

SAINT MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE MESSENGER

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Dear Ones,

MAILED OCTOBER 2, 2020

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it." — John 1:5

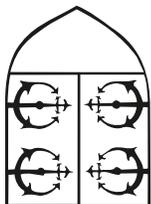
Your 2020 Team L.I.F.E. decided on this verse from the Gospel of John after prayerfully discerning what felt right with an image that Lynda Garner gave us. We were working with a big, bright, beautiful sun and thinking about how we manifest light at St. Michael's. It is a perfect emphasis on the construction of our solar panels that you can read about in this Messenger. It is also a reminder that our community continues to be a bright spot during a time that has been wrought with anxiety and fear. AND it amplifies what we hear in John 1:5, *"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it."*

I recently had a day when the ways, structures, systems, and injustices of our world felt both personal and overwhelming. It was the kind of day that I am sure many of you have experienced throughout this time. I usually try to quickly find a path through this feeling. I think about what I understand to be true, what I understand to be just, what I understand to be love, and I think my way through it. On this day, I couldn't think or intellectualize my way out of it. There was no way of thinking that allowed me to move out of the feeling. It was in the moment when someone I am close to sent me this message, "Love is bigger. You don't have to hold on to it. It remains true whether you can feel it or not. You get to be wherever and however you are. Love remains." It was all that I needed. I don't have to hold it. It remains true. Love remains. *"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it."*

As we enter into this fall and hold the many tensions of this time, your clergy and staff continue to try and create space where you can set it down and be filled by the love and light of this community and of God. Whether it is through Zoom groups or online offerings of devotions and worship, music and children's liturgy, or the opening of quiet times to be in the sanctuary or walk by to receive communion, the mission and ministry of St. Michael's continues.

Love remains.

Christopher+



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Jackie Van Anda, Bookkeeper	Ext. 320	Manuel Luna, Facilities Assistant	

YOUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED . . .

- + for healing and comfort for **Michael Berkson, Liddy Curtin, Ann Hargraves, Mark Jones, Caroline Litzenberger, Mary Myers, Katie Reitel, Jerry Vannice & Pat Wilson.**

These prayers have been published previously in the Weekly Messenger/ebblast, but they are revisited here for those without access to the eblast or who otherwise missed them.

- + in thanksgiving for the birth on June 16 of **John Odell Lidstrom** and for his parents **John & Tia Lidstrom** and brother **Walter**;
- + in thanksgiving for the baptism on May 31 of **Neve Viola Barnett** and for her parents **Aaron Barnett & Andrea Lampman** and brother **Ewan**;
- + in thanksgiving for the baptism on September 26 of **Samuel Garrit John Lighthart-Faletra**, and for his parents, **Michael Falettra & Annie Lighthart**, and brother, **Benji Lighthart-Faletra**;
- + for the repose of the souls of **Delores Angula Rochín**, mother of Martha Pérez, who died on May 5; **Katie Vogt**, who died on May 11; **Minda Larson**, sister of Jane Larson, who died on May 15; **Stephanie Thiele**, sister of Margaret Thiele, who died on May 16; **Kristin Sergienko**, mother and mother-in-law of Peter Sergienko & Ann Hargraves, who died on May 20; **James Brent Loy**, father of Laura Loy, who died on July 24; **Ruthanne Bullock**, mother and mother-in-law of Holly & Steve Denniston, who died on July 27; **John Wetherell**, father and father-in-law of Ann Wetherell and Chad Southwell, who died on August 1; **Sandy Masterson**, sister of St. Michael's bookkeeper Jackie Van Anda, who died on September 9; and **Edgar Short**, father and father-in-law of Marie & Dan Bagwell, who died on September 11.

ASSOCIATE RECTOR

For as much as we've lost and missed over the past six months, there are many ways in which my own work with you at St. Michael's has never felt more rich and engaged than it has during this time. This may be obvious, but what I miss most is being together. I am still not used to the feeling of preaching to empty pews on Sunday morning, and every time the camera shuts off after our service my heart still sinks a little bit. It just doesn't feel right doing all the things we normally do to celebrate our communion together in God but without the people we know belong there together joining in with us.

I know it feels strange engaging this way from home, too. That's why I'm especially heartened by the people who contin-



ue to tune in anyway. We need your feedback to keep going, because we don't get it in person like we normally would on a Sunday morning. Knowing that you keep showing up, even when it's hard, even when it's not how we're used to finding God together, gives me the strength and inspiration to keep showing up, too. So, first and foremost, thank you for following with us into this unfamiliar territory, and thank you always for your words of encouragement; they mean the world to us. Those of you who have stayed positive with us even when these new ways are frustrating are really getting us through.

Even with what we're missing, however, there are parts of this work that have gained so much. I have always wanted my own ministry to involve more robust small-group work around study and care and prayer. Over the seven years I've been at St. Michael's, I've tried so many different ways of making space for small-group engagement and prayer, and I have never had so many people participate in this as I have had over the past six months. This happens primarily through the small groups we host on Zoom and through the weekday morning prayer services we hold on Facebook.

