

The Guardian

OCTOBER 2024

FROM THE RECTORY

TOGETHER IN GRATITUDE

It is October, one of the best months of the year to live in Vermont. I was born in October, and I feel a special connection to the fall. To me, there is nothing better than cooler nights, more temperate days, the bright reds and yellows of the trees, and the lower angle of the sun which makes everything look crisp and clear, casting long shadows. It reminds me of the beginning of John Henry Newman's well known prayer for evening:

*O Lord support us all the day long,
Till the shadows lengthen and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over,
and our work is done.*

Fall also corresponds with one of my favorite church seasons — stewardship. Stewardship is not a liturgical season exactly, but it threads through everything we do as people of faith.

This year, our stewardship theme is “Together in Gratitude.” The Stewardship Team is hopeful that we can spend some time this season cultivating our sense of gratitude and thankfulness for God's abundant blessings and presence. To this end, the Stewardship Team is inviting you to participate in one of the Gratitude Gatherings to be held in parishioners' homes. These gatherings will be a time for us to connect more deeply with one another, share stories, and reflect on God's blessings.

We have also asked a few people speak at our Sunday services about why their faith and their church home of St. Michael's are important to them. Our stewardship speakers will be Gabriel Sistare (October 20), Elizabeth Freese (October 27) and Craig Irvine (November 10). Stewardship season begins October 20 and ends on Commitment Sunday, November 10, when we ask you to return your pledge cards.

On behalf of the Stewardship Team, please know how grateful we are for YOU and for your continued participation and support in this Body of Christ called St. Michael's. May we grow together in gratitude!


Mary Lindquist, Rector

OCTOBER SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

Be Still and Know:

Building a Community of Centering Prayer

On Wednesday evenings October 2 through November 13, from 5:30–7pm in the Meeting Room, 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. We will be suggesting many resources for further study during the class; one recommended resource you may want to purchase is Cynthia Bourgeault's *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*. Please email Mary if you have any questions — mary@stmichaelsvermont.org

Praying through Cinema

Gabriel Sistare, who will facilitate this small group, writes “One of my favorite activities is going to the movies by myself, choosing a film that will leave me a little spiritually woozy when I leave. I've spent plenty of time fine-tuning my YouTube algorithm to feed video essay after video essay on film analysis. So, through these activities I've learned there is plenty to investigate about spirituality as expressed through ‘the big screen.’ I am curious to see who at St. Michael's and our local community may want to join a group that wanders through spirituality in film for 6-8 weeks. We will watch full films in between meetings and discuss the films in person along with viewing clips and video essays. Discussions will broadly ask how we attempt to relate with God through film or as film portrays that relationship. Potential directors may include Terrance Malick, Andrei Tarkovsky, Werner Herzog, and Wim Wenders.” **Start Date and Meeting Time: Thursday, Oct. 3; 4:15 pm.** Please email Gabriel if you are interested, gabriel.sistare@icloud.com



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! This year, St. Francis Day lands on the same day as Brattleboro's Gallery Walk. We hope to join with our siblings in Christ at Centre Congregational Church for a brief St. Francis Day Service and Blessing of the Animals.

When: Friday, October 4, 4 pm

Where: Gallery Walk, Centre Congregational Church Lawn, 193 Main Street, Brattleboro

What: A brief time of music, 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!



JEANIE WILL BE RETIRING THIS FALL AND WE ARE SEARCHING FOR A NEW PARISH ADMINISTRATOR!

While we will not hire anyone who is a St. Michael's parishioner, we are putting the word out to you in case you know anyone who may be a good candidate. We are looking for an organized, warm and flexible individual whose values align with St. Michael's. This is a 20 hours per week position. Please direct possible candidates to contact Mary at mary@stmichaelsvermont.org

NEWS OF THE PARISH

**BROTHER JOHN MICHAEL LONGWORTH
TO PREACH ON OCTOBER 6**

In celebration of St. Francis Day and the end of the Season of Creation, Brother John Michael Longworth, a resident of Rutland and a member of St. Michael's Church in the Cloud, will be preaching

and leading the Adult Forum on Sunday, October 6. Br. John Michael Longworth, OEF is a life professed member of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans.

This global community was born out of the profound sense of calling of Dale, a North Dakota United Church of Christ Minister, to Franciscan community, the helpfulness of the North Dakota Conference, the curiosity and creativity of the Third Order Society of Saint Francis and Society of Saint Francis (TSSF & SSF, two Anglican Franciscan communities), and the eager hopefulness of Dale's earliest companions, Chuck and Ron.

