



The Guardian

MARCH 2015

FROM THE RECTORY



In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan. Mark 1:9–13a

I think there is a very high spiritual value when we make a commitment to something that is bigger than comfort and discomfort...so no matter what happens I know that I am committed to life more than to what I like and what I don't like. Thomas Huebl

Welcome to Lent! This forty-day season (excluding Sundays) is meant to connect to Jesus' forty days in the wilderness as described in the quotation from Mark above. I am always somewhat amused by this story. No sooner had the gentle Spirit descended on Jesus (with God's words of deep love) than the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted. What?! As St. Teresa once said, "Dear Lord, if this is how You treat Your friends, it is no wonder You have so few!"

Why would the Spirit of God drive Jesus into the wilderness? How is this consistent with God's deep love of his beloved son? This action by God calls into question our deeply human assumption that if God really loved us, we would never experience pain or adversity. If we look at the life of Jesus, this assumption does not hold up. Adversity, pain, and loss were all part of Jesus' life, and he neither tried to avoid life's difficulties nor pursue them. His focus instead was on trusting God through all of it. His commitment to God was much larger than his commitment to comfort or discomfort, pleasure or pain.

Which makes me wonder if this time of Lent is an opportunity for us to practice trusting God no matter what our lives consist of? Not avoiding adversity and discomfort, but rather perceiving every moment as an opportunity to deepen our trust in God?

*Yours in Christ,
Mary*



LENT AND HOLY WEEK AT ST. MICHAEL'S

ST. MICHAEL'S
2015 LENTEN SERIES

SPEAKING OF FAITH:
STORIES OF CHRIST-CENTERED PRACTICE

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. Each Wednesday evening in Lent, Mary will interview one individual from our parish about his/her life, formation, and particular practices. We will end the evening with a chance to try out the practice that has been presented.

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.

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 Wesoloski: Prayer in Service*

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



HOLY WEEK & EASTER

SUNDAY, MARCH 29, PALM SUNDAY
8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, 10:15 a.m.
Holy Eucharist & Procession with Palms

MONDAY, MARCH 30
5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist

TUESDAY, MARCH 31
5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1
12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist
5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist

MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 2
7:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with
Washing of the Feet and Stripping of the Altar

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 3

8 a.m. Proper Liturgy for Good Friday (no music)
12:00-3:00 p.m. Ecumenical Good Friday Service at
Brattleboro United Methodist Church
7:00 p.m. Proper Liturgy for Good Friday with
Veneration of the Cross, St. Michael's

HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 4

7:00 p.m. The Great Vigil of Easter,
followed by a celebratory reception

EASTER DAY, APRIL 5

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, 10:15 a.m.
Festival Holy Eucharist



BEAUTY OF THE BELOVED:
THE LIFE AND VISION OF
HENRI NOUWEN



*A morning retreat at
St. Michael's led by
Dr. Robert A. Jonas
Saturday, March 21,
9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.*

When Father Henri Nouwen died suddenly in 1996, he was one of the most renowned religious figures in the United States. An inspired pastor, professor, and priest, he taught at Notre Dame, Yale, and Harvard and wrote 40 books on the spiritual life. Nouwen is known for a personal vulnerability in his writing that invites readers to



LENT AND HOLY WEEK AT ST. MICHAEL'S

identify with his journey through woundedness to a sense of his belovedness in God.

Dr. Robert A. Jonas, who was a close friend of Nouwen's and served on the Board of the Henri Nouwen Society for eight years, will lead a morning of reflection and prayer based on Nouwen's work. Dr. Jonas will show a video of Nouwen preaching at the Crystal Cathedral in southern California in 1992, "a spectacular sermon that you won't want to miss," he says.

Robert A. Jonas, Ed.D., M.T.S., is the founder of The Empty Bell, a contemplative sanctuary (www.emptybell.org). Trained as a psychologist and theologian, Jonas is a retreat leader, musician, and video artist. His publications include, among others, *Rebecca* (Crossroad), *Henri Nouwen* (Orbis) and *The Essential Henri Nouwen* (Shambhala).

Suggested donation \$10 (no one will be turned away)
Contact: 802-254-6048 | mary@stmichaelsvermont.org
| www.stmichaelsvermont.org | www.emptybell.org



**VESTRY OF
ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

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NEWS OF THE PARISH

**“CHURCH HALL MEETING”
WITH BISHOP ELY MARCH 5**

As part of the Diocese of Vermont's year-long discovery and discernment process focused on the theme of "Becoming More Missional," and in the spirit of the New England Town Hall meetings, Bishop Ely will host a series of ten "Church Hall" meetings throughout Vermont to present and consider discoveries and ideas emerging from the various consultations and conversations underway throughout the Episcopal Church in Vermont since June 2014.

