



St. Michael's
Episcopal Church

the Chronicles of Canterbury

april 2016

From the Rector

Study of Other Religions Crucial To Knowing Our Own

I hear a lot of talk about Islam these days in the news and in the public discourse. I don't like much of what I'm hearing. I hear anti-Muslim bigotry and populist scare-mongering — which I find morally repugnant, historically fallacious, and patently un-American.

After all, this has always been a pluralistic nation ethnically and religiously. While some claim there was a uniformity of Christian faith by our nation's forefathers, what was notable about the founders of America was not that they were the same, but that they were different. We too easily forget how the differences between Calvinists, Lutherans, Anglicans, and Roman Catholics had long been drawn in lines of blood. To assert the homogeneity of the founders of the United States is to know nothing about them.

Others argue that America was founded as a Judeo-Christian nation, but what some now call the Judeo-Christian tradition is largely a modern myth. The fact is, there is Judaism and there is Christianity.

We are not the same, and we've never merged. We have much in common of course: images, books of Scripture, vocabulary, story and so on. To be sure, Jesus was Jewish.

But we have a great deal of difference and tension between us and have since the first century of the common era. Moreover, to suggest that this Judeo-Christian tradition is separate and distinctive from Islam, doesn't hold up to the facts. After all, Islam borrows a great deal of its imagery, symbolism and key teachings from Judaism and Christianity which came before.

Indeed, in my view, the differences between Christianity and Judaism are no less stark than the differences between Islam and Christianity. In fact, in many ways Islam and Judaism are more similar to each other than Christianity is to either.

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Friendship Transcends Differences in Faith

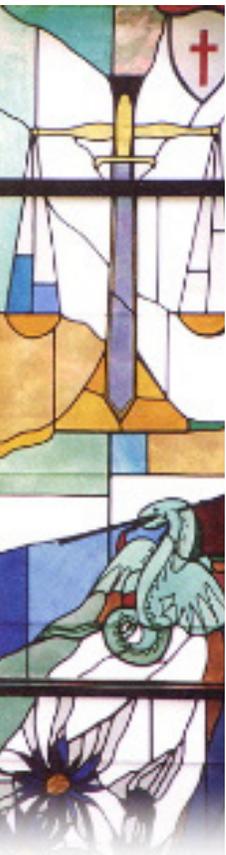
Editor's Note: The St. Michael's evening Education for Ministry class has developed a dialogue with members of an Apex mosque to understand the differences in Christian and Muslim faiths. EfM members have visited the mosque and have hosted Muslim visitors at St. Michael's. The dialogue is continuing. Here, parishioner Karen Wagoner shares the story of her friendship with Sahar El Shafie and how this exchange grew out of that friendship.

Sahar has been my good friend since I started teaching at Martin Middle School in the fall of 1997. We knew instantly that we had a lot in common. We were both born up north — she in New Jersey and I in Massachusetts. She is your definitive Jersey girl. We both are Middle Eastern-ish by ethnicity — she is of Egyptian descent and I'm Armenian. After sharing a few stories of growing up, we determined that we must have had the same

parents, only in different bodies! We knew our friendship would be defined by what we had in common and not by what was different about us. I am Christian; Sahar is Muslim.

Sahar and I share recipes. Our families eat very similar foods/meals with sometimes only minor differences in the spices used, resulting in a slightly different flavor. She and I both make a mean tray of baklava. (Armenians, by the way, spell and pronounce it paklava.) We both make very tasty meat pies. While we were together at Martin, it wouldn't be unusual for one of us to drop some food off with the other, just to give a sampling of what our version tasted like. She and her three children have been to my house for a very traditional Armenian dinner — shish kebab, rice pilaf, salad, and pita bread. My

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

CANTERBURY SHOP HOURS

Monday/Wednesday/Thursday 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Sunday 9-9:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.-noon

Spring Fever:

A Daughter Explores Her Mother's Green Thumb

Genesis 1: 29 – God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food."

My mother Boyd was a woman of the soil with farmers hanging all over her family tree. I used to joke that she not only had a green thumb but all 10 of her fingers were green. When she planted something, whether it was a seed or a cutting she swiped from someone's yard, she knew it would grow strong. Her faith was unshakeable.



