



# The Guardian

DECEMBER 2014

## A BLESSED ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SEASON

**Sunday, December 7**

*Second Sunday of Advent  
St. Nicholas Fair*

**Saturday, December 13**

*The Greening of the Church, 9:00 a.m.*

**Sunday, December 14**

*Third Sunday of Advent  
Advent Lessons and Carols, 4:00 p.m.,  
reception following*

**Saturday, December 20**

*Festival of Lights with St. Michael's Choir School,  
4:00 p.m.*

**Sunday, December 21**

*Fourth Sunday of Advent  
The Longest Night Service, 4:00 p.m.*

**Christmas Eve, December 24**

*Christmas Pageant and Holy Eucharist, 4:00 p.m.,  
Festival Candlelight Christmas Eve Service  
with Holy Eucharist, 9:00 p.m.*

**Christmas Day, December 25**

*Festival Holy Eucharist, 10:00 a.m.*

**Sunday, December 28**

*Holy Eucharist, 8:00 a.m.  
Christmas Lessons and Carols (no Eucharist), 10:15 a.m.*





## FROM THE RECTORY

### BEGIN AGAIN: A POEM FOR ADVENT

*In the Bus*, by Grace Paley

Somewhere between Greenfield and Holyoke  
snow became rain  
and a child passed through me  
as a person moves through mist  
as the moon moves through  
a dense cloud at night  
as though I were cloud or mist  
a child passed through me

On the highway that lies  
across miles of stubble  
and tobacco barns our bus speeding  
speeding disordered the slanty rain  
and a girl with no name    naked  
wearing the last nakedness of  
childhood breathed in me

once    no  
once    two breaths  
a sigh    she whispered    Hey you  
begin again

Again?  
again    again    you'll see  
it's easy    begin again    long ago

When I first read this poem a few years ago, I was living in Hawaii. Little did I know I would one day live near Greenfield and Holyoke! This poem reminds me of the season of Advent, because Advent is all about beginning again.

Advent is the beginning of the church liturgical year and the beginning of the cycle of liturgical seasons. At this time of year, we focus on the beginning of the gospel stories and divine prophecies of the Old Testament. These stories are stories of expectation and longing. Expectation, longing, hope—this is precisely where we begin again, spiritually speaking. We begin with our deepest longing for God to come to us in the flesh, in a way that will bring redemption, peace and joy.

So I invite you to embrace this deep longing, returning again to your deepest hopes for our lives and for our world. *Hey you    begin again    again    again    you'll see    it's easy*

*Yours in Christ,  
Mary*

### SAVE THESE DATES IN JANUARY

**January 7:** “Exploring the Episcopal Church Class” begins and continues for five Wednesdays

**January 25:** Parish Annual Meeting

**January 31:** “Working on the Inside: Spiritual Practices for Daily Life,”  
a workshop led by the Reverend Bill Redfield at St. Michael's



## ADVENT AT ST. MICHAEL'S

### CHRISTMAS EVE PAGEANT REHEARSALS START DECEMBER 7

Calling toddlers, children, and teens! Join St. Michael's Christmas Eve pageant and help bring the Nativity to life for our parish! We've been doing our own Vermont Nativity for several years now and will continue to do so, modifying to fit the company and adding, of course, any new elements that pageanteers invent. Recent pageants, for instance, have been blessed with flocks of free-range angels!

We'll rehearse Sunday mornings 9:00–10:00 a.m. (during Sunday School) starting December 7, when we'll talk briefly about the story we'll tell and hear what role each child would like to play. On December 14 and 21, the rehearsals will be more detailed. In addition, we'll have a session with readers only at a mutually convenient time. Dress rehearsal will be on December 23 at 4:00 p.m. The pageant will be at 4:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24. We invite kids from outside the parish to join in, too. If you have friends from school or the neighborhood who'd like to be part of the pageantry, please encourage them to come to do so. For more information and to sign up, contact Annie Landenberger, 348-7156, [verbatim@svcable.net](mailto:verbatim@svcable.net). Watch for more information and a list of other adult contacts in upcoming Sunday Bulletins.