St. Michael's will be hosting one of these meetings on Thursday, March 5, at 6:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to gather to hear a presentation and engage in conversation focused on the question: What is necessary in order to support and sustain a more missional Episcopal Church in Vermont over the course of the next 5-10 years?

**SNOW DAYS AND YOUR FINANCIAL
SUPPORT OF ST. MICHAEL'S**

This February we have been clobbered with very bad weather on Sundays. The weather not only affects our attendance; it also affects the financial support we receive in pledges and plate offerings. We ask you to keep up with your pledges and financial offerings to St. Michael's, even when you are not able to come to church (or get out of your driveway)! St. Michael's is dependent on your generosity to pay the bills and support our ministry. We also want to encourage you to consider the online options below, which assure St. Michael's of consistent financial support regardless of the weather.

Remember: contributions made electronically are easy, environmentally friendly, and increase our administrative effectiveness.



NEWS OF THE PARISH



USE OUR WEBSITE St. Michael's website offers online giving as a secure, convenient way to support the mission of our church. For many, this method of giving simplifies the process and allows you to give from any location with internet access. It's easy to start, make changes, or stop at any time. To make a one-time or recurring gift online, please visit our website, www.stmichaelsvermont.org and click on "giving."

USE YOUR BANK'S ONLINE SERVICES You can do this in two different ways. One is *automatic clearing house (ACH) payments* or *automatic bank debits*. These transactions are automatically transferred from your bank account to the church's bank account. You may schedule weekly, monthly, or quarterly gifts to St. Michael's Episcopal Church through your bank. You can also use your bank's *bill pay service* to have checks automatically cut and mailed to the church. [*Editor's Note: We have been doing this for years. No fuss, no muss. And it's completely free.*]



PARISH FINANCIAL UPDATE: OPERATING INCOME/EXPENSES FOR JANUARY

Total Pledges Received: \$29,732 vs. Budget of \$17,990 (165% of Budget)

Total Operating Income: \$42,714 vs. Budget of \$27,139 (165% of Budget)

Total Operating Expenses: \$30,643 vs. Budget of \$27,811 (110%)

REPORT ON THE SACRAMENTAL HEALING TEAM RETREAT

What a joy it was for the healing team at St. Michael's to go on an overnight retreat January 23–24. Nine women from our parish gathered once again at the Emmanuel House in Bellows Falls. The intention was for enriched spiritual development and connection of community through study, practices of prayer, and sharing.

While snowflakes gently covered the outside landscape, we on the inside were each discovering our very own uniqueness of pattern and individual design. Like the velvet softness of the fresh falling snow, we as both vessels of healing and recipients of prayer were learning the delicateness, serenity, and gentleness of reflective listening and compassion. This is the ministry we seek to bring to worship each week at St. Michael's.

The retreat, of course, also brought us together for fun and laughter, good meals shared, and group activity such as yoga and singing. And in between our structured time, we were able to set out for a brisk walk, knit, read, write, or just spend some time in quiet meditation. After our final "agape" meal we all left with grateful hearts and a renewed sense of God's spirit, knowing that we are a part of a very special ministry.

Margit Lilly





THE SCHROEDER FUND: A MEMORY AND PERSPECTIVE

The December and January issues of the *Guardian* had articles about the Schroeder Fund by its committee telling of its current work. As a result, various readers raised such questions as, “What is this committee?” “What is its purpose?” or “I have never heard of it; does it concern me?” Thus perhaps this might be the time to tell its story and explain its working rationale. If in its telling the author appears to speak in the first person, please understand that it was I who ended up acting as the chief agent or central figure in what follows. In addition, I then returned to the vestry to organize a committee and served on it for its first ten years.

Dr. Henry Schroeder, a highly noted expert in the medical field for his work on trace elements, and his wife, the sculptor Janet Gregg Schroeder, were for many years ardent members of St. Michael’s parish. They lived on a lovely estate known as Ginseng Hill in the hills of West Brattleboro. My wife and I met them on our arrival in Brattleboro in 1968, and we became friends in the years that followed. In the course of that role we knew some of their “pre-planning” and were somewhat privy to their thoughts and plans for Ginseng Hill, which was for the estate to be an outright gift to St. Michaels. It must be noted at this point that Dr. Schroeder had been seriously invalidated and was now totally confined to his wheelchair.