Our yard was one for the picture books with borders of white candytuft, pink phlox and something she called "basket of gold." Hot pink azaleas filled in the background against our white house. Yellow forsythia and white spirea bushes separated our house from the one next door. Long leaf pines stood tall above it all.

Flowers defined the front and side yards, but the back yard was her pride

and joy. Row upon row of vegetables stretched from the clothes line to the house behind us. Tilling the land was no problem in the sandy soil of northeastern North Carolina. She ran the rows herself with a hand plow. This time of year she would be planting Irish potatoes and anything else not threatened by a late frost. Seeds were already sown in little cups on our sunny back porch. By July, we would have a bountiful harvest of tomatoes, corn, string beans, green peas, pink peas, black-eyed peas, yellow squash, watermelon, cantaloupe, onions, green, red and yellow peppers, and little tiny butterbeans that were the devil to shell, but tasted like heaven.

Planting and harvesting that garden gave us food all year-round but it was also my mother's therapy. She was widowed twice by the age of 43. It was a hard life but she rarely complained, when she could play in the dirt.

I will take spring flowers to the cemetery in Newsoms, Va., where Boyd is buried next to my father, Aaron. And on Easter Sunday, a lily in their memory graced the St. Michael's nave.

— Jane Bass



Jane Bass's mother, Boyd, widowed twice by age 43, raised her children and her garden with loving care. At top, she sits on her porch in Seaboard, N.C.. At right, she stands by her hedge just under the clothesline.

Guarding the Perimeter: Men's Retreat Looks at Family, Life and Faith

I'm looking forward to leading the Men's Retreat for St. Michael's, May 13 & 14. It's true that in 20 years of leading retreats, I've never led one for which my stipend included shotgun shells (for skeet shooting), but I'm definitely up for this, even if it means looking like a fool on the skeet range.

Retreats are not necessarily for being super spiritual or super religious. Retreats are for being more fully human. Retreats help us to be grounded in our truth, God's truth and God's love for this world, so that we can then work alongside God, in God's work, with more vision, creativity and heart in whatever life-situation we find ourselves.

More to the point, we sometimes over-spiritualize what we need to get grounded in our truth and God's truth and care for the world. Even when I was living in a monastery—I had an unusual route into priesthood—my most refreshing breaks, what most helped me, were not the week-long silent retreats with amazing reflections by noted authors and spiritual speakers. Rather, my best breaks were, hands down, the bicycle tours I took, alone and with friends, for hundreds of miles all over southern Wisconsin, and the weeks spent at a friend's beach house on Lake Michigan.

What most of us need, more than anything else, is usually just to get away from the stresses and distractions of ordinary life. In the middle of living, we can lose our sense of why we do what we do, and what's really important for our well-being and the well-being of those around us. Stepping out for a day or two, taking a break, getting some rest and relaxation with friends— it's easier to touch again whatever is most vital and important and meaningful to us.

At this retreat, before the golf balls are unpacked and the skeet are loaded into the arms that will toss them into the air, we will have some time for spiritual reflection. I will offer a talk about how men often have the role



The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth will lead the Men's Retreat May 13-14 in Whispering Pines.

of "guarding the perimeter," a term my wife's birth coach and midwife taught me as we approached the birth of our first child. The best thing I could do to help my wife give birth, our midwife said, was to preserve an atmosphere of safety, security and calm in the birthing room, so that my wife could do the work that only she could do. (This turned out to have more challenges than I assumed it would: At one point my mother-in-law's taxi driver showed up at the door of the birthing unit asking if he could witness the birth!)

In my retreat talk, I'll use "guarding the perimeter" as a metaphor for the humble but critical role, off center stage, of providing the kind of context that allows for the growth of God's life in our families and churches, and even our lives of prayer.

So I look forward to talking with the men of St. Michael's, getting to know the parish from that angle, and I look forward to getting away from my own ordinary life for awhile, having a beer and trying my beginner's luck at the skeet range. I look forward, most of all, to getting back to my family and work after the retreat, refreshed and grounded in what is most important to me, rested and ready to go. All are welcome.

—The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth

The Men's Retreat May 13 & 14

Country Club of Whispering Pines. \$175 includes lodging and meals. Register for the retreat on Sunday mornings in the lobby at the front desk.