### ST. NICHOLAS FAIR DECEMBER 7

Did you know that Nicholas, Bishop of Myra in the 4th century, was generous to seafarers and to sailors, and more especially to children? This year at St. Michael's we will celebrate St. Nicholas Day on Sunday, December 7, immediately following the 10:15 service. There is a lunch of soup and bread. At the Fair, we create ornaments for our trees, door swags for our doors, goodies from the kitchen, and gifts for members of the family. If you would like to help with this wonderful parish event, please contact Gwen Mousin at 603-363-8401 or [gmousin@myfairpoint.net](mailto:gmousin@myfairpoint.net).

### INTERFAITH YOUTH GROUP GATHERING DECEMBER 7

All kids ages 11–14 are invited to meet at the Guilford Church at 3:00 p.m. to prepare and serve a meal at the Overflow Shelter at the First Baptist Church (190 Main Street). The meal will conclude by 6:30 p.m. Kids can be picked up at the Overflow Shelter. If you have any questions, please contact Ricky Davidson at [Rickybratt@gmail.com](mailto:Rickybratt@gmail.com).



### THE GREENING OF THE CHURCH DECEMBER 13

All are invited to the greening of the church on Saturday, December 13, at 9:00 a.m. This is a festive time when parishioners of all ages are invited to adorn the church with greens and decorate the Christmas tree. Please join us for this festive gathering!



### ADVENT RETREAT DECEMBER 13

"Deepening our Advent with the Gospel of Thomas" will take place December 13 at Hallelujah Farm in Chesterfield, New Hampshire, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The fee is \$50 with lunch included. If you are intrigued by the Gospel of Thomas and if you would like to make your experience of Advent more meaningful, this retreat may be just the thing. Utilizing spiritual practices to open the vision of the Gospel of Thomas, we will find new depths in this season of incarnation. With a little help from some silence and some chant, we will allow the Gospel of Thomas to open up Advent for us. For information or to register, contact Cathy Dutch at [wisdomswork@gmail.com](mailto:wisdomswork@gmail.com).



### ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS DECEMBER 14

The beautiful traditional service of Advent Lessons and Carols is on December 14 at 4:00 p.m. The adult choir will be joined by instruments and readers as we



## ADVENT AT ST. MICHAEL'S

come together for this most meaningful and joyful tradition of the season. Please join us, and remember that this is a service that can be meaningful for those outside our church as well. Invite a friend!



### ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS RECEPTION

The reception after the Lessons and Carols service is both a St. Michael's tradition and a wonderful way to provide hospitality to visitors to our church. We are asking the congregation to help by bringing food. If you are able to help, please bring snacks such as sweet finger foods, fruit, or cheese and crackers.

In order not to have too much of one thing, we ask those with last names A–J to bring sweet finger food and those with last names K–Z to bring cheese and crackers or fruit. Food may be dropped off at Coffee Hour on December 14 or before the Lessons and Carols service later that day. Please contact Betsy Bates if you have any questions, 257-0734. Thank you ahead of time for your help!



### CHOIR SCHOOL TO SING A "FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS" DECEMBER 20

Saturday, December 20, at 4:00 p.m. Candles, children singing, carols, readings! What could be a better way to celebrate the week leading into Christmas?



### "THE LONGEST NIGHT" SERVICE DECEMBER 21

The holiday season can magnify what is going on in our lives, including pain and loss. "Peace on earth," or even peace in our hearts, may seem an impossible dream. Sadness and memories may seem overwhelming at a time when joy and celebration are expected. "The Longest Night" is a service of hope for all who carry sorrow of any kind. Join us Sunday, December 21, at 4:00 p.m. in this inclusive service, during which we honor the burdens we bear and claim the promise of light that follows even the darkest night. We hope that the music, readings, candles, and chants may help us to find the comfort we need and strengthen the connection we share. All are welcome.