On Zoom, I gather with groups of four to seven members once a week for spans of five to six weeks at a time. I've come to think of these as "group pastoral care" in one way because, as we show up for one another week after week, we develop relationships of trust and care with each other. We listen to each other talk about the fears and hopes we have about the news. We pray for the things that are happening in our lives with one another. We also study the Gospel together and ask questions that help deepen the way we hear the Good News on Sunday morning. Some of you have said that the preaching has been better than usual lately, and I think these study groups are the number one reason why, because we're really able to think about the Gospel out loud together. I think these groups are going to be more important than ever this fall.

I'm also launching a new forum series on Tuesday nights this fall called *Teach Us to Pray*. When the disciples asked Jesus how they should pray, he gave them the Lord's Prayer. This class will look at how the themes of this prayer can help us today as our own time with God shifts and adapts to these times. We'll cover themes like: How do we name or call on God? How do we discern what God wants in our world? How do we practice reconciliation with those with whom we disagree or have hurt or been hurt by? The class runs from 6:30 to 8:00 pm on Tuesday nights starting October 6 and includes options for group discussion or private reflection, depending on how introverted or extroverted you may be feeling on any given day!

As for the weekday morning prayer times on Facebook, my own on Tuesdays and Thursdays have been focusing on what I call *anchor verses* in these times, or those parts of scripture where we find ourselves most deeply centered in God's Word. In all these things, we're finding new ways to connect with each other and deepen our faith. I hope you'll join us!

— The Rev. James Joiner



TREASURER'S REPORT

Hello Friends,

As summer comes to a close, I'd like to give an update on the finances of St. Michael's. I'm happy to report that our 2020 fiscal year has gone pretty well. Thank you for continuing to stay current on

your pledges despite the overwhelming uncertainty that this year has brought.

We are through the typically slower summer months. Overall, pledge and open offerings are only \$152 under budget for the year through August. That's .04%, so we're on pace to be right on budget at the end of the year. Operating expenses are \$5,000 under budget through August. (Under budget = good!)

Stay tuned for 2020 giving statements. Those updates are being sent out presently. Also, Team L.I.F.E. (stewardship) is starting to kick things into gear as we look to collect 2021 pledges at the end of October.



In summary, the 2020 operating budget looks good. We'll start planning for the 2021 fiscal year in the coming months. Your continued generosity is so greatly appreciated!

If you have specific questions about the finances, please send me an email at swart.jeffrey@gmail.com. Since accessing the financial statements that hang outside the Nativity Hall is not an option this year, I'd be happy to answer your questions via email.

With Gratitude,

— Jeff Swart, Vestry Treasurer

Treasurer's Report As of August 31, 2020

Income	Year to Date Balance	Budget Year to Date	Annual Budget
Pledge Offerings	\$380,729.00	\$390,000.00	\$585,000.00
Open Offerings	\$35,783.00	\$26,664.00	\$40,000.00
Diocesan Grant*	\$0.00	\$22,000.00	\$33,000.00
PPP/Cares Act**	\$89,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Income	\$505,712.00	\$438,664.00	\$658,000.00
Expenses			
Personnel Expenses	\$298,710.00	\$289,960.00	\$434,906.00
Property and Utility Expenses	\$34,996.00	\$43,770.00	\$63,875.00
Parish Administration	\$14,489.00	\$20,472.00	\$30,700.00
Diocese of Oregon Program (DPA)	\$70,280.00	\$70,280.00	\$105,417.00
Programs and Outreach	\$15,812.00	\$15,408.00	\$23,100.00
Total Expenses	\$434,287.00	\$439,890.00	\$657,998.00
Net Income less Expenses	\$71,425.00		

* Diocesan Grant will not be received in 2020 due to COVID-19

** \$89,200 PPP/Cares Act Funds received in May
Budget YTD figure is affected by rounding.

SMALL GROUPS THIS FALL

In October, we'll begin another round of our small groups on Zoom which will take us right up to Thanksgiving and the end of the church year. Belonging to one of these groups involves meeting once a week on Zoom with James and about four to seven other folks from St. Michael's – checking in about how our week is going, studying the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday and finishing our time together in prayer. They have been a very rewarding way to stay in touch and stay connected during these times, especially as we're all processing the many changes we find ourselves in the midst of. I believe they will be especially helpful to us as we pass through the rest of a tumultuous election season. You can sign up at this link: <https://forms.gle/T3QzpEEcsdyPqQVh6>

TEACH US TO PRAY TUESDAY SERIES

This fall, James is also offering a new Forum series on Tuesday nights called *Teach Us to Pray*. This class will use each line of the Lord's prayer as a way of examining how our prayer lives have adapted and changed during the past six months. We'll cover topics like discernment, reconciliation, how we name and speak to God, and how we center our lives in the good we believe God is bringing into the world. Sessions will run on Tuesday nights from 6:30 to 8:00 pm beginning October 6 and will include options for small-group conversation or individual written reflection, depending on how introverted or extroverted you may be feeling on any given day! You can sign up for this class at the same link for the Zoom small groups, here: <https://forms.gle/T3QzpEEcsdyPqQVh6>

— James Joiner, Associate Rector

VESTRY UPDATE

Even though the Vestry has not been able to meet in person, since March we have continued to keep a finger on the pulse of the church virtually. We were delighted to give approval to the loan for the solar panels, and excited to have them finally installed. You can read more about the solar project on Page 7, and about our finances in the column to the left.