John Michael entered formation for community life in 2010 and made vows of life profession in 2014, celebrating 10 years of vowed life this June. John Michael has served as a community interviewer, compiling the first volume of OEF local ministries in 2013, as well as the Scribe for 3 years, and the Formation Coordinator for 6 years.

Franciscan spirituality is a rhythm of going from Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel, which Br. John Michael does through service to the unhoused community in Chittenden County Vermont, and as a Spiritual Director and Formation Companion. This work is sustained by a personal and corporate contemplative prayer practice that is always growing and evolving.

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FALL GRATITUDE GATHERINGS

Our Stewardship theme this year is "Together in Gratitude," and part of the joy of gratitude is sharing it with others! Come join with some friends from St. Michael's to gather around the hearth for a time of conversation, light refreshment and storytelling. The Gathering is a time for us to get to know one another better and to reflect on our gratitude for God's many blessings in the special setting of parishioners' homes. Each Gathering will be limited to 12-14 people, so you need to sign up ahead of time. Once you sign up, we will give you directions to the home where you are going. Please sign up in the Common Room or by using the link in the eNews to the sign up form.

- Sunday, October 20, 4-5:30 pm at the home of Craig Irvine and John Spooner (Brattleboro)
- Sunday, October 27, 4-5:30 pm at the home of Margery McCrum and George Moore (Brattleboro)
- Friday, November 1, 4-5:30 pm at the home of Jack and Margit Lilly (walking distance from St. Michael's)

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ADULT FORUMS IN OCTOBER

Sunday, October 6: "Walking The Little Way Together: Treading Gently In Community" — In this forum, our guest preacher, Brother John Michael Longworth, will share stories from his 14 years of being a member of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans.

Sunday, October 13: "Swords to Plowshares" — Parishioners Thomas Ely and Cliff Wood will lead a discussion about Swords to Plowshares, a Vermont and education to reduce gun violence and to promote safe storage of firearms. Currently, the project is Windham County-based, offering public awareness and opportunities for people to responsibly dispose of unwanted firearms by donating them for the process of transformation into garden tools and works of art. In these efforts, Swords to Plowshares is working closely with the Windham County Sherriff's Office

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and the Brattleboro Police Department and partnering with The Putney School, its students, and Brian Quarrier in their Art Department. Come hear more about Swords to Plowshares in Windham County and around the country.

Sunday October 20: “Stay Safe from Scam, Phishing and Other Internet Baddies” — This Adult Forum, prompted by a recent phishing attempt to our church community, will be led by Annamarie Pluhar. She says “Over the years that I have been teaching older people how to manage their digital devices, I’ve seen many different kinds of attempts. I would like you to be safe, and able to recognize when hackers and other internet baddies have you in their target. There are some basic simple steps and methods that will protect you from these scams. I will show you how. Please come to the forum.”

Sunday October 27: The Forum, led by Phillip Wilson, will focus on the title of Jonathan Haidt’s book, *Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion?* In this intense political time, we ask, “Where in the world is the other side coming from?” What if we learned that they are coming from the same basic place as our side?



Choir retreat



REIMAGINING THE STRUCTURE OF OUTREACH MINISTRY AT ST. MICHAEL’S

In the early 2000s, the Reverend Thomas Brown charged a group of parishioners with the task of almsgiving (the act of donating money or goods to organizations in need, on behalf of St. Michael’s) and organizing direct action to help those in need. The Outreach Committee determined some guidelines regarding the disbursement of money (giving equally to local, national and international organizations) and the expectation that at least one person from St. Michael’s would be connected with the organization receiving funds.

The committee became known as the Mission & Outreach Committee under the spirited leadership of the Reverend Joel Hill, our deacon at the time. This committee was very active indeed! They organized mission trips to New Orleans, Rwanda and New Jersey (following Hurricane Sandy), hosted multiple fundraisers for important causes, and built relationships with people and organizations around the world.

The pandemic, however, put an end to many of the action-oriented ministries of the Mission & Outreach Committee. And as we were coming out of the pandemic, other significant, outward-looking ministries emerged. These include St. Michael’s Refugee Ministry, St. Michael’s expanded commitment to Loaves & Fishes and, most recently, the Skyberry House of Hospitality. While the Mission & Outreach Committee continued to disburse funds for St. Michael’s and offered ways for our church to serve such as the Diaper Drive, colored envelopes for donations to aid those suffering from natural disasters and the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper fundraiser, there have been fewer people and less energy to support this particular configuration of ministry.

