



The Guardian

FEBRUARY 2015

FROM THE RECTORY

LIVES OF INTEGRATION

Many of us at St. Michael's enjoy listening to a program on National Public Radio called *On Being*. This program was created by Krista Tippett (the interviewer) in 2001 and was originally known as *Speaking of Faith*. The *On Being* website states, "On Being opens up the animating questions at the center of human life: What does it mean to be human, and how do we want to live?"

St. Michael's vision — *a Christ-centered Community of Practice awakening to the abiding presence of God* — is about the integration of one's faith and one's life. In regard to this idea of integration and in thinking about what we might offer at St. Michael's for our Wednesday Lenten series, I was drawn to the idea of inviting different parishioners to speak about their lives, their faith, and their practice.

The series, which we have entitled *Speaking of Faith: Stories of Christ-Centered Practices*, is in part modeled on Krista Tippett's radio program. We hope our Lenten program will open up "animating questions" at the center of Christian life: What does it mean to be Christian, and what does it mean for how we are called to live? Each Wednesday evening in Lent, I will try to channel my inner Krista Tippett and interview one individual from our parish about their lives, their formation, and their particular practices. We will end the evening with a chance to try out and/or engage in the practice that has been presented. The practices will involve prayer with art and icons (Zachary Roesemann), intercessory prayer (Karen Guthrie), the practice of service and social action (Christopher Wesolowski), the practice of joining earth sustainability and spirituality (Cary Gaunt), and the practice of Christ-centered mindfulness in daily life (Karin Bleecker).

I am very thankful for the willingness of Zachary, Karen, Christopher, Cary, and Karin to share their lives with us. And I am very much looking forward to our Lenten dinners and conversations. May these evenings be an opportunity for all of us to deepen our love for God and neighbor, as well as give us tools to integrate our faith with the particularities of our daily lives.

*Yours in Christ,
Mary*

ASH WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 18

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent. The liturgy, which includes the imposition of ashes and Holy Eucharist, will be offered at three different times at St. Michael's: 7:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 5:30 p.m.



LENT AT ST. MICHAEL'S

**ST. MICHAEL'S
2015 LENTEN SERIES**
*Speaking of Faith: Stories
of Christ-Centered Practice*

Wednesdays in Lent beginning February 25

Dinner in the Undercroft at 5:15 p.m.

Program in the Church at 6:00 p.m.

Worship in the Church at 7:00 p.m.

February 25:

Zachary Roesemann: Prayer through Art and Iconography

March 4

Karen Guthrie: Praying for Others/Intercessory Prayer

March 11

Karin Bleecker: Mindfulness in Daily Life

March 18

Cary Gaunt: Spirituality and Sustainability

March 25

Christopher Wesolowski: Prayer in Service

Childcare will be available 6:00-7:15 p.m.

HELP NEEDED FOR LENTEN DINNERS

We will gather for simple suppers during the Wednesday evenings during Lent (February 25, March 4, March 11, March 18, and March 25). Dinner will be from 5:15–6:00 p.m.; people can come and eat anytime in that time period. As we did last year, St. Michael's will provide fixings for sandwiches. But we need help with:

- *Set-Up:* 1–2 people to set the tables and set out the food.
- *Bring Soup:* 2–3 people to bring pots of soup to share.
- *Shopping:* 1 person to work with staff and oversee sandwich food for this Lenten season. This involves buying sandwich fixings (will be reimbursed) and making sure we have enough food for each of the Tuesday dinners.
- *Clean-Up:* 2 people to clean up food and dishes following the meal (around 6:00 p.m.).

Please sign up in the Common Room. Thank you for your help!

NEWS OF THE PARISH

PANCAKE SUPPER FEBRUARY 17

Save the date! St. Michael's will host another Pancake Supper on February 17, Shrove Tuesday, aka "Mardi Gras." The supper is a fundraiser for the Outreach Ministry. This year's diners will also enjoy a silent auction with a children's table.

The evening is an opportunity for the church family to come together for an evening of fun and great dining before we move into the thoughtfulness of Lent.

The menu, of course, will be pancakes, sausage, fruit compote, applesauce, and drinks. Doors will open at 5:00 p.m.; serving will begin at 5:15 p.m. and end about 7:00 p.m. The suggested donation is \$5 per person or \$15 per family.