The Vestry created a small group to investigate plans for continuing while we cannot meet in person and how we would eventually open back up. That team has followed the diocesan guidelines, investigated what other dioceses are doing, and created a draft of our re-opening plan to submit to the diocese. Some people were responsible for investigating how to make our online services run more smoothly, while others focused on in-person events and how we could go forward in a loving manner. The small team has received input from the Vestry as we go forward, as well as how to safely feed the hungry. (*Burrito Love* – thanks, Hjalmer!)

— Barb Miller

MUSIC PROGRAM

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, October 4 St. Francis Day – St. Michael's Choristers virtual choir video during the 10:00 am service (*Jubilate Deo*)

Saturday, October 31, 7:00 pm Halloween Organ Spooktacular with scary poetry readings, premiering here on our YouTube channel, [STMAA Connection](#).

Sunday, November 1 All Saints Sunday – St. Michael's Singers virtual choir video during the 10:00 am service (*Victoria's O quam gloriosum*)

Sunday, November 29 - Advent I - Saints & Singers virtual choir video during 10:00 am service (*Soon and very soon*)

Choir rehearsals (on Zoom):

Choristers (youth 3rd-12th grades) – Tuesdays at 4:30 pm

St. Michael's Singers – Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

Saints & Singers Choir – occasional Thursdays at 7:00 pm

For more info and Zoom links, please contact Choir Director Brian Fairbanks brianfairbanks34@gmail.com or Music Director/Organist Hannah Brewer hannahcbrewer@gmail.com.



REFLECTION FROM HANNAH BREWER, MUSIC DIRECTOR/ORGANIST



Over the course of the last six months, my roles at St. Michael's have been varied: cinematographer, proofreader, sweeper, art director, recording artist/engineer, editor, cameraman, YouTube professional, collaborator, llama placement coordinator and, of course, organist/pianist.

I have hastily attempted to arrange flowers on Sunday mornings when Chris handed me bouquets from the supermarket in the early days of the pandemic. I am fondly reminded of my youthful acolyte days as I light and diffuse the altar candles each and every Sunday now. I have watched (more than once) as one of these altar candles runs out of oil mid-service and snuffs itself out. I sigh, sorely missing our Altar Guild, and dutifully fill the candles with oil after the service.

In my downtime, I have learned how to bake bread, exercised from YouTube workout videos, finished puzzles, mastered the mute/unmute button on Zoom, moved in with a partner

for the first time, and seen almost all of my performance projects and side music jobs disappear due to the pandemic. I am also one of the lucky ones. Lucky to have the support of a generous, loving community and a job I love. Lucky to have family members less than an hour away with whom I can spend time in their extensive, peaceful gardens. Lucky to have access to an empty vacation home on the Oregon coast to escape to when it all becomes too much. Lucky to have financial stability (for now) in a time of instability for many. Lucky to have the gift of music which I can share in new ways and hopefully bring some sense of calm or spiritual support to listeners in need.

I have also been using these past months of racial upheaval and awareness to research and discover a more diverse array of composers, both composers of color and women composers. Western art music and traditional Anglican choral music consists almost entirely of works by white male composers, at least until recently. An unfortunate reality is a lack of publications from much of anyone outside that category.

We know that there were female and non-white composers through the centuries, but few had the opportunity (the privilege) to be published because of their standing in society. Despite this stumbling block, I have been digging around and consciously learning and programming preludes, interludes, and postludes by female composers such as Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, Clara Schumann, Ethel Smyth, Amy Beach, Florence Price and several contemporary female arrangers. I have uncovered some beautiful gems along the way that deserve a wider audience.

As for other underrepresented composers, our choirs have sung many spirituals and gospel arrangements, but it has also been interesting to research the non-idiomatic choral music of Black composers. These include familiar names like David Hurd, Bobby McFerrin, and William L. Dawson, but also lesser known composers like Rosephanye Powell, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, and William Grant Still. I hope to program more of their choral music in the future and perhaps discover some new favorites.

Meanwhile, although it aches to not be able to gather our choirs together to sing in person or to hear our congregation belt out familiar hymn tunes, we are finding ways for choral music to live on.

We have multiple virtual choir projects in the works, and we continue to hold choir rehearsals through Zoom. Our St. Michael's Singers' section leaders record each week's anthem and lead the 10:00 am Sunday service in four-part harmony. Participating in the services in person week after week has been a disjointed experience since we can't hear the recorded portions that you hear on your devices at home. But awkward silences are a small price to pay for the opportunity to work and lead and give and pray. Using music and the arts as a survival tactic in these rather calamitous times seems fitting, as well as ironic. May we all keep singing, and listening, and letting ourselves be moved.

LIZ KLEIN UPDATE

I miss you all and think of you often. I will remember summer 2020 for the protests and riots, COVID-19 and the devastating Oregon fires. I will also remember this time because I have learned so much about my cocoon of white privilege and my weightless knapsack filled with educational degrees, property rights and credit. I am doing *Sacred Ground*, the Episcopal program on race and religion, with Rev. Sara at St. Luke in Gresham and learning lots. I am still making 130 sandwiches per week for Operation Nightwatch and making masks for Portland Mask Project.