RECTOR

Continued from page 1

No, it is crucial to study the teachings and practices of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, not out of some notion of political correctness, but so we might know how they are alike and different. For by studying these other traditions, we will also see more clearly what it is about our own faith that is special, and what about other faiths is instructive.

I believe the message of Jesus Christ and his life, death and resurrection is not only true and special for me, but also has implications for the whole world—even if the whole world doesn't know it or believe it. From my study of their teachings, I know that Jews and Muslims do not agree with me. But because I love Jesus, I must love them anyway, for Jesus calls me to live in this pluralistic world with compassion and concern for all people.

As an American, I am happy to live in a pluralistic society built around a constitution of enshrined liberties. As a Christian, which is my primary citizenship, I believe in loving all human beings the way Christ does. And loving involves showing compassion and understanding for my neighbors.

—The Rev. Samuel Gregory Jones



Spring flowers adorn the Easter cross on Easter Sunday morning. It's a St. Michael's tradition for the children to bring flowers for the cross.

FRIENDSHIP

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WHAT MUSLIMS BELIEVE

I consider it both an honor and a blessing that Karen asked me to meet up with her EFM class. We have been good friends for a long time and have so much in common culturally. We both know we need to understand each other's faith without the stereotypes portrayed by the media. Islam, as I practice it, and Christianity, as Karen practices it, are similar in many ways.

Muslims like Christians believe in one God. While Muslims call Him Allah (the Arabic word for God) he is still the same God the creator of the heavens, earth and all that is in between. Both Muslims and Christians believe in the Ten Commandments and adhere to them in our daily lives. We pray and attend our house of worship to come together with our brethren in faith. We value family and community, and believe we have responsibilities to honor and give them our time and attention. We both value the sanctity of life and we are appalled by those who don't have respect for human life. We both believe in helping those who are less fortunate and we give a percentage of our income towards that endeavor. Muslims like Christians believe we were created for the purpose of serving God. Despite our flaws as human beings, we strive to serve God in all we do. As we learn more about each other, I believe we will find we have more in common than not.

If we get to know each other's respective faith, we can work together to better the community at large. Maybe at the end of the day, we can work towards universal peace, respect and understanding of all faiths.

— Sahar El Shafie

teaching partner and I have been to Sahar's house for a traditional dinner after breaking the daily fast during Ramadan. I have seen her without her hijab, or headscarf, on.

So, last year when our Education for Ministry class discussed living in a multicultural world, it seemed natural to me to suggest inviting Sahar to our EFM class when our text suggested learning about someone else's culture. She accepted the invitation and spent about an hour with us, talking to us about her faith and answering our myriad of questions. All of us wanted to know more about each other's faith. Therein began a conversation among all of us to make that happen.

After several months of planning, we finally nailed down a date to visit the mosque in Apex. We observed a Saturday prayer service and met for about an hour to learn about the Muslim faith from two of their members, Sister Mona and Brother Asif. We left with brochures in hand and many, many more questions.

One Saturday last fall, our new Muslim friends visited St. Michaels. We spent about two hours together talking about church architecture, liturgy and the Bible. There was so much more to be said! I remember one of their folks saying that he had always wanted to see the inside of a church; he didn't realize it was as easy as asking to see.

We were quick to point out that not all Christians think or worship alike; there are, of course, basic commonalities in our faith, but there are differences, too. It's the same with Islam. It's a start. Our conversation continued in February with a visit to the mosque to discuss family and how our faith interacts with and influences our families. We each brought a family picture.

The most important difference in our two faiths is the acknowledgment of who Jesus is. Muslims see him as one of the five great prophets, the others being Moses, Noah, Abraham, and Mohammed. Christians, of course, believe he is much more than a prophet; we see him as the Son of God, the Messiah. Muslims follow a stricter dress and food code. Muslims, like Jews, do not eat pork. Christians live for bacon!

The Muslim observance of Ramadan, with its daily fasts (broken at sundown each day) are more stringent than the Christian Lent, when fasting from one or more things is optional. Muslims feel that the authentic reading of the Quran should be done in Arabic because the Arabic language has no shades of meaning, but the Quran is translated into every major language so all can access it. Christians look at many translations of the Bible, with no one translation considered the pure translation.

Muslims and Christians trace their roots to Abraham, yet Muslims acknowledge both Sarah and Hagar as his wives and trace the religion's lineage through Hagar and Ishmael. Christians trace their lineage through Sarah and Isaac.

