

ARCHANGEL

Vol. 1, Issue 1, September 2017

A Publication of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Raleigh, NC

**MUSIC TO
OUR EARS**

WITH GRACE

**GROWING (UP)
WITH GOD**



INTRODUCING: ARCHANGEL

Words: The Rev. Samuel Gregory Jones

Photos: Susan Rountree, Community Music School

THE STORY OF GOD IN CHRIST WAS TOLD BY HIS FOLLOWERS IN THE BOOK THAT BECAME THE NEW TESTAMENT. IT CONTINUED IN THE EARLY CENTURIES OF THE CHURCH IN NUMEROUS OTHER BOOKS, AND IN THE WORKS OF THE RIGHTEOUS AROUND THE WORLD. LET JESUS TAKE YOUR STORY AND WORK IT INTO SOMETHING WONDERFUL.

In the beginning, God began to tell the story. And when He spoke, the creation arose. God is still storytelling, and you and I live and move and have our being inside that grand saga made real by the God who speaks, inspires and lives.

In Christ, God spoke and became flesh. He became one of us: physical, emotional, mental, talented, needful. Cold in winter, hot in summer, tired after a long day's work. The story of God in Christ was told by His followers in the book that became the New Testament. It continued in the early centuries of the church in numerous other books, and in the works of the righteous around the world. The story continues at St. Michael's, in the things we do, the prayers we make, the songs we sing, and the helping hands we offer.

In the Bible, we see that angels are the messengers of God, and sometimes they do more than speak. Sometimes they not only carry the word of God but the power of God over evil in any form. Among the angels, Michael ranks near the top of the heap. He is an archangel. A leader of the heavenly host. Indeed, Scripture tells us Michael is the one who defeated Satan and cast him down from heaven in the primordial rebellion. He is our patron saint, and a mighty one at that.

In honor of our archangel, we have launched this new publication to herald the ongoing story of God at St. Michael's Church. Three times a year, *Archangel* will be published and mailed to you, as a proper magazine, a proper journal. It will have creative spiritual writing from our talented congregation. It will offer more depth about our common life in Christ and be something rich to read and ponder. We are very excited to move beyond our ongoing range of newsletters, bulletins, social media postings and emails and into this new realm.

Over the years we have done a number of publications of high quality writing — most notable and popular have been our Advent- or Lenten-themed books. The Writing in Response to Scripture class has produced excellent pieces of spiritual writing.

It is our hope that as the parish grows in size and depth, the new publication will reinforce and deepen our members' awareness of all that we do, and what it means to us. We hope that more of our people will be able to share their stories of what God is doing in and through them at this parish.

In this issue, we explore the friendship between two parishioners, David Sousa and Keith Allen, who for more than 20 years have improved the

brick and mortar of this parish. We will look at the way one of our staff children, Angela Colula de la Cruz, has studied and grown into a musician thanks to the Community Music School, which we have long supported. Holly will take us on her own grief journey. As well, we will examine the faith journeys of parishioners, the consecration of our new bishop, and the formation of small groups to go deeper in the spirit.

Don't you know that God can take your story and work it into something wonderful? Jesus Christ, the master of stories, the master of creation, the Word Himself can make your life into poetry and prose, and you may bear much fruit. I believe that as we follow Christ, the Gospel will begin to be written in our flesh, starting now and lasting forever.

Welcome to *Archangel*.



Photo 1: Angela Colula de la Cruz

Photo 2: Holly Gloff and a favorite harp

Photo 3: David Sousa and Keith Allen

On the Cover: The Rt. Rev. Samuel Rodman with his wife, Debbie, after his July 16 ordination and consecration as the new bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



6

MUSIC TO OUR EARS



12

WITH GRACE



18

GROWING (UP) WITH GOD

FEATURES

- 8** **Beginning Again Our Walk with God**
The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth offers tools to connect with God anew.
- 10** **In Tune with Grief**
The Rev. Holly Gloff shares her personal story of grief and how it became her call.
- 16** **If You Build It...**
David Sousa & Keith Allen bond over 20 years building St. Michael's.

THE GOOD NEWS

20 Life Resurrected

Karen Wagoner on how a bird's struggle becomes a faith story

22 A still, small voice

God speaks to Elaine Bayless at important milestones

FIFTEEN TWENTY

25 St. Michael's new 'do'

An active life of an aging parish means it's time for a makeover of sorts.

LIFELONG DISCIPLE

26 Sunday Forum

How are we reconciled with God? Our Sunday program examines the story of Scripture, the Old and New Testaments, as that of God's search for us,

Finding God in the Ordinary

Our new small group ministry will bring us together in new and important ways as we explore what helps us respond to God in ordinary life.

