

The Guardian

SEPTEMBER 2024

FROM THE RECTORY

FOR EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON

At our staff meeting this last week, Jeanie, St. Michael's administrator, reflected on how, now that it is late August, her plants are drooping and falling down. Since I am not a gardener, it did not occur to me that many of the plants that flower and grow in summer start to fade in August. And even though the weather is still hot and humid, I have observed a tree here and there with leaves already beginning to change. The change of season reminds me of all the change we are experiencing at St. Michael's, especially among our staff.

The word administer has a Latin root of "ad" which means "to" and "minister" which means "care for" or "to serve." In modern parlance though, administration has the meaning of "manage" or "organize." A good deal of my job as a rector is administration. This is not something I was taught in seminary, so I've had to work hard to develop the executive functioning of my brain! Mostly however, I (and we at St. Michael's) have been deeply blessed by the presence of an excellent administrator in Jeanie Crosby. She is not only an extraordinary administrator, but she is also a wise counsellor and a patient listener. She ministers to all of us.

Now that Jeanie is in her 80s, she has let me know that the time is coming for her to step down from her position at St. Michael's in the next few months. I knew this day would come, but it is hard! Jeanie and I have worked together for 12 years — we have developed such a great relationship and we all depend on her quite a bit.

It is also difficult because we have had so many staff changes at St. Michael's. In the last 18 months we have said goodbye to our Music Director, Susan Dedell, and welcomed Keane Southard; said goodbye to our bookkeeper, Darlene Rudnick and welcomed a new bookkeeper, Casey Pariss; welcomed our new deacon, Lars Hunter; and said goodbye to priest associate, Jean Smith.

So much change!

And yet, while these changes are difficult, they also call me to remember how good God has been to us at St. Michael's by sending us such amazing people to serve in our church — just the right people for what we seem to need in each season. This goes for our staff, but also our parishioners. It helps me to trust that God is working amidst all these changes and seasons.



Mary
Mary Lindquist, Rector

NEWS OF THE PARISH

**KIDS & YOUTH CHRISTIAN FORMATION
KICK-OFF SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 8, 9:30–10 AM,
THE RECTORY YARD**

Back to school means back to formation programs for children and youth at St. Michael's. Our hope 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 8, 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 (see below).



SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Nursery Care (ages 0–3, every Sunday) is open beginning at 10 am on Sundays. Childcare is provided by our two lovely Nursery staff, Kaitlin and Blue. You are welcome to have your kids stay in the nursery throughout the 10:15 am service or pick them up at The Peace (middle of the service) to share Holy Communion.

Godly Play (ages 3–9) meets Sundays at 10:10 am during the first half of the 10:15 am worship service. Godly Play is a Montessori-inspired Christian formation program based on the recognition that children have an innate sense of the presence of God. The Godly Play approach teaches classical Christian language in a way that enhances the child's authentic experience of God so it can contribute to the creative life of the child and the world. Children then join their parents during the Peace so that they may participate in Holy Communion with the rest of the congregation.

Upper El, a Christian formation program for children and youth Grades 4–6, is offered from 10:10–10:45am on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. We explore one biblical story for each two-week cycle,

using a different learning approach each week. Our hope is to provide a time of active engagement with the stories of the Bible and with one another.

St. Michael's Youth Group (for youth 7th–12th Grade) will be held on the First Sunday of each month (except September, when they will meet on September 8) beginning at 10:10. St. Michael's Youth Group will focus on service projects and exploring some different ways of worshipping God. Please come for the first class on September 8 to brainstorm ideas for the year.



THE SEASON OF CREATION

From September 1–October 6, St. Michael's will join with millions of Christians around the world to celebrate the Season of Creation. During this time, our liturgy will reflect a focus on our gratefulness and concern for God's creation. The movement — which began in the Eastern Orthodox Church and spread widely among Protestant, Catholic and Anglican congregations — is observed every year from September 1–October 4 (St. Francis' feast day, which will be celebrated on Sunday, October 6 at St. Michael's). With the increasing temperatures, flooding, draughts and storms, the call to engage directly with the reality of climate change and our place in God's creation is more urgent than ever.



**THINKING ABOUT JOINING
THE ADULT CHOIR?
REHEARSALS BEGIN SEPTEMBER 8**

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 begin on September 8 at 8:45 am before the 10:15 am services.** Contact Keane (keane@stmichaelsvermont.org) with any questions.



WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR AT ST. MICHAEL'S?

This fall, one of the themes of our Stewardship Campaign will be gratefulness for God's many blessings. The Stewardship Team of John Lent, Craig Irvine, Laura Andrews, Imogene Drake, Paul Gallagher and Mary Lindquist thought it would be fun to ask parishioners to write a sentence or two about what they are grateful for at St. Michael's. We plan to create a "Gratefulness Wall" in the Common Room to display your words. Keep a look out in the eNews for a way to share your words of appreciation or you may send your words to Mary at mary@stmichaelsvermont.org Thank you!



