/2027.

—Susan Heimer

STM

HELLO ST. MICHAEL'S FAMILY! IT'S TOURETTE SYNDROME (TS) AWARENESS MONTH

and I would like to use the occasion to share about my own experience with this condition, and to ask this community for some help in navigating the challenges that come with it.

TS is a condition marked by involuntary movements and sounds called tics. These tics can be just about anything. TS varies a lot from person to person in frequency and severity. Perhaps you have noticed me jerking my head, or heard me clicking my tongue or making shushing noises. These are some of my tics.

They may seem inconsequential (if you have even noticed them!), but the internal experience is quite difficult; I am often suppressing a great deal because my condition also involves coprolalia, a form of TS which makes the content of my tics obscene and explicit. It can be quite surprising to people, so when in public I am doing my very best to suppress it.

It is important to me that my neighbors are not exposed to language that negatively affects them, but I'm afraid that stifling them is not an adequate long-term solution. It tenses my whole body, and my shoulder gets jolted with pain. Stifling tics is causing me harm. This condition frustrates me daily, and I've

been keeping the struggle largely hidden. I would like to make St. Michael's a safe place to tic more openly for the sake of my body, but in doing so I will need to ask for your patience and grace when my tics become a disruption.

*Thank you siblings,
Xanthe Veltkamp*

STM

FROM THE ELDERS MINISTRY: TIPS FOR HAVING A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT

This presentation was part of a panel at the January Elders Ministry forum, "Navigating the Journey to the End." The session focused on Gate 2, The Slippery Slope, a time when difficult conversations may need to happen as elders begin to experience health and wellness challenges such as less mobility, deficits in vision and audition, increased confusion and memory lapses, and other diminishing capabilities, which begin to affect their independence and safety.

Having a difficult conversation with someone you care about can be stressful. A few examples of these are discussing health concerns, harmful habits, or life decisions. I am going to share some experiences and knowledge that I have gained throughout my life to touch upon challenges and best practices when it comes to having these conversations. Please note that these are general tips and are certainly not a substitute for counseling or medical advice.

Ask permission: Start by readying yourself and your loved one. Ask yourself if this is a good time. For instance, talking about your concerns about driving would not be best when the person is headed out the door! By asking permission, you're preserving both your and the loved one's honor and dignity. An example would be, "I have some concerns and I care about you. I would like to talk about your driving: is now an ok time?"

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Ask **open ended questions** to demonstrate you're really listening; e.g., "Tell me about your driving routines" or "How have you been feeling about driving?" In turn, your loved one will touch on their feelings around the concern.

Positive affirmations of your loved one's strengths helps keep the conversation going and honors the person. You're helping the person feel respected, not shamed. An example would be, "By going to the gym every day, you are prioritizing your health and mobility and that's so great."

Reflect back what you hear. Thus being an active listener, you may touch upon essential emotions or feelings; e.g., "Driving to the gym and staying healthy is important to you."

After listening to your loved one you may **summarize** your reflections by saying, "Do I have this right? You feel like you can drive during the day to one location,

but more than that is overwhelming. It sounds like driving gives you a sense of independence and you want to continue doing it safely." By summarizing and reflecting, you are showing that you were present in the conversation and then they can clarify their thoughts and feelings.

Close the conversation with warmth and gratitude. They need to feel supported and honored. An example would be "I really appreciate your talking with me about this. I want to make sure you feel safe and happy. I am here for you."

In these conversations you're looking for "change talk," which is when someone begins to express their own desire, ability, reason, or need to do something differently. An example may be "I know I shouldn't drive at night anymore." These conversations are just an entry into more in-depth discussions.

—Rebecca Olmstead



A BIG THANK YOU!

Our **Terrific Tag Sale 2026** is in the books! Thank you to all who worked on making it a success. Your donations of time, talent, and treasure created a day of accomplishment and joy. Working together we provided funds for Loaves and Fishes to support its mission providing food for anyone who needs it free of charge.

We wish you all a happy and joyous summer.

—The Tag Sale Ministry



PARISHIONER PROFILE: DOUG SWITZER

By Erin Pesut

Where do you live? West Brattleboro

What service do you most often attend? The 8 o'clock

What brought you to St. Michael's?

I've always been an Episcopalian. My father was an organist in the Episcopal church up in Bellows Falls before he passed away. I grew up in the church.

Tell us a little bit about yourself: I was a teacher at the high school [BUHS], and I was principal of the junior high/middle school [BAMS] for about 11 years. I was a math teacher over there for a number of years, too. I retired in 1992.

I play the euphonium. It's about half the size of the tuba. I'm in the Legion Band in Brattleboro, and that goes year-round, and I play in one in Massachusetts and also one in Grafton, Vermont. I've been playing the euphonium since I was a sophomore in high school.