## NEWS OF THE PARISH

### AWAKENING TO THE ABIDING PRESENCE OF GOD: STEWARDSHIP FOR 2015

Many thanks to those who have pledged to support the mission and ministry of St. Michael's in 2015. We are so grateful for your generosity and commitment to our parish! We have currently received 103 pledge cards and we hope we can exceed the 127 pledge card total that we received by the end of December of last year.

We are also thankful to Jessica Bennett, Susan Avery, Corky Elwell, and Ken Jacobs, who gave wonderful stewardship reflections in October. Each of them spoke from the heart and helped us all think deeply about what St. Michael's means to us.

If you haven't yet turned in your pledge card, we hope you will soon! We understand that your financial support is only one way you support St. Michael's and that you all give generously of your time and your gifts. However, we tend to emphasize your financial support at this time of the year because we are in the midst of drawing together a budget for 2014. If you have not received a stewardship brochure or pledge card, please contact the church office (254-6048) or pick one up in the back of the sanctuary on Sunday mornings.







## NEWS OF THE PARISH



### MEET THE MATTSONS!

Over the past year, you may have noticed this family of six at coffee hour with their service dog, Rizzo. Mom Jessica trains service dogs and teaches puppy kindergarten at NB Productions in Greenfield, Massachusetts. All the Mattson children have been actively involved in dog training.

Dad Christopher (Chris) is a police officer in Rowe and Heath. Daughter Kirsten (19) is a dance major at Greenfield Community College and an assistant instructor at Mountain View Dance in Sunderland. Sons Jake (9) and K.C. (12) both enjoy dancing at Mountain View. They are also torch bearers at St. Michael's. K.C. has a special connection with animals and assists in breeding Irish Wolfhounds. A seventh-grader at Frontier Regional Middle School, he participates in the Eye to Eye mentoring program which pairs middle schoolers with UMass students who have similar learning styles. Jake, a fourth-grader at Deerfield Elementary, has a keen sense of fashion and likes climbing trees and being outside. Sixteen-year-old Mikael, a tenth-grader at Franklin County Tech focusing in collision repair, is a crucifer at St. Michael's and an avid wrestler, hunter, and fisherman.

If you want to hang out with the Mattsons, you have to like animals. They have five dogs, four cats, one tortoise, one turtle, one rabbit, one degu (whatever that is!), and a hamster. A day trip for them is most likely to be a visit to Mystic Aquarium or a zoo.

The Mattsons all love St. Michael's for many reasons. Jess says, "The respect for all people and beliefs was something our family tried to practice in our lives, and to find a congregation that supported those beliefs was truly a Godsend. Most important was the absolute warmth and encouragement the congregation gives to the children. The younger boys love Godly Play, Mikael loves the music and especially serving as crucifer, Kirsten loves the stress-free environment, Chris loves that we have been accepted with open arms, and I love walking into and out of the church feeling like we are home."



### BUILDING & GROUNDS REPORT

The Building & Grounds Committee had a busy summer and fall. We want to thank all those who turned out for the Fall Clean-up on November 1. We were 20 strong and enjoyed fellowship as we worked putting the gardens to bed and collecting the leaves! We also want to thank all those who donated bulbs and plants from their own gardens to help beautify the landscape of St. Michaels. The response was more than we could have hoped for and there will be a spectacular display come spring and summer. The little hydrangeas by the Chapel entrance have grown quite a bit this season. We should have many flowers available for use in worship or for parishioners' cheer in 2015. Inside, there are many projects, some great and some small, you may have noticed. The roof has been a bit of a leaking challenge but improvements continue to be made. Several additional cabinets have been hung in the kitchen. We have new signs to mark parking for the mobility challenged and the parking lot lines were repainted. We are looking into updating the lighting for the signage out front and the lamp posts. So the committee stays busy and always welcomes new members. We meet at 9:00 a.m. on the First Sunday of the month. If you have ideas or see something that requires attention please let us know!