I am excited about this semester at the Academy for Formation and Mission. I am taking Historical Theology, a class on Prayer Book Liturgy and a class on Leadership. I am now working with MACG, the Metropolitan Alliance for the Common Good, and am on their anti-racism team. Life is full, and I am thankful. As Henri Amiel said, “Life is short. We do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us. So be quick to love. Make haste to be kind.”

In my spare time, I’ve been enjoying some really fun hikes near Welches with my husband Arnie and our dog Hope and experimenting with my camera and manual focus.

Wishing you peace and blessings,

— Liz Klein, Postulant for the Diaconate

REFLECTION FROM GLORIA ORELLANA, ASSOCIATE FOR ADMINISTRATION



This year has been for me, as for all of us, turbulent but dull, frightening but reassuring. St. Michael’s and my job here has been, for the most part, a solid and steady presence in an unpredictable year.

My role here has, of course, been altered by the full quarantine and the aftermath. I continued to come into the office regularly even in the beginning; it was good for me to stick with a routine, and I didn’t want St. Michael’s to look abandoned. The MOW/WOWs and our cleaners Olegario and Socorro have helped a lot in that regard! They’ve kept the grounds and building looking like a well-loved, well-cared-for place.

At the beginning, I saw very few if any people during my day, which was a bit of a shock. In normal times, the office during weekdays is a very busy place! But I didn’t mind the quiet as much as I thought I would. I cranked up Spotify and worked

on various projects.

I used the slower pace as an opportunity to catch up on my filing and to reorganize and clean out some areas which most of you probably have never seen. I simply hadn’t had the time previously to do this. The back office and the supply room had become places of extreme clutter and disorganization over many years, making them difficult to work and find anything in. The drawers of my desk, I’m embarrassed to say, hadn’t been cleaned out since I took this job in about 2007. It took weeks, even months, to complete these projects a little at a time. But what satisfaction!

I’ve continued to do what I’ve always done, which is a little bit of everything. I’ve communicated with a wide variety of people over email, snail mail, phone and at the front door – answering questions, following up, helping to connect parishioners with other staff members and checking in with folks, especially those without any or much internet access. I learned a new website-based weekly eblast program and have worked hard to make that as readable and informative as possible. I’ve continued to keep a record of our pandemic activities through photos and created slide shows with JT, believing that seeing each other virtually is vital to a feeling of community.

With Chris’ encouragement and an example from her home church in Oakland, I led a small-but-mighty team in creating our first DIY photo directory. This was truly a labor of love for me. While not perfect, I believe that asking you to provide your own photo created a much more interesting and vibrant and community-enhancing directory. We’re never going back to the “old way!”

While I was doing COVID clean-outs at church, I was also doing those at home. Twenty-six years and three children later, there were places in our house which had a sort of *Hoarders* look about them. I also had more time to plant areas in our backyard which had heretofore been dirt and weeds. I’ve read many books and completed many, many crossword puzzles. My latest effort is a photo-reorganization project which has taken over our dining room and should last me well into winter.

I’ve also had a personal situation this summer which has shaken me to my core. June was kind of a lost month for me, and I’ve been striving to keep my focus ever since. But I feel very blessed to have loving siblings and friends who I can say without question have my back. And so many parishioners have reached out with support and sympathy, and I’m grateful beyond words to each of you. I’m grateful, too, to have a job and co-workers that I love, and for the trust and continued financial support of our parishioners. I’m grateful for the love of my husband and children, for a home and yard that I treasure, for a beautiful park close by to walk and bike in, for the continued good health of almost everyone I know, and for the love of God even when I’m at my most unlovable.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

ALL CREATURES GREAT & SMALL CELEBRATE ST. FRANCIS DAY

What could be better than a blessing for the beloved creatures—furry, feathery or scaly—who live in your home and bring you joy?

The Blessing of the Animals will begin at 12:00 noon on Sunday, October 4. If you can't make it to church for an in-person blessing, please send a photo of your pet to Gloria at gloriao@stmaa.org, and she will include your pet in our St. Francis Day photo gallery.



CHORISTERS IS HAPPENING – HOORAY!

Who: Young people in 3rd grade and up!

What: Choristers

Where: On Zoom for now and in person at the church as soon as it is safe for everyone

When: Tuesday afternoons at 4:30 pm

Our Chorister program is a youth choir for those in 3rd grade and up – no experience necessary, just an ability to read and a desire to make music! We learn about church traditions, sing psalms, hymns, and anthems, and are featured as a choir some Sunday mornings. We hope you will join in and sing! Contact Hannah Brewer (hannahbrewer@gmail.com) or Brian Fairbanks (brianfairbanks34@gmail.com) if you have any questions.



YOUTH GROUP FALL MEET-UPS

What's better than kickball in the fall?! The St. Michael's Youth Group is taking advantage of the good weather (as long as it lasts) to meet at Normandale Park. The next gathering is Sunday, October 4, from 5:00 to 6:30 pm. We will meet by the softball fields, the same location as the last two weeks.

We are going to do something a little different and share a meal. Since we can't share food, we're going to have an Un-Potluck! The idea is everyone wears a mask and brings their own dinner, and we can eat together, six feet apart. Both middle and high school youth are invited but we will have separate programs for both age groups. Please bring your own dinner; water bottles will be provided. Wear shoes you can play in, and please RSVP so we know how many to expect.