Did you grow up around here? Yes, I grew up around here. I grew up in Bellows Falls.



Ann and Doug Switzer

Do you have a favorite holiday/liturgical season? I like Easter, and I like Christmas. Those would be my two favorite ones. Matter of fact, up in Bellows Falls, each of the painted windows had sills, and at Easter, they would have those filled with lots of flowers, potted geraniums, in fact, and we could take one home.

Is there anything you're looking forward to? Gee, I don't know at my age. I just had a "biggie" birthday. It was my 91st birthday in April. We had a family dinner to celebrate. Right now, what I'm looking forward to is nice toasty warm weather so I can be out gardening. I don't mind hot weather at all.

Doug Switzer, a parishioner since 1965, was Parish treasurer for nine years and chair of the Endowment Committee for many. In the past, he played his horn for several Easter services.

SUMMARY OF THE MARCH MEETING OF THE VESTRY

All members were present.

Opening Devotional:

We are reading the book *People of the Way*, and Margery reflected on the introduction.

Minutes from 2/26/26 were approved.

Rector's Report:

- Planned Giving Luncheon had 26 participants. It was informative and well-received.
- Team Holy Week had 44 participants, who will together make the Holy Week a moving spiritual journey.
- Laura Frye is facilitating the Lenten study of the mystics.

- Twenty-three women attended Women's Retreat at Hallelujah Farm to share and celebrate each other.

Senior Warden's Report:

- John related the mystery of the broken choir window and damage to mini splits, saying that both problems were due to ice. Several mini splits need to be replaced. Hopefully, the cost will be covered by insurance and a cover or roof for those mini splits will be built in the future.
- In the near future, we will be changing our internet service from Comcast to Fidium.

Junior Warden's Report:

- Rosie reported the Communications Team met on Tuesday. Topics included changes to the *Guardian*,

continued

MARCH SUMMARY *continued*

now published only six times a year and communications to both the inner parish and the outer parish.

- Rosie has posted a QR code for our social media in the Common Room.
- After Easter, there will be a meeting to roll out Realm, a data base that will offer many advantages for the parish.

Committee and Ministries Reports:

Margery gave an update on the Elder Ministry. There's a workshop this weekend, using a text called "Navigating the Journey to the End."

Pastoral care, which provides support to parishioners in need, meets on the second Saturday of every month on Zoom.

Community Building:

- Patty shared comments from the heads of each of the five Foyer Groups.
- Mary emphasized that we still need a designated Hospitality Team to organize the Coffee Hour effort and other special hospitality events. "Compassion in Action" might also match people to hospitality events.

Closing Prayer was offered by Rosie.

SUMMARY OF THE APRIL MEETING OF THE VESTRY

The Vestry gathered at 6 pm April 16. Alex O'Pray led our devotional time with a summary and discussion of Chapter One of the book *People of the Way* by Dwight Zscheile, a chapter focused mostly on the history of Anglicanism and the Episcopal Church in America.

Then Gwen Mousin, our treasurer, went over **Quarter 1 financial reports** for the church. We looked at operating and non-operating expenses and revenues. For the first quarter of this year our revenue and income were higher than our expenses. Gwen reminded us that over the course of the year the numbers tend to balance out and to not expect higher income and revenue every quarter.

In the **Rector's report**, Mary Lindquist shared some of her thinking about Holy Week after this year's. She also reminded the Vestry about the upcoming Bishop's visit and the Vestry's zoom meeting with the Bishop earlier that week. Mary also shared information about upcoming events and activities at church.

The Wardens shared information around some projects happening at church including work on some of our infrastructure.

Buildings and Grounds Committee Report: Ricky Davidson shared information about projects and activities of the building and grounds groups. This committee has a large list of projects and activities on their agenda over the next couple of months. Members of the committee will address some of these projects themselves and they will help the church hire experts to address others.

The Education Committee: Annamarie Pluhar reported that Godly Play could use more adults to help with the program. She also shared the work of the adult forum group that meets the first Wednesday of the month at 8:30 am. Forums are planned through June 15, before the education year summer break. Annamarie will be doing a Realm orientation in June. The Vestry discussed putting regularly scheduled meetings on the website calendar.

Vestry Listening: Alex O'Pray shared that the recent change in the service music and some of the hymns are unfamiliar and difficult.

*Respectively submitted by
Ricky Davidson for the Vestry*

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SUNDAY, JUNE 14: SUNDAE SUNDAY CELEBRATION FOR KIDS, TEACHERS, AND FAMILIES:

Come celebrate the end of school following the 10:15 service with an ice cream celebration in the Rectory Yard! All kids, parents, families, and teachers are invited to join in a time of fellowship, play, bouncy house, and food. We especially want to honor our Godly Play, Upper El, and Youth teachers by showering them with our thanks for their dedication and love for St. Michael's children and youth.