The Saturday Muslim prayer service we observed was without any formal structure like our Episcopal liturgy. The imam intoned the call to prayer, and men and women came in to pray at different times, whenever they could get to the mosque. Muslim men and women worship separately. Out of the five daily prayers, the morning and early evening and late evening prayers are recited out loud in the congregation; the noon prayer

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Members of the Islamic Center of Apex gather with St. Michael's Education for Ministry students at the mosque in Apex. The two groups have been meeting periodically since last fall to discuss the differences between the two faiths. Front Row left to right: Barbara Elliott, Marilyn Budrow, Sahar El Shafie, Diana Sendall, Pat Faellaci, Sister Taramoud. Back Row left to right: Brother Asif, Brother Mohammad, Polly Downward, Brock Downward, Paul Elliott, Karen Wagoner, Sister Mona, Sandy Callahan. Not pictured: Virginia Price and Marian Weatherspoon.

and late afternoon prayers are recited silently. During Friday prayers, there is formal liturgy added before the prayer which is recited out loud by the imam and it is shorter, with two cycles instead of four. But this is just for Friday prayers held in congregation.

Our worship spaces differ, too.

The Apex mosque is a large, fairly empty, sparsely decorated room. There are some chairs for those individuals who cannot prostrate themselves on the floor and an alcove in the front center of the room, where the imam leads the prayers. The men we observed praying lined up side-by-side, feet touching. Prior to beginning their prayers, each man and woman ceremonially moved his/her arms, bent from the elbows, up and towards the shoulders, palms open. When we asked why this was done, we were told that each person "moves" the cares and concerns of the world behind himself/herself to be in the right frame of mind to pray.

There are no pews, as worshippers are on their knees for their prayer service. The closest thing to an altar is the alcove where the imam is stationed. There are no pianos, organs, or other musical instruments. Our altar faces the religious east, toward Jerusalem, no matter which direction our altar really faces. When Muslims pray, they all face Mecca.

Christian space, particularly the St. Michael's nave, contains much symbolism — the stained glass windows, the bricks in the shape of crosses, the upside down keel shape of our interior, the number of trusses that shape our ceiling. Their space didn't have this. In their equivalent of a narthex, they had a picture of Mecca and a picture of Medina as well as a list of rules for proper behavior when in the mosque.

I hope, in our small way, we are building a bridge of understanding rather than creating a chasm of fear and suspicion. We know that there will always exist a religious tension between us; we believe differently about some things. We aren't trying to remedy things with or through education. But, I think we are trying to remedy misconceptions through education while the religious tension remains because of our differences.

— Karen Wagoner

Jeff Hensley, our theologian in residence, will be teaching a three-part Adult Formation class in April and May that focuses on our connection to other faiths. Please see page 11 of this newsletter for more information.



Habitat for Humanity Episcopal Build volunteers take a break at a home on Skinner Drive in Raleigh. It will be home to Cheston Dooley when complete.

Veterans vs. Rookies: The Episcopal Build with Habitat

We know that there is a place for both a veteran and a rookie when it comes to construction and building. For that matter, there is a place for a veteran and a rookie in many aspects of our lives. We find there is always a place for both no matter our skill set. It's similar to the house of the Lord. Surrounding ourselves and growing from each other helps us gain the necessary skills to become more experienced.

This is similar to the experience I encountered when asked to organize the Episcopal Build this spring during Lent. St. Michael's is among 10 participating Episcopal churches or organizations. When the project began, there was no doubt I entered as a rookie. I had limited exposure to Habitat for Humanity. Like most things in life, however, you know that when you are the rookie you rely on the veterans to help you gain information and the tools necessary to become more experienced and do the job.

On Saturday, March 5, 16 veterans and rookies from St. Michael's had the opportunity to come together to help the family of Cheston Dooley. Cheston is a deserving candidate who entered the Habitat for Humanity community. The need for housing in Wake County is tremendous. Habitat for Humanity of Wake County is working every day to help with this need, bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope. The Habitat for Humanity Strategic Plan for 2016-2018 is the 1-3-5 Plan.

- Serve 1 percent of the housing need (315 families) through new home construction, rehab, and repair.
- Influence 3 percent (840 families) of this need through advocacy efforts.
- Engage 5 percent of the population (53,500 people) as volunteers, donors, and ReStore shoppers.

