



# ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



## The Annual Report for 2024

Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 9, 2025



### PARISH STAFF

The Reverend Mary D. Lindquist, *Rector*

The Reverend adwoa Wilson, *Assistant Priest*

The Reverend Lars Hunter, *Deacon*

Jeanie Crosby, *Parish Administrator*

Keane Southard, *Director of Music*

John Laamanen, *Sexton*

Casey Parris, *Financial Administrator*

The Reverend Phillip Wilson, *Priest Associate*

### WARDENS & VESTRY

Christine Hart, *Senior Warden, class of 2025*

Susan Heimer, *Junior Warden, class of 2026*

Paul Gallagher, *class of 2026*

Cary Gaunt, *class of 2026*

Margery McCrum, *class of 2027*

Chris Meyer, *class of 2027*

John Spooner, *class of 2027*

David Treadwell, *class of 2025*

Rosie Wojcik, *class of 2025*

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024

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# ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH

Sunday, February 9, 2024

### AGENDA

Call to Order

Annual Meeting Slide Show

Opening Prayer

Verification of Quorum

Appointment of Clerk of the Meeting

Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting

Reports Received by Title

Report from Rector and Acknowledgements

Report from Assistant Priest

Report from St. Michael's Refugee Ministry

Report on Building Hope for the Earth

Report on Skyberry House

Report from the Senior Warden

Report from Treasurer

Report of the Nominating Committee

Candidates for Vestry & for Delegates to Diocesan Convention

Adjournment

## Annual Meeting Minutes

St. Michael's Episcopal Church

16 Bradley Ave., Brattleboro VT 05301

January 28, 2024

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

And livecast via Zoom for “Church in the Cloud” attendees

### Call to Order

Due to an illness, The Rev. Mary Lindquist participated via videoconference, so incoming Senior Warden Chris Hart and outgoing Senior Warden Annie Landenberger emceed the meeting. Parishioner Ruth Tilghman called the meeting to order at 11:57 a.m.

### Annual Meeting Slide Show

### Special Instructions

Special Instructions were given to members of the Church in the Cloud to use the Zoom chat to vote or comment.

**Opening Prayer** was provided by The Rev. Jean Smith.

**Verification of Quorum** Approximately 80 voting members attended in person. As a quorum would be 45, it was determined that there was a quorum. Other family members, visitors and friends also attended.

### Appointment of Clerk of the Meeting

Carol Beninati was appointed Clerk of the Meeting

**Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting** were approved without change.

**MOVED: Ruth Tilghman      SECONDED: Paul Gallagher      (MOTION PASSED)**

### Report from Assistant Priest

Assistant Priest adwoa Wilson began her report by thanking the Rev. Mary Lindquist for all the work she does that is not only visible but behind the scenes.

Adwoa noted how her formation and discipleship continues and identified a desire to be more prompt and fully present in her responses to people. She also asked us to identify and grow in areas where we feel we need to develop in service to God.

She highlighted some of her ministries this past year, also discussed in her written report:

- Psalm group at The Works (café) in downtown Brattleboro. The psalm group is now also reading a book together called Getting Involved with God. She invited parishioners to join.
- Adwoa highlighted church administrator Jeanie Crosby's constancy and how much she does willingly that's beyond her job description. One of the places Jeanie's skills have been

essential is in her collaboration with adwoa on a grant proposal that brought \$1 million to the diocese and helped fund adwoa's continued presence in our parish.

- Adwoa elaborated on the grant which helps parishes that don't have full-time clergy develop and gather lay leaders and share resources. Adwoa is the point person for designing and implementing this program. Some possibilities for parish development are covenant groups and foyer groups. She reminds us as a larger, program parish to consider our connectedness to these smaller parishes, as well as to see and learn their strengths and engage with them.
- Adwoa acknowledged the Building Beloved Community effort that led to the rethinking of the Common Room space. She especially thanked Kim Peavey for her 20-page narrative of our parish's history and Chris Triebert for her photos and space design.
- Adwoa mentioned the Diocese's Mission Review that took place this year. The report is out and can be found via the Diocesan website. We'll be hosting a Town Hall Meeting March 10 here at St. Michael's regarding this report and parishioners' experiences of the diocese.

### **Reports were Received by Title as they appear in the Annual Report.**

#### **Report from St. Michael's Refugee Ministry**

Paul Gallagher called our attention to the Refugee Ministry's written report in the Annual Report and elaborated on how many more needs there are among refugees, both within and beyond our sponsored families. Most of these individuals left family, sometimes their children, behind. We will be working to reunite some of those missing members.

He talked about the revised agreement with ECDC (Ethiopian Community Development Council, not just for Ethiopians) defining a sustainable path for future efforts. This agreement sprang from the parish's Way Forward Committee.

120 refugees are expected to arrive in Brattleboro in 2024. We will sponsor two families.

Paul asked all members of the Refugee Committee to stand so we could acknowledge them.

He also recognized Joyce Vining Morgan who developed a pathway for refugees to obtain driver's licenses, apply to college and jobs, and in other ways build independence.

#### **Report on Building Hope for the Earth**

Alan McBean recapped:

- Every roof on every building had something done to improve or replace it.
- The church roof was insulated.
- Heat pumps were installed in the rectory and Bradley Wing for cooling and heating.
- Solar panels are installed and will be turned on soon. (They needed to pass inspection before we flipped the switch.)

Alan highlighted results and consequences:

- Electrical use in church and rectory went up due to heat pumps.
- Oil consumption in the church has been cut in half; in the rectory it has gone to zero.
- Savings from oil covered the increase in electricity.
- When solar panels become operational, electricity cost will go down significantly.
- We have about 100 solar panels. We need about 50 more to get to 100% renewable energy. (The goal is 110% so we can give some away.) Alan says the most obvious way to do this is to buy into a solar array, as we have maxed out space on our roofs.

Alan reminded us that the goal is to be energy independent by 2030 and off oil entirely.

### **Hospitality Committee**

Rosie Wojcik encouraged more parishioners to sign up for coffee hour and generally participate in the Hospitality Committee's efforts. On February 17 at 10:30, there will be a kitchen orientation/hospitality training. She noted that there are opportunities to do well-defined pieces of the whole task (such as clean up after coffee hour or prepare some food). She notes that you can be paired up with an experienced coffee hour host. There's a signup in the Common Room.

### **Report from the Senior Warden**

After accolades from Chris Hart, outgoing Senior Warden Annie Landenberger highlighted moments from the Vestry's 2023 activities:

- The Vestry held its first in-person retreat in three years at Hallelujah Farm.
- Pageant participation was the largest in years.
- Foyer Groups ran in 2023.
- Annie re-instituted nametags for coffee hour (optional but helpful).
- The Responding to Our Neighbors dialog about homelessness in Brattleboro began and continues.
- Annie noted and appreciated that adwoa's position is now secured for a total of 3 years.
- Annie thanked all parish staff, especially church administrator Jeanie Crosby and sexton John Laamanen.
- Annie asked all Vestry members to stand and thanked them.
- Annie thanked the parish community for their "faith in action."

### **Report from Treasurer**

Outgoing treasurer Tom Cain called our attention to the treasurer's written report in the Annual Report and noted that we brought in more than we spent this year. He mentioned a few items that were of note this year:

- The obvious need to budget for a permanent, paid assistant priest, albeit part-time.
- The work of bookkeeper Darlene who now needs a backup. The size of our budget, and the money coming and going frequently, warrant this. We have hired someone to be a backup bookkeeper.
- Tom mentioned that he will be stepping aside and Gwen Mousin will become treasurer.

### **Report of the Nominating Committee**

Annie announced the candidates for Vestry:

- Margery McCrum
- Chris Meyer
- John Spooner

**These new Vestry members were elected.**

- **MOVED: Jared Rediske      SECONDED: Paul Gallagher      (MOTION PASSED)**

Chris thanked the exiting Vestry members: Annie Landenberger, Alan McBean, Steve Guerriero.

### **Candidates for Delegates to Diocesan Convention were presented:**

- David Treadwell
- Steve Guerriero

- Chris asked for a candidate for Alternate Delegate. Leigh Marthe volunteered.

**These candidates for Diocesan Convention were elected.**

- **MOVED:** Judy McGee      **SECONDED:** Ruth Tilghman      **(MOTION PASSED)**

**Adjournment occurred at 1:00 pm**

- **MOVED:** Ruth Tilghman      **SECONDED:** Paul Gallagher      **(MOTION PASSED)**

## Rector's Report

*For he is our lifelong pattern...* Once in Royal David's City, vs. 4

I recently began a sermon by talking about Yo-Yo Ma, the famous cellist. In an interview, he described how he learned to play the cello at age 4, by practicing Bach's Cello Suite no. 1.

*"...I just use one finger, and it's the same pattern twice over. So, the first day of learning this piece was very easy because I just used my finger once, the pattern repeats and the second day I used two fingers. Same kind of pattern with one change. Everything we have in life is about patterns, the same or different"* (my italics).

This idea of patterns has stuck with me! Yesterday when I drove downtown towards "malfunction junction," I saw a big electronic traffic sign which read, "Old bridge closed. New traffic pattern." Those cars going to New Hampshire could not use the old bridge anymore and with the new bridge, there is a new traffic pattern.