NEW FOYER GROUPS FOR THE FALL! SIGN UP BY SEPTEMBER 10

We will soon be forming new St. Michael's foyer groups. 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 (both current foyer group members and new ones) will 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.

Also, there can be a foyer group for people who regularly attend St. Michael's in the Cloud.

Let's get together! While we won't be able to share food, we can still eat together, share conversation and get to know one another. Please email John Spooner at the address below if you are interested in this form of a foyer group.

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.



NEW SINGING PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN BEGINS SEPTEMBER 24!

The St. Michael's Choir School, which our previous music director Susan Dedell started in 2014 and ran until the pandemic, is coming back this fall, although with a new name and new focus.

This children's choral program sponsored by St. Michael's aims to develop both social and musical

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skills in youth by using music to acquaint them with the practices of Martin Luther King Jr.'s philosophy of nonviolence. The program will also use as a model "El Sistema," the world-renowned Venezuelan network of community music centers and youth ensembles focused on social development through free, high quality music education for underprivileged children.

Activities will include listening to and singing a diverse repertoire of music, with an emphasis on songs about social justice and peace, as well as learning to improvise and collectively compose original songs with a goal of regularly sharing our music with the Brattleboro community. The children's choral program will be led by our music director, Keane Southard, who studied El Sistema-inspired programs in Brazil as a Fulbright scholar and wrote his doctoral dissertation on how such programs can incorporate King's philosophy of non-violence to enhance social justice outcomes.

The program will be free of charge and open to all children in grades 2–6 in the Brattleboro area who love to sing and want to learn more. There is no requirement of an affiliation with St. Michael's and no requirement for previous musical training or experience. Rehearsals will be in St. Michael's music room on Tuesdays from 3:45–4:45 with the option to come at 3:30 for a snack. The program will begin on September 24.

Please contact Keane Southard at keane@stmichaelsvermont.org for more information.



ADULT FORUM RESUMES ON SEPTEMBER 22

The Adult Forums are held each Sunday morning from 9–10 in the Meeting Room. Here is the information about the September 22 Forum. Watch the eNews for information about the September 29 Forum.

- **September 22** — The 81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church was held June 23 through 28. At the convention a new Presiding Bishop, Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe, was elected. We'll talk about some

highlights of the Convention, as well as give an introduction about Presiding Bishop Elect Rowe.



SHELTER MEALS MINISTRY

Benson Bobrick

The Shelter Meals Ministry, which provides a full evening meal each month to the homeless at the Groundworks Shelter on South Main Street, begins again this October and will continue through next April. **The Sign-Up sheet for volunteers is now in the Common Room.**

This time around, we will be providing the evening meal on the first Wednesday of each month — with each volunteer providing one part of the 5-part serving: the main dish, the salad, the bread and butter, the milk, or the dessert. Each meal serves 35.

While I can still contribute to these meals myself, I will soon no longer be able to oversee the program. My coordinating role, while immensely rewarding, is not that difficult, and I'd be happy to serve as a hands-on guide to anyone willing to take it up. Please read Liz Vick's article in this issue of *The Guardian* and if you're interested, please contact me at: shiloh98@sover.net.



BE STILL AND KNOW: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF CENTERING PRAYER

Mark your calendars! Tuesday evenings, October 2 through November 13, from 5:30–7pm, St. Michael's will offer a class on Centering Prayer for beginners and experienced practitioners alike. Given that many of us will be experiencing more stress and anxiety this fall with the presidential election, we invite you to "find an anchor in the storm" through opening to the presence of God and through being supported by the presence of one another in community. Each session will involve teaching, practicing and sharing. This will be a hybrid offering and we encourage people to carpool. More information to come!

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A NEW GROUP ON AGING

Jeff Lewis

As I grow older, I find that more and more of my conversations revolve around aging. This has been a bit of a surprise as I've always been busy doing something, usually trying to help people accomplish something. Now my thoughts are often not directed by goals, projects or outcomes but by the questions that float up from times past. Some are troubling, some are pleasing, most are worth reflecting on.

I'd like to create a group of 6 to 8 to have an eight-week discussion group on aging. I'll provide some guidelines; we'll just see where it goes. We will read a chapter of Joan Chittister's book, "The Gift of Years," for each week to set the topic. We'll meet weekly for 8 weeks in the Church Meeting Room at a time we agree on. Please contact me at Jeffrey.m.lewis@comcast.net or 802-579-3877, if you are interested.