THANK YOU FOR HOLIDAY LAMB MEAL PROJECT

Bill and Nancy Ames, Brattleboro Loaves & Fishes, and Ruth Tilghman would like to thank all those who participated in the holiday lamb meal project. We delivered the meat in quarters to Ruth on December 10 from the processing facility (Adams Farm) in Athol. The meat was stored in neighborhood freezers for use over the holidays. The sheep did not seem to have added as much weight this year over the four months that they stayed at the Ames' Farm when compared to last year, but nonetheless they will serve many hundreds of meat meals at the pantry. We are most grateful for the participation of so many parishioners at St. Michael's: Trudy Crites, Bob and Laurie Chiperfield, Paul Love and Holly Bowen, Nancy Barber, Philip and Susan Wilson, Anne and Wayne Cook, Dan Drish and Ron Lenker, Don Berg, Claudia Jacobs and Ralph



NEWS OF THE PARISH

Palmer, Liz Vick and Craig Hammond, Betsy Swift, and Michael at Centre Congregational. Thanks to you all and we look forward to next year and the opportunity to provide protein nutrition over the holidays to individuals and families in need. A reminder to sign up will appear in the *Guardian* in the spring.



TAG SALE DONATION TIPS

It is time to start filling the closets for the Spring Tag Sale. When considering a donation please keep in mind the following:

- Storage space is limited, so stick to spring and summer items. Hold any fall/winter items such as skis, sleds, heavy coats, and sweaters.
- Given the high volume of donations to sort, clothes and linens must be clean, in good repair, and free of pet hair. (Remember some volunteers have allergies to animal hair.)
- No text books, encyclopedias, magazines, or books that are damaged, wet or moldy.
- Houseware items should be clean and have detachable plugs, etc., included along with a manual if available.
- If you donate fragile items, for the workers' safety pack them carefully and write "Fragile" on the box.
- Jewelry donations can be given directly to Jeanie in the office.
- If you donate something that you know to be of higher value (such as jewelry or antique items), please let us know so that it is not overlooked.
- Please no TVs or computer monitors other than flat screen/panels. Older ones do not sell and we have trouble disposing of them after the sale. Items must be in working condition, and if you have the instruction/owner's manual please include it.
- Keep our tent in mind for larger items such as indoor and outdoor furniture and summer sporting equipment. As always we ask that these larger items be held until the month before the sale, when additional storage becomes available.

Please share this with your friends and neighbors who may wish to donate items as well. St. Michael's has a great reputation for quality items at our tag sales. Your help in selecting appropriate items to donate will go a long way to ensure this continues.

Anne Cook



PARISH FINANCIAL UPDATE:

Operating Income/Expenses for January-December (year-end totals)

Total Pledges Received: \$214,737 vs. Budget of \$220,000 (97.6% of Budget)

of which: Total Pledges Received for December: \$17,522 vs. Budget of \$18,334 (95.6%)

Total Operating Income: \$323,764 vs. Budget of \$320,720 (100.9% of Budget)

Total Operating Expenses: \$330,081 vs. Budget of \$328,113 (100.6%)

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



WINGED PRODUCTIONS NEEDS YOU!

Winged Productions has finished one year of programming! We began last February with a fabulous concert, “Songs of Divine Chemistry,” which was preceded by a collaboration with the Retreat exploring the connection between neuroscience and spirituality. In March, we moved on to “Three in the Wilderness,” an original mystery play with the extraordinary puppets of Finn Campman, with music by Tony Barrant, Zara Bode, Stefan Amidon, Kathy Andrew, and Paul Dedell. In November, we hosted a day-long chant workshop, “Altered States,” with guests Amir Latif and Sr. Kristina Frances. Finally this past weekend, we produced an extraordinary concert, “The Protecting Veil,” with guest cellist Paul Wiancko and 16 string players from across the New England Region. The concert was preceded by a marvelous talk by Zachary Roesemann, who described the icons used as inspiration for this piece and gave a wonderfully concise overview of icons in general.

In the year ahead, we are excited to continue this work and have plans for another mystery play, “Out of the Lion’s Mouth,” this time involving our own Choir School, and featuring Greg Lesch and Elle Jamieson; a concert of music inspired by the writings of William Blake; a choral presentation of “Come Life, Shaker Life”; and another chant workshop. There will be ancillary events connected to some of these in the form of guest speakers and hands-on art workshops.