27 Bible & Book Studies

Join one of our fall book studies.

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MUSIC TO OUR EARS

Words: Susan Byrum Rountree

Photos: Community Music School & Susan Rountree

Angela Colula De la Cruz's fingers spread across the piano's keyboard and into position, gliding into the soft notes of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, a favorite of the 13-year-old pianist. When she was 9, she began taking lessons at Community Music School, and today Angela shows the confidence of someone well-practiced in the art of the piano. She's also learning the flute.

Private music lessons might have been out of reach for Angela, the daughter of St. Michael's Housekeeper Marcela De La Cruz and Groundskeeper Jesus Epigmenio, if it were not for the school. Begun in 1994 to serve students in the Raleigh area, professional music teachers provide lessons for \$1 per lesson to students who meet the eligibility requirements for the free or reduced school lunch program in Wake County.

"Playing brings me more energy," says Angela, "and it's joyful. Something of me would be gone without it."

After only two years of study, Angela's musical acumen spilled into other areas of her life. Math problems became easier as she understood measures and rhythms. Her grades improved in Social Studies, too, as she learned about the composers of her favorite songs.

That's what music does for a child, says parishioner Marilyn Budrow, who has long been active with CMS. "Music gives (a child) something to love, a purpose, and opens up a new world. It gives them confidence, develops the brain and makes them more disciplined." Marilyn, an accomplished violist who created the strings program at Raven-



Community Music School students rehearse for a concert with Pink Martini and the NC Symphony. At left, Angela Colula de la Cruz, a child of St. Michael's and a student at the school, plays three instruments and sings in the choir.

croft School, was invited to be part of the CMS board years ago. "The board wanted someone who knew something about education, and I thought I might be that person."

CMS offers one-on-one lessons to 120 students through close to a dozen programs, including brass, strings, musical theater, songwriting, and music technology.

School founder Mary Cates encouraged parishioner Mimi Keravuori to join the board when she retired from her job as executive director of the North Carolina

Theatre Conference, and she has been active with the school for more than 20 years. Mimi did everything from stuffing envelopes and providing refreshments at recitals, to representing the school at various places and helping to raise money.

"I was fortunate enough to have parents who could provide piano lessons for me and introduce me to symphonies and opera, which enriched my youth," says Mimi. "I want all children to have these same opportunities."

“MUSIC GIVES (A CHILD) SOMETHING TO LOVE, A PURPOSE AND OPENS UP A NEW WORLD. IT GIVES THEM CONFIDENCE, DEVELOPS THE BRAIN AND MAKES THEM MORE DISCIPLINED.”

— MARILYN BUDROW, ST. MICHAEL’S PARISHIONER



Angela Colula De la Cruz

“Our students really have done well academically,” Mimi adds. “The discipline required for music goes over to the classroom.”

Angela, who plays in the band at Daniels Middle School, has won academic awards in school and performed in the CMS honors recital this past spring. Many CMS graduates earn college scholarships.

But success was jeopardized last year. The school had recently hired more staff and a full-time executive director, hoping to grow. “We thought the funding would support the growth,” says Carol Holland, incoming Board President. But when that didn’t happen, CMS was forced to suspend classes for November, December and January.

Community Music School is a regular attendee at Gifts of Grace, our alternative gift market held each November to support outreach efforts in our

community and world. When lessons were suspended, “it took everybody by surprise,” says Marilyn. She spread the word at Gifts of Grace about the school, and parishioners stepped up to help, donating around \$3,000 during the event, the largest donation given to the school by St. Michael’s.

“It took a lot of faith that it was going to open again,” says Mimi. “(Contributors) were told that we didn’t know what was going to happen. (The reaction) was huge.”

The school developed a new fundraising plan, setting a goal of \$100,000. “Thanks to an incredible and heart-warming outpouring of support,” says Carol, “we were able to resume all music programs on Feb. 1 and complete the academic year while continuing to fundraise for the future. We have embarked on a strategic process to review our mission and develop new alliances and partnerships with stakeholders in our community. While ‘re-envisioning,’ we still need the support of our faithful donors.”

More than 30 organizations in the community support the school’s missions. St. Michael’s is one of several churches offering financial support.

CMS musicians are exposed to unique opportunities to perform in the area. In December of last year, three students auditioned for the opportunity to join the North Carolina Symphony and the Pink Martini orchestra for a 20th anniversary concert, in the band’s initiative to involve student musicians in the communities where they perform.

Angela continues to play. “Now I can learn anything,” she says. She also sings in the choir at St. Michael’s.