**VOLUNTEER HELP WANTED:
ST. MICHAEL'S MONTHLY COORDINATOR
FOR GROUNDWORKS SHELTER MEALS**

Liz Vick

For many years, St. Michael's Episcopal parishioners have been volunteering to prepare hot meals for folks experiencing homelessness in the Brattleboro area: years ago at the drop-in shelter in the First Baptist Church on Main St. (now "Epsilon Spires"), then at the Groundworks shelter on the Prouty Center campus, and most recently at the permanent shelter at Groundworks Collaborative on S. Main St. in Brattleboro. The location of the shelters has changed, but the need has not. This is a highly valued ministry of St. Michael's!

Recently, Benson Bobrick, the current Groundworks Meals coordinator, has posted an appeal for people to

sign up to help with preparation of these meals on the first Wednesday of each month from October, 2024 through April, 2025. We hope you will volunteer! The sign-up sheets are in the Common Room.

We also know that Benson, who has done a great job coordinating the Meals for a number of years, is ready to "retire" from this position and is looking for a replacement. This would involve the following responsibilities:

- creating sign-up sheets for each monthly meal for the Common Room at Church;
- encouraging people (through Sunday bulletin/*Guardian*/ in-person announcements at Sunday services, etc.) to sign up to prepare/provide different components of the meal for 35–40 hungry shelter residents and staff;
- sending reminders to those who signed up a week before the meal;
- on the designated meal date, meeting the volunteers at the church to pick up the ready-to-serve food;
- delivering the food to Groundworks at a designated time (example 4:30 or 5:00 pm);
- sending thank you notes to those who prepared food;
- communicate with the Groundworks staff when needed.

The amount of time required to do this job is approximately 4-5 hours each month. If you are interested in getting more information regarding taking on this very important and fulfilling role at St. Michael's, please contact Benson at shiloh98@sover.net or Jeanie Crosby at the Church office. Benson is very willing to train whoever wants to volunteer for this job. We hope you will consider it!

Thank you very much!

VITAL COMMUNITY? — PART II

adwoa Wilson

Last month I mused about what makes a church or ministry community vital, alighting on three elements: (1) the vibrant spirituality of its leaders, (2) shared vulnerably among their peers, (3) undergirding and permeating their ministry in the world around them.

This month I want to reflect on this vitality as I witness it through Loaves and Fishes. Loaves and Fishes has been a stalwart ministry of feeding for decades. It has gone through various stages, now serving exclusively by delivery or patron pick-up at the door. Early in COVID, many lamented the loss of ‘community’ implied by shutting the doors to a sit-down meal. Years on, the vitality of the community at Loaves in its current functioning is undeniably robust and variegated.

Serving at L&F as a pastoral presence, I am just one of many people who make up the rich loam of the community. People serve and are served from every walk of life. People with doctorates and people without a high school diploma or with developmental delays. People who are unhoused as well as housed. Octogenarians, folks living with mental illness, teens on vacation, and caregivers. L&F is by far the most diverse space I have yet witnessed in Brattleboro. Something about the shared purpose and the respected dignity of every human being has drawn folks from all walks of life to give themselves for the common good of the whole. It is a community in which each member has a function that meets them where they are and where the whole has enough strength to enfold new people like me (and every week it seems more of you as well) with ease.

When I serve people on line or stand outside talking with guests, I witness the same diversity navigating discomfort and difference with grace. People recognize Loaves and Fishes — this door, this process, these people — as *their place*. This amazing resilience of hospitality, belonging, and grace is the epitome of spiritual vitality.

Some of our long-term St. Michael’s volunteers shared how important the community also is *for them*. It is a place where they can fully participate at various ages. (They proudly mark each person who joins the octogenarian club with cake, and graciously tack on the youngsters, too!) Intimacy, sass, and introspection are all held well within the common work. Faith, spoken and unspoken, life vulnerably shared, and fruit permeating into the world are hallmarks of this ministry that makes space not only to work but to wonder and wrestle with what really matters among others.

Though L&F is not in our building, it is truly a ministry of ours, of *all of ours*. Have you ever worked for or bought something from the tag sale? Have you ever donated egg cartons or food containers by the church elevator? Have you ever written a check or made so much for a special reception that platters were left over? Then you’ve been a part of Loaves and Fishes. Have you played music in- or outside, providing joy to volunteers and guests? Have you ever worked with the refugee ministry (many families from which are now finding treasured food staples from home through this program), then you are a part of Loaves and Fishes. Do you earnestly lift up your heart to God on Sundays when we bless Cliff as he takes communion to the men at Southern State Correctional Facility? Then you, too, are a part of Loaves and Fishes, for that communion is joined to snack parcels that Loaves sends to the men, as well.

All four Gospels tell the story of a little boy’s few loaves of bread and two fish being multiplied by the blessing of Jesus and the labor of his disciples, distributing what was blessed. What was left over from that feast was more than what could be found before the blessing, faith, action. Even still, Jesus insisted that every fragment be gathered so that none may be lost. None may be lost — was he talking about the food, or the bodies, or the souls? Yes! It is a vision of heaven when, for a moment, fragments gathered together discover they are whole. Thank you for being a part of it!