All of these events reach out to people both in and beyond our own church community as we seek to

create pathways for people to connect with the sacred. Both Paul and I have heard over and over again from people attending these events that they are comforted, inspired, and encouraged by the warmth and sense of true hospitality and genuine spirituality that they find here at St. Michael’s. This past weekend, one of the orchestra players walked into the sanctuary and said, “What a wonderful space. It feels just right. You must love it here.” If we can particularly touch those who are either unchurched or perhaps even wounded by a past church experience, we will be accomplishing one of our major goals. If we can help those already on a spiritual journey deepen their relationship with God, we will be accomplishing another.

And we need your help! You can sign up for ushering, offer your skills as a treat-baker, help construct sets and costumes, or help distribute flyers and posters. It will be fun! It will be helpful! And I think it will be helping to carry out our parish vision of being a Christ-centered community of practice awakening to the abiding presence of God.

We will be posting sign-up sheets in the common room for our next event in March. I hope you’ll take a look, and if you’re able, sign up to help!

That orchestra member was right. I do love it here — this is indeed a most special community of faith and I give thanks to God for all of you.

Susan Dedell



A VOICE FROM THE PEWS: THOUGHTS ON POVERTY, PROSPERITY, AND THE PROMISE OF THE GOSPEL

Let's face it: we have a lot of problems in the United States. We love our great nation, but it is undeniable that most of us struggle on a daily basis with a myriad of challenges, or at least hear about them on the news. We read constant stories about, or are victims ourselves of, violence, poverty, crime, job loss, financial crises in our cities and towns, hunger, homelessness, environmental destruction, spiritual malaise, racial injustice, outbreaks of deadly viruses, and tragic death. This litany is so overwhelming as to be almost paralyzing.

For the past year, I have been looking at these issues from the perspective of the root causes of poverty, specifically in the U.S. but also globally. I have been doing this in conjunction with some valiant members of what we're calling the Interfaith Poverty Workshop of Southeastern Vermont, whose members have been particularly supportive of my efforts to promote job security in Vermont and throughout the nation. We have looked at the root causes of poverty from other angles as well, since many of our nation's ills are related to poverty; these issues are quite complex.

As a trained theologian and lifelong Episcopalian, I come at our national problems and challenges from a theological perspective and do not claim to be an expert on areas such as taxation or economics. But I wanted to offer some observations that might provide



not only possible solutions to some of our seemingly intractable national problems but also hope. For it is hope that we as practicing Christians can offer to a broken world.

As I noted in an April 2014 *Guardian* article, certain nations in Europe boast some of the happiest citizens in the world. The Danes, Swiss, Norwegians, Dutch, and Swedes are generally in the top five when surveys are conducted (the U.S. currently ranks 12th). If we look at these and other nations from a "quality of life" perspective, we see amazing examples of societies that are, in many ways, exemplars of the best of Christian principles, such as love of neighbor and care for the

most vulnerable. Let me offer a few comparative statistics:

- While the U.S. has a childhood poverty rate of nearly one-fifth (or upwards of 45% if the proper methodology is used for calculating the poverty level), childhood poverty rates in various advanced nations are much lower: the Netherlands and Norway 6.1%, Denmark 6.5%, and Switzerland 8.1%.
- The homicide rate, averaged between 2005 and 2007 in the U.S., is approximately 5.6 out of 100,000. Other nations' rates in the same time

Continued next page



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

A Voice from the Pews, continued

period are 2.04 (Belgium), 1.17 (Denmark), 0.9 (Germany) and 0.71 (Switzerland).

- On average, top executive pay in the U.S. is a whopping 400 times greater than the wages of an average worker. Some Europeans are currently protesting huge wage gaps, but their gaps are actually much smaller than ours: 58 times in Norway, 147 in Germany, and 148 in Switzerland.
- The long-term unemployment rate in our country was around 2.4% in 2012. But even given the worldwide Great Recession, long-term unemployment is significantly lower in many advanced nations: 0.3% in Norway, 1.3% in Sweden, 1.5% in Switzerland, and 1.7% in the Netherlands.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported that our average life expectancy in the U.S. is the highest it's ever been: 78.8 years. However, many advanced nations have surpassed this level for a long time: 83 years in Switzerland, 82 in Sweden and Norway, and 81 in the Netherlands.

There are a number of other comparative markers that can be examined, with similar results: amount of paid vacation and sick days mandated by law, incarceration rates, carbon footprint, average hourly manufacturing wages, and access to public transportation and the Internet. In these ways, European nations have been doing significantly better than we have for years, if not decades.

What is their secret? Why do these millions of people, who also have capitalist economies and whose values are very similar to ours, live lives that we might envy?

I have become convinced that the answer lies in at least two areas: a basic difference in philosophical outlook toward social values, and taxation.

