



St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Faith, Community and Hope ~ 50 Years and Growing

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2018

from the Rector

Dear Friends,

The 13th century Persian mystic poet Rumi wrote:

Today, like every other day, we wake up empty
and frightened. Don't open the door to the study
and begin reading. Take down a musical instrument.
Let the beauty we love be what we do.
There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.

One of the first things I do in the morning is have a cup of tea. I have been doing this since I was a little girl when my father would prepare a cup of tea for me first thing in the morning (although I now drink it with far less sugar). The routine in our house at 6:20 am is that Adrian, my husband, who is the first one to go down to the kitchen, makes tea for himself, for me and for our daughter, Elizabeth. After I have that cup of tea, because I usually do not have to rush to get ready and out the door, I have to choose: will I read or watch the morning news, or will I read a few pages in my book, or will I meditate and pray? Undoubtedly, when I choose the latter of the three, my life is more rooted in prayer all day, and I feel more grounded and hopeful.

This poem by Rumi (above) is a reminder of the proper order of things. When we wake, we would do well to practice things of beauty and things that we love. Practicing those things akin to kneeling and kissing the ground (i.e. prayer).

Advent, like Lent, is a season of intentionality. It is a season to step up our prayer practices and to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Christ child. You will see in this newsletter, and in the "Life at..." bulletin that there are many ways "to kneel and kiss the ground" during our Advent season here at St. Michael's. First, to attend Companions in Christ, on Monday evenings for a time of fellowship, prayer and reflection. Secondly, to join us in Sunday Forum to work through the Advent devotional *Living Well Through Advent: Practicing Generosity with All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind*. Lastly, these booklets are free for you, to use, on your own, during Advent.

The themes of the devotional include being generous to ourselves, being generous to the world, being generous to others and, finally, being generous toward God.

I send you my very best wishes for a meaningful, expectant Advent, and, when it comes, a very Happy and Merry Christmas.

Yours in Christ,

Sarah Robbins-Cole

Sunday, December 9

Eucharist at 8 & 10 AM

Sunday, December 16

Eucharist at 8 AM
Lessons & Carols at 10 AM

Sunday, December 23

Eucharist at 8 AM
Christmas Pageant at 10 AM

Christmas Eve, December 24

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

Sunday, December 30

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

Sunday, January 6

Eucharist at 8 & 10 AM



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UPDATE FROM NOVEMBER VESTRY MEETING

At this month's meeting, the Vestry inspected areas of the building for needs and repairs; reported on fellowship current activities; discussed Companions in Christ for Advent as well as the need for more church school teachers; and, due to many commitments, the resignation of our Youth Minister, Jarvis Wyche. A decision was made for the Prayer Wall to have a new bulletin board with cards for prayer intentions. Stewardship was also discussed with opportunities for parishioners to continue to send Estimated Giving forms as they are able.



SEE THE NUTCRACKER— BUY TICKETS NOW!

Our own Trevor PinterParsons is performing as The Nutcracker on December 15 and 16 at 2 PM at the Norwood Theater. Come show your support.

Tickets can be bought directly at <https://norwoodstage.com/the-nutcracker>. Don't wait—this will be a sell out!

CHARITY CHRISTMAS CARDS

If you receive an excess of free holiday cards from charities, we invite you to donate them to St. Michael's. We will take your cards and bundle them with stamps and pens and deliver them to Serenity House and Shadows so that the women can send cards to their friends and families. We will be collecting your cards up until December 16th.

COMPANIONS IN CHRIST FOR ADVENT

Companions in Christ are meeting during Advent for our spiritual and spirited evenings on Mondays, December 3, 10, and 17. Gathering time is from 7:30 to 8 PM with the opening prayer at 8 PM, finishing around 9 PM. (*December 17 is the famous Yankee swap – not to be missed!*) We hope 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) or Deb Ervin ([djmac@verizon.net](mailto:djemac@verizon.net)).

POT LUCK COFFEE HOUR DECEMBER 30

Please consider providing leftover holiday treats for our "pot luck" coffee hour on December 30.

NOT RECEIVING WEEKLY EMAIL UPDATE?

It has come to our attention that there was a computer glitch with our weekly email update sent out via Constant Contact. A few parishioners have been inadvertently dropped from the contact list, which until now was unknown to the Parish Office. If you are not receiving our weekly email update and would like to have your email re-added to the contact list, please let Amy Plante know (stmichholl@aol.com or 508-429-4248). We apologize for any inconvenience.