SKYBERRY HOUSE JOURNAL AND UPDATES*Teresa Savel*

It is with heartfelt gratitude that our **skyberry** cohort thanks each of you for stepping up and showing up for all the tasks that have gotten us to this point of closing on our property at 95 Frost St. in Brattleboro. We would not be where we are without you! You have provided a trajectory of support, everything from emotional and spiritual



bolstering to cleaning kitchens and sharing meals with unhoused children and families. Please know how valued each of you is and together we ARE paving a way to make a tangible difference. One that is based on building relationships, meeting and getting to know the other in a face-to-face, intimate way.

I have enjoyed getting to know the families temporarily living at the Prouty shelter, some of whom I hope will be part of our first **skyberry** guests. We have fed infants, grandmothers, children and adults of all ages, not only with delicious food but more importantly in the exchange of care and respect. We have learned about children being placed in foster care and mothers trying again to rise above their pasts. We have exchanged hugs and laughs and play and have sung gratitude songs that blessed our meals together. We have reminded children to eat their meal first and enjoy dessert after. We are doing this work together, alongside each other, upholding the care for our local children at the forefront. It's a beautiful glimpse of more to come for **skyberry**, and we are so fortunate to be sharing this with all of you!

The summer work for **skyberry** included the meal series collaborating with the Winston L. Prouty Center and their interim family shelter. We have prepared and shared meals with more than 10 families along with shelter staff and skyberry friends. Our contributors varied from local food pantries (Brigid's Kitchen, Foodworks, and Loaves & Fishes) to businesses, bakers, and area farmers

providing flowers, sourdough breads and sweets, organic produce and farm fresh eggs! **skyberry** has been very blessed! Also, we brought together a creative collaboration of housed and unhoused artists for our July fun(d)raiser which added close to \$2,000 toward the purchase of our **skyberry house**.

Now begins the task of creating a clean and inviting environment as a transition home for unhoused families. We have organized and begun a series of Friday work parties which continue on:

- August 30, 11:00-3:30 pm, breaking for a simple noon lunch. Tasks TBD
- September 6, 11:00-3:30 pm, breaking for a simple noon lunch. Tasks TBD

If these times don't work for your schedule, let us know when you are available to lend a hand. We can work with your schedule. Let us know if you have other skills such as carpentry, power washing, gardening, etc. to share: houseskyberry@gmail.com

All efforts are blessed and we appreciate your generosity!

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SUMMARY OF AUGUST 15 MEETING OF THE VESTRY

- Susan Heimer called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.
- Cary Gaunt led us in devotional time with a centering meditation on listening.
- The minutes of the July meeting were approved.
- Mary Lindquist presented the Rector's Report:
 - There is no Treasurer's Report this month. Next month, an in-depth report will be presented, focusing on the year-to-date finances and the recent changes to our accounting system.
 - Presented calendar of upcoming events for the next program year.
 - Plans are being made for her upcoming sabbatical.
 - Discussion of the re-vamping and re-forming of the Mission and Outreach committee. Some of the duties of the committee will be overseen directly by the Vestry while a roadmap for the committee's future is developed.
- Junior Warden's Report
 - During Mary's sabbatical, part of the parochial duties will be taken by adwoa. For the rest of the time, a visiting priest will be hired. An offer will be made to a retired Episcopal priest well-acquainted with the parish.
 - The Parish Picnic is fast approaching!
 - skyberry house will be having a work party to assist with the rehabilitation of the recently-acquired property.
- Committee Reports
 - Cary reported on the next phase of the Building Hope initiative: the plans for adding heating and cooling to the sanctuary and undercroft. An engineering study is underway to determine the most cost-effective way to do this.
 - The Stewardship Committee is planning the upcoming stewardship campaign. The Vestry will be making calls to parishioners when the campaign gets underway.
- Closing Prayer was offered by Chris Meyer.
- The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

STM

*We gathered on Sunday, August 11, to dedicate a young flowering cherry tree
in thanksgiving for Jean Smith's ministry at St. Michael's.*



EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

LECTIONARY FOR SEPTEMBER

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

SEPTEMBER 2024 CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

September 1	Nan Tierra
September 3	Thad Bennett
September 4	Jacki Capponcelli
September 6	Ricky Davidson
September 9	Sarah Benton, George Moore
September 12	Margit Lilly
September 14	Jay Pomponio, Kyle Capponcelli
September 16	Eleanor Horton, Susan Daigneault
September 17	Michael Hightower
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

ANNIVERSARIES

September 3	Christine Triebert & Carol Ross
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

LEADERSHIP

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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)