## NEWS OF THE PARISH

### FALL TAG SALE WRAP-UP

A final Tag Sale meeting was held on October 26, and I am very pleased to announce the current proceeds are \$6,530.24, with several items still at the consignment shop and the auction house. The group discussed several potential improvements and changes that may enhance future sales. At this time the last of the books have been packed up and taken to book donation containers in the local area. The "Christmas Room" will be cleaned out shortly, thereby making room for Spring Tag Sale donations. Once again I wish to say Thank You to all of the "Department Leaders." Without your willingness to step up this tag sale would not have happened at all. It was a definite success because of everyone's help and participation. Together we did it. I would especially like to say Thank You to Susan Wilmott: Susan, I am grateful for your ongoing support, guidance, patience and sense of humor, which helped me make it through what you know to be a very busy week.

*Anne Cook*



### PARISH FINANCIAL UPDATE

Year-to-date pledges show 99.2%, but some of those dollars are from parishioners who pre-paid for the year. These figures do not show the "real" deficit amount pledged or the amount of dollars prepaid. We are still behind in pledges. So please catch up as you can!

#### *For January 1–October 31:*

**Total Pledges Received:** \$181,857 vs. Budget of \$164,332 (99.2% of Budget)

(for the month of October alone, the figures are \$20,114 vs. Budget of \$18,334, or 109.7%)

**Total Operating Income:** \$275,444 vs. Budget of \$268,429 (102.6% of Budget)

**Total Operating Expenses:** \$271,906 vs. Budget of \$273,844 (99.3% of Budget)

## REPORT FROM OUR 2014 DIOCESAN CONVENTION

Opening the 2014 Diocesan Convention, Bishop Ely expressed his gratitude and asked us to join in the hymn "Now Thank We All Our God." He talked about his four-month sabbatical that he finished only a day before the convention and with a touch of humor said that, "When I told some bishops at the House of Bishops meeting that my sabbatical ended the day before our Diocesan Convention, many looked at me with amazement as if to say, 'Are you nuts? Are you really going to trust all that to others?'" I said, "Absolutely!" His confidence proved accurate. The convention was organized, interesting, and provided lots of time for networking. Our own Craig Hammond was part of the planning committee.

For those who don't know, convention is an annual event that manages the business of the diocese, including approving the budget and electing people to various positions. It is somewhat like the annual meeting of membership for a nonprofit organization. Our small diocese has 45 parishes. All canonically

resident clergy are automatically voting members. Each parish elects two delegates, who with the senior warden and rector represent the church. Joanne Patalano and Annamarie Pluhar, along with Senior Warden Janet Cramer and Rector Mary Lindquist, were St. Michael's delegates. Every three years the convention is held somewhere other than at the Cathedral in Burlington. This year it was in the Northeast Kingdom at Jay's Peak Ski Resort.

The theme for convention was "Equipped for the Journey: Formation for Mission." Workshops on Friday morning offered perspectives on mission, whether faith-formation in the future, work in Zimbabwe, or a systems understanding of the life-cycle of parish programs. After lunch the Bishop addressed the convention, making the point that the budget was a mission-driven budget, not a budget-driven mission. He also referenced many times the subject of dignity and acknowledged that he is influenced by the book, *Dignity: Its Essential Role*



## REPORT FROM OUR 2014 DIOCESAN CONVENTION

*in Resolving Conflict* by Donna Hicks. Bishop Ian Douglas, newly elected Bishop of Connecticut, was the keynote speaker, focusing on the theme “Baptized into Mission: Experiments for a Post-Christendom World.” Bishop Douglas invited us to think about how we can be missional leaders in five areas: worship, forgiveness, service, proclamation, and justice-making. We divided into small groups to brainstorm how we could actually do this.