— The Youth Cohort: Chris Craun, John Lidstrom, Jennifer McBratney & Laura Nichols

A NEW SUNDAY FUNDAY ZOOM FOR KIDS

Beginning in mid October, Leslie Sackett, Associate for Ministry with Children and Families, will host WELCOME FRIENDS! – a real-time RED DOORS Zoom gathering for kids to meet up after worship, play some games and see their friends. As we draw nearer to the season of Advent, we will also do some planning for the Christmas Eve Nativity Play – yes, it's happening! Stay tuned...

GOT GOBLINS? COME TRICK OR TREAT AT ST. MICHAEL'S FOR A SAFE & SPOOKY HALLOWEEN!

Children of all ages are invited to bring their parents and trick-or-treat on Halloween, Saturday, October 31, from 6:00 to 7:00 pm at St. Michael's. We invite you to wear your costume and face mask and join in the fun as you follow the path around the church building and St. Michael's House to the designated outside doors. BEWARE! If you dare knock on the door, you will soon discover a friendly "MASKED" St. Michael parishioner ready to dispense Halloween treats and spooky riddles to all who say, "Trick or Treat!" We will take every precaution to keep children and families safe and physically distanced, and all candy and treats provided will be peanut-free. We hope to see you there!

— Leslie Sackett, Associate for Ministry with Children & Families

PLASTICS RECYCLING EVENT

An upcoming event in the Walgreen's parking lot at Cesar E Chavez Blvd (SE 39th Ave.) and Belmont St. is an opportunity to recycle many of the plastics which cannot be recycled at the curb. This event is happening on Saturday, October 24, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and is brought to the community by James' Neighborhood Recycling Service. Volunteers will be present to help you; in fact, if you wish to volunteer that day, please email Kathi at jshrecycling@gmail.com.



There is a fee to bring in your recyclables, so get together with some neighbors or family/friends to pool your items! Please check here for important guidelines: <https://jshrecycling.com/recycling-drop-off-event>.

INTERFAITH VOTING GUIDE

Advocacy Action encourages you to download a non-partisan voting guide produced by Interfaith Power and Light and supported by the National Council of Churches as well as a variety of faith-based organizations. The guide is intended to give people of faith a number of points to consider in making decisions up and down the ballot. Go to <https://www.faith-climatejusticevoter.org/voter-guide/>, or call the church office to pick one up, at 503/284-7141.

QUILTS FOR EMPOWERMENT BENEFIT



Many of you may remember the Quilts for Empowerment exhibit that St. Michael's hosted last year. Even in these times of COVID-19, this organization is going strong and is needed more than ever to support women in Kenya who have suffered socially and economically from having a fistula.

However, like other organizations, Q4E is conducting its benefit and fundraiser virtually this year. The auction has many of the items people asked about purchasing last year. We recently received notice that the *Protect Your Sister Project* has agreed to match proceeds from the auction and benefit up to \$5,000. Because of their generosity, any auction purchases and donations will be doubled. The Protect Your Sister Project is clearly in alignment with Q4E, and the two nonprofit organizations share many goals.

Please RSVP for the benefit at <https://qfebenefit.app.rsvpify.com/>. Bidding opens on October 11 at <https://www.32auctions.com/QFE2020>. You can read much more about both of these organizations at www.quiltsforempowerment.org and www.protectyoursisterproject.org.

— Bev Hoeffler

SOLAR UPDATE

On Friday, September 18, our solar installation began. By the end of Saturday, the contractors had completed the anchoring system and installed the rails in preparation for the panels, which LightSource Energy and Elemental Energy began installing on Monday, September 28. We are so excited to see this work begin! We look forward to the weeks ahead and the flipping of the solar switch for energy from the sun. We will have reached our next stage of commitment to a more sustainable future through the use of renewable energy.

As we mentioned in our last update, plans are being made for celebrations, and the ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place on Friday, October 16. Then,



if we are able to gather on Sunday, October 18, we will have our own congregational celebration of the completion of our solar project. We are hopeful that we will be able to gather in person; but if not, we will have a virtual celebration. Stay

O&J IS KEEPING BUSY!

The Outreach & Justice Council has met online every month since the COVID-19 outbreak began, though not on our usual meeting date. We have divided our funds so far between the many areas of need with which we've been bombarded since March as follows so far:

COVID-19 RELIEF

- Oregon Food Bank (for its increase in needing food)
- Baby and Mother (for those not able to work and therefore afford supplies for their children)
- Operation Nighthawk (for an increase of folks out of work and on the street)
- Diocese of Navajoland (for the huge COVID hit these folks are taking)
- Oregon Workers Relief Fund (for those out of work due to closure of businesses)
- Bridge Meadows (for school supplies to help parents teach at home)

BLACK LIVES MATTER

- Don't Shoot PDX (Black-led human rights non-profit)
- Self-Enhancement Inc. (giving education and social services to underserved youth and families)

NATURAL DISASTERS

- Red Cross (to help with Oregonians needing help from fire damages)
- Rogue Valley Relief Site (targeting Phoenix and Talent, specifically)
- ERD (for hurricane relief)

We send our prayers along with those parish funds, and we are grateful for the opportunity to pass on what we can from you, our generous parishioners.

