



# St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Faith, Community and Hope ~ 50 Years and Growing

## NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2017

### *from the Rector*

Dear Friends,

Yesterday, the Christmas Card catalog, Shutterfly, arrived in our mail box. It is that annual reminder to get the two children (who are together at Thanksgiving) to stand before our front door for a Christmas photo to be sent to Shutterfly and printed for our Christmas card. We are quite traditional in that our card always says "Merry Christmas". We also send additional Hanukkah cards to our Jewish friends.

I noticed in the Shutterfly catalog that there was a proliferation of cards you could buy with your photo on it. Underneath it just said "Blessed". I wondered for Christians if the card should also say "Blessing". Just this morning, Amy Plante, our parish administrator, shared with me a quote she had just read in the famous Mitford Series books by Jan Karon about a fictional Episcopal priest named Father Tim. In At Home in Mitford, Father Tim prays "Lord, make me a blessing to someone today." Amy loved it so much she wrote the quote down to have close at hand (as an aside, Amy is such a blessing here at St. Michael's - what would we do without her?).

God put us on this earth to be both blessed and to be blessings. Christmas is a time when we are invited to think about the ways we are being called to be a blessing to others - by our patience, our kindness, our presence, our listening, a heart-felt thank you, a financial contribution to a cause close to your heart, or a thoughtful gift to someone who is often forgotten?

"Lord, make me a blessing to someone today" reminded me of a major turning point in my life - perhaps one that you have had too? That experience that made you want to be a better person - a more thoughtful person; when you wanted to be a blessing more than you wanted to be blessed. It happened to me right after my Uncle Jim passed away. My mother and I went to his apartment in Shenandoah, Iowa. He was a man of deep faith, and he had more friends that you can ever imagine. At his funeral, the church was packed. He knew everyone in town. As we cleared out his apartment, there was, pinned to a bulletin board, a poem called "Friends". The poem reminded me that knowing my uncle made

### **Sunday, December 10**

Eucharist at 8 AM

Lessons & Carols at 10 AM

### **Wednesday, December 13**

Blue Christmas at 7 PM

### **Sunday, December 17**

Eucharist at 8 AM

Christmas Pageant at 10 AM

### **Christmas Eve, December 24**

(No 8 or 10 AM Service)

5 PM Festival Eucharist with  
Blessing of the Crèche and  
children's story

9 PM Festival Eucharist with  
special music

### **Sunday, December 31**

Eucharist & Carol Hymn Sing  
at 10 AM (no Eucharist at 8)

### **Sunday, January 7**

Eucharist at 8 & 10 AM



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me feel blessed, but knowing my uncle also made me want to carry on his legacy by being a blessing.

So I share with you the poem "Friends" for the Advent and Christmas Season.

*I'd like to be the sort of a friend that  
you've all been to me.  
I'd like to be the help that you've been  
always glad to be,  
I'd like to mean as much to you each minute  
of the day.  
As you have meant, good friends of mine,  
to me along the way.  
And that's why I am wishing now that I could but re-  
pay  
A portion of the gladness that you've  
strewn along my way.  
And could I have one wish this year,  
this only would it be:  
I'd like to be the sort of friend  
that you have been to me.*

Edgar A. Guest 1881 -1959

With all warm wishes for Advent and Christmas,  
Yours in Christ,

*Sarah Robbins-Cole*

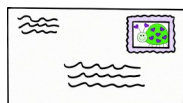
### BOOK SALE DECEMBER 10

Be sure to browse the book sale in Eva's Room, Sunday, December 10, and stock up on books to read this winter. Proceeds from the sale go to the Rector's Discretionary Fund, which is used to help those in need in our community and in the greater Holliston community. For more information, please speak to Anke Geurtsen at 508-429-1132.

### PLEASE SEND CARDS—NEW ADDRESS

Parishioner Frits Geurtsen has moved. He is currently residing at The Residence at Valley Farm and would love to receive cards and notes from the parish. Please keep him in your prayers and thoughts. His address is:

Frits Geurtsen  
The Residence at Valley Farm  
639 Pond Street, Room #206  
Ashland, MA 01721



### COMPANIONS IN CHRIST FOR ADVENT

Companions in Christ will meet during Advent for our spiritual and spirited evenings on Mondays, December 4, 11, and 18. Gathering time will be from 7:30 to 8 PM with the opening prayer at 8 PM, finishing around 9 PM. (*December 18 is the famous Yankee swap – not to be missed!*) We will be using seasonal poetry this Advent. We hope that you will join us for these special times together as we study and share and pray. For more information, please contact Nan Malone ([maxximilla@verizon.net](mailto:maxximilla@verizon.net)) or Deb Ervin ([djmac@verizon.net](mailto:djemac@verizon.net)).