Personally, I believe the 5 is the most important number of that strategic plan. Without the assistance of the community, how can we affect the 1 and 3?

It's about getting someone's attention, and most importantly, keeping it. As we engage with the community and volunteers, it enables us to grow and become more experienced.

Sharing 821 Skinner Drive with 16 volunteers from St. Michael's gave me the chance to engage with others sharing the interest of Habitat for Humanity. For some, it was meeting for the first time and for others, it was admiring their hard work and determination from a distance. I found my passion is not only making a difference in the Habitat for Humanity community, but getting to know the volunteers on a personal level. There is a lot of value in sitting on a 2x4 and sharing a lunch organized by Nanci Atkeson. Engaging in all the talents on site was the most fundamental part of the day. We'd teach and share talents in hopes to accomplish a list of items that would give Cheston Dooley's family the house they deserve.

Volunteering as a rookie isn't as much of a challenge when you are surrounded by a group of caring and devoted people. In fact, they can even make you look like a veteran. Some of the volunteers who began on that Saturday as rookies have slowly moved a couple of steps closer to being a veteran. Isn't our hope during this Easter season that we can all move a couple of steps closer to God?

— Joe Warena, St. Michael's Team Leader
Episcopal Build



Habitat workers from Episcopal Build, clockwise from top left, sign the frame of the house that will soon be home to Cheston Dooley and his family; Cheston and Katherine Davies; St. Michael's Team Leader Joe Warena, left, with Cheston and Vaughn Wagoner, left; Bruce and Joyce Hunn after framing a window; at left: Ralph Yeager, Lee Costa, & Phil Lamb.

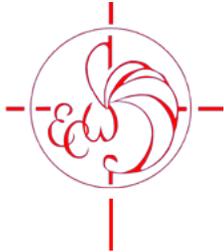
Support the Holy Michael Foundation at the ECW Garden Party

“From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required.”

Luke 12:48

The Holy Trinity. That somewhat confusing concept of the Three in One. Separate but Equal and yet the Same. If you’ve ever tried explaining it to a curious child, you know how difficult it can be for the right words to come!

Of course, there’s God the Father and Jesus the Son — the headliners of the Holy Trinity— the ones we hear about all the time. With the seemingly forgotten Holy Spirit left out of the equation. You’ll get the questions: Do you believe in God? How about Jesus? But has anyone ever asked: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? Sure we say it every Sunday in the Nicene Creed, but when faith is talked about publicly, it’s God and Jesus that get top billing.



But after last fall’s Bible study on the Book of Acts from Lisa Harper and seeing the Holy Spirit in action in my life, I’ve come to understand the Holy Spirit a little bit better. The Holy Spirit is the part of the Trinity that Jesus left us when He ascended into Heaven. The Holy Spirit is the part of the Trinity inside each one of us— our own personal piece of God. How cool is that?

There’s another trinity that comes to mind — one not quite as holy — but just as important to the work of the church. That’s the trinity of Time, Talent, and Treasure. And just like the Holy Trinity, two of those parts, Time and Talent, are very public. When I look around this parish, I see lots of time-givers and lots of talent faithfully and generously shared with this church community. And just like the Holy Spirit, the Treasure part of that trinity is private/personal.

How many of us were taught to NOT talk about money? It’s for you to know — I can’t look around the nave on Sunday mornings and know what your treasure gift has been — just as I can’t look around and see how the Holy Spirit is firing you up from the inside.

But I can guess. See, the Holy Spirit and Treasure may be personal, but they are mighty and powerful when given freely and combined. Both can create tidal waves of good works with limitless possibilities. And if there’s one thing St. Michael’s can brag about, it’s our hard work and dedication to making our pocket of the world a better place!

That’s why the ECW has chosen the Holy Michael Foundation as our spring event funds recipient! I hope you’ll plan to mark May 6th on your calendar and help the Holy Michael Foundation bring those limitless possibilities within reach!

—Josey Kasper, ECW Secretary of Devotional Life

SAVE THE DATE

ECW OF ST. MICHAEL'S
spring event

garden party

friday, may 6th 6:00pm - 9:30pm

DINNER AND MUSIC

LIVE AUCTION LIMITED SILENT AUCTION

invitation to follow...