As I sat down to write my annual report reflecting on 2024, I am reminded of patterns regarding the life of our church – everything in life is about patterns, the same or different. Here are some patterns I have noticed over the last year:

- **A return to most pre-pandemic patterns:** During the pandemic, which began almost four years ago, we really were forced to change our patterns. Some things we could continue – like our Sunday services on Zoom. Some things we needed to drop -- like Coffee Hour, Healing Ministry, choir practice, the Women's Retreat, the annual parish picnic, and much more. I noticed this year we have returned to doing all those things and then some. I've noticed that there is greater interest in gathering in person and connecting deeply with one another. Of course, our patterns are still different from before the pandemic in that we still often use zoom for some meetings and we have a whole new part of our congregation that participates through the Church in the Cloud.
- **More ministry in the summer:** While summers used to feel fairly slow, I noticed a change last summer. I decided to experiment with the assumption that people participate less in church life in the summer by offering two different small groups, Exploring the Episcopal Church and the Acedia Book Group. I was amazed how high the participation was in both



of these groups! Also, because of the leadership of Susan Heimer, we offered a kids' program on Sundays, called "Summer Fun," that was also well attended. The summer still felt more spacious than the program year, but it was also a delight to gather in these different ways and to engage new people in the life of the church.

- **Our staff continues to change:** Last March, we said goodbye to our beloved priest associate, Jean Smith. We also hired a new bookkeeper, Casey Parris, in May. At the end of 2024, Jeanie Crosby, our amazing Parish Administer, retired, and in 2025, we welcomed Susie Webster-Toleno into that important role. And although Lars Hunter and Keane Southard became part of St. Michael's staff in 2023, it felt like they fully integrated into the life of our church in 2024.
- **Financial structures are being updated:** We had known for several years that we needed to update our financial structures, but with the hiring of our new bookkeeper and the beginning of the tenure of Gwen Mousin as our treasurer, it felt like the right time to do this restructuring. Gwen, Casey and Deb Bunker (bookkeeping consultant) have worked extremely hard to make our finances streamlined and transparent. In 2025, we will move to a new church software system called "Realm," that should further help us integrate membership, pledging and our budget structure. In addition, we have changed the pattern of the counting ministry; instead of asking counters to stay after church to count the offering, we have trained new counters to come in on Wednesday mornings to do this important task, in hopes that any questions about the offering can be answered by the administrator.
- **New people:** I am so grateful to God for bringing new people to St. Michael's! These new folks bring so many gifts to us and renew our congregational life. While it is hard to track exactly how many new people are calling St. Michael's home, we have had 20 *new* pledging families/individuals this year for a total of 145 pledges, which is more than we've ever had during my tenure, which began in 2011. This is a great sign of health for our parish.
- **New structure to some ministries:** Some ministries have ceased to function in the same way, like the Mission and Outreach Committee which came to a crossroads last summer after years of dedicated and fruitful work. Since the pandemic, many other outreach ministries have been developed at St. Michael's – the Refugee Ministry, skyberry house, a deeper commitment to Loaves & Fishes. We are discerning the right structure to continue to support outreach at St. Michael's and in the world. In addition, the Healing Team has re-organized and re-energized, and this group is looking at what structure best serves St. Michael's and our wider community. Finally, the Building Hope for the Earth Team has been looking at new ways to approach our goal of become zero carbon and producing 110% of our energy.
- **Small groups:** So many small formation groups! Jeff Lewis now leads three "Aging groups" on a regular basis, and adwoa continues to lead a growing group of people who meet at The Works on Wednesday morning to study scripture. We have had Lenten study called Wisdom in the Wilderness, a film group called Praying as Cinema, a Centering Prayer class, and two Exploring the Episcopal Church classes, just to name a few!

As our patterns for church life continue and change, may the Holy Spirit always lead the way as we endeavor, through our common life, to serve Christ in all we do. Amidst changes and chances, Christ is truly our lifelong pattern.

## WORSHIP

Holy Eucharist was celebrated on 52 Sundays.

The Wednesday weekday Eucharist met in person weekly on 42 Wednesdays. (With the departure of Jean Smith, the first Wednesday of the month has become a lay-led, ante-Communion service).

During 2024 we offered 50 weekly Contemplative Services Thursdays at 5:30 pm, on Zoom and in the chapel.

We held Saturday morning Centering Prayer every Saturday of 2024.

There were six baptisms in 2024 (Atticus Coburn, Azariah Coburn, Ocean Leitermann-Long, Ethan Horton, Gabriel Sistare, and Danica Blais).

There were no Confirmations in 2024.

The Burial office was conducted one time in 2024 (Susan Potter)

Morning Prayer was prayed daily on the weekdays for all of 2024.

Average in-person attendance in 2024 was 121 per Sunday. Average Livestream attendance was 30 unique devices per Sunday.

## ASSISTANT PRIEST

In addition to serving liturgically and in the regular spiritual and pastoral care responsibility of the staff, I have continued in three primary areas of focus which have been described robustly in a Guardian series entitled “Vital Communities.” Those three articles are about the experience of The Works bible study (December Guardian), Loaves and Fishes (September Guardian), and my extra-parish ministry, The Communities for Spiritual Vitaliy (August Guardian). I refer you to these articles for a more detailed description (in my words and those of others) of these ministries.

- Here let me simply mention a few of my impressions based on the year that has passed: We are an amazingly blessed and blessing parish. This year I have worshipped with and heard from several other parishes in Vermont and a few in Massachusetts. We are truly blessed at St. Michael’s, not only with numbers (and an embarrassment of clergy presence) but also with the seemingly endless desire in this community to reach out to God, to serve our neighbor, and to embrace each other in mutual affection. Wow!

- Many of the very small parishes around us are also vital in their own ways and are reaching out to invite us (and others) in. Small groups of us have gone to Taizé services at St. Mary’s, Wilmington, and St. James’s, Arlington. These visits have been of great blessing to those of us who

attend as well as to the small parishes that treasure the interest others show in their efforts to serve the community. For example, St. Paul's, White River, has worked with communities, and at long last, part of their property has been reappropriated to create housing for those without it. I hope it is of interest and hope to hear of how other faithful folk in the Body of Christ are living their faith. I expect to share more vignettes in the coming year. Perhaps we can also find ways to share our stories of vitality with others in the diocese as well.

- There are a lot more spiritual, and even Christianly spiritual, folks in Brattleboro and this state than I have often assumed/been told. The opportunities to share the life of faith with others is all around, and people seem curious – some cautiously and some with relief. In a society with an increasingly loud, single story of what Christianity is, I am humbled by how much people need us to witness in words and deeds to the varied ways in which to love Jesus.

- Small groups are an invaluable way to live the Christian faith. This reality is taking deeper root at St. Michael's. The Works study has been bearing this out, as well as the aging groups, foyer groups, etc. If you are not in a small group, please consider it. The mutual vulnerability of long commitments is indispensable to our spiritual maturity and such a sweet blessing in difficult times.

- We are a surprisingly diverse community. The noise of election seasons (among other things) can give the impression that we are homogenous in our views. This year, in spiritual and pastoral conversations, small groups and emails, it has become increasingly clear to me that this is not so for us at St. Michael's, except perhaps in the broadest strokes. This is true of our politics, or piety, or theology, gender(s) and age, etc. When I consider the polarization in this country, I wonder about the opportunity we have to turn toward another way – opening ourselves to conversations across these differences. Have you had slow, thoughtful, curious conversation with anyone in the parish who thinks differently from you recently?

- From January 5-26, I will be more present in worship and pastoral/spiritual care as Mary goes on the first part of her sabbatical. I look forward to being with you every week in the liturgy, as well as to being reached at [adwoa@stmichaelsvermont.org](mailto:adwoa@stmichaelsvermont.org) for pastoral meetings.

Finally, a fuller update on my work with the Communities for Spiritual Vitality, which is 2/3 of my job. Our first cohort of 12 members from 10 parishes in Vermont and Massachusetts has been meeting regularly since September. Our next in-person retreat will be at the end of January 2025. This cohort is a gathering of lay leaders who mostly come from parishes that have fewer than 30 members. Yet their concerns and hopes are diverse. From them I learn so much about what it means to be church, to be committed in fallow seasons, and to find how much depth of support lay folks have to offer one another. We are near to launching a website that I expect to be live by the end of January. After a staff transition, we have found a lay project administrator with strong skills for the job. I am working with the bishops to develop a memorandum of understanding about how the ministry connects the two dioceses.

In 2025, I hope to have a working board that can help support the many tasks of a start-up ministry. In 2024, my gratitude continues to go to Jeanie Crosby, John Lent, Gwen Mousin, Casey Parris, and Mary Lindquist for their support of the ministry in ways both tangible and intangible. I continue to give thanks for the vitality of this place and its ability to support ministries beyond its own walls, as well as to walk alongside clergy discerning 'uncommon' paths of serving God's church. Thank you, all!

## DEACON

My ministry as deacon at St. Michael's has continued for the year 2024. I perform the liturgical duties of a deacon at the 10:15 service and at the 8 am when I'm preaching. I preached on seven Sundays in 2024. My ministry also includes participating in pastoral care by attending the monthly meetings, staying in touch with several parishioners who are in need, and making visits to the hospital when needed.

My diaconal ministry in the world continues at Brattleboro Area Hospice as the Bereavement Program Coordinator and as a guardian ad litem for Windham Superior Court. A bridge of care has developed between St. Michael's and Brattleboro Area Hospice where several clients have joined the church this past year and current members have sought out support at BAH.

I'm also responsible for serving The Rt. Rev. Dr. Shannon MacVean-Brown when she visits other parishes in southern Vermont. In 2024 I assisted the bishop in Manchester, Springfield, Wilmington, Bellows Falls, and Bennington.