In the evening we had a social hour, dinner, and another speech from Bishop Douglas. Saturday morning, All Saint’s Day, was time for Holy Eucharist. Picture 150 people in a hotel ballroom at round tables. It was All Saint’s Day. Wine and bread were placed on each table. We used texts from the New Zealand Prayer Book, had a Wendell Berry poem as one of the readings, and sang three verses of “Bridge Over Troubled Water” between the readings, the last verse being the Offertory hymn. There was a rededication of vows for priests, deacons, and laity, and anointing of hands after the sacrament of Bread and Water. The Lord’s Prayer from New Zealand is a bit different, for example the lines, “With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, spare us.” (The full text can be found here: <http://www.orucc.org/wp-content/uploads/Alternative-Lords-prayers.pdf>.)

And then we finally got to the business of convention. We handily elected the slate that had been prepared, including Bill Ames for Diocesan Trustee, had a ballot vote for alternatives to next year’s General Convention, approved the budget as presented, and adjourned for a quick lunch. The new Diocesan Communications Minister introduced a new video available for local use entitled “A Diocesan Narrative.”

After lunch came resolutions. There was a beautiful resolution about Joel Hill that contained the first lines of a poem written by Anne Montgomery for her memorial service. This year the only resolution that might have generated controversy was the resolution from the Earth Stewards Committee to replace non-biodegradable polystyrene and plastic products at all diocesan events and to encourage parishes to do the same. Thad Bennett offered a friendly amendment encouraging everyone to bring their own coffee or water container to every event! This was voted in. Work was completed by 3:30 p.m. on Saturday. It was snowing as we left Jay Peak.

All convention business can be found at <http://www.diovermont.org/2014-Diocesan-Convention/>. You can listen to the Bishop’s address and see the Diocesan narrative on the diocesan website: <http://www.diovermont.org> and on the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/EpiscopalDioceseOfVermont>.

*Janet Cramer, Joanne Patalano, Annamarie Pluhar*

### DECEMBER LECTIONARY

**Sunday, December 7, Advent 2:** Isaiah 40:1–11; Psalm 85:1–2, 8–13; 2 Peter 3:8–15a; Mark 1:1–8

**Sunday, December 14, Advent 3:** Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24; John 1:6–8, 19–28

**Sunday, December 21, Advent 4:** 2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16; Psalm 89:1–4, 19–26; Romans 16:25–27; Luke 1:26–28

**Wednesday, December 24, Christmas Eve:** 2 Samuel 7:1–16; Psalm 89:1–4, 19–29; Luke 1:67–69

**Thursday, December 25, Christmas Day:** Isaiah 52:7–10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1–4; John 1:1–14

**Sunday, December 28:** Isaiah 61:10–62:3; Psalm 147:13–21; Galatians 3:23–25, 4:4–7; John 1:1–18





## OUR MISSION & WORK...AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

### THE HELP FUND: HELPING FAMILIES CLOSE THE GAPS

As we prepare for winter, closing the gaps in our home's insulation that might let the cold air in or our precious heat out, we also think of the financial gaps that many families face. The "Smith" family, for example, is a Brattleboro family of two parents with three children. They were struggling to meet their rent of \$900 a month and decided to look for a place with lower rent so their budget would be sustainable. They found an apartment for \$600 a month that met their needs, and of course would be cheaper in the long run, but needed to pre-pay a lump sum to cover the first month, last month, and security deposit. Between their savings and some grants that they identified with help from a case manager in a local community organization, they had most of this cost covered, but were still \$250 short of the amount needed.

Enter the Help Fund. The what, you ask? The Help Fund is a small fund managed by Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA), funded partially by the state and partially by private donations. We at St. Michael's are one of the primary donors to the Help Fund, through the Schroeder Fund, an endowment held by St. Michael's and designated for direct community outreach as well as education. Parishioners Lynn Billington, Hollis Carlisle, Dan Drish, Ronny Johnson, Ruth Tilghman,

and I take turns representing the Schroeder Fund/St. Michael's at the Help Fund meetings. The Help Fund is designed to help people like the Smiths who are just a few dollars short of what they need to help them get or keep their job or home. The Help Fund holds a weekly meeting that includes representatives from SEVCA and from a variety of community-service organizations such as Morningside Shelter, Early Education Services, and St. Michael's. Each week we review applications and determine whether a grant from the Help Fund would indeed make a big difference to the recipient, cover a gap they can't meet in another way, and put them in a position of sustainability, where they would not be likely to need such help again. The maximum grant is \$250.