Upon Dr. Schroeder’s death in the late 1970s, the Ginseng Hill property—which included a beautiful stone chapel, his laboratory buildings, a gorgeous eastern vista, the gracious house, multiple acres, Dr. Schroeder’s grave, and the future site of Mrs. Schroeder’s grave—came to St. Michael’s. You can readily perceive that this would not be an easy parcel to access in the context of the Schroeders’ dream that it be used by a religio-charitable organization for retreats and intellectual seminars. To add to this situation, the gift came without endowment for upkeep, and St. Michael’s at that time was in no financial mood to do this on its own. It was hoped that some religious organization would see this as a great deal, but the term “un-endowed” cooled any initial interest. Mrs. Schroeder kept me busy on the phone explaining the who, the which, and the why of

the offers that were not taken. Several years of no progress went by, and the property began to show the effects of being unused. At that time St. Michael’s was in no financial position to do anything that took cash, and it was the outright owner; the decision was made: we sell it, and we did at a greatly reduced amount from what its original price tag would have been.

I had gone back on the vestry because it seemed that by now few knew or cared about the background of this project; I needed some advice. I went to our bishop at that point, the Rt. Reverend Robert Kerr, who was soundly familiar with our leadership and financial situation. He and I had several meetings on the overall problems involved. Under his sound advice the Schroeder Fund Covenant evolved. The sale money would be invested and the interest resulting be used in the Fund’s work, which would reflect as best as possible the donors’ intentions. The Vestry was happy to accept this plan; finally what had become an awkward problem was settled.

The Fund’s covenant was as follows: 5% of the interest would go to Christ Church Guilford; 20% to the parish’s “bricks and mortar” (i.e., the building’s upkeep); 20% for further clerical education (seminars, diocesan offerings, etc., and potentially including advanced training for a member of the parish); with the remaining 55% utilized as what we came to refer to as “the kind uncle with deep pockets”—a resource for parish members who came up with a sudden cash emergency such as sudden hospital costs. Any funds not utilized in a year would be added to the subsequent year’s provision. When the Help Fund was established in 1998, monies from the Schroeder Fund were used (and continue to be used) to help those in need in the wider community.

How does it work now? The rector and/or a concerned parish member alerts the Schroeder Committee to a specific need or concern, they do whatever research may be appropriate, and considered action is taken.

The author hopes that this article will clarify for interested parish members the Committee’s presence and purpose.

George Lewis



WINGED PRODUCTIONS

MYSTERY PLAYS IN MARCH

A veritable festival of mystery plays is approaching! On Saturday, March 14, at 7:00 p.m., *“Three in the Wilderness”* will have a one-time only showing at St. Michael’s before it travels up north to be performed at the Cathedral in Burlington. Featuring the beautiful and sophisticated puppets of Finn Campman (Company of Strangers/Sandglass Theater), with original music by Paul Dedell, *“Three in the Wilderness”* explores the story of Christ’s temptations in the wilderness. Vocalist Zara Bode (of The Sweetback Sisters) will knock your socks off, as will the masterful narration provided by local legend Tony Barrand. If you didn’t get a chance to see this last year, you will definitely want to be there this time. If you did see it last year, you will undoubtedly be eager to see it again!

The following weekend, Saturday, March 21, at 7:00 p.m., and Sunday, March 22, at 3:00 p.m., we proudly present the world premier of another modern mystery play, *“Out of the Lion’s Mouth”*, with an original script and score by Paul Dedell. *“Out of the Lion’s Mouth”* tells the Old Testament story of Daniel in the lion’s den through music and spoken Scriptural narration. It is written for children’s chorus, bass soloist, soprano soloist, and narrator, and is accompanied by piano, clarinet, and percussion. The Choir School children will be singing as Satraps, who were the petty and rather shifty officials of King Darius the Mede, as well as the infamous hungry lions of the lion pit. The versatile Greg Lesch will be the waffling King Darius, and the talented young Elle Jamieson is singing the role of Daniel. It is a pretty wild story, where eventually all the Satraps are eaten by the lions but Daniel is saved by his integrity and faith. Special guest David Tasgal, klezmer clarinetist, will be on hand to lend that authentic musical sound of the near East.

Both of these plays have original scores written by Paul Dedell. Paul has numerous scores to his credit, which have been performed in both America and Europe. He began writing scores for theater as a college student, and was awarded the prestigious



David B. Marshall award for his score for *“The Great American Hero.”* Locally he has received commissions for his work from Marlboro College, Sandglass Theater, and the Vermont

Symphony. In addition to theatrical scores, Paul has written choral scores, including the Alfred Nash Patterson Award-winning *“Come Life, Shaker Life,”* chamber music, and songs.

WHAT IS A MYSTERY PLAY?

A simple story from the Bible. A moral lesson. A social commentary. A comedy. A musical. From the Latin *mysterium*, meaning a divine miracle.