We are thinking seriously about the coming Advent season and are sure we will not be having a Giving Tree this year. We have a couple of thoughts about what we might do to celebrate this wonderful season and would welcome any thoughts/advice from others, in this area and in our donations as well.

— Lynn Baker & Susan Barnett, co-convenors

tuned for more details about these celebrations as we get closer to the dates, and watch for other exciting news and photos.

Thanks to all of you for your continued support of and interest in this project. We couldn't do it without you!

— Dan Bagwell, Solar Coordinator and Green Team Representative

COVID FUND UPDATE

Back in the spring, many St. Michael's parishioners and friends offered to donate money to help those less fortunate, include many who lost most or all of their income and were not eligible for federal funds. At the beginning, volunteers bought and delivered actual groceries to two to four families. After the number of families needing help grew, we switched



to grocery gift cards. Presently, the fund is helping up to 15 families each week. Some folks who have received help have also helped us, by delivering masks, doing translations and delivering gift cards. Many more have offered to help in any way possible.

For months, the gift cards were delivered in person to encourage personal contact. Lately, however, the cards have been mailed to ensure the safety of all concerned. The gift cards are purchased (reimbursed by the COVID Fund) and mailed in a handmade card by a St. Michael's volunteer who wishes to remain anonymous.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESS OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS:

- When we (Dora Montes, Doris Chavez, Marcela Zurita Ruiz and myself) made the initial contact, people were very touched that someone from St. Michael's reached out to them. Even if they didn't need the help or support, they really felt that St. Michael's cared. The four of us emphasized that we are all part of the St. Michael's *familia* regardless of the worship service we attend. Many folks became tearful first at just being contacted and then again when admitting to needing help.
- People were really blown away that it was just "regular" St. Michael's people who had donated money to help other St. Michael's people. Many were confused and assumed it was some kind of city/county assistance. We assured them that it wasn't.
- It was HARD for people to admit they needed help. For the most part, these are people who are usually the ones doing the giving. They are the ones bringing the food, supplying the piñatas, etc., so for them to ask for help was tough.
- At times, some have asked and/or worried that the help will run out. When we reach out each week, we often get the comment that, yes, they need help if we are able, and we keep telling them that we are able and want to help.

- Some have gone back to work. Not all have been able to return full-time, and many have not yet caught up from the expenses they incurred while not working at all.
- Not all of the families ask for help each week. Some families are doing better some weeks than other weeks, and they let us know when they don't need help.
- In addition to gift cards for food, we have distributed over 75 adult and child cloth masks. These masks were made by a group of St. Michael's folks as well.

THESE ARE DIRECT QUOTES (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) THAT I RECEIVED BY TEXT:

- "I cannot tell you how much the church's help means to me and my family."
- "A very nice woman delivered the masks and cards last Friday. If you can continue to help me, I would be very grateful. My unemployment benefits were not approved so it has been very hard."
- "Thank you for always remembering me and asking me how I am doing."
- "A thousand thank-yous. God bless you all."
- "Thank you for all of the help. My husband is working a little bit more so we are okay for this week, but I appreciate everything you and the people of St. Michael's are doing for my family."
- "If you can still help us this week with food, I would be very grateful. May God bless you."
- "I wish I could thank everyone personally who has been helping my family. God bless them all."

— Susie Silva-Strommer

RECTOR'S NOTE:

Susie has been essential to the implementation of this process. Without Susie and three women who attend the 1:00 Misa—Dora, Doris and Marcela—as well as the anonymous volunteer who organizes all the deliveries, many in our church family would have been suffering needlessly over these past six months.

To date, over \$28,000 has been donated to the fund. About \$16,000 from the fund has been spent on groceries and gift cards for those in need. I have also spent about \$3,500 from my Discretionary Fund. In addition to groceries, some money from the two funds has been spent on rental assistance. The generosity of the St. Michael's community is truly remarkable. Thank you to all who have donated.

— Chris Craun

PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS, 2020

I WONDER...

AS I glide my kayak through the blanket of yellow, cup-like water lilies and the dazzling white star-burst water lilies floating above the carpet of flat, shiny green leaves,

I wonder...

how such sublime beauty grows and blooms out of the muck and decay at the bottom of the lake to grace me with such awe and joy.

I wonder...

what will be the beauty and the gifts that will come out of the pain, suffering, chaos and death of this time as we are being called to draw on our better selves and manifest a better world.

AS I stroll along the beach, watching the rhythm of the ocean as it repeatedly erupts into high-crested waves edged in foam over swirls of blue and green water rushing to the shore that become ever more gentle and peaceful as they flow over the waiting sand,

I wonder...

who and what will create the new waves of harmony, justice, peace and love we long to have wash over our country and our world, transforming it with healing and hope.

I wonder...

can we be open to see with the eyes of our heart and catch glimpses of the new reality already forming, like the waves, and beginning to wash over us with refreshment and new life?

AS I sit on my patio and observe my red hydrangea, I marvel at the number of small flowers in pink, red, cream and white that



come together to create one large bloom of eye-catching beauty out of an initial cluster of chartreuse tiny blossoms. I ponder the slow process of transformation from those first clusters of buds to full splendor and maturity of blossom, including the stages and diversity of color that must come together to create such beauty.