The Help Fund Committee approved the Smiths' application, and they have since moved into their new, more affordable apartment. They are one of over 600 families that have received Help Fund grants in the last five years. Helping the committee make decisions that help our local families so directly has been one the most satisfying ministries I've participated in at St. Michael's. Please find me or one of the other parish representatives at fellowship hour to hear more about it!

*Alix Fedoruk*



### REPORT FROM BUDDY WALK 2014

It was a bit on the wet side, but that didn't stop over 200 community members from walking and supporting inclusion in Brattleboro on October 4. Brian and I wanted to say, "Thank you, thank you, thank you" for showing us your support by either donating or walking that day. We raised \$956 for The Inclusion Center, and we could not have done that without your support and prayers. I am so happy that Brian has you all as his extended family; we have always felt welcomed and loved at St. Michaels, and for me, as a mother of a child with special needs, that is all I have ever wanted for him. So please accept my heartfelt gratitude and thanks.

*Robin White*





## OUR MISSION & WORK...AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

### LOAVES AND FISHES AND ST. MICHAEL'S

While preparing for the Ministry Fair, I had a chance to reflect on all the ways St. Michael's helps Loaves and Fishes. Loaves and Fishes is a community kitchen serving the Brattleboro area at Centre Church Congregational. This ministry was started by our own Dodo Rice and serves lunch to the community Tuesdays and Fridays. We also provide a hot lunch to the 30 children and 12 teachers at the Brattleboro Children Centre. And we have a give-away table that offers canned goods, cereals, toiletries, snacks, used warm clothing, and vegetables and fruits. We also provide weekend meals both dry and frozen to the families and staff of Brattleboro Children Centre. Cynthia Baldwin has organized this for us.

This ministry has grown as the needs have grown. We serve over 90 people (including the children) each day and provide take-outs for people to take to others or use for themselves for extra meals. We have one young man who takes meals to his grandparents. We have members of our Loaves and Fishes community who are now helping us by setting up the tables, sweeping and mopping the floors, giving an hour to washing pots and pans, and helping to unload from the Food Bank order.

Where does all the food come from that we prepare? The Food Bank is our biggest supplier. Once a week a team picks up the order and unloads it at Centre Church. This is usually where we get all of our meat. Bill and Nancy Ames and the "Lamb for Loaves" project provide us with lamb, which we store in a donated off-premises freezer. We get gleanings of vegetables from the Food Bank but also, through support from St. Michael's, we have a share at Wild Carrot CSA. Local gardeners also bring us their home-grown. Brian and Joyce Morgan from St Michael's did this all summer and even if they were away, food was brought in by a neighbor!

We receive funds from Mission and Outreach but we also have many members of St. Michael's who volunteer at Loaves and Fishes: dressing our tables with flowers (Trudy Crites), cutting up vegetables to be cooked or frozen (Sissy Loftin and Martha Moravec), dicing onions and freezing them (Lloyd Graf), making salads and helping with cooking (Lynn Billington and Hollis Carlisle), bringing food from

their own gardens (the Morgans, Betsy Bates and Judy Walker), bringing in the milk and food from the Co-op and Amy's (Bruce Landenberger, Martin Leggot, and Karin Bleeker), helping to unload the Food Bank order (Betsy Bates and Hollis Carlisle), and helping with serving the meals to the Nursery as well as helping with packing the weekend meals (Cynthia Baldwin and Charlene Kemp).