HOLY MICHAEL FOUNDATION

all proceeds grow our Holy Michael Foundation

ECW Spring Garden Party

Tickets are \$25 per person

Giving Levels:

Lily: \$1,000 to \$4,999

Violet: \$500 to \$999

Daffodil: \$100 to \$499

Wildflower: other

Ideas for Endowment Spring Forth!

I was excited to have the opportunity to speak to St. Michael's ECW about the Holy Michael Foundation at their March General Membership meeting. After noting the Holy Michael Foundation's history and opportunities for giving, we brainstormed about the most exciting aspect of any endowment – its potential to benefit the church and the community.

Once the Holy Michael Foundation sustains a two-year average balance of \$1 million, we can disburse 4.5% of the balance, each year, for special programs, initiatives and ministries of the church, and for improvement of the church's assets. This means in our first year of issuing grants we can disburse a minimum of \$45,000! Think about that. What will St. Michael's be able to accomplish with a working endowment? Who or what will benefit from our first \$45,000 grant?



Many ideas sprung forth from our discussions. Here are a few presented by the ECW for potential uses of our endowment:

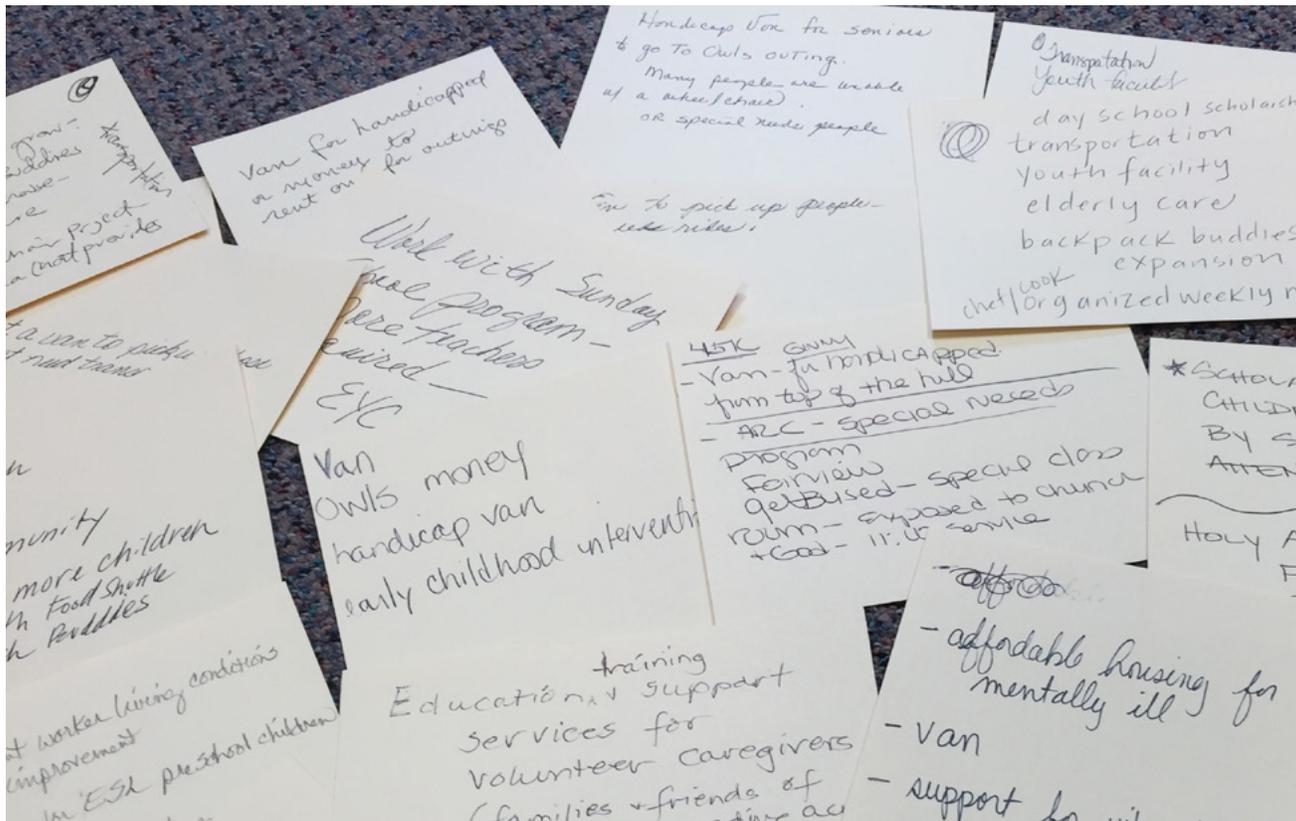
- Program to help women/single moms
- Mental health assistance/living
- Assistance with the homeless
- Improve migrant workers' living conditions
- Support for ESL pre-school children
- Van/Bus to transport senior parishioners