Unfortunately, I am not an expert on these issues, and I hope someone else with more experience writes a Guardian article about them, but I wanted to offer these observations. First, when a solution to a social problem is proposed in the U.S. — say, a law to

regulate the quality of our air or water — the first impulse among many is often, “How much will it cost?” and/or “That’s going to hurt business.” My suspicion from examining an array of European countries is that an initial response to a similar proposal is more like, “Sounds good! That will ultimately benefit everyone. Let’s see how we can make it work.”

Second, we all know that Europeans are taxed at much higher rates than we are. Americans desperately want to hang onto as much of our hard-earned money as we can, and we have an aversion to higher taxes and burgeoning government programs (which is somewhat understandable, given that many of our tax dollars have gone to fund unpopular wars, company bailouts, corruption, and other unsavory “projects”). The middle class and the poor especially have felt extremely burdened; the dollar does not go nearly as far as it did a generation ago. Europeans, however, generally do not object to high tax rates, and I believe that is because they receive excellent benefits in return: robust economies, peaceful societies, assistance in times of crisis, and long, prosperous lives. Fair and equitable taxation (both personal and corporate) that burdens and helps everyone equally appears to me to be at the base of these nations’ ongoing success.

Obviously, no nation is perfect, and I suspect there are flies in the ointment underneath many of the statistics and examples I have cited. But I cannot ignore what these nations appear to have accomplished. What would it take to achieve parallel quality of life measures, in Vermont and across the nation?

In examining our advanced, prosperous sister nations, I am convinced that we need to move more resolutely in the directions they have gone since World War II, and that is legislatively, another way of saying “collectively” and “communally.” When our legislators next propose laws, fairer tax structures, and government programs that will benefit everyone, measures that have been proven to work for millions of Europeans, let us lend them our support. A just society is what the Gospel is truly all about.

Valerie Abrahamsen, ThD



EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

**ADULT FORUM SCHEDULE
FOR FEBRUARY**

February 2, *Interfaith Dialogue* — The Reverend William Redfield, an ordained priest and Clinical Social Worker, will lead this Forum, climaxing our “Renewal Weekend for St. Michael’s.” He will preach at both services and, during our Forum, share his experience with interfaith dialogue.

February 8, *Making Decisions* — How do you make decisions when you have no idea what the right answer is? What authority do you rely on? How do you choose between two bad options? Phillip Wilson leads.

February 15 — TBD

February 22, *Prayer* — This first Sunday in Lent begins a four part series looking at prayer. What is it and what is it not? Who benefits and how? For some of us prayer is easy and for some it is a huge confusion, and at times feels like magic. Using Anne Lamont’s book, *Help, Thanks, Wow*, we hold up different understandings of prayer and share our experiences. Anne Lamont’s book is available on Amazon or at Everyone’s Books on Elliot Street in Brattleboro. Led by Phillip Wilson.

**LENTEN REFLECTIONS
WITH THE SOCIETY
OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST**

The Brothers of the Society of St. John the Evangelist are providing daily video reflections during Lent called, *Stop, Pray, Work, Play & Love*. You can subscribe to these daily messages at <http://ssje.org/ssje/time>



Here is more information about the series from the SSJE website:

So much of our stress and anxiety derives from our pollution of Time. God has given us the gift of time, and called it holy, yet we often experience time as a curse. In a series of short, daily videos over five weeks, the Brothers of SSJE invite us to recapture time as a gift. Join the Brothers as they wrestle with questions of time and discover how to experience the joy of the present moment...Everyone is busy. Time is at a premium. It is hard for all to come together to deepen our faith. Each theme is introduced with a video of a Brother priming us for the week’s theme. The theme is then explored in depth in six short reflection videos (around 2 minutes each). A compilation video is also available each Sunday. Each reflection video ends with a thought-provoking question for you to ponder over the course of the day, then answer on the worksheet.

**GO GREEN — RECEIVE YOUR COPY
OF THE *GUARDIAN* BY EMAIL!**

If you would like to receive the *Guardian* as a PDF file that would be sent to you by email, please contact Jeanie Crosby at jeanie@stmichaelsvermont.org or (802) 254-6048, x104. One advantage to receiving the newsletter this way is that you can view the pictures in color!