A cancer support group was held from January through May with 3-6 participants. We met in the chapel with an option for Zoom participation. This was a space for sharing cancer journeys, supporting each other and prayer.

In October I began a transgender support group for 4-5 transgender parishioners. We have met a few times and I hope to have more regular meetings in 2025

I'm grateful and honored to be serving at St Michael's and I look forward to the coming year with its challenges and joys. Thank you for welcoming me into this vibrant, Christ-centered church.

In Christ,

*The Reverend Lars Hunter*



## Reports from Worship Ministries

### ALTAR GUILD

- It is a ministry combining housekeeping and beautifying God's house.
- It is a ministry consisting of members who are committed to serving with reverence and devotion. We have four teams consisting of 2 or 3 people that rotate weekly once a month.

- It is a ministry of prayer and meditation as we focus on each task and its meaning like filling the candles, polishing the brass, caring for the linens, and arranging flowers. We hold at least 2 work bees a year- one before Easter and one before Christmas. Shared ritual and working with our hands are a part of our spiritual life. It encourages us to be mindful paying close attention to detail.
- It is a ministry of preparing the Altar, the center of our worship service. Altar Guilders prepare the Altar for Sunday worship, funerals, baptisms, weddings and feast days.
- It is a ministry of welcoming new members. Welcome to Lindsey Boss as a new member. Thank you to Caroline Hammarlund who has consistently prepared the noon Eucharist on Wednesdays for many years and who served on an Altar Guild team. Thank you to Zadie Olmstead, our youngest Altar Guild member who is off to college. She started out setting up the hymn board when she could barely reach it and building up to carry the heavy cross in the stripping of the Altar for the Maundy Thursday service.
- If any of these parts of the Altar Guild ministry interest you, please contact me at jane.sbardella@gmail.com

*Jane Sbardella*

## THE DAILY OFFICE

Every weekday morning at 8 am, between 3 and 9 people gather in-person and on Zoom to pray Morning Prayer together. St. Michael's has been praying the Daily Office of Morning Prayer since 2018. We meet in-person in the Chapel on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, with a Zoom option. We meet exclusively on Zoom on Mondays and Fridays. We rotate leadership of the Morning Prayer, asking participants to help be "the congregation" and read the scripture lessons appointed for the day. We read the appointed prayers, but we also have a robust time to bring our own personal intercessions and thanksgivings before God. Sometimes we sing or chant, sometimes we include spiritual readings. We are generally done by 8:30 am every day. It is a wonderful practice and a great way to start our day. New people are always welcome! Thank you to prayer leaders Teresa Saval, David Hayden, Judith Reichsman, Nan Tierra, adwoa Wilson, Shiva Shankaran, Mary Lindquist and Yoojin Lee. – *Mary Lindquist*

## CONTEMPLATIVE CHRISTIANITY

The Contemplative Ministry at St. Michael's continued its weekly Thursday Contemplative Service and Saturday morning Centering Prayer. The Thursday service involves chanting, Lectio Divina and silence. The Saturday morning Centering Prayer involves two 20-minute sessions of sitting in silent meditation together, interspersed with five minutes of walking meditation. Many thanks to Karin Bleeker, who organizes the Saturday facilitators, and to the facilitators themselves who lead Saturdays and/or Thursdays: John Daly, Jean Smith, Caroline Hammarlund, Laura Frey, Karin Bleeker, Joanne Patalano, Kim Peavey, Mary Lindquist, Barbara Lee, and Margit & Jack Lilly.

This Fall, we offered a class called, "Be Still and Know: Building a Community of Centering Prayer" that was attended by 15-18 people in person and on Zoom. We are hoping that another centering

prayer group will be formed in the new year. Many thanks to the leaders of this group: Cary Gaunt, Susan Marshall, Annamarie Pluhar and Mary Lindquist.

## THE CHURCH IN THE CLOUD MINISTRY

The Church in the Cloud continues into its fourth year! We have a faithful core of people who show up every week in the Cloud, as well as many folks who listen to the recording of the service if they happen to miss a Sunday. Although we cannot see who is attending the services, we can count “unique devices” and we average 30 unique devices per week.

Many thanks to Galen Robinson, who served as one of our camera people since the beginning but resigned the position because he got a new, fulltime job in the field of photography. Ori Johnson continued to serve as a camera person and Jonas Ackermann-Hovis has taken on Galen’s tasks.

## SACRAMENTAL HEALING

*“Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”* Luke 17:19

Yes, faith is the key. Faith is the healing ingredient for both the prayer minister and the prayer recipient to contribute to these sacred moments with God. The prayer minister brings to the petition a capacity to carefully listen, to open into the love of Christ, and to trust the Holy Spirit to come and offer the words that will be most supportive and healing for the prayer recipient. Whether sitting or standing, holding hands or placing hands on the petitioner’s shoulders, each prayer minister opens to being guided by the power and authority of the Holy Spirit. Following the prayer, the petitioner is invited to be anointed with a special oil blessed by our bishop, a most lovely opportunity available to anyone who has a prayer request or wishes to celebrate a blessing with a prayer of thanksgiving.

**During the second half of 2024, the healing ministry team reorganized.**

- Healing ministers are consistently available for prayer requests or thanksgiving at both the 8:00 and 10:15 services.
- In July, twelve team members met for a day-long retreat at Hallelujah Farm. The retreat was designed to connect, to share, to pray, to dance, to create, to be together, to brainstorm new prayer offerings, and to trust God would lead and guide our time together and the ministry of our prayer team going forward.
- In September, we piloted “Soaking Prayer” at Hallelujah Farm for our team members. Here we had a direct, group experience of this multi-sensory way of soaking in the presence of God’s love.
- In October, prior to the election, the healing team placed a sapling frame in the Common Room for parishioners to pin their handwritten prayers on branches to express their deepest wishes and then let go.
- On Election Day, the healing team offered three “Soaking Prayer” sessions in the sanctuary. Those praying were invited to bring a pillow and lie on a pew. While the lights were dimmed and soothing music played, affirming messages and restful verses were slowly and softly offered into the silence. The Holy Spirit was at work. What a surprise that “Soaking Prayer” was introduced to St. Michael’s on such an emotionally charged day, giving those who attended a way to detach from the national drama and attach to the constant love and peace of God.

- On November 27, Rector Mary Lindquist commissioned eleven prayer ministers at the 8:00 and 10:15 church services. Later that morning, the prayer team hosted a “Fruits of the Spirit” coffee hour.
- Monthly meetings have restarted via Zoom or in person at Hallelujah Farm.

**Prayer Ministers are:** Carolyn Taylor-Olson, Greg Lesch, Margit Lilly, Anne Black, Barbara Evans, Sher Wilson, Leigh Marthe, MJ Woodburn, John Daly, Tom Evans, Megan Buchanan, and Bev Bakke.

**Prayerfully submitted:** *Anne Black and Leigh Marthe on behalf of the healing ministry team.*

## MUSIC AT ST. MICHAEL’S

I sit down to write this report just a day after our Advent Lessons and Carols service where our choir of 20 singers beautifully sang a challenging program of five a cappella anthems (including singing in Polish for the first time). The Lessons and Carols service is one of the highlights of the year for the choir, and it has been a joy to lead them and help bring these beautiful and moving works to life.

In my second year as Director of Music at St. Michael’s, the liturgical calendar and how everything works here is feeling much more familiar the second time through. Back in March, my first Holy Week at St. Michael’s was quite overwhelming with learning all the music and chanting for the various services, but as I felt more comfortable planning and leading Lessons and Carols this year, I’m sure Holy Week 2025 will feel this way as well.

Beyond Holy Week and Advent Lessons and Carols, I led my first retreat for the choir on Sept. 7 to welcome them back from their summer break. We rehearsed new anthems, shared a potluck lunch, and had Cary Gaunt discuss music’s ability to inspire people at the intersection of nature and the environment. Over the course of this year, we have welcomed several new (or returning after some years away) regular members of the choir—some Sundays it’s getting very crowded in the back of the church, which is a problem I’m happy to have!

In October 2023, I began a weekly optional choir rehearsal that focused on teaching and developing musical skills, including reading music, ear training, and vocal technique. This came out of my goal to encourage and enable all who want to participate in making music to be able to do so, no matter their ability level. After pausing these sessions to focus on preparing for the Advent Lessons and Carols service that year, they resumed in January 2024 and continued until May with a core group of five or six people. Over the summer, I offered a similar class for four weeks that also incorporated the development of listening skills that could be applied to music of any style or genre, for which we had about ten enthusiastic attendees each week.

In June, I was able to take some professional development days to attend a 3-day choral conducting workshop with master conductor Harold Rosenbaum in New York City. Believe it or not, all of my previous conducting training had been in conducting instruments, with no instruction on the unique challenges of conducting voices. I took a lot away from the workshop and, combined with my

growing experience leading the choir, I feel my musical direction and leadership has improved noticeably since last year, and I look forward to further refining it to better serve our collective music-making.

In September, we launched the “Beloved Community Youth Choir,” our reincarnation of the St. Michael’s Choir School. Like the Choir School, it offers free choral music instruction open to all children in our community, but now focusing on using “El Sistema,” the celebrated Venezuelan system of community youth centers and orchestras that provides free high-quality music education to under-privileged children, as a model as well as instilling practices of Martin Luther King Jr.’s philosophy of nonviolence into our activities. However, about a month into launching it, we made the decision to put the program on pause. While I was very happy with how our activities were going and how the children were responding to them, we only had a couple of participants each week. This made it difficult for it to feel like a true choir and for the kids to feel a part of something larger. More participants from the onset (as opposed to continually welcoming new attendees) would allow us to have a core group each week so we can build upon the skills worked on the previous week and grow and develop together as a group. We plan to relaunch in early 2025 after rethinking and expanding our recruiting efforts.