“I’ve known Angela since she was an infant,” says choirmaster Kevin Kerstetter. “She has become one of St. Michael’s many extraordinary choristers attending two week-long Royal School of Church Music choir training courses, most recently at Duke University. Children who sing in a church choir develop a deeper connection to worship, benefit from a supportive and inspiring music education community, and learn a creative skill that offers joy and fulfillment for a lifetime.”

Mimi shares founder Mary Cates’ favorite quote: “Every child deserves a round of applause at least once.”

And Community Music School has made applause possible for hundreds of students through the years.



Join the Outreach & Missions Committee at its 15th annual Gifts of Grace, Sunday, Nov. 12, in the Parish Hall. Close to two dozen organizations will be represented, including Community Music School. Gifts of Grace runs from 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

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Susan Byrum Rountree is the director of communications for St. Michael’s. She is the author of two books and writes a Sunday column for the News & Observer.

BEGINNING AGAIN IN OUR WALK WITH GOD

Words: The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth

Photo: Susan Rountree

I have been out of the monastery long enough to enjoy what happens when I share with a new acquaintance that: 1) I have lived in a monastery, 2) that I dropped out of college to do so, and 3) the real hammer blow, that I was there for two decades! The conversation usually stalls then in disbelief, and jumps forward with curiosity. What was it like? What did I learn?

My time in the monastery did not give me what most people assume it should have: a mastery of Christian faith or spirituality. It gave me, in fact, the opposite. Because of that time in the monastery, I am painfully aware of all the things I have done wrong in the spiritual life. After 27 years of a concerted attempt to live a religious life, I now start each day as a bare beginner. My only asset from those years of practice is an encyclopedic knowledge of how to do things wrong!

As a spiritual beginner, I can however return every day to the bare beginning of the spiritual life, which is the promise that God can share God's life with us, and through us, share Godself with the world. Our little human selves with our specific histories and faults, all this can be opened and used by God to share something of God's compassion with the world, to proclaim God's kingdom, to reveal God's truth. That our lives can share in God's life should take our breath away.

With that promise as my starting point, and with my encyclopedic collection of spiritual errors to guide me, at least, in what not to do, it seems that opening our lives to God, ever so gently, requires three simple things.

First, we need silence. Our anxious selves with their distractions, desires, and agendas make it impossible for us to be receptive to God. If we are to have any sense of our deeper truth, of others' reality or of God's agency in our world, we need a baseline of stillness and silence from which we listen to God.

For some people, contemplative silence is an intimate way into the experience of God. For others, it is more like spiritual hygiene that restores a basic minimal sanity. For all of us, it helps us to

be open to what is deep and true between ourselves and God.

Second, we need familiarity with basic spiritual practices. One positive thing the monastery did was to educate me in the fundamental practices of living a spiritual life: various traditions of prayer and meditation, self-reflection, scriptural study and devotion, worshipping in community, keeping a journal, serving others, manual labor, and mindfulness in ordinary life.

None of these are magical techniques that instantly create spiritual wellness, but when these practices are gently and sensitively explored, we can find what we need to nurture our souls and be more open to others and God.

Third, we need communal listening to the Word of God. I love Biblical scholarship that analyzes the history and textual complexity of the Bible. More primary than such scholarship is, however, the practice of gathering with friends to hear what God is saying to us, through scripture. In such holy listening, we encounter the living and active God, and we gain a sense of how we can surrender to be more faithful to the action of God in our lives.

To those who doubt that God can speak to anyone in this direct and personal way, I can only say that it happens, miraculously but predictably, when we give Scripture solid attention and trust.

This fall we are launching a new small groups program that cultivates these fundamentals of Christian life. It will be called Finding God in the Ordinary: Small Groups to Nurture Christian Spirituality.

"THE GREATEST FULLNESS OF JOY THAT WE SHALL HAVE, AS I SEE IT, IS THE MARVELOUS GRACIOUSNESS AND FRIENDLINESS OF THE FATHER WHO IS OUR CREATOR, IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WHO IS OUR BROTHER AND OUR SAVIOR."
[JULIAN OF NORWICH]

Since February I have been meeting bi-weekly with 14 St. Michael's parishioners and training with them in how to facilitate these groups. Each group will be small, with 10 parishioners and two facilitators. Meeting once a week for eight weeks, each will last 90 minutes.

We will learn together how to sit in silence before God. We will learn about spiritual practices. We will listen and respond to scripture together.

We are, all of us, spiritual beginners. This is marvelous. We can all wake every day to the hope of our lives being open to and used by God. We can all learn how to respond to God with more sensitivity and lightness of spirit. It is my joy to be sharing this with you.