SUNDAY, JUNE 21: SUMMER FUN FOR ST. MICHAEL'S KIDS BEGINS:

Yay Summer! Once St. Michael's formal Sunday School comes to an end for the year, we want to keep building community with our children and youth by offering summer activities during the first part of Sunday church.

We will have a story, simple snack, crafts, outside time, and/or games. Volunteers will rotate planning an activity and supervising the kids and will have the additional support of the nursery attendants, Nora and Kaitlin. The kids will join the congregation at the Peace so that they can participate in Holy Communion and the Blessing.

We need volunteers to help with this ministry! If each parent could sign up for one Sunday this summer, we could have the summer covered! Please email Susie at parishadmin@stmichaelsvermont.org or sign up in the Common Room.

SUNDAY, JUNE 28, ST. MICHAEL'S CELEBRATES PRIDE SUNDAY:

During this service we will offer special prayers for our ongoing support and celebration of the LGBTQ + community at St. Michael's and in the world, as well as hear from parishioner Bee Hesselbach for the sermon.

Bee Hesselbach (they/them) has been a member of St. Michael's since their family moved to Vermont when he was age six. Bee describes themselves as a queer trans nonbinary lesbian neurodivergent Episcopalian parent, partner, Vermonter, public servant, union activist, and general good-troublemaker.

In their day job, they work at the Superior Court in Brattleboro as the Windham County Probate Register. Bee also serves in many union roles, including Judiciary Unit Trustee on the Board of Trustees for the Vermont State Employees' Association, and Executive Vice President of the Vermont AFL-CIO.



THURSDAYS, JUNE 4, JULY 2, AUGUST 6, 6:15–7:30:

St. Michael's Monthly Poetry Writing Group returns, gathering in the Meeting Room. This is a generative group, meaning we will create first drafts of new work based on an optional prompt, then share in a supportive, non-critical setting. All are welcome. Drop-in once or come each month: no commitment required. Bring a notebook and pencil/pen, or a laptop — whatever you prefer. Email mbuchanan@hotmail.com with questions.

Many thanks to all who came to the two lively poetry events we hosted for National Poetry Month, "Poetry and Pie" and the Poetry and Faith Forum. Thanks for sharing your beautiful poems, for the abundance of pie, and for joining together in creative community. We hope to host something like this again in the future. Thanks also to Mary for supporting both these events, and to John for help with set-up. It was a joy to be together!

—Erin Pesut and Megan Buchanan

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, NOON TO 4 PM:

St. Michael's Annual Summer Picnic at Kate and Dana McGinn's home on Spofford Lake.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO...

June 2	Laura Lewis, Cary Gaunt, Jane Sbardella
June 3	Caroline Wojcik
June 5	Jonah Johnson
June 7	Louise LaChance
June 9	Larry Earle
June 10	Jon Davis
June 11	Martha Moravec, Susan Gantt Kubert
June 12	Betsy Bates
June 13	John Byrnes
June 15	Aldrich Wright
June 17	Jean Jersey
June 20	Jared Rediske
June 21	Yoojin Lee, Iris Polley
June 23	Craig Hammond, adwoa Wilson
June 24	Heather Lesage-Horton
June 25	Whitney Nichols, Kevin McElhinney, Michael Fedoruk
June 27	Carolyn Taylor-Olson
June 28	Judy Hueber, Oren Hesselbach
June 29	Vince Johnson
June 30	Zadie Olmstead
July 1	Meaghan Landin, William Stearns, Patrick Ackerman-Hovis
July 2	Beth Houder
July 3	Rosie Wojcik
July 4	Matthew Wojcik
July 5	Thea Porter, Rebecca Porter
July 6	Duncan Hilton
July 7	Lori Palmer, Joanne Patalano
July 8	Judith McGee
July 9	Anita Crosson, Irene Burtis
July 11	David Treadwell
July 12	Ann Switzer
July 14	Marian Wojcik, David Carr
July 16	Olivia Capponcelli
July 20	Diane Southard
July 22	Susan Wilmott
July 25	Phillip Wilson
July 27	Kerry Capponcelli
August 2	Caleb Fritz, Laura Frey
August 11	Christine Triebert
August 16	Erin LeBlanc
August 18	Avery Buchanan, Mary Carnahan
August 21	Judith McBean, Joseph Meima
August 22	Janet Brocklehurst
August 26	Susan Dedell, Grainne Buchanan
August 28	Fred Bump

VESTRY

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**Please see Thursday E-Notes
and Sunday Bulletins for other
important dates and news.**

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parishadmin@stmichaelsvermont.org or 802-254-6048.

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The Guardian

St. Michael's is 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)
SECOND THURSDAYS	7:30 pm	Compline service
SATURDAYS	8:00 am	Centering Prayer (in-person)