CHURCH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

On Sunday December 23, all children are invited to take part in the annual Advent Pageant. There will be no atrium lessons on that day. Also, there will be no atrium lessons on Sunday, December 30. At that time, children are invited to sit with their families in church. Church School atrium lessons will resume on Sunday, January 6. Please note: It's not too late to join church school classes. Children can join at anytime during the year. Age 3- pre-school 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 with any questions.



CHILD CARE SCHEDULE

The Sacred Playroom will be staffed on Sunday, December 23, but will not be staffed on Christmas Eve, December 24. 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 30.



WISHING YOU A BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR.

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



Christmas at St. Michael's Church

Third Sunday of Advent, December 16

8 AM Eucharist

10 AM Lessons and Carols

Readings and music for Advent and Christmas

Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 23

8 AM Eucharist

10 AM Christmas Pageant with Eucharist

Christmas Eve, December 24

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 30

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

The Epiphany, January 6

8 & 10 AM Eucharist

**Q & A WITH THE WARDENS —
NOVEMBER 18, 2018 at
8 & 10 AM SERVICES**

Bill Shaw and Cathy Harper



The purpose of our talk today is to give you an update on the church business of the Vestry. If any of you are new to St. Michael's, the Vestry is a group of about a dozen parish members (including the rector) who are basically in charge of managing the operational side of St. Michael's. We do tend to focus on financial matters, building and grounds, and the like. We also try to focus on other aspects of Parish life and activities.

The Vestry meets monthly where we are chaired by our Rector, Sarah Robbins-Cole. The minutes of our meetings (as well as the By-Laws of the Parish that guide us) are posted on the bulletin board in Eva's room. Current members of the Vestry are:

Ted Comstock (Treasurer)
Linda Ouellette (Clerk)
Nan Malone
Bob Colburn
Sharon James
Ken Rice
Deb Ervin
Kristen Walters

"Thank You!" to our Vestry members (all have signed up for a three-year term). We do our best to have the Vestry be representative of the Parish, and we also try to rotate Parish members through the Vestry so that we can keep fresh ideas and perspectives coming! (if any of you are interested in joining the Vestry in the future, Cathy and I would be very happy to talk with you!).

Building and Grounds

Areas that will be a priority for the Vestry, over the next year or so, are repairs, renovations, and upgrades to our church building. I know this topic can sometimes feel discouraging as our building continues to age with regular use and with the effects of weather, but these kinds of repairs and replacements are just routine issues that every parish contends with. We'll continue to spend effort and expense to keep up with the needs of our church building. Here are a few of the current and upcoming activities related to building and grounds:

Part-time maintenance worker: This year, the Vestry elected to find and hire a part-time maintenance person, (someone with professional mechanical and carpentry experience) to help us manage the recurring maintenance and repair needs of the property. This is the result of

comments from many of you about the state of the church building. The Vestry has taken this issue very seriously. In our Vestry meeting discussions, we have realized that the frequency of building malfunctions is more than we can realistically ask volunteers within the Parish to handle. After discussing this topic in several Vestry meetings, we formulated a job description and found a qualified local individual.

We believe that Bob Hart, who is currently providing similar services for other churches, is a good match for the type of help that we need. He has agreed to begin in January 2019 as an independent contractor, providing about 10 hours per month. He will be under the guidance and supervision of the Rector and the Wardens. Specifically, he will be helping us in four areas: (1) responding to urgent problems with the building that can arise (heat not working, broken door knobs, broken mailbox); (2) coordinating with contractors to perform larger projects; (3) scheduling routine maintenance (changing filters in the heating system, regular inspections from the Fire Department for our alarm systems, pumping the septic system, etc.) and (4) doing minor repairs around the church as time allows. We have a list of projects already in mind, but we will try to prioritize projects in order of importance so that we can gradually take care of projects over time and start with the things that are most critical (e.g., installing fire and police lock boxes on the front of the building). This will, hopefully, allow us to make slow, steady progress without incurring excessive costs to the Parish budget. We have added \$6,000 to the annual budget for 2019 to cover this expense. As this is a change in our usual practice (and it represents a new expense), we will be keeping track of whether this is working for us. We'll be reporting back to the Parish regularly in future updates.

Major building projects ahead: There are three major building projects in our future (next 5-7 years). Funding of these projects will vary, but basically come from our own donations and reserves, from Together Now funds, and from other resources within the Diocese to help us finance larger building projects. Our last major effort was to repave the parking area, and this seems to be holding up very well. A few years ago, we had some substantial work done inside the building due to a winter of major ice dams. Most of that work was covered by insurance coverage.