Our organ builder and maintainer, Larry Nevin, has been slowly but consistently working on fixing and improving our organ this past fall. Specifically, he has done some work matching the volume levels of some of the organ pipes, changed pipes to make certain stops sound a bit more different from each other, fixed many minor problems like single notes that stopped working, tuned out-of-tune pipes, etc. When his work is finished, I would like to do an informal session after a 10:15 service where anyone (of any age) can come check out the organ, learn about how it works (what all those many buttons do), ask any questions they’ve ever had about it, and even try out playing it a little if they’d like too.

I’m looking forward to another great year of music-making at St. Michael’s in 2025!

*Keane Southard, Director of Music*



## Reports from Christian Formation

### CHRISTIAN FORMATION/ADULT EDUCATION

*The Adult Forum is designed to be an informal drop-in opportunity to gather and deepen our understanding of our Christian faith and practice. Happening between the two services, Adult Forum is one place where the people from the 8 am service mingle with the people who go to the 10:15. We are thankful for all our presenters and the robust attendance in 2024. Here’s what we hope we do.*



We will offer a diversity of topics covering:

- different interests (outreach, scripture, contemplative Christianity, spirituality, tradition, community interests, etc.),
- experiences of faith,
- the basics of Christianity and the Episcopal Church (for both those new to the church and those who want to rediscover their roots) and
- specialized topics (for deeper understanding)

In the context of:

- small, high-commitment/confidential small group offerings,
- open, low-commitment offerings (forums), and
- a balance between content and discussion.

All offerings are to be connected to our context (Christian, faith community); all topics should ask the question, “How does this connect to our faith?” or “So what?”

Listed are some of the Forums offered this past year.

- Issues in the Holy Land led by Nicholas Porter
- Meeting Afghan and Eritrean new Vermonters whom St. Michael’s supports
- MLK Sunday: Being Black in America
- Sin, Salvation, Forgiveness: Exploring Meaning and Experiences.
- Resurrection
- St. Michael’s Ministries: Prison, Refugee and Gun Reduction Ministry
- Advent Voices: Alfred Delp and Dietrich Bonhoeffer

As we plan for future Adult Forums, please contact the committee with ideas, offerings, and recommendations. We’d love to hear from you.

Your Adult Forum Planning Committee: *Annamarie Plubar, Chair. Janet Cramer (resigned in October), Craig Irvine, Mary Lindquist, Carolyn Taylor-Olson, Ruth Tilghman, David Treadwell, Phillip Wilson*

## **SMALL GROUP MINISTRY**

St. Michael’s offered numerous small formation groups in 2024! Here is a list of them, followed by a special report on St. Michael’s Aging Groups.

- Breakfast with the Psalms (all year)
- Exploring the Episcopal Church (January- February)
- Wisdom in the Wilderness Lenten Study (February -March)
- Acedia Book Study (June-July)
- Exploring the Episcopal Church (June-July)

- Praying as Cinema (October-November)
- Be Still and Know: Building a Community of Centering Prayer (October – November)

### **Aging Discussion Groups**

The first Aging Discussion Group gathered early in 2024. It was soon followed by two other Groups; one began in mid-spring, the other this fall. Each group has used a sequence of books as stimuli to discussion. The books are: ‘The Gift of Years’ by Joan Chittister, ‘Aging with Wisdom and Grace’ by Wilkie and Noreen Au, and ‘Literature and Aging’ edited by Kohn et al. The groups have a total of about 25 members. Each meets weekly. While there is always a reading from a book to guide a meeting, discussions cover all the varieties of issues that arise in aging. Each group has developed a particular closeness that is warm, intimate, and supportive that aids in facing the issues and events of aging.

We have discovered, among many other things, that we have all been surprised by the new feelings that come with aging, along with the new physical issues, social challenges and opportunities to engage with others and the world. We have thought also about others who age but are not in our groups. To that end we have begun to spin off a small group dedicated to working on an Elder Ministry at St Michael’s to honor and care for particularly our elder members.

*Jeff Lewis*

## **CHRISTIAN FORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

We love children and youth at St. Michael’s and are glad for new children and youth who have become active. We are so grateful for the dedication and faithfulness of our adult volunteers who lead this ministry with passion and love!

### **PAGEANT MINISTRY**

In December nearly three dozen youth – infant to teenagers -- participated in the creation of a Christmas eve pageant sharing their own Vermont version of the Nativity story. The event at the 4 pm Christmas eve service was full of joy, spirit, and light.

The pageant is always a team effort with the help of parents, grandparents, our rector Mary and our music director Keane. Once again, Miranda Smith managed costumes and angels while Lydia Taggart led youth group members who are assets to the production by lending support, experience, fine performances, and solid role modeling for the younger set. We’re also grateful to Belle Coles for helping with costumes and to Brie Davenport for coaching the angels—and her Penelope who played a perfect Jesus. New this year, we had script additions from Ellen Davis and lighting by Hugo Taggart. New players are always welcome, as are new ideas and team members. It takes a little doing and commitment on the pageant players’ part to create the St. Michael’s pageant; in the end though, the hard work pays off—with a little help from the Holy Spirit.

If you’re interested in joining in, please let me, Miranda, or Lydia know. --*Annie Landenberger*

## GODLY PLAY

*“Let us go forth to love and serve the Lord.”*

The younger children invite the people of St. Michael's to participate actively, not only at their enthusiastic familiar dismissal of the Sunday service, but also as they perform in the annual Christmas pageant, get to know us at coffee hours, and involve us in their Christian education.

A huge part of that education is the Godly Play curriculum and routine. The stories, told according to a Montessori approach developed by Sonya M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman, feature three-dimensional objects in baskets or boxes. “Storytellers” match ecclesiastical imagery and language with these memorable props. “Doorkeepers” help with guidance and support.

During the last year, a terrific team of parents and volunteers embraced this ministry, which they report enriches their own understanding of the stories they share.

The Godly Play team also encourages consistent family churchgoing throughout the year with a special “Summer Fun” opportunity for the children. Special thanks to Judith Reichsman, Susan Heimer, Peta Leiterman-Long, and Katie Beth Ryan who provided great community-building time during the first half of the 10:15 am service during the months of July and August.

*-Susan Heimer, Judith Reichman, Miranda Smith, Judy Davidson, Peta Leiterman-Long, Bri Davenport, Katie Beth Ryan, Leah Leor, Rosie Wojick, Michael Hightower, Michael Kennedy and Liz Vic (winter 2024 only).*

## UPPER EL

The 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Graders met bi-weekly during the 10:15-10:50 time to study one of the scriptures from the lectionary and respond with art, cooking and conversation. Many thanks to the teachers! They are: Richard Cogliano, Rachel Fox, Joslyn Homberg, Marie Lawrence and Jesse Ridgway.

## YOUTH GROUP

The Youth Group for Middle and High School-aged Youth was led this year by Lydia Taggert and Ricky Davidson. This past year, we:

- Hosted the luncheon for the Annual Meeting
- Read the Passion in church
- Met with Cliff Wood to learn about his work with the Prison Ministry and Loaves and Fishes
- Cleaned up brush and invasives at Christ Church Guilford
- For Season of Creation, visited an organic, horse-powered farm
- Hosted another bake sale which raised over \$400 for gifts for the kids of Groundworks Shelter



## REPORTS FROM MISSION AND MINISTRY

### OUTREACH MINISTRY

#### January - July: *Brian Morgan*

The Outreach Committee began 2024 in a focused manner. The Vestry indicated that the 2024 budget would be the same as the preceding year, so the committee went to work fulfilling the almsgiving function of St. Michael's.

- The committee began by assisting Alix Fedoruk organize the now traditional BOB (Bag of Basics) Day. The Parish responded generously by donating various toiletries and other necessary items for daily well-being.
- In February the committee held its annual Retreat at church where committee members planned the year's various activities. We updated our Mission Statement keeping it attuned to contemporary circumstances.
- The committee hosted its annual Mardi Gras/Shrove Tuesday pancake supper in April, and parishioners Mary Abell and Don Erwin sent us their traditional King Cakes from New Orleans. This year the pancake supper proceeds were donated to the Windham County Heat Fund.
- In May the committee invited the Parish to donate diapers for the traditional Mothers' Day Diaper Drive. The Parks Place Community Center in Bellows Falls, Foodworks and Loaves & Fishes here in Brattleboro are always very grateful for these donations.
- The Parish also contributed generously to the colored envelope collection for the diocesan relief effort for the flood damage in the Northeast Kingdom.

As the summer progressed, lives became busier, several members experienced health difficulties, and we tried to find more convenient meeting times and to recruit new committee members. That was easier said than done. Our number remained depleted and the committee was not able to continue in its present form.

#### August-December: *Mary Lindquist*

Last August, Deacon Lars Hunter and the Vestry representative to Outreach, David Treadwell, and I met with the Outreach and Mission Committee to discuss and give thanks for all the work of the committee over the past decade and to discern next steps. As Brian stated above, participation at the monthly meetings had become sparse in the last year and many of the committee members were facing health challenges. We recognized that many of St. Michael's most robust outreach efforts after the pandemic were independently organized outside the scope of the Mission & Outreach Committee.