I wonder...

if we will begin to open wide our hearts to welcome and honor the diversity in the human family and celebrate the ways we can come together to create peace, harmony and greater wholeness and justice worthy of our human family over the divisiveness, anger, oppression and destruction of one another, so characteristic of this time.

I wonder...

if we can commit to the challenging work of transforming our lives and the lives of those around us as we live into the vision of the Beloved Community.

AS I sit in the darkness of the night sky, lit by the moon and millions of slivers of star-light, I reflect on those individuals who are starlight and hope in the darkness of our time by their acts of heroism, their acts of compassion and love, and the courage of those who are putting their lives on the line to demand greater justice and equity for all, as promised in our constitution.

I wonder...

will each of us draw on our ability to also choose to be light in the darkness by helping feed the hungry, by defending everyone's right to vote or joining in protest with others to demand justice for all and help create a vision for our future that will allow each person to live into their full potential.

I wonder...

will we trust and find hope in the little pieces of light that are always in the midst of the darkest darkness.

AS I gaze at my cigar plant covered with hundreds of tubular orange blooms with white edging around the opening, nicknamed "hummingbird candy," that attracts hummingbirds throughout the day to work diligently and draw on the life-giving nectar of the blossoms. These tiny hummingbirds expend much energy and utilize great skill as they fly from one blossom to another, suspend themselves for a moment at the opening of multiple blossoms, only to fly off and then return repeatedly to seek their reward.

I wonder...

as we live in this liminal space between what was and what will be that is not yet revealed, will we be as diligent as the hummingbirds seeking truth, in living out our life purpose and calling to love, to make choices that empower life and liberty for all and not get discouraged in the process but return again and again to what our faith asks of us, to what our constitution envisions and what is just, moral, ethical and life-giving for all, not just "for the few" in our society and in our world?

I wonder...

will we find God in the process, making the journey with us?

MAY THE SPIRIT OF GOD GUIDE US AND GIVE US COURAGE.

MAY IT BE SO!

— Mary C. Myers, MEd, Spiritual Director/Companion & Legacy Writing Facilitator

7/20/20

PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS, CON'T



SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2020

I see this time as an Endless Lent. I have not yet lost anyone, yet I have given up much. I have also gained much, for it has given me a chance to slow down, listen, and observe. I am thankful for the surprising blessings this time has brought, including:

- Seeing young families walking, running, and bicycling; they are spending more time together, experiencing each other, sharing an April filled with beautiful weather.
- A reduction in traffic – its noise, and its pollution – as many people start working from home, and as we all eliminate frivolous shopping trips. We now hear the songs of myriad birds, no longer drowned out by traffic and human bustle.
- The chance to learn safer, healthier ways of shopping, wearing masks in stores and staying six feet from others as we navigate the grocery aisles.
- Greeting strangers with extra care and concern, stepping off the sidewalk for others, and then greeting them with more feeling and care, as though they might be offended for our detour.

— M.R.



During these turbulent times we are living in, it is very easy to succumb to a bunch of unhealthy attitudes – apathy, aggressiveness, negativity, despair – loss of hope.

I can't imagine what it must have been like to be a Jewish person living during the Holocaust. I so admire their tenacity and fortitude in the worst of circumstances. Because I am living in a comfortable home and have food on my table and can get out and walk about, I do not picture myself as a Jew during World War II, but I am taking on some of their survival beliefs.

I am a blooming flower in the desert with an extremely long root. I will not succumb to the negativism around me – I will prevail with the help of that very long root that reaches to the Holy water of our Lord God!

— J.C.



- *What has helped me keep calm and emotionally stable?* Certainly social distance visits with friends and walks in the forest have been very helpful. I've also aimed for "contentment." Life is usually so jam-packed with opportunities to engage; but throughout history, people have lived quite simply and just gritted it out and endured hardship. It's my turn to do that now.
- *What is my comfort food?* Humus and crackers and potato chips
- What brings me joy is the chatter of my funny little granddaughter who calls me Wauma. Also the Farkle tournament with my bubble neighbors.
- *What do I miss about St. Michael's?* The warmth and the beauty.
- *What gives me hope?* Hope is a tricky word. Honestly I don't know if I do have hope about the politics, the climate. I choose to join others in working for justice, I'm doing what I can do and surrender the rest.



I am working on being grateful that I am surrounded by smoke and not fire. So far, I am not doing a very good job of feeling grateful.

Unfortunately, my comfort food is anything in my fridge or pantry.

— A.A.



- *What brings you joy?* Mini-escapes to Bend with my son Jack
- *What gives you hope?* Seeing people in person
- *What is helping you cope each day?* An equal balance of a handcrafted cocktail and a walk outside and daily phone calls with my family
- *What is your favorite comfort food?* Tacos!

— C.C.

PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS, CON'T

September 2020

In My Fairy Garden

In my fairy garden

The flowers always bloom.

The skies are perfect azure.

Moss rolls softly underfoot.

The paths meander freely,

*And where you are,
you want to be.*

Bonsai trees reach out to shelter

Nut cottages nestling there.

Twig benches invite tiny creatures

To rest their wings, be still.

I fancy hidden giggles

Floating on the air

And opaque ballerinas

Leaping o'er the moss

As they snatch my cares away

And toss them to the Past.