I feel that St. Michael's gives Loaves and Fishes a lot and want to thank everyone for contributing to us. Thanks to those who offer their time with us, and thanks to all who donate. Those containers that pile up in the community room are used for our weekend family meals and as take-outs. Money is generously given to support our CSA, our general funds, and the "Lamb for Loaves" Program. Food flows in from gardens and parishioners' pantries. Shepherds with extra lamb donate to our program (Judy McGee and Liz Vick and Craig Hammond). Toiletries are handed to me in church, and when someone calls with an extra casserole or baked good, Loaves is blessed. I feel blessed in St. Michael's support for my ministry and the ministry at Loaves and Fishes.

We would love to have more involvement from the St. Michael's community. Interested? Call me (254-2761) or email me ([ruthtilghman@gmail.com](mailto:ruthtilghman@gmail.com)).

*Ruth M. Tilghman*

#### HOW YOU CAN HELP LOAVES AND FISHES MINISTRY:

- Save and bring in reusable take-out containers
- Grow extra in the gardens (talk to Brian and Joyce Morgan)
- Donate soaps, toiletries, and haircare products for our share table
- Donate winter wear (coats, mittens, gloves, etc.)
- Donate canned goods
- Donate leftover cooked food from a party or bake sale
- Support "Lambs for Loaves" (talk to Bill and Nancy Ames)
- Support our Wild Carrot CSA (talk to members and Mission and Outreach)



## EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

### STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION

by Susan Avery

*Much comfort is derived from the familiarity of Home.*

Home is my daily morning walk along Maple Street here in Brattleboro, when I pass by my beloved grandmother's house on Belmont Avenue where I spent countless hours with my "Nana"; the Thompson House, where my mother was the Administrator for many years; and Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, where I was born on December 22, 1946. Turning my gaze up Canal Street hill, I can just see the top of the old stone building I was to call my first home. Further, traveling down Canal Street, I pass by 8 Brook Street, where I lived as a youngster until age 7, when our family moved to our newly built home on South Street.

As I continue along, Canal Street School is on my right, where I made dear friends and now, even with time, many of those friendships remain. Our family's move to West Brattleboro in 1954 brought new friends at the Academy School, a beautiful structure which was intentionally destroyed by fire to make way for a parking lot when the new school was ready for students in 1958. Only a cement walkway remains leading to a grove of trees where once that majestic building stood.

By now, to my left, is Flat Street and I can see the long red buildings that line the Whetstone Brook, one of which was home to my Dad's tool and die enterprise, the Avery Machine Shop. Walking up Main Street, I recall many of the businesses from childhood: Goodnow, Pearson and Hunt, Sam's Army & Navy, J. E. Mann, Fishman's, the Francis Store where my Nana worked, the Brooks House, F. W. Woolworth, the original site of our St. Michael's Church, and the U. S. Post Office where my grandfather held Badge No. 1 as a postal carrier.

As you are listening, you have learned that my roots of Home are planted all over our town. On April 16, 1949, I was baptized at this font, and as a young child I attended Sunday School here at St. Michael's while my grandmother attended church services. During my junior-high-school years I participated in what was then called Youth Group. I was married at this altar in 1965.

And now, back to my original intent on this day. Several weeks ago, in the moment of receiving Mary's

invitation to speak this morning, I first thought, "Well, what is it that I have to say?" Well, awakening after a good night's sleep the following day, I knew I could tell a story, my story. And so I stand here today sharing with you how I came to find my way back to St. Michael's after many years of sleeping in on Sunday mornings.



In 2006, I began to think about the importance of baptism for my youngest granddaughter Chloe, who came to live with me when she was three. As my thoughts turned to action, I called Thomas, rector of this parish at that time, to inquire about the process. He explained that an act of baptism of a child who was not an infant required more than just the ritual of using water and admitting that child into the Christian community. He went on to say that it was important to have the child become a part of the church community *before* baptism so that at the time of the actual event the community would know the child and the child in turn would know and feel welcomed by the members of the church and would thus come to see them as his or her extended family.

At the time of that conversation with Thomas, I was a busy grandmother; in addition to Chloe, I was also raising my two older grandchildren, who were then in their teen years. The thought of getting up on Sunday for church was an idea that was quickly dismissed... for a while.