Still the disbursement of funds to local, national and international organizations remained an important function of this committee., as well as many yearly activities like the diaper drive, the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, the MLK service day, and the colored envelope collection in response to local and national disasters. How would St. Michael's navigate these tasks in the absence of an active Outreach Committee?

The Vestry and I decided to gather the leaders of the many outreach ministries at St. Michael's for a conversation, which we called an Outreach Roundtable. On the afternoon of October 31 (Halloween), Ruth Tilghman (Loaves & Fishes, The Help Fund), Paul Gallagher (The Refugee Ministry and Vestry member), Teresa Savel (skyberry house), Cliff Wood (The Prison Ministry and Loaves & Fishes), Brian and Joyce Morgan (The Outreach Committee and the Refugee Ministry), Rosie Wojcik (Tag Sale, The Help Fund and Vestry member), Susan Heimer (Jr. Warden, the Help Fund, skyberry house and Vestry member), and David Treadwell (Loaves & Fishes and Vestry member). We were missing Craig Hammond (Groundworks) and Liz Vick (the Tag Sale) because they were out of the country!

What was evident and very impressive was the scale and breadth of so many outreach efforts at St. Michael's. There are people engaged in feeding the hungry, welcoming and supporting refugees, providing housing for unhoused families, recycling clothing and home goods for the community, visiting prisoners, providing emergency assistance to individuals and families in need, supporting local organizations like Groundworks. Wow!

In discussing the disbursement of funds to local, national and international organizations which had been done by the Outreach Committee, it was recognized that it is important that these decisions be made by a representative group from the congregation who have rotating terms. Because the Vestry already works with the pattern of three-year term limits, we decided for next year to try having a task force made up of three Vestry members (one from each year), with rotating terms who would make these decisions with the assistance of myself and Brian Morgan, who will help with knowledge of past outreach giving, organizational histories, etc.

As for the other discrete ministries of the Outreach Committee (including the Diaper Drive, the Shrove Tuesday Dinner and the Bag of Basics) to the wider St. Michael's, the leaders suggested that we offer these opportunities to our congregation to see if any parishioners or other committees would like to take them on. For instance, there may be a group of people who are interested in leading the diaper drive and another group who would like to come together and plan the Shrove Tuesday dinner.

I hope that next year we will have more to report about the evolution of outreach at St. Michael's. In the meantime, I give deep thanks to God for all the work and devotion of so many people to the Outreach & Mission Committee and for these committee's leaders, especially Brian Morgan and the late Deacon Joel Hill.

2024 Distributions:

**International:**

Orphélinat Evangélique, Haiti	\$2,000
Nonko school, Rwanda	\$1,010

**National:**

St. Thomas Clinic, New Orleans	\$2,500
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**Windham County:**

Heat Fund (pancake supper proceeds)	\$303
Diaper Drive	\$500
BHS/Refugee Summer Youth Program	\$1,000
Groundworks garden mulch	\$75
The Walk-In Clinic	\$600
Total	\$7,988

**PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY**

The Pastoral Care Team continued to meet most months through 2024. We reached out to those who were in need of care through visits, Eucharist, meals, prayer shawls and transportation, as available. Many thanks to the dedicated and generous members of the Pastoral Care Team: *Betsy Bates, Lindsey Boss, Judy Davidson, Jenny Karstad, Mary Lindquist, Margery McCrum, Joan Pinilla, Jane Sbardella, Ruth Tilghman, and Lars Hunter.*

**CHRIST CHURCH GUILFORD**

Even though Christ Church Guilford remains closed to the public for safety reasons, the Board of Directors – with assistance from many quarters – has made good progress on several fronts in the past year.

- Thanks to Vermont Natural Homes and with technical assistance from Stevens & Associates PC, we have successfully completed the structural repairs to the attic and roof framing. We are also putting the finishing touches on structural and architectural repairs to the exterior walls and eaves.
- Since the Spire was hit by lightning in September 2023, we have worked with Church Insurance Co. and hired a contractor to make permanent repairs to the Spire, windows, and related trim work on the exterior. We are planning to finish the Spire repairs in the Spring.
- We have upgraded our financial systems to better track grant income, donations, and expenses.
- We have participated in several events in Guilford and Brattleboro:
  - *June 1*: the grand reopening of the Guilford Center Meeting House
  - *July 4*: the town picnic in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Grange
  - *December 7*: FOMAG's annual *Messiah* Sing at Centre Congregational Church
  - *December 13-14*: FOMAG's annual Christmas concert at Broad Brook Community Center
- In addition:
  - Early in the year, we received a \$2,500 grant from the Windham Foundation.

- In June, Board Vice President Anne Montgomery gathered with several members of the St. Michael's Youth Group for a very successful Clean-up Day on the Christ Church grounds.
- Thanks to Andy Burrows, we had 200 new Christ Church greeting cards printed – 50 cards each with four different scenes of the church.
- In late September, Board members Kate McGinn and Anne Montgomery mounted a wonderful exhibit in the window of the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce on Main Street.
- On October 10, we were finally able to host a concert on the lawn featuring the Celebration Brass Band of Vermont. (This event had been canceled twice in 2023 due to rain.) The concert, coordinated by the Christ Church Events Committee, was a tremendous success and drew an enthusiastic audience. We are very grateful to the Band for beautiful music in the New Orleans brass band style and for refreshments provided by the Guilford Country Store. The concert was preceded by a lecture on Civil War General John Wolcott Phelps by Guilford resident Linda Hay; the talk was organized by the Christ Church Cemetery Association.
- We have benefited from excellent care of our grounds by Heritage Landscape Services LLC, and we are grateful to Eric Morse for the use of his restroom for our events.
- We periodically update the CCGS website and publish blog articles with news items.
- We have sent out more than 350 copies of our annual appeal letter.
- We publicize our events on the Front Porch Forum, in the *Commons*, in the *Guilford Gazette*, in e-blasts of St. Michael's, through personal outreach, through the Brattleboro Concert Choir, and in other venues. We do not hide under a bushel!

In the coming months, we will apply for grants to complete repairs to the ceiling, and we will also seek funding for a new heating system, a ramp, restrooms, lightning mitigation, and exterior painting. Once the ceiling repairs are complete, we will be able to reopen our beautiful building to the public and begin again to hold concerts and weddings that people have enjoyed for decades. But we will not be limited to what we have done in the past! We also have many ideas for lectures, educational programs, fairs and other events that will benefit our wider community.

We are so grateful for all the financial support we have received and will continue to receive from our generous friends, including the Vestry and parishioners of St. Michael's. To further the work of Christ Church, we would be glad to talk to anyone who might be interested in joining us, whether on the Board or in other capacities. Thank you!

Board members: *Valerie Abrahamsen, Melanie Boese, Andy Burrows, Mary Lindquist, Kate McGinn, Edmund Meade, and Anne Montgomery.* Events Committee: *Valerie Abrahamsen, Andy Burrows, Carol Leitch, and Don McLean.*

## **GROUNDWORKS MEALS MINISTRY**

As the homeless population of Brattleboro has grown, it has become more challenging at times to care for all of those in need. Nevertheless, the parishioners of St. Michael's have once more

generously helped to sustain the Meals Ministry at the Groundworks Drop-In Center on South Main Street. Our dinners—this year delivered on the first Wednesday of each month from October through April—feed about thirty-five and typically include a hot pasta dish such as lasagna or macaroni and cheese, a tossed salad, bread and butter, whole milk, and dessert. By April, we expect to have helped nourish more than 245 people in this way.

At a time when the capacity for charitable giving is sometimes strained, we are profoundly grateful to the volunteers who make this effort live. There is no more direct way to help those in need than this. If you would like to know more about participating, please contact Benson Bobrick at shiloh98@sover.net or Liz Vick at ebethvick@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted, *Benson Bobrick and Elizabeth Vick*

## SCHROEDER FUND COMMITTEE

**Members:** *Ruth Tilghman, Susan Heimer, Jack Lily, Rosie Wojcik, Pam Carr and Alix Fedoruk*

**Education:** The Education Fund was used to support staff conferences, parishioner retreats, resources for prison ministry, assistance to a parishioner in need, Advent wreath making supplies, technology to support hybrid meetings and ministry formation resources.

Total for Education: \$5589.42

**Outreach:** The money allotted for outreach goes to support the Help Fund. We also give our time by serving on the Help Fund Committee. We meet through Zoom for the Help Fund meetings on Wednesdays at noon. All the social services agencies in the area can attend. SEVCA (Southeastern Vermont Community Action) runs the meetings and is treasurer. The Help Fund gives grants up to \$250 to individuals and families for: housing deposits, back rent, car repairs, and back utility payments. The goal is to keep families and individuals housed. At the weekly meeting, requests for grants are vetted. This is important because other agencies may know more information about the person who is requesting, and we will know if the request is viable. As many people who were housed in hotels began to be moved out to become unhoused, Help Fund began to feel the stress as well. The funds for Help Fund have decreased with St Michael's being the biggest supporter. There are many more car repair requests so people could get to work and medical appointments and requests for back utility bills. After much discussion, money for storage unit rentals was not available. The mission of Help Fund is to keep people in their housing and to help others obtain housing.

Help fund received \$ 8,720; Total for Outreach: \$ 8,720

*Ruth M Tilghman*

## LOAVES AND FISHES

The Mission and work of Loaves and Fishes: To feed anyone who is hungry and food insecure.