OUR SPECIFIC HISTORIES AND FAULTS
CAN BE OPENED AND USED BY GOD
TO SHARE SOMETHING OF GOD'S
COMPASSION, TO PROCLAIM GOD'S
KINGDOM, TO REVEAL GOD'S TRUTH.
THAT OUR LIVES CAN SHARE IN GOD'S
LIFE SHOULD TAKE OUR BREATH AWAY.



Father Robert Fruehwirth
celebrates the Eucharist
with Vacation Bible School
kids in August.



TIME SOFTENS THE WOUNDS OF LOSING A LOVED ONE, AND ONE LEARNS TO LIVE WITH THE LOSS, AS THE PAIN BECOMES LESS SHARP. BUT GRIEF INVARIABLY CHANGES YOU.



Hand-painted detail on a harp built by Holly Gloff's late husband, Rob. The couple shared a love for music, and they learned to play the harp together. After he died, playing was painful for her.

IN TUNE WITH GRIEF

Words: **The Rev. Holly Gloff**

Like many people, when Christmas is over, as I pack away the tree ornaments, I take a moment to reflect on the most special ones. I remember people who have touched my life and those who have changed it dramatically. One particular ornament always brings a tear to my eye — a two-inch-tall gold harp. My life changed dramatically the day it was given to me.

My late husband, Rob, and I shared most things, even grocery shopping, which is my most hated chore. Our great love was music — not only as a hobby — it was also our profession. We played in pit orchestras, taught and freelanced. He was the better musician of the two of us, and most everything came easily to him.

One day, when surfing the web was first becoming popular, I found myself searching for harps.

Photos: **Susan Rountree**

I'd wanted to learn to play the harp since I had listened to a harpist in a recital when I was in my teens. I didn't live in the right tax bracket for that sort of purchase, so it remained a dream. Several decades later, Rob and I were married and as I surfed, I found a web page advertising harp kits. Who knew there were these smaller, more affordable harps in existence? Before I met Rob, he had made a clavichord merely by looking at photographs. So why not a harp? He knew I wanted to learn to play the instrument, and he figured if he made one, he'd learn to play it, too.

So we agreed to save up for a kit. A potter/priest friend of mine had made a large vase for me, so Rob and I stored away any cash either of us received from teaching in this large purple vase. It took a long time for us to save up, but one Christmas, we got close. Rob went to the bank, and got a \$100 bill and put it in a small box, along with the

gold harp ornament. It was the final few dollars we needed to order the harp kit!

We ordered the kit and he built the harp on the dining room table and coffee table. It turned out beautifully, and we began driving an hour from our home in Charlottesville, Va., to our teacher in Richmond. It was a chunk out of our day for lessons, certainly, but we had no problem filling the drive time with chitchat. We became obsessed with learning the instrument, spending a good two hours per person per day practicing, discovering that learning the harp was far more difficult than we had anticipated.

Rob continued making harps and began arranging pieces for flute and harp, giving me the difficult flute parts and writing simple but beautiful harp parts for himself.

We spent several happy years playing the harp, reading about harps, talking about harps and of course attending harp conferences. Our holidays usually involved harps in one way or another.

The end of our life together, in fact, included our beloved harp. Rob was diagnosed with leukemia when I was beginning my final year in seminary, and died shortly after we moved to Raleigh in 2006. I played the harp for him, and as he was dying, our good friend Anita Burroughs-Price from the North Carolina Symphony came and played for him on one of the harps Rob had made.



I was shattered by his death. I had lost my best friend, my soul mate and the love of my life. I found it hard to play the harp, and his hand-made instruments sat sadly in my living room, reminders of our love of the instrument and each other, growing out of tune.

I tried to revive my interest in the instrument by going to the largest folk harp conference in the country, held each year in New Jersey. It was one Rob and I had attended yearly since the conference began. Attending was a mistake! I felt alone, and miserable.

Everyone around me seemed to be with a friend or husband and I felt left out. People we had known for all those years would come up to me and ask where Rob was. Having to explain over and over and over again that he had died opened the wounds time and again. I would go back to my room and weep.

I stopped playing the harp for a long time, only pulling it out to play for parishioners and others in the hospital, in hospice or in their homes. Sometimes, passions last only for a season. Sometimes, they are with you for life. I do play the harp now for my own pleasure on occasion, but I don't think that I'll ever quite recapture the passion I had when I was playing it with Rob.

Time softens the wounds of losing a loved one, and one learns to live with the loss, as the pain becomes less sharp. But grief invariably changes you. But for the better — or the worse? I suspect that we are the ones to determine that.