I wonder if the tenants

Appreciate their lot?

Can my sweet imaginings

Ever meet the truth?

— Sherri Afryl



A letter from Buffy reflecting on adjustments to her life in a coronavirus world, 5/15/2020

Dear friends and family,

Something strange happened a few weeks ago. I can't quite put my paw on it; my humans suddenly changed their routines to better accommodate my schedule, but such an abrupt change has me worried for my humans. Mom is helping me write this letter to tell you about my concerns.



First, let me introduce myself. My name is Buffy. I am also called simply Buff, or Miss Underfoot, and sometimes Buff-in-Stuff. At almost 14 years of age, I no longer see or hear well, but my nose works just fine. I live with my people, Mom and Dad, in a condominium in the forest. I take them on walks four times a day. We always put on my halter and leash when we go out so my humans don't get lost.

About six weeks ago, however, the smell of things changed. Mom stays home all the time now, and Dad stopped running errands everyday. He only goes to the grocery store once a week. We don't even see the grandkids and their annoying boxer dog, Lucy.

I am having trouble knowing what day of the week it is. We no longer get my Sunday morning puppachino at Starbucks, and Mom doesn't go off to classes or meetings during the week.

Even though my humans stay home most of the time, I can still take plenty of naps. In fact, Mom and Dad are even learning how to nap with me. My dinner is now served on time and it has become easier to get my humans out to walk on schedule. Life couldn't be better with all the extra attention I get these days.

The big change has affected the neighbors, also. We see them more often on our walks. It is obvious to me that they all have things ruffling their fur, but everyone is friendlier and looking out for each other.

Mom has been sewing face masks for the neighbors. The Easter bunny brought freshly baked cookies to our house, and Peggy brought Mom flowers on Easter. Sheryl, next door, went fishing and brought us two trout for dinner. One evening last week just after dinner, a neighbor brought slices of homemade cherry pie with ice cream. We have a new neighborhood book exchange in Claudette's garage.

I always look forward to greeting my friends on our walks. My favorite dog friends, Fidel and Oliver, also take their people for frequent walks, but Mom and Dad stay back at the end of the leash and our neighbors seem wary of each other coming too close. The best part of our walks is greeting my human friends along the way – especially the ones who give me treats. I always show my love and let them know how appreciative I am. I personally don't like to practice social distancing, because it makes people feel good to greet me. That is the least I can do when people are going out of their way to be more neighborly than ever.

But my senses are confused. My humans are showing signs of stress. Mom talks on the phone way more than before, and she gets very sad listening to the news on TV every night. I think she is getting lazy, too. The house doesn't get cleaned as often as it should and she is forgetting to bathe and groom me. She spends way too much time on the computer and putting together jigsaw puzzles on the dining room table.

I try to help all I can by listening patiently when they explain the problems. Then I sit nearby and ask for a scratch. I know that petting me lowers their anxiety levels. I am teaching them how dogs handle stressful situations: If you can't eat it or play with it, just pee on it and walk away. Everything will work out fine. Life is really pretty sweet.

Sincerely,

Buffy

ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

1704 NE 43rd Avenue
Portland, OR 97213-1402

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

For now, generally 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Mondays,
Wednesdays and Thursdays. Call or email before
coming over: 503/284-7141 or office@stmaa.org.



CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

- OCT. 4 **St. Francis Day/Blessing of the
Animals**
Choristers virtual choir video
- OCT. 4-NOV. 1 **Sunday afternoon youth gatherings,
weather permitting**
- OCT. 6 ***Teach us to Pray* series begins**
- OCT. 7-NOV. 4 **Evening Prayer on Wednesdays;
church open 5:00-6:00pm, service
from 5:15-5:30 pm**
- OCT. 16 **Public ribbon-cutting ceremony for
completion of solar project**
- OCT. 18 **Congregational celebration of solar
project**
- OCT. 31 **Halloween Spooktacular & trick-or-
treating at St. Michael's**
- NOV. 1 **All Saints Sunday; St. Michael's
Singers virtual choir video**
- NOV. 29 **Saints & Singers virtual choir video**

UPDATE FROM BONNIE STEWART

Greetings, St. Michael & All Angels! I am thrilled to have the opportunity to say a word of hello and catch you up a bit on what I am doing. To begin with, it has been my great joy since my ordination to the Priesthood in June of 2019 to serve as the Associate Rector of St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Southwest Portland. It has been interesting, to say the least, to be a “rookie” at this stage in my life; but I am blessed with a very patient partner in Father Sean Wall and a loving congregation which supports me as I grow into my role as a priest. I preach and preside regularly via Zoom, lead our communications team and coordinate our faith-formation small-group activities also via Zoom. Like you, we continue to bring the gospel to our community, and in our case, it is via a food-bag program that assists over 75 families each week.

On the personal front, my wife Megan has retired and is now involved in work with a non-profit dedicated to developing green spaces in urban settings. While the “stay-at-home” order has been difficult, we have thoroughly enjoyed our time together after years of her being on airplanes for work. I remain grateful for my time with all of you, read the Weekly Messenger regularly, pray with you when I see the emails on the Prayer Chain and continue to enjoy the music that Hannah and Brian put online. Blessings and peace to you all.

— Bonnie+