Ekwall Hall flooring. The first of our new projects will be reflooring the Ekwall Hall area (including removal of existing tiles with small traces of asbestos). We expect to be completing this work over next summer when the Montessori preschool is out of session. The Vestry will be working with Bob Hart, with our preschool
(cont'd on next page)

lessees, and with the Building and Grounds Committee to choose the best products and the best contractors for work to be done over the winter and spring so that we will be ready to go in the summer. This will probably involve two separate contractors – one that is certified for the removal of asbestos materials and another that will install the new tile floor.

Replacement of HVAC units. We will also be getting quotes to replace all of our five HVAC units within the next year or two. If you come in through the side door, you can probably hear the straining and whining of our older HVAC units. These units require substantial costs to maintain from year to year, and they are becoming less reliable. While they seem to be hanging in there for the moment, this is a renovation cost that we can't put off for much longer.

Re-roofing of the building. Although we've had information from contractors and inspectors that our current roof will make it for at least another few years, we know that an entire re-roofing of the building is on the horizon for some time in the next 10 years. This information provides us an opportunity to alter roofing materials in some of the trouble spots to reduce the possibility of ice damming in some of the valleys where rooflines meet between the old and the newer parts of the church building.

Tidying up

In keeping with the building and grounds theme, at our last vestry meeting we split into small groups and focused on looking at different areas of the church. We took a look at how the rooms / hallways appear, and how things in the room that are not used or not working can be stored in a tidy manner. For example, in the meeting room we have an old box tv on an AV cart that hasn't been used in years, yet it is taking up space and lots of dust! It is probably time to get rid of it. We want each room to be inviting and clean. We have assembled our list with the hopes of tackling some of these items over the next year.

On December 1st from 9-11 AM, we will be cleaning the church – sprucing it up for Christmas. We will play Christmas music to keep you joyful and have treats to keep you nourished while you work. Please let Bill or me know if you can make it so we can create an action plan for the morning based on the number of volunteers. We will make cleaning fun!

Prayer Wall

From the amount of the yellow stickies on the back prayer wall, it seems to be something that is needed and wanted. The stickies were an experiment to see if people would put their prayer intentions on the board. Soon a bulletin board will be installed on the back wall as our new prayer

wall. We will have small index cards to write your prayer requests on, complete with push pins for attachment. Once a quarter, they will be taken down and saved in a basket for you to put up again or to discard. Each week 3-4 names that are on the prayer wall will be added to our Prayers of the People and read aloud.

Volunteering

We are currently working on producing a list of all of our volunteer activities – we have a lot. We also have a main contact person for these activities. For example, the Panera Bread activity involves picking up the treats from Panera and delivering them to Serenity House, a shelter in Framingham. Let's say you are on the list to pick up at Panera and drop off at Serenity House, and you have never done it before. It would be helpful to know the details as to where to go at Panera, who to speak with, where to go at Serenity House, which door to go to and who to speak with. If you need help with any of these questions, there will be a contact at St. Michael's. This will be a bit of a process to put together, but it is necessary to do and needs to be constantly updated.

Building & Grounds Manual

Another manual that we are working on is a Building & Grounds Manual. Parishioner Bob Malone suggested this idea, and we all agree it is a necessity. This manual will list all of our contacts (names, addresses, phone numbers) that we do business with as well as and our account number. For example, the company to call for electrical issues or septic issues will be listed. This manual will be especially helpful for our new maintenance worker, Bob Hart. It will need to be updated constantly.

Jarvis

Sadly at the end of our program year, Jarvis, our youth minister, will be leaving us. He has done a fantastic job with our youth and will be sorely missed. The reason for his departure is his workload. He is a counselor at Thayer Academy in Braintree, he is going to grad school, he lives on the south shore and he is responsible for three of our youth programs (Rite 13, J2A and YAC). That is a lot! We are happy he stayed this long and very grateful that he is staying with us until early June. We will begin the search process for a new youth minister in January.

Indaba

Indaba is a Zulu word which means gathering for a purposeful discussion. It is a mutual invitation in which everybody may speak and listen to one another respectfully. The annual Diocesan Convention in 2017 adopted a mission strategy that includes opportunities for teams from congregations to visit other congregations sharing in worship and learning about one another.

(cont'd on next page)

WARDENS TALK (*cont'd from page 5*)

What does this mean for us? St. Michael's, if interested, may participate by constructing a team of four people that will team up with two other congregations from other deaneries over three designated weekends throughout 2019.

The structure is a kick off orientation in January for three weekends that consist of a Saturday morning through Sunday afternoon. Overnight accommodations would be in team members' homes. There would be discussions on internal life of the host congregation, the community at large. There would be worship with the host congregation, ending with lunch and closing conversations. One of the three weekends would be hosted by St. Michael's.