Brian Morgan, who stepped up to lead the Mission & Outreach Committee after Deacon Joel died in 2016, has continued to very ably lead this ministry these last 8 years and he is now ready to step down from this leadership position. Brian and I met to discuss the direction of the Mission & Outreach Committee, and

it was clear to both of us that it was time to reimagine this ministry in light of all the other kinds of outreach in which St. Michael's people currently participate. We then met with people who currently serve on the Mission & Outreach Committee; we remembered and gave thanks for all that the Committee has done over the many years, and we discussed the possibility of not continuing this ministry in its present form in order to discern where the Spirit is leading us in this moment. The Committee agreed with this new direction.

What's next? In the next weeks, several members of the Vestry and I will have a roundtable discussion with the leaders in each of our ministries that serve the wider community, including the Refugee Ministry, Loaves & Fishes, the Overflow Shelter Meals, the Prison Ministry, and the Tag Sale Ministry. Our first step will be conversation and communication between these different forms of outreach. How can we support one another? What are the needs of the outreach ministries in which we are already engaged? Brian and I are excited to explore new ways to organize and support outreach at St. Michael's. Please keep these conversations in your prayers. For the time being, St. Michael's Vestry will oversee the disbursement of charitable funds to organizations in need. May we discern the best way to serve our neighbors, near and far, at St. Michael's.



STAYING SAFE FROM SCAM, PHISHING AND OTHER INTERNET BADDIES

Annamarie Pluhar

A text from Rev. Mary Lindquist almost got me. I went one step and then realized that it was a phishing attempt. How? When the text said "I'll reimburse you," alarm bells went off.

The internet allows us to do so much! We can have video calls with anyone around the world, shop for what can't be found locally, find old friends, track down important information, stay in touch with friends and family, share photos, get political news from independent writers, etc.

It's a pity that it also has a dark side. Hackers use it to inveigle money from innocent and trusting people. It's a cat-and-mouse game with the baddies finding ever-new ways to scam and con unsuspecting people, while the various tech companies work to figure out how to keep their users safe.

Here are some basic things every computer user should do or know to stay safe.

1) Never give out your information to someone who calls you. They might say they are from Social Security, the IRS, the bank, or other entity. But how would you know that they are who they say they are? Hang up. If you are concerned that it might have been real, find a phone number for the entity on their website or in your bills and call that number.

2) Never respond to an alert, alarm, or other message that pops up on your device (desktop computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone) that scares you. Heightened emotion short-circuits rational thinking. Examples I've seen include "your storage is used up" or "you have been infected with a virus." Sometimes they even say "Don't close this page." But you should close the page, quit the program and/or turn off your device, and start again. Hackers are very good at scaring unsuspecting people.

3) Use unique, strong passwords for every account you have. This is REALLY HARD to do without the help of a computer program. Using the same password for all your accounts (or many of them) runs the risk that once hackers get one password that works, they will try it on other accounts. This is one of the ways that identity theft happens. I use a program called 1Password. There are others.

4) When your device prompts you to do the upgrade, do it. The upgrade will contain fixes to issues such as "security holes" that hackers have found and are using. Upgrades protect you from hackers.

Want to know more? Come to the Adult Forum on October 20th. Bring your stories. My goal is to make sure you are safe on the Internet.

NEWS OF THE PARISH

LETTER FROM JEAN SMITH

My Dear Friends,

I am honored with your gift of the cherry tree now planted in the church yard. I loved the idea when I first heard about it, and I look forward to watching it grow and bear bright pink clusters of bloom gladdening hearts each spring. I was humbled by Mary's kind words and prayers as we stood together on the dewy grass after the 8:00 service and treasure the memory of every smile and hug and the sweetness of that morning. I struggled to hold back tears as I met faces of all of you with whom I have shared ministry over sixteen years. Standing beside the church sporting her Pride flag, BLM sign, and solar panels seemed an outward and visible sign of the Holy Spirit's leading,

our response, and openness to new opportunities to serve.

After the delicious breakfast and wonderful re-connecting conversations in the undercroft, I welcomed the quiet before the 10:15 service. I checked what the opening hymn would be, read the announcements, and settled myself on the kneeler for a prayer. I sighed and bowed my head and ...laughed. The friend in the pew ahead of ours had tucked her dew-drenched socks and wet shoes on the floor. How perfect, I thought, that is exactly how I feel. The love and affection we had exchanged that morning and over the years have soaked me all the way through.

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The Parish Picnic at the McGinn's House



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 2024 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 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, Thaddeus Bennett & George Connell |
| October 11 | Louise LaChance & Aldrich Wright |

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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) |