David Treadwell and Ruth Tilghman serve on the Steering Committee with Centre Church committee members. The need for feeding people in the whole Brattleboro area continues to implode as more people became unhoused.

Funding -- We were able through grants to supply our refugee market and secure fresh produce through a CSA grant. Supplies from local stores also helped. Project Feed is a source of funding as well as Mission and Outreach from both churches. And we are always thankful for our individual donors. Grocery stores and our CSA Wild Carrot donate food, and Lloyd is our organizer to pick these up, weigh, and sort.

On Tuesdays and Fridays

\*100 meals are sent to Groundworks.

\* 40 boxed meals are delivered by Becky Anderson to Foodworks to also serve the homeless.

\* 60 bags of groceries are filled by Teri Robinson and Pam Carr to be given away.

\* Food is distributed in boxes to Dalem Chalet, Colonial Motel, High Rise, Quality Inn, Comfort Inn, Hayes Court, and individuals. Our delivery team of Sher Wilson, William Stearns, Craig Irvine, Charlie Veltcamp, Chris, and Brian Morgan fill up their cars and often do it in 2 trips.

\* Families in Hospice are delivered meals.

\* 200-250 meals are served out the door.

\* Frozen and fresh food are also supplied in the bags of groceries.

\*Diapers from Mission and Outreach are always appreciated. The Food Bank also donates free women's products.

\* Refugee Market: With grants, donations and money and food from the Food Bank, we have been able to provide our Afghan families and our newer refugees with food particular to their dietary requirements including Halal meat and fresh vegetables, eggs, and milk from Miller Farm.

*Ruth M Tilghman*

## **PRISON MINISTRY**

St. Michael's continues its biweekly services at the Southern State Correctional Facility in Springfield Vermont, one of the state's six prisons. The ministry team includes leader Cliff L. Wood, who conducts services and sermons with support from Gabriel Sistare and from Ron Bos-Lun, a teacher at the Compass School who leads the music which the men really enjoy. A Reflection time on the sermon provides a time for the men to discuss their feelings and reactions. A significant number of the inmates are indigent and have no support from family or friends.

Highlights include:

- Over the last five years, St. Michael's has provided over 8000 paperback books and many puzzles and board games.

- St. Michael's also provided new socks, underwear and several changes of clothes to inmates who were being released and had no outside support.
- St. Michael's parishioners also donated generously to purchase much needed toiletries each month. Your donations are greatly appreciated.
- Our attendance at each service is now over 35 individuals.

Our team thanks our parishioners for your prayers and support. Both are important to this special ministry. If you would like to be involved in this rewarding work, please contact Cliff.

The prison is also interested in persons providing courses, lectures and seminars for inmates. For example, Ron Bos-Lun teaches yoga to a small group each week. If you have an interest in teaching or presenting at SSCF, the volunteer coordinator would be happy to discuss your interest with you.

*Cliff L. Wood, Liaison for Prison Ministry*

## **TAG SALE MINISTRY**

The St. Michael's Tag Sale Ministry's 2024 Tag Sale was a benefit for Loaves and Fishes, a Brattleboro area community meals program for anyone who is hungry for both hot meals and free groceries twice a week. The Tag Sale raised \$10,000 to support the great work of Loaves and Fishes, which serves hundreds of meals each week and is staffed by volunteers, many of whom are St. Michael's parishioners. The money we raised helped with both food costs and for general expenses.

The sale was held on Saturday, May 4, and, as has become the custom in the past few years, was set up in part under big tents outside the church (clothes, shoes, children's items, sporting goods, art objects, furniture and more) and partly downstairs in the Undercroft (housewares- both useful and/or beautiful, books, jewelry, linens, and delicious homemade food.) Many items were "sold" for whatever donation customers wished to give, and other items were priced. The sale was very well-attended and some types of goods - furniture, linens and jewelry, for example - were mostly gone by the end of the day.

Shoppers are extra generous when they see that the donation they give will go to benefit a beloved organization like Loaves and Fishes. We are grateful for all the people who come to shop at the sale year after year. We also really thank all the wonderful volunteers who make the Tag Sale possible and a success, helping with all the varied jobs of putting the sale together: gathering to sort housewares, clothes and linens (a sociable, fun activity!), hauling furniture, setting up the jewelry tables, cooking and serving food, helping shoppers, and so much more.

This Ministry is one in which many, many parishioners join together for the common cause of helping a community organization like Loaves and Fishes - PLUS we have a great time! The 2025 Terrific Tag Sale will be held on Saturday, May 3. Stay tuned for our decision on the benefitting organization/s and our donation schedule for housewares, clothing, furniture and so on!! In the meantime, please start setting aside great stuff to donate to the sale!

Please consider becoming more involved in the Tag Sale Ministry. We meet once a month for

planning from October until May and weekly during March and April to sort donations. We would welcome your participation! For more information, contact Liz Vick or any of the Tag Sale Team members below.

Respectfully submitted, *Liz Vick with Becky Anderson, Betsy Bates, Charlene Kemp, Pam Gallagher, Eva Kopacz, Lori Palmer, Joan Pinilla, Linda Rice, Jane Sbardella, Sherry Stimmel, and Rosie Wojcik.*

## ST. MICHAEL'S REFUGEE MINISTRY

2024 marks the third year of the Refugee Ministry working with refugee families. The Ministry partners with ECDC (Ethiopian Community Development Council) which resettles all refugees assigned to southern Vermont and matches families that have the highest need with co-sponsorship teams.

St. Michael's is the only organization that has continued to co-sponsor families since 2022 and it benefits from the support of many in the community. Only about half of our current volunteers are members of St. Michael's.

In 2024 the Refugee Ministry co-sponsored two families who received support from two teams of about 15 volunteers each for at least nine months.

Here is a brief snapshot of those we sponsored in 2024:

- The first family is an extended one of four from Eritrea. The guardian, just 21 this year, is responsible for two siblings, ages 18 and 16, and a niece, age 9.
  - The guardian holds a full-time job and aspires to go college. Those in high school work during the summer and school year.
  - After living at SIT for at least six months, they moved in June into an apartment, which was beautifully furnished with donations and decorated by volunteers.
- Additional efforts, which will take years, have been initiated by the team and ECDC to reunite the Mother, a refugee in Egypt, with her family.
- The second family is from the Democratic Republic of Congo and headed by the Mother. She is here with seven children, some who spent their entire life in refugee camps before coming to the US.
  - The children range in age from six years old to two who are in their mid-twenties. The three youngest are in elementary, one is in middle, and two are completing high school.
  - The team has helped connect five of them with jobs.
  - Recently after living at SIT for over 9 months, they moved into their first home.
  - The family is remarkably resilient and incredibly accomplished. All older children play instruments and sing and record as a family. They also speak Swahili, English, and French. The teens participated in the High School track team, and one was selected for the VT Summer Governors Institute!

Those who have worked with the families are grateful for the opportunity with one team member saying: "This is the most meaningful volunteer work I have ever done." Both teams are grateful to Saint Michael's community which so generously helped furnish the housing for both families.

Looking ahead to 2025, the operative word is “uncertainty” because it is expected that the number of refugees granted visas to enter the US may be reduced to previous levels, which are just one-tenth of that in 2024. At this time the Refugee Ministry is still planning to welcome two families of high need.

## SKYBERRY HOUSE

Skyberry, Brattleboro's House of Hospitality for unhoused children and families, has come a long way since the Aug-Dec 2023 discernment conversations Mary steered for our church community. We were a small group of 3 women (Susan Heimer, Mary McKenna and myself (Teresa Savel) exploring the possibility of opening a 'home for housing women and children.' Our inspiration sprouted from the lives of social change activists, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin who created the well-established Houses of Hospitality known as Catholic Worker Houses. With support from our community, we envisioned doing the same, naming our initiative: 'skyberry' (“where a little bit of Heaven touches the prickly in life and makes it sweet.”)

Highlights of the year:

### WINTER:

- Educational forums held in the church, along with a Dorothy Day movie night, to learn about radical hospitality
- Beginning conversations with local agencies working with unhoused families and country-wide Houses of Hospitality
- Discernment around fiscal structure
- Search for a home begins
- Organizational team grows to include retired founding member of Vermont Trust Company, Jack Davidson

### SPRING/SUMMER:

- Referrals begin to arrive
- Organization and action: hospitality meals begin with the interim family shelter at the Winston Prouty Center (WLP) and relationships grow with local unhoused families
- Fun(d)raiser at WPC campus- artistic collaboration with the unhoused
- Visits to Catholic Worker Houses in Worcester and DC. Visit to House of Peace in Ipswich, MA
- Process begins to purchase the house on Frost St.
- skyberry House is purchased
- House and property are saged in the Native American tradition
- First house blessing by Catholic priest, Fr. Paul
- Work parties begin at skyberry with a committed volunteer crew
- Donations of furnishings begin to arrive
- New tub and bathroom renovations
- House manual for hosts and guests begins

### AUTUMN:

- Organizational team grows to include retired lawyer Michael Kennedy
- Non-profit 501(c)(3) application submitted to IRS to support the financial needs of skyberry under the name of Brattleboro Hospitality House
- Brattleboro Zen Sangha group comes to work at the house

- Additional host search begins
- Transition into living at the house begins. First host (Teresa) overnights at skyberry.

Our mission of extending radical hospitality goes beyond making sure people feel comfortable. We strive to make our guests feel valued. We are guided by faith-based practice, valuing interfaith collaboration. Come pray with us, eat with us, clean with us...you are welcomed at skyberry. Together we grow the Light of good and God because of your generous support. We look forward to the new year, when with God's grace skyberry will invite its first unhoused family in for interim shelter.