As days turned and as more years passed, my two older grandchildren graduated from high school and moved on in their lives, and so there were just Chloe and me. It was then that I revisited the idea of baptism. By this time Thomas had moved on as well, and Mary Lindquist was the person in charge.

Initially, I sat down and wrote a letter to Mary inquiring about her thoughts on baptism. No surprise, she mirrored that same response Thomas had spoken several years prior.



## EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

## CELEBRATIONS

And so, two years ago this past September, while this church was undergoing the renovation, Chloe and I made our way to the River Garden for our first service. We enjoyed it immediately and have been a presence ever since.

Many people were friendly and introduced themselves to us during those early weeks. I met and spoke with others whom I recognized from my various walks in life: Madelyn Howard, Peter Johnson, Gregg Lesch, Lori Palmer, and Dr. Burtis, just to name a few. I had heard Carrie Lane's name but finally had the opportunity to meet her on one of those September mornings. Carrie and my mother were pen-pals with the common interest of both owning our family home on South Street, past and present.

On Easter Eve, March 30, 2013, long after feeling the love and kindness of this church community well settled in our hearts, Chloe was baptized right here along with my great granddaughter Liliana. We are so thankful and fortunate to have recognized the importance of coming back to our roots right here at St. Michael's in Brattleboro. My roots are planted all over town; my faith, with God's help, brought me back Home to St. Michael's.

And, as Mary always says at the beginning of each service, *it is good* to be here at St. Michael's this morning.



### ADULT FORUM SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

**December 7, 14, 21, "Engaging with our Advent Texts"**—This series started on November 30 with Karen Guthrie and continues for the following three Sundays. Just to remind you of the topic: "This season is particularly blessed by texts that are rich in imagery and have multiple layers of meaning. Typically, the hymns, collect, lessons, psalm, and gospel sail by so quickly that we miss most of this richness. We will slow down and live with a few of these texts long enough to let them find a home in us." Leaders will be Mary Lindquist on December 7, Jean Smith on December 14, and Annamarie Pluhar on December 21.

**December 28: Take a break! No Forum.**

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

December 1	Liz Vick
December 3	Jonah Siegel
December 7	Susanna Grannis, Chris Mattson
December 8	Julia Fedoruk, Paul Dyer
December 9	Jeanette Perry
December 10	Arthur Smith, Daniel Smith, Clara Fritz
December 12	Jenny Karstad
December 14	Paula Ryan, Nathan Potter, Robin White-Diamondstone,
December 15	Carol Hesselbach
December 17	Jessica Bennett
December 20	Merribelle Coles
December 21	Peter Walker, Stephanie Dockery
December 22	Susan Avery, Ann Bonneville
December 23	Jean Smith
December 25	Joyce Vining Morgan
December 26	Jeanette Landin, Hugo Taggart
December 28	MJ Woodburn, Christine Gauthier, Stephanie Diamondstone
December 30	Julia Miramontes, Annamarie Pluhar, Dolly Glennon

## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

December 5	Brian & Joyce Vining Morgan
December 7	Michael & Susan Wilmott
December 27	Bruce & Kerry Capponcelli



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# The Guardian

*a Christ-centered community of practice awakening to the abiding presence of God*



## Our Worship Together

**SUNDAYS**—8:00 a.m., Quiet service of prayer and Holy Communion  
10:15 a.m., Prayer, music, and Holy Communion, with Sunday  
School and childcare  
**WEEKDAY MORNINGS**—6:00 a.m., Silent hour in chapel  
**WEDNESDAYS**—Noon, Brief service of prayer and  
Holy Communion  
**THURSDAYS**—9:00 a.m., Rite I service; 5:30 p.m.,  
Contemplative service of chanting, silence, and prayer  
**SATURDAYS**—8:00 a.m., Centering prayer

## This Month At St. Michael's Episcopal

*Please see front for Advent and  
Christmas services schedule*

**DECEMBER 7**—St. Nicholas Fair

**DECEMBER 13**—The Greening of the Church,  
Advent Retreat