Mystery plays are dramatic representations of Scriptural incidents or the anecdotal lives of saints that developed and flourished from the 10th to 16th centuries in both England and continental Europe. Originally, mystery plays were presented on church premises by clergy and consisted of tableaux alternating with Latin chants. However, during the latter part of the 11th century, lay people began producing their own plays in the common language at sites removed from church property. Under these conditions, the plays became less strictly structured, much more colorful, and often contained additional stories and commentary. Original music for the plays was widely composed, but just as commonly popular melodies were adapted.

At their height in the 15th century, mystery plays could be quite elaborate in their production. Mechanical devices, trapdoors, and other artifices were employed to portray flying angels, fire-spouting monsters, miraculous transformations, and graphic martyrdoms. Almost every town of some size held week-long festivals of plays, with the town craft guilds each producing their own play.

In the years following the Reformation, the plays were banned, both in England and most of the continent. To the Protestants, they smacked of *“Catholic”* heresy, as they often elaborated in imaginative and even comic ways on the pure Word of God as contained in



WINGED PRODUCTIONS

the Bible. Many ruling governments wanted them suppressed because they frequently depicted the intermingling and equality of all social classes from kings to shepherds, and often contained unwanted social commentary. Even so, it took several decades to thoroughly suppress the mystery plays, which were much loved by the people. Meanwhile, the influence of these plays had already made a profound mark on the future development of theater, oratorio, and opera. Indeed, mystery plays laid the foundation for theater as we know it today.

Today, festivals of mystery plays are held each year in cities across England and Europe, most famously in York, Paris, and Dresden. Perhaps we shall be adding Brattleboro to that list someday!

CELEBRATIONS

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

March 2	Susan Kochinskas
March 3	Christine Hart
March 5	Jodi Clark
March 6	Wayne Cook
March 9	Eric Potter, Martin Leggott
March 11	Teri Robinson, Marie Lawrence
March 14	Mimi Lilly
March 15	Michael Doty-Tolaro
March 16	Chris Chapman
March 19	Ken Neilson, Karen Guthrie
March 20	Bob Walker
March 21	Robert Kochinskas
March 22	Bruce Lawrence
March 24	James Wilmott, Joan Pinilla, Margery McCrum
March 25	Kate LeBlanc
March 28	Tom Woodbury, Elizabeth Moore
March 29	Braeden Smith
March 30	Craig Newbert
March 31	Jan Bennett

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

March 1	Ellen & Chris Lovell
March 7	Elizabeth Vick & Craig Hammond
March 12	Nancy & Jeffrey Durborow
March 23	Kate & Dana McGinn

EXPLORING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

ADULT FORUM SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

Our first three Forums in March focus on what prayer is and what it is not, taking three themes from Anne Lamont's book, *Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers*

March 1, Help—Thinking of prayer more as asking for help in the expectation that God will make everything better. Sarah Benton and Janet Cramer will lead.

March 9, Thanks—Thinking of prayer more in terms of giving thanks rather than asking for something. Devin Starlanyl will lead.

March 16, Wow—Thinking of prayer as opening ourselves to the mystery and the majesty of life. Nancy Barber and Deb Jones will lead.

March 25: TBD

March 29: Palm Sunday, no Forum

MARCH LECTIONARY

Sunday, March 1:

Genesis 17: 1–7, 15–16;
Psalm 22: 22–30; Romans 4: 13–25;
Mark 8: 31–38

Sunday, March 8:

Exodus: 20–1–17; Psalm 19;
1 Corinthians 1: 18–25; John 2: 13–22

Sunday, March 15: Numbers 21: 4–9;
Psalm 107: 1–3, 17–22; Ephesians 2: 1–10;
John 3: 14–21

Sunday, March 22: Jeremiah 31: 31–34;
Psalm 51: 1–13; Hebrews 5: 5–10; John 12: 20–33

Sunday, March 29:

Liturgy of the Palms:
Psalm 118: 1–2, 9–29;
Mark 11: 1–11 or John 12: 12–16

Liturgy of the Word:

Isaiah 50: 4–9a; Psalm 31: 9–16;
Philippians 2: 5–11; Mark 14: 1–15: 47



Saint Michael's Episcopal Church

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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

MARCH 4, 11, 18, 25: Lenten series continues
MARCH 5: Church Hall with Bishop Ely
MARCH 14: “Three in the Wilderness” mystery play
MARCH 21: Henri Nouwen retreat
MARCH 21, 22: “Out of the Lion’s Mouth” mystery play
MARCH 29: Palm Sunday, beginning of Holy Week