*Teresa Savel, with Susan Heimer, Maida McKenna, Jack Davidson, Michael Kennedy, (and many volunteers)*

## **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

The committee had a busy and productive year, completing a variety of projects around the property.

### THE CHURCH

*The Solar System:* In January a hearty, cold tolerant group met for several sessions to construct the deck and stairs for access to the power inverters for the solar panels located on the north side of the sanctuary foundation. A group has also been meeting since the summer to brainstorm heat pump systems for the undercroft and sanctuary. A contract for this work has been presented by ARC Mechanical and A.L. Tyler Electric. Installation of these additional systems is expected by the end of February or March. At that point the church will be basically fully electric with the oil backup available for the coldest days of the winter.

### THE GROUNDS

*Rectory:* The hemlock hedge between the Bradley Wing and the Rectory and trees along Bradley Ave. in front of the Rectory were removed last spring due to declining health and shading of the solar panels. Wayside Fence installed a cedar stockade fence, and Judy Davidson arranged for the plantings along the fence and Bradley Ave. We installed a drip irrigation system for the summer to keep the new plants watered and happy. The plantings seem well established at this point and should provide a beautiful display as they mature.

*Gardens:* A dedicated group of gardeners led by Judy Davidson did an amazing job on the flower gardens and shrubs to make the church grounds look beautiful all summer and fall. Thank you, Judy!

*Clean Up:* Spring and fall cleanup days went off without a hitch this year and thanks to many hands the load was light. It really does make a huge difference when a crowd shows up for these events. We are usually done in a couple of hours. Don't be shy! There is something for all ages and abilities at these work days.

*Our Sexton:* I just wanted to say a big Thank You to John Laamanen for all of his hard work on the grounds this year. Your day-to-day care of the grounds, John, makes our clean up days a breeze!

The Buildings and Grounds committee is always looking for people who enjoy outdoor work. Speak with any member of the committee or a Vestry member if you are interested. Chris Meyer is our official Vestry liaison.

Happy New Year to all!

Submitted by *Alan McBean with members Judy Davidson, Bruce Lawrence, Greg Allen, Jonathan Davis, Ross Kinney, Steven Meyer, Vince Johnson, Caleb Webb and Craig Hammond.*

## BUILDING HOPE FOR THE EARTH

*Jesus looked at them and said, 'With humans this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.*  
New International Version: Inclusive Language Edition (NIVI), Matthew 19:26

This time last year St. Michael's began generating solar power from panels placed on the roofs of the sanctuary, Bradley wing, and rectory! It was the extraordinary enthusiasm and participation of our church community that made this milestone happen. The Building Hope for the Earth team once again expresses gratitude to all of you who made the seemingly impossible possible! Together we made a huge step toward achieving the St. Michael's goal of ***"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."***

When we began this project back in 2021, we imagined four phases:

- 1) Replace our elegant but failing slate roof with a new standing seam, copper roof. Replace the Bradley Wing roof and make additional energy efficiency measures, including added insulation and reducing air leakage from the building through weather-stripping and other measures.
- 2) Install onsite solar panels as a first step towards producing 110% of all our own electricity.
- 3) Pursue electrification of our heating and cooling as the path toward minimizing our dependence on fossil fuels and substantially lowering our carbon footprint.
- 4) Invest in an offsite solar array to cover all our energy needs, plus our tithe 10% back to the community.

Most of these actions were completed by last year's meeting. The roofs were successfully replaced and insulation added. Other energy efficiency and weatherization actions were taken throughout the church. Most lighting was replaced with more efficient LED bulbs. Energy efficient ductless mini-split heating and cooling systems were strategically installed in the most used areas of the church. Solar panels were added and electricity started being generated from the sun. To achieve all of this, and to be able to pay for it, was an extraordinary accomplishment, possible only by our collective effort and the grace of God.

The Building Hope for the Earth team took a winter break but resumed planning next steps during the summer of 2024. Our priorities were to:

- Provide electric heating/cooling for the Sanctuary and the Undercroft
- Review electricity use since the addition of the mini-splits

- Develop a strategy for reaching 110% clean, renewable energy
- Share news of our Building Hope for the Earth project with others.

### ***Provide Electric Heating/Cooling for the Sanctuary and the Undercroft***

Many of you probably noticed how warm the church sanctuary gets during the hot months. Our next priority is to address that! During the summer and fall of 2024 we connected with engineers and began scoping a plan to provide fossil-fuel-free heating and cooling for the sanctuary and undercroft. The undercroft is straightforward, the sanctuary complex. After much deliberation, we selected ARC Mechanical to continue doing this work and received a proposal in early November to place ductless mini-split heating and cooling systems in both locations. The ones in the sanctuary will be discretely placed and darker in color so they blend in with the existing woodwork. The intention is to honor the integrity of the historic space and not disturb its visual beauty. After careful review, the team approved the proposal and ARC Mechanical hopes to begin installation in the spring, if not earlier. This coming summer we should be able to say “goodbye” to excessively hot indoor temperatures in the church!

### ***Review Electricity Use and Develop a Strategy for Reaching 110%***

This spring, after we obtain one full year of data, we will begin to assess how much additional electricity St. Michael’s requires after switching from oil heating to fossil-fuel-free electric. Once we have this information, we will be able to determine how much additional electricity will need to be generated from clean, renewable sources to meet our 110% goal. We will explore all options for achieving this, including investing in an offsite solar array. The Building Hope for the Earth team will complete this analysis, but if any of you reading this are data people, please let us know. We are especially interested in ways to display the data to tell a dynamic visual story of how much electricity we are generating from the sun.

### ***Share News of Our Building Hope for the Earth Project with Others***

A key goal of the Building Hope for the Earth project is to share our knowledge and mentor other parishes that might be interesting in taking a similar journey. Communication has been central to our approach, with wonderful support from parishioners in writing articles, giving talks, and having informal conversations with people and parishes that call to learn more. At this year’s Diocesan Convention, St. Michael’s received a lot of attention and information requests about how we accomplished our Building Hope for the Earth project. We are a role model in the Diocese for completing the kind of comprehensive energy makeover that is essential for reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and taking bold action to address the climate crisis.

St. Michael’s, with Vestry endorsement, also agreed to participate in the Episcopal Path for Creation Justice. This is a recently created Province One initiative “to encourage and support congregations to deepen and grow in a holistic response to the climate emergency.” It takes a broader approach than the Building Hope for the Earth program, by looking beyond energy efficiency and fossil fuel reduction/elimination to consider our broader environmental impacts through a four-fold path that includes prayer, learning, action, and advocacy. We are just starting our engagement with this program and would love to have more people join us. You can learn more about it at [www.episcopalcreationpath.org](http://www.episcopalcreationpath.org) and please contact Cary Gaunt ([chg.watershed@gmail.com](mailto:chg.watershed@gmail.com)) if you would like to be part of this exciting new initiative!

I finished writing this report while the news was consumed with stories of the wildfires consuming Los Angeles—just another catastrophe in a seeming unending flood of climate disasters. It can be overwhelming. It can be confusing to know what to do. It is tempting to tune out and look away, to surrender to hopelessness. This is where faith comes in.

In conversations with other churches those of us on the Building Hope for the Earth team are often asked, “How did you do it?” There are many answers—the vitality and commitment of our church community, visionary leaders and hardworking volunteers, strong moral grounding, and the secret sauce—deep faith and the mystery of grace that joined hands with our human will. Indeed, “with God all things are possible.” Please join us.

Submitted by *Cary Gaunt, St. Michael's Vestry and Building Hope for the Earth Team*

## STEWARDSHIP

The theme of St. Michael's 2025 Stewardship Appeal was *Together in Gratitude*. The Stewardship Team invited the congregation to reflect on how St. Michael's nurtures our grateful hearts and how together we cultivate gratitude for God's love and compassion.

A highlight of the campaign was parishioners' stewardship reflections, shared during worship services. Gabriel Sistare, Craig Irvine and Talley Summerlin spoke to us about their religious journeys and their love and appreciation for St. Michael's.

New to the stewardship campaign this year were two “Gratitude Gatherings” hosted by Craig Irvine and John Spooner and Jack and Margit Lilly. These small-group get togethers were moderated by Craig Irvine and gave parishioners an opportunity to share their gratitude for God's gifts and grow in their gratitude.

We are deeply grateful for the congregation's generous financial support of St. Michael's. We met our fundraising goal and this year's appeal set several records for the years since Mary has been rector. Your giving includes these new high-water marks:

- Dollars pledged: \$311,581
- New pledgers: 20
- Total pledges: 147

More than 40% of us increased our pledge amount over last year. In a time when so many churches struggle to build membership and remain financially healthy, St. Michael's is thriving.

Thanks to everyone who pledged your financial support of St. Michael's ministries and mission in the world. We are grateful!