### CHURCH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

On Sunday December 17, all children are invited to take part in the annual Advent Pageant. There will be no atrium lessons on that day. There are no church services or lessons on Sunday morning, December 24. Also, there will be no atrium lessons on Sunday, December 31. At that time, children are invited to sit with their families in church. Church School atrium lessons will resume on Sunday, January 7. Please note: It's not too late to join church school classes. Children can join at anytime during the year. Age 3-preschool level 1, grades 1-3 level 2, and grades 4-6 level 3. All classrooms are upstairs and start time is 9:45 AM. Volunteers are always needed to help teach. Please contact Kristen Walters at [keawalters@comcast.net](mailto:keawalters@comcast.net) with any questions.



### CHILD CARE SCHEDULE

The Sacred Playroom will be staffed on Sunday, December 17, but will not be staffed on Christmas Eve, December 24, as past experience has shown that there is no demand for child care at that time.

### CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND MUSIC DONATIONS

If you would like to make a contribution towards the cost of Christmas poinsettias or special music, please fill out the form on the back page and mail it to the church or place it with your donation in the offering plate on Sunday. Poinsettias may be collected after the Ten O'Clock Service on Sunday, December 31.



# **WISHING YOU A BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR.**

The Rector, The Wardens and Vestry of St. Michael's



## **Christmas at St. Michael's Church**

**Second Sunday of Advent, December 10**

8 AM Eucharist

10 AM Lessons and Carols

Readings and music for Advent and Christmas

**Wednesday, December 13**

7 PM Blue Christmas Service

A special service for those experiencing loss  
or sadness in this season of Christmas

**Third Sunday of Advent, December 17**

8 AM Eucharist

10 AM Christmas Pageant with Eucharist

**Christmas Eve, December 24**

*(There will be no 8 and 10 AM Sunday services)*

5 PM Festival Christmas Eucharist

with Blessing of the Crèche and children's story

9 PM Festival Christmas Eucharist with choir

**The First Sunday after Christmas, December 31**

10 AM Eucharist and Carol Hymn Sing (one service only)

**The Epiphany, January 7**

8 AM Eucharist

10 AM All Ages Eucharist

## WOMEN'S GROUP

We will have a mother/daughter event on December 10th. Join us for a Musical performance about women's rights. Let's meet at St. Michael's at 3:15 PM to car pool over to Natick. Even if you don't have a daughter or she can't attend, we hope you can come! Please RSVP to

[Cathy@hahpah.com](mailto:Cathy@hahpah.com) or [Paula-colburn131@gmail.com](mailto:Paula-colburn131@gmail.com) so we can get a headcount.

Sunday, December 10, 2017  
4:00 PM Q&A, reception  
Common Street Spiritual Center  
13 Common Street, Natick, MA 01760  
Tickets: \$10.

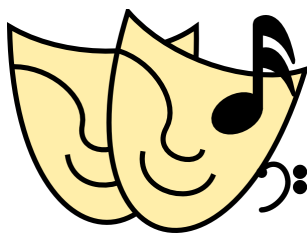
*We Did It For You! Women's Journey Through History is the story of how women got their rights in America, told by the women who were there. Covering over 400 years, it shares anecdotes from the lives of 20 characters and identifies the problems women have been up against on their road towards equality. The musical has been performed in California for colleges, high schools, conventions, and organizations since 2010.*



## CAROL HYMN SING DECEMBER 31 AT 10 AM – ONE SERVICE ONLY

Do you have a favorite Advent Hymn or Christmas Carol? Or one with special meaning for you that you'd like to tell us about? On

Sunday, December 31 (at our *one service only* at 10 AM that morning) we will have a Carol Hymn Sing in place of the sermon. Everyone is invited to come and say a word or two about a favorite hymn or carol – we'll sing a verse or two of each. Members of congregation will, also select other carols or hymns during the service.



## STOCKINGS OF HOPE

*Pamela PinterParsons*

This year, St. Michael's will again be filling Stockings of Hope for 63 women who reside in Serenity House & Shadows. Each year, I speak with the House Managers to assess the current need and I am struck by how basic their needs are. The list includes 63 Stockings of Hope, 33 Robes for Shadow residents, and new this year, Bags of Hope. \*\*

There are many ways you can get involved, and all are needed!