- Handicap van to transport those in wheelchairs
- Education/training/support for volunteer caregivers (families and friends of patients with acute and chronic health problems)
- Education and support to prevent human trafficking
- Elderly support

This does not comprise half of the ideas exchanged that day. As we move closer to the ability to issue grants, it is exciting, and prudent, to explore the possibilities. Yet, before the Holy Michael Foundation can realize its potential, it must reach the \$1 million threshold. This is where you can make a difference.

The Holy Michael Foundation is honored that the ECW has dedicated the proceeds from its Spring Event to the Holy Michael Foundation. We are so thankful for your recognition and support! It promises to be a great party, and we look forward to an evening of fun and fellowship. Together, St. Michael's can help our endowment fulfill its mission!

— Charlotte Griffin, Holy Michael Foundation



Ideas abound for how the Holy Michael Foundation will help our community.

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OWLS Talk History, and the Book of DO!

The OWLS have their final outing for the program year on Thursday, April 4, with a tour of Historic Oakwood Cemetery. Established 150 years ago as a final resting place for Raleigh's Confederate dead, the cemetery was later expanded and now is a resting place for some of North Carolina's most notable citizens.



The cemetery includes the original Confederate Cemetery established in 1869, and also a Hebrew Cemetery. Those buried in Oakwood include former governors Thomas Bragg and Charles Brantly Aycock; politician Needham B.

Broughton, N.C. State basketball player Lorenzo Charles and his coach, Jim Valvano; former U.S. Senator Jesse Helms; Berrian Kinnard Upshaw, first husband of Margaret Mitchell and possible model for Rhett Butler in *Gone with the Wind*; and L.L. Polk, founder of "The Progressive Farmer."

Meet at the cemetery office in Oakwood at 10 a.m. We will not provide transportation for this event. Lunch afterward at Irregardless.

On Thursday, April 28, parishioner Kel Landis will join the OWLS to talk about his book, *The Little Book of DO!* available in the Canterbury Shop. Kel has spent more than 30 years in banking, financial services, investment management and private capital and is a founding partner of Plexus Capital, a North Carolina-based investment firm. The visit begins at 2 p.m. in the Convocation Room.



Men's Prayer Breakfast

Tuesday
April 12
7 a.m.



OWLS
Outing
Thursday
April 4

Oakwood
Cemetery

10 a.m.

Lecture
Thursday
April 28

Kel Landis
2 p.m.

Quiet Ministry Feeds from the Freezer

Are you the kind of person who, as soon as you learn someone is in the hospital, you go straight to the kitchen and start cooking for them? Then the Blessings Ministry is the place for you at St. Michael's.

The Blessings Ministry is one of the "quiet" ministries in our parish. It is made up of four teams of volunteers who rotate cooking and assembling a chicken and rice casserole from a recipe provided by the ministry. Those casseroles are frozen and kept in the freezer at church.

Each team cooks once during the calendar year. Each team delivers frozen casseroles to parishioners three times during the calendar year. Those who receive casseroles are church members or family of members who have suffered a loss, a hospitalization, an accident, or suffered some incident that leads us to say "you are in our thoughts and prayers, and we are thinking of you."

Each team is led by a volunteer captain who notifies team members when it's their month to cook or to deliver casseroles. A message may come from the captain asking for someone in the team to volunteer to call a parishioner and offer the casserole, then to deliver the casserole. The team captains are notified of needs by the Blessings Ministry Coordinator, who

receives notice of the needs from clergy, Jean Olson or from parishioners.

The once a year cooking and assembling of the casseroles is a fun fellowship time. The calls to fellow parishioners and the delivery of the casseroles are opportunities for a short visit with church family.