Respectively submitted by the Stewardship Team: *Laura Andrews, Imogene Drakes, Paul Gallagher, Craig Irvine, John Lent, Mary Lindquist*



<b>Year</b>	<b>Total pledged</b>	<b>Number of pledges</b>	<b>Number of new pledges</b>
2011	\$198,837	119	12
2012	\$211, 693	128	11
2013	\$218,293	129	12
2014	\$217, 293	128	12
2015	\$215,878	123	9
2016	\$234, 724	128	9
2017	\$262, 282	133	11
2018	\$255,947	141	13
2019	\$268,498	140	15
2020	\$261,155	142	11
2021	\$274,155	130	8
2022	\$290,651	136	9
2023	\$281,249	140	18
2024	\$287,986	132	13
2025	\$311,581	147	20

## **TECHNOLOGY MINISTRY**

The Church in the Cloud continues into its third year! We have a faithful core of people who show up every week in the Cloud, as well as many folks who listen to the recording of the service if they happen to miss the livestreamed service at 10:15. On a recent Sunday when we had a snow storm, many of our regular attenders attended in the cloud. Although we cannot see who is attending the services, we can count “unique devices” and we average around 30-35 unique devices per week.

Many thanks to Tian Ragle, who served as one of our camera people for over a year, but resigned the position because he went to college. Ori Johnson has taken Tian’s place and we still have the help of Galen Robinson, who has been with us since the beginning of our digital ministry.

## Reports from Administration & Finance

### VESTRY

At the Annual Meeting, thanks were given for the services of outgoing Vestry members Annie Landenberger who served as Senior Warden for two years, Steve Guerriero, and Alan McBean. The Vestry began the year by welcoming its new members -- John Spooner, Margery McCrum and Chris Meyer. Though it got off to a somewhat unexpected start, the Vestry had a very successful retreat held in the Chapel at the church. Christine Hart served as the Senior Warden and Susan Heimer as the Junior Warden for the year.

The Vestry supported and remained informed of the numerous ministries and activities presented elsewhere in this report. Of particular note are the following:

- The successful award of the Lilly Endowment Grant for \$1,168,000 for five years. This grant, written by Jeanie Crosby and adwoa Wilson, will fund a 2/3 time position for adwoa leading the Communities for Spiritual Vitality, a new program of the Dioceses of Vermont and Massachusetts. Adwoa will remain an Assistant Priest at St. Michael's for the other 1/3 of her work time.
- The successful final installation of all the parts needed for the solar panels to run and generate electricity, which they did in abundance. The Building Hope for the Earth Team under the leadership of Cary Gaunt, with the support of the Vestry, joined the Episcopal Path to Creation Justice, a program to assist other churches in Vermont and Massachusetts to create their own paths for Hope for the Earth. Our Building Hope for the Earth Team also picked up its work to bring heating and cooling to the Sanctuary and Undercroft.
- Working with the Rector as she navigated a variety of personnel changes. The Rev. Jean Smith moved to Connecticut after 16 years as our Priest Associate. The Parish gave Jean a festive good-bye and planted a beautiful cherry tree in the front lawn in her honor. We welcomed a new bookkeeping team with Casey Parris and Deb Bunker. Lars Hunter fully settled into his role as our Deacon. As the year comes to a close, our "excellent administrator, wise counsellor and patient listener" (as Mary describes her) of 12 years, Jeanie Crosby, is retiring. A gathering will be held in December to thank Jeanie for all her incredible service to our parish. The Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno has been hired to become our new Parish Administrator.
- Strongly supporting the creation and work of Skyberry House.
- As the year draws to a close, the Vestry is preparing for Mary's Sabbatical which will take place in two parts. The first, in January, will be covered by adwoa, Lars and the Pastoral Care Team and the second, from May 13 to August 5, will be covered by the Rev. Thad Bennett (formal agreement pending) and the Vestry.

As you can see from the breadth of reports in this booklet, St. Michael's continues to be "A Christ-Centered Community of Practice awakening to the abiding presence of God."

On behalf of the Vestry, I thank all of you for your contributions to our parish community.  
Sincerely, *Christine H. Hart, Senior Warden*

## TREASURER

2024 was a year of transition in a number of ways in the practice and oversight of finances at St. Michael's. Some examples include:

- I accepted the position of St. Michael's Treasurer from Tom Cain's capable hands in January 2024 and it has been a year of learning and discovery.
- We transitioned to a new bookkeeper, Casey Parris, in early 2024. Casey has become a valuable member of our financial team. Additionally, we benefitted from consultation in some selected key areas from Deb Bunker and Cynthia Moore, seasoned financial management professionals in our community.
- In 2024, the St. Michael's finance team has been supporting the financial management of the Lilly Endowments Thriving Congregations Initiative Grant from the Diocese that is being administered through St. Michael's. While no grant activities are directly supported by St. Michael's operating budget, our operating budget benefits from indirect income received from the grant.

### **2024 Financial Results**

We entered 2024 with an approved operating budget that reflected a potential deficit with projected income not likely to meet total projected expenses. This was due, in part, to the added expense of supporting 1/3 of the Assistant Priest position. Operating income did, in fact, fall short at year end but at a higher level than expected. We are able to identify where we fell short — some projected pledge income was not received combined with some expected 2024 rental income that is not going to be received until 2025. Additionally, Operating Expenses were slightly over budget in some areas - in hindsight some line items may have been under-budgeted. The combination of lower income received and higher expenses led to a higher than expected net deficit in 2024.

As mentioned, the 2024 budget, when approved by the Vestry, assumed a potential shortfall. It was decided that any actual shortfall at year end would be offset by the use of Covid-related funds that St. Michael's had set aside for unexpected circumstances. As this was the case with year-end results, we will, in fact, utilize part of these set-aside funds to reduce the shortfall experienced in 2024.

### **Looking Forward to 2025**

During 2024, we became aware of a database, giving, and financial management software product that was built specifically to support churches. This product is called REALM. During 2024, we researched this product, conducted reference checks with churches currently using this product, and identified costs. With the support of the Vestry, St. Michael's has decided to move ahead with the conversion of our current software to REALM in 2025. What will this mean for our parishioners?

- The Database/Giving module of Realm will replace the current Church Windows product and will serve as the method by which we receive and manage our pledges and other contributions. It will provide one source for our member demographic and pledge information. Parishioners will ultimately be able to interact directly with Realm with user-friendly tools.
- The Accounting module will replace our current QuickBooks accounting software and will better support the unique accounting needs within a church environment. It will be fully integrated with the Giving/Contributions module, with expected savings in staff and bookkeeper time.
- Conversion to this new product will occur in two phases, with the Giving/Contributions module being implemented in January 2025 and the Accounting module following within a few months.

Stay tuned for more information about this new and exciting undertaking including how parishioners will be invited to interact with Realm to manage their own giving activities.

Additionally, a goal of mine this year has been to improve and increase documentation of policies, procedures, and processes so that transitions in finance team members, when they occur, are supported by improved resources. This activity will continue in 2025.

I would like to thank those that have supported me during this past year as I assumed this new role. Thanks to Mary and the Vestry for their knowledge, patience, and guidance as I made my way through the year. Appreciation for Jeanie Crosby who was another invaluable source of support and assistance and who will be greatly missed. Thanks to Casey Parris, our bookkeeper who is wonderful to work with and makes my job much easier. And gratitude for our parishioners, whose generosity allows St. Michael's to do all of the good work that is so evident within our parish and our community.

*Gwen Mousin*  
Treasurer

## **ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE**

The year 2024 has been a generally good year for our invested funds. The year began with a balance of \$1,633,123 and ended with a balance of \$1,770,681, a gain of 8.4%. This follows the stock markets, which have been a bit of a mixed bag during 2024, especially since it was a Presidential election year. Because of the capital campaign, a CD was established as a “rainy day” fund that has earned an average of just under 4%, which is on par with the CD market. The diversification of our investments has been key to the gains we made. The Endowment Committee met four times during the past year to discuss the status of the Fund. No concerns were found that needed addressing during the year.

I want to thank the Endowment Committee for their support and time spent at committee meetings, Jared Rediske for being the notetaker, and especially Steve Hamlin, Trust Officer for

Greenfield Savings Bank, for his time and effort in setting up our Zoom meetings and reports on the status of our Funds.

*Jeanette Landin, Chair; Committee: Steve Harrison, Jared Rediske, Mary Lindquist, Steve Meyer, Annie Landenberger, Chris Hart, and Susan Wilmott*

## COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY

The Communications Team—Rosie Wojcik, Mary Lindquist, Jeanie Crosby and I – aim to get the word out --within the community and beyond--about the good works in which St. Michael's is engaged. Rosie has been great at keeping St. Michael's visible in social media--she knows the platforms and uses them well; Jeanie--soon to be Susie--continues to send services listings and event information to the press; and I've been writing press releases and feature articles for area print media when opportunities arise on people, events, and initiatives at St. Michael's that would be of interest to a wider readership.

We meet monthly via zoom to share ideas and hear updates from each other and, especially, from Mary on projects, plans, and initiatives; we then assess whether getting the word out is called for and, if so, to whom and how.

There are so many interesting people among us and projects to write about at St. Michael's, but we can only cover the basics at this point. If you'd like to join us as a writer, we'll use your talents well. Just contact Annie Landenberger if this interests you. ([verbatimvt@gmail.com](mailto:verbatimvt@gmail.com))

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee are those Vestry members retiring: Chris Hart, Rosie Wojcik, and David Treadwell. We are pleased to announce this year's Vestry candidates for election for three 3-year terms: Belle Coles, Greg Lesch, and Alex O'Pray. The candidate who is nominated to be elected as delegate for the Diocesan Convention is Talley Summerlin. An alternate delegate will also be elected at the Annual Meeting. The Senior Warden will also attend as a delegate.

***Class of 2025:*** Chris Hart, David Treadwell, Rosie Wojcik

***Class of 2026:*** Paul Gallagher, Cary Gaunt, Susan Heimer

***Class of 2027:*** Margery McCrum, Chris Meyer, John Spooner