We already have two people for this (Sarah and Linda Ouellette) and are looking for two more to round out our team. We need to register by November 30th. If anyone is interested please see Linda O or Sarah for more information.

Stewardship. After all of this talk about building renovations, it seems appropriate to say a few words about Stewardship. When last I checked with Ted, I believe we're at about 75% of estimated giving for this year, but we're about 85% through the calendar year (which is also our fiscal year). We are a little behind. This would be a good time to catch up with your estimated giving for 2018. At year-end, we hope to avoid drawing on reserves for our routine expenses. Also, we're currently winding down our Stewardship Campaign for 2019, we are currently at about 63% of our goal, so please send in your estimated giving card if you are able to support the Parish in the upcoming year. No amount is too small; whether your donation is in the 10s, 100s, or 1000s, it really does help the Vestry to plan for the upcoming year, and we greatly appreciate that.

Before we open up for any questions from the Parish, we just want to say that Cathy and I, as well as the rest of the Vestry members welcome your comments and questions at any time. Please feel free to speak with any of the Vestry members or send an email through the church website if you have any questions or comments for us. This year, we started a new custom of printing a few highlights from our Vestry meetings in your bulletin insert, so, hopefully, this will help you to stay abreast of what's going on at Vestry meetings.

Questions or comments from the Congregation?

STOCKINGS OF HOPE

Pamela PinterParsons

Once again, we are inviting you to be part of a program that touches the lives of so many. We will be filling Stockings of Hope for the residents of Shadows and Serenity House. Each woman receives a special stocking filled with items they need but more importantly, items they want ~ after all isn't that what Christmas is all about?

How you can get involved:

Purchase items for a whole stocking or sponsor a stocking (\$75).

Buy select items. For example, five pairs of socks, donated gift cards, Kohl's cash or simply cash to help us buy what is needed. Please make sure any checks have Stockings of Hope in the memo section.

We appreciate all offers to help, and if you don't like shopping, no worries ~ really. I have shopping elves ready to go and fill in what is needed. Thank you Mary Swartout, Gloria Clinton, Joanne Apesos and Kristen Walters for assisting this year as many hands make light work.

Lists will be available in Eva's room or by contacting Pamela at pamela@soulspiritstudio.net.

Whole Stockings

- *Socks
- Hat & Scarf set
- *Gloves
- *Earrings
- Lip gloss
- Mascara
- Pocket size Tissues
- *4 oz Hand Lotion
- Nail polish
- *Chap Stick
- Lindt Chocolates
- Card from St Michael's

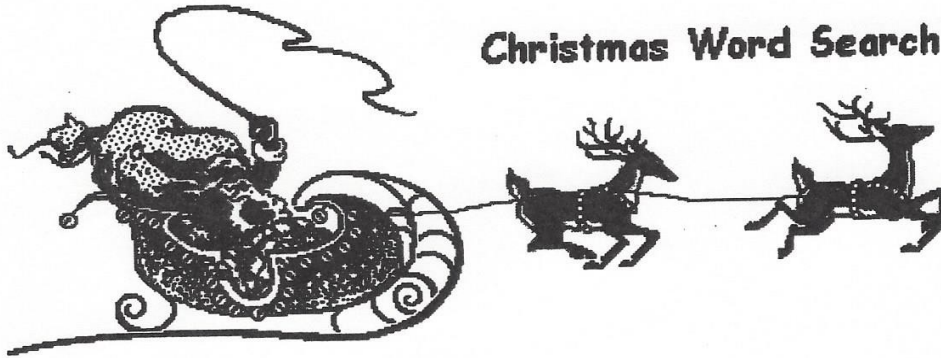


Drop off boxes in Eva's Room and at Soul Spirit Studio, 76 Railroad Street, Holliston. Soul Spirit Studio (*) will happily give you 20% any items purchased for Stockings for Hope.

Deadline for unwrapped items is December 16th so that we can get them to the shelters by Christmas! Thank you for helping make the Holidays a bit brighter for those in need.

St. Michael's Kids Page

Christmas Word Search



s u b c a n d y
l s b a l l e k
e n e l f t e d
d o l l s e r k
t w l g t r e e
o w n i a x a i
y b m f r m w c
s a n t a f r b

ball
bell
candy
deer

elf
gift
santa
sled

snow
star
toy
tree

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

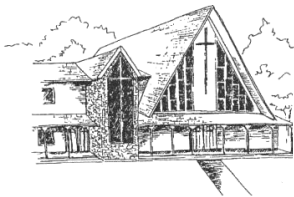
Christmas Flowers and Music

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
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