Anyone interested in serving with this ministry can contact the current coordinator, Mary McMillan, by telephone at 919-870-7405 or by email at marymcmillan@mindspring.com.

Words & Wisdom

The Children Act

The Words & Wisdom Book Club has chosen *The Children Act* by Ian McEwan for its April 13 discussion. Join the group at 7 p.m. at the home of Diana and Dave Sendall for light refreshments and lively discussion.

The novel is the story of Fiona Maye, a leading High Court judge who presides over cases in the family court. While in a personal crisis, she is called on to try the case of a teen who refuses medical treatment that could save his life. For more information, please contact Lisa Williamson at Lisa@dtsssoftware.com.

a p r i l



CHRISTIANITY'S RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER RELIGIONS A THREE-PART STUDY WITH JEFF HENSLEY

How is Christianity related to other religious traditions such as Islam? This question is arguably one of the most pressing theological issues of our time, especially given the rise of "Islamic extremism," increased persecution of Christians within majority Muslim countries, and the political rhetoric here in the U.S. concerning our appropriate response. The purpose of our three-week investigation of this crucial question will be to look at the theological issues undergirding a Christian view of other religious traditions, i.e., issues such as what role does our view of Jesus Christ and the salvation that only he can provide have in shaping our relationship with other religious traditions? Is Allah just another name for the God of Jesus Christ? And are we called to evangelize people of other faiths? These are tough, controversial questions upon which faithful Christians disagree, so come with your own queries, thoughts, and respect for those who might ultimately disagree with you as we struggle with what it might mean for us to live faithfully as followers of Christ in a religiously pluralistic world.

SUNDAYS

APRIL 10

IS JESUS CHRIST THE UNIQUE MEDIATOR OF SALVATION?

Christianity traditionally claims that salvation is through no other way, is found in no other person or idea but Jesus Christ. Yet not all religious traditions hold this claim to be true. Should Christians still claim that salvation is in Jesus alone or should we reject that notion as overly offensive to other religious traditions?

APRIL 24

DO CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS WORSHIP THE SAME GOD?

Both Christians and Muslims are monotheists, i.e., they believe that there is only one God. Yet Christians and Muslims describe and name "God" very differently, e.g., God as Triune vs. Allah. So if there is only one God and yet we have radically different views of who that God is, do we ultimately worship the same God?

THERE WILL BE NO CLASSES ON SUNDAY, APRIL 3

MAY 1

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "GO INTO THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL" IN A WORLD FILLED WITH BELIEVERS OF OTHER FAITHS?

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called, in the words of Jesus' great commissioning in Matthew 28, to "go and make disciples in all the nations." Bearing witness of our faith to others thus is fundamental to who we are as Christians, but what does that mean for the way I relate to my Muslim neighbor or co-worker? Are we called to evangelize people of other faiths?

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Opening night:
5:30 p.m.,
Sunday, July 31

Mornings:
Monday-Thursday,
Aug. 1-4

Registration
information coming
soon.

LIFELONG DISCIPLE



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Wise Women Weekend Beach Retreat

A few spaces remain for the Topsail Beach weekend retreat April 22-24. Led by the Rev. Meta Ellington, the retreat will offer space for reflection, reading, writing and fellowship as we explore who we are as Wise Women. No writing skill is required.

Registration deadline is April 10. Cost is \$100 and includes lodging. Limited to 16 participants. Please send your check to Meta Ellington, 521 Marlowe Road, Raleigh, 27608.

Your check is your reservation.

Questions? Contact Meta, tometa@nc.rr.com.

QUESTIONS? STORY IDEAS?

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Ann Garey,
Publications Coordinator
garey@holymichael.org

Deadlines:
• *Canterbury Tales*:
noon Wednesday before
Sunday publication
• *Chronicles of Canterbury*:
Wednesday, April 12

Spring Newcomer Dinner • April 12

We love welcoming people into our parish, so if you are new to St. Michael's and have not attended a Newcomer Dinner, please join us on Tuesday, April 12, from 6-8 p.m. in the Parish Hall for our casual supper. You'll meet our Clergy, Vestry, Staff, Newcomer Committee and other newcomers to our parish. E-mail Lee Hayden to make your reservations. If you need child care, please include the names and ages of your children in your email. Contact: Lee Hayden, Director of Newcomer Ministries (919-782-0731, ext. 108)