You can adopt a whole stocking or individual items; the list is available in Eva's Room or by email. Buy a robe, donate Kohl's cash, gift cards, or Bob's Store cash (you get the idea). If you prefer to make a cash or check donations, they are happily accepted as they help us fill in needs and get "deals." Please make sure Stockings of Hope is in the memo section.

**\*\*BAGS OF HOPE ~** We will also be doing house donations of hair products, feminine hygiene items, and shampoo & conditioner. Underwear sizes from 5 -24 are also needed. I will never forget the house manager at Shadows breaking down into tears when we brought in the huge bag of underwear that we had collected. It truly means a lot.

For more information, please send an email to Pamela PinterParsons at [newpamela@comcast.net](mailto:newpamela@comcast.net) or give me a call at 508-277-9230.

Thank you for making the Holidays special for so many!

## Stockings of Hope!

Socks  
Hat & Scarf sets  
Earrings  
Lip gloss  
Lotion (4 ounces)  
Nail polish  
Chap Stick  
Venus (or similar) Razors  
Small boxes of Chocolates





## A NEW FAMILY TRADITION - BROCKTON AREA MULTI-SERVICE SUNDAY SERVICE

*Clarissa Flannery*

"You play XBOX with your toes!" Ailin said in wonder.  
"Yeah, and guitar."  
"Cool."

Ailin watched every move Brian made in his electric wheelchair. It was as if his eyes couldn't take enough in. Up and down Ailin's eyes scanned, watching Brian show off his speed to spin and turn, then stop, and use his feet and toes to move something on the coffee table. With a little nudging, Ailin shared his age and the fact that he was in fifth grade, but he never took his eyes off of Brian. Not staring, rather a look of awe. That was the Flannerys' first introduction to BAMSI and the people who lived on Dunster Road.

BAMSI is an acronym for Brocton Area Multi-Service, Inc. This agency offers a wide array of services for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities across Eastern Massachusetts, with one of the residential homes located in Holliston. From the website, "BAMSI's residential network includes community centered living for adults with a developmental or intellectual disabilities. Each person has his or her own room which they can decorate in their own style and favorite colors. Common spaces including the bathrooms, kitchen, and living rooms are shared with housemates."

Several months ago, Rev. Sarah received a phone call saying that residents at BAMSI would like to have a church service come to them. After meeting with staff and residents, Sarah determined that the church would commit to the First Sunday of each month being "BAMSI Sunday." Often Nan Malone, Dana and Karen Frye, and the "Four Flannerys" come together with the residents to share a service together with Rev. Sarah. Prayers and the Gospel are read with time to openly reflect on its meaning. We share events that happened at the church services earlier in the morning, just like old friends chatting about their day.

Why do we go to this residence each month? Well, do you know the song "A Place in the Choir" by Bill Staines? This song plays in my head at least once a day, often much more, and I have always wondered, "Where is the place?" If all God's children have "a place in the choir," where is the place?... in Church...in Heaven...where?

I am often amazed by the variety of causes our church reaches out to - a food pantry, Shadows, mission trips, the list seems endless. My motivation for many things comes from the desire to have my children, and myself, look in the eyes of "God's choir members" first hand. Look into their eyes wherever that may be, and on the first Sunday of each month they happen to be at BAMSI. My children see people sitting in wheelchairs, with ventilators, feeding tubes and other medical necessities. They share the peace, touching the residents' hands and looking in their eyes. Each visit leads us to truly look and see with our hearts who are God's children. We see Megan raise her voice louder than the rest of us during the Lord's Prayer, and Joe's arms slowly sweeping wide and then in to bless himself at the end of the service.

At our last visit, we discussed how there may be other adults from another residence that may join us in the future. We talked about the December 24 service and whether we could sing some carols. There is plenty of space for more to join in this special service each month. Each resident enjoys having someone assist with holding the service program for them to follow along with the service. They love the conversations that we share with them. Ann enjoys being asked about the puzzle she is working on, and Megan delights in being ask about her nail polish color. It really is a special place, and if you listen really carefully, you can hear it....can't you? "All God's creatures got a place in the choir. Some sing low and some sing higher, Some sing out loud on a telephone wire. Some just clap their hands, or paws, or anything they've got now...."

### WORDS TO LIVE BY

Spread love everywhere you go: first of all in your own house. Give love to your children, to your wife or husband, to a next door neighbor....Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting. -- Mother Teresa



## ANNUAL HEIFER ADVENT PROJECT MOVING TO LENT



This year, we are moving our Heifer Calendar project to Lent!