FESTIVE SEASON





FESTIVE SEASON





ROTA FOR FEBRUARY

LITURGICAL ROTA FOR FEBRUARY 2015 · 8:00 AM AND 10:15 AM SUNDAY SERVICES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Position	February 1	February 8	February 15	February 22
8:00 A.M. SERVICE				
Lay Assistant	Anita Crosson	Wayne Cook	Wayne Cook	Wayne Cook
Intercessor	Bill Ames	Doug Switzer	Anne Brown	Doug Lilly
Sacramental Healing	Sarah Benton	Janet Cramer	Jean Smith	Trudy Crites
Usher	Judy McGee	Anne Cook	Bill Ames	Anne Cook
10:15 A.M. SERVICE				
Crucifer	Miranda Smith	Jessica Bennett	Leigh Marthe	Mikael Mattson
Torch Bearers	Thea Porter Rebecca Porter	Avery Bennett Andachew Mousin	Julian Siegel Nathaniel Johnson	K.C. Mattson Jake Mattson
Element Bearers	Chris Hart Sue Dyer	Ken Jacobs Betsy Bates	Janet Brocklehurst & Sissi Loftin	Allen Family
Lay Assistant	Sarah Benton	Devin Starlanyl	Miranda Smith	Greg Lesch
Lector	Julia Fedoruk	Diana Bingham	Sarah Warren	Mary Carnahan
Intercessor	Susanna Grannis	Mary Carnahan	Sue Dyer	—
Ushers	Michael & Susan Wilmott	MJ Woodburn & Vince Johnson	Linda Rice and Annie Landenberger	Alan & Judy McBean
Sacramental Healing	Robin White-Diamondstone and Trudy Crites	Betsy Bates and Jean Smith	Carolyn Taylor-Olson and Margit Lilly	Janet Cramer and Robin White-Diamondstone
Altar Guild	Jane Sbardella Christine Gauthier Lucis Osiecki	Craig Newbert Irene Burtis Judith Hildreth Sherry Stimmel	Craig Newbert Irene Burtis Judith Hildreth Sherry Stimmel	Mary Carnahan Charlene Kemp Betty Elwell Rebecca Olmstead Zadie Olmstead
Coffee Hour	John Daly and Leigh Marthe	Deb Jones & Lucia Osiecki	Landin Family	Andy & Elise Burrows
Counters	Judy McGee Anne Cook	Vince Johnson Wayne Cook	Ricky Davidson Jared Rediske	Sherry Stimmel Judith Hildreth

If you cannot make it, please find your own replacement; then call Jeanie in the Office at 802-254-6048, ext. 104. Thank you.





EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

EPIPHANY (SIMEON REVISITED)

Jim Crosson

He touches me . . . This child
 Whose touch can raze the very walls of heaven!
 Yet no such drama happens when
 He touches me.
 Only my heart leaps in its cage,
 Only my mind grows awesome still,
 Only my sense dims . . . with His touch.
 His touch! . . . His touch!
 Blessed, blessed, blessed am I!
 This child has by his touch . . . transformed me,
 Ordained me, . . . into Life
 At home with my eternal God . . . forever.

CELEBRATIONS

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1 Steven Meyer
 5 Andy Burrows
 7 Douglas Lilly, Chris Landin
 8 Emma Allen, James Landenberger,
 Gordon Landenberger
 9 Richard Burtis, Susan Wilson
 10 Sissi Loftin
 11 Alan McBean, Jayne Fritz
 12 Robert Anderson, Lucia Osiecki
 14 Stephen Hill, John Judge Jr.
 16 Greg Allen, Doug Williams
 19 Ross Kinney
 20 Judy Wagenbach
 24 Kirsten Mattson, Steven Perrin
 25 Anne Cook, Ron Doty-Tolaro
 26 Paul Love, Charlene Kemp
 28 Joseph Garofalo, Leigh Marthe
 29 Asa Taggert

FEBRUARY LECTIONARY

Sunday, February 1:

Deuteronomy 18:15–20; Psalm 111;
1 Corinthians 8:1–13; Mark 1:21–28

Sunday, February 8:

Isaiah 40:21–31; Psalm 147:1–12, 21c;
1 Corinthians 9:16–23; Mark 1:29–39

Sunday, February 15:

2 Kings 2:1–12; Psalm 50:1–6;
2 Corinthians 4:3–6; Mark 9:2–9

Sunday, February 22:

Genesis 9:8–17; Psalm 25:1–9;
1 Peter 3:18–22; Mark 1:9–15



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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

FEBRUARY 17 — Pancake Supper

FEBRUARY 18 — Ash Wednesday

FEBRUARY 25 — Lenten series begins