Our Heifer Lenten Calendar project will feature a 40 day calendar which will invite participants to reflect upon their blessings and make small sacrifices to help people who are in need to help themselves. We will bring our donations to the church after April 1st and vote on where we would like to send them. We are hoping this decision will give parishioners more time and energy (during our Advent season) to focus on our other traditional Christmas outreach programs, like Stockings of Hope and Loaves and Fishes.

We also hope this will give parishioners a special project during Lent. We will display our bags on a Lenten tree in Eva's room and have calendars available for all. This project is for everyone - children and adults - parishioners and non-parishioners - and we are very excited to be able to offer this new experience to everyone during Lent! For more information please contact Michelle Tate at [michellefrancistate@yahoo.com](mailto:michellefrancistate@yahoo.com).

## ST. MICHAEL'S PRAYER WALL

You may have noticed in the back of the church there are the words "the prayer wall" taped to the wall. This is our new space to share your prayers. We have been noticing that more and more churches are creating this space for people to share their prayers and gratitude. A church in Haverhill turned their brick exterior wall into a pray wall with a simple bucket of chalk. Rev. Collins wrote "prayer seems to be universal whether religious or not, and many believe in prayer or at least sending out positive thoughts on behalf of themselves or others." Rev. Collins also said, "We must never underestimate the power of prayer. More importantly we must never underestimate what can happen when space is made for people to become awake and aware of the universal presence of God."

We are going to try this with post it notes, but will be doing something more permanent if the congregation embraces it.

You will notice the Youth Group have just instituted their own prayer wall with chalk paint. Stop by and take a look inside the Hagen Atrium.

We invite you to take a post it note and pen from the back of the church and jot down your prayers next time you are at church. Let St. Michael's share in your prayers!

## MISSION TRIP BOTTLE/CAN REDEMPTION

The Mission Trip Youth are continuing to redeem bottles and cans. If you have some, please put them in the bin out in the front of the church. The youth group will take turns redeeming them each month, and the money will go towards the ASP trip this year to West Virginia. Thank you in advance for your support!



## CHRISTMAS COOKIE MISSION TRIP FUNDRAISER

The Youth Group is holding a Christmas Cookie fundraiser in December for their next mission trip. They will take orders for a variety of Christmas Cookies (\$10 per dozen) that will be wrapped and ready for you to pick up on

Sunday, December 17, just in time for Christmas! Please fill out your order form and place in our Christmas Cookie Box in the Narthex. All orders must be received by December 10. Order forms for each of these will be in the Narthex or contact Cathy Harper [cathy@hahpah.com](mailto:cathy@hahpah.com) for more details or to place an order.

## HOLIDAY GIFT WRAPPING FUNDRAISER

The Youth Group is holding a Gift Wrapping Fundraiser on Saturday, December 16 to raise funds for their mission trip to West Virginia in July. Please bring your gifts to the church between 10 AM and 1 PM and adults will beautifully wrap them while you wait, or you can drop them off and come back later. Cost is only \$3 per box, \$5 for large or oversized boxes. Help us raise money for our trip while we help you cross wrapping off your busy holiday to-do list!

## St. Michael's Kids Page

# Christmas Anagram

### Word List:

angels, animals, frankincense, Jesus,  
manger, nativity, newborn, shepherds,  
shining star, stable



bennorw \_\_\_\_\_

ghiinns arst \_\_\_\_\_

deehprss \_\_\_\_\_

aceefiknnrs \_\_\_\_\_

aiintvy \_\_\_\_\_

aeglrs \_\_\_\_\_

abelst \_\_\_\_\_

aegmnr \_\_\_\_\_

aailmns \_\_\_\_\_

ejssu \_\_\_\_\_

A decorative border of red poinsettias with green leaves frames the top, sides, and bottom of the page.

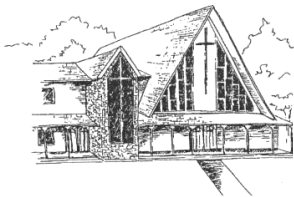
## Christmas Flowers and Music

If you would like to make a donation to the cost of Christmas flowers and special Christmas Eve music in “memory of” or “in thanksgiving for” a loved one or loved ones, please fill out the form below and return it to Amy Plante in the parish office or place it in the offering plate. All memorials and thanksgivings received by December 19 will be listed in the Christmas bulletins.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In Thanksgiving for \_\_\_\_\_



**St. Michael's Episcopal Church**  
**1162 Highland St.**  
**Holliston, MA 01746**