It has been almost 11 years now since Rob died, and there is joy in my life. Rob's presence will always be with me, but it no longer drags me down. I'm different, and I've learned a lot about grief and a lot about being with people who are grieving. It is always a privilege to walk with someone who is in that grief process. Grief makes one vulnerable, and when someone allows me into their very precious and fragile lives, it is a gift to me. It is both a calling and a gift to walk this walk.

Are you living through grief now? If so, I invite you to join our grief group this fall. Beginning Sept. 18 and continuing until Thanksgiving, I'll host a grief support group on Monday afternoons at my house from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Our group can accommodate about 10 people, so it will be a small, intimate group of people who can join together to share their stories, receive support and give support to those who are also living through grief. Please contact me at the church or email me at gloff@holymichael.org to find out more. I look forward to our shared journey.





WITH GRACE

Words: Beth Grace

Photos: ©Brian Mullins for the Diocese of NC

THE REV. SAMUEL RODMAN WAS CONSECRATED AS THE XII BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA ON JULY 15. OUR OWN BETH GRACE WRITES ABOUT HER TIME ON THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE AND REFLECTS ON THE WORDS OF OUR NEW BISHOP AND WHAT THEY MEAN TO HER LIFE IN CHRIST.

You never would have noticed it.

A flick of the wrist, and Samuel Sewall Rodman III deftly removed the silicone ring from his finger that he had worn since the diocesan Walkabouts Week in February.

The ring, swirled with flashes of green, orange and yellow, was a gift from the Transition Committee to each of the five nominees. It was offered as a symbol and message of love, support and friendship as the nominees embarked on one of the hardest and longest job tryouts in the world.

The ring bore just two words, in white typewriter font:

with grace

He smiled as he stood on the altar of Duke Chapel at his consecration and slipped on the shining new bishop's ring – a gift from his wife and daughters – then handed the silicone ring to his wife, Debbie, for safe-keeping.

Inside his new ring of office, his family had inscribed two words: with grace.

Sam told the 10 of us on the Transition Committee shortly before he was ordained in July that the ring and the words had touched his heart and stayed with him.

"I have hardly taken it off since the walkabouts," he said. "These words, your words to me, have meant so much."

It has been clear to us as we've gotten to know him — the Transition Committee organizes and implements the walkabouts, acts as shepherds to each nominee and assists in preparations for the ordination and consecration — that Bishop Sam is a calm, quiet, pastoral soul who loves first and asks questions later.

He's a sharp administrator, for sure, but he is also a former parish priest who has earned his knowledge at the altar, by the side of parishioners, on the streets with the hungry and homeless, and with fellow clergy. Dozens of parishioners from churches he served in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts traveled to Durham to be with their friend at his ordination.

He made it clear as he spoke to the hundreds gathered at Duke Chapel for the consecration that he *gets* us, all 120 congregations that make up the Diocese of North Carolina.

"Things look and feel a little different now," he said with a laugh shortly after being presented with the gifts a new bishop receives – from a Bible to a ring to vestments to the miter, the tall headdress bishops wear. "Someone asked me this week if I would be a different person after today. And I said, 'No, I will still be the same person, just with a bigger hat.'"

"But I actually feel like I have a bigger heart today for every person who is here to celebrate and give thanks for the gift of the Spirit that has touched each of us in this space on this day. And it is that grateful heart that is the heart I offer to you, the people of North Carolina."

All hearts were open and few eyes were dry as he promised to be faithful in prayer; to study Scripture; to boldly proclaim the Gospel; to encourage, support and nourish all of us in our ministries; to guard the faith, unity and discipline of the Church; and to share with his fellow bishops in the government of the whole church.

His fellow bishops gathered around, laying hands on him. Those who couldn't reach, clasped the arm or shoulder of a brother or sister bishop in front of them.

From above, that tiny gathering formed the shape of a heart.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, the 11th Bishop of our diocese, raised his hand in blessing:

"Fill, we pray, the heart of this your servant whom you have chosen to be a bishop in your church, with such love of you and of all the people, that he may feed and tend the flock of Christ. ... In all things, may he present before you the acceptable offering of a pure, and gentle, and holy life."

And as the service bulletin said: The people in a loud voice respond, "Amen."



Beth Grace is a nonprofit marketing/communications professional who loves words, her church, her friends and enjoys nothing more than a good belly laugh. You can find her in the pews every Sunday, trying not to talk too much during the quiet times.



Susan Byrum Rountree photo

Above: The plastic ring worn by the bishop-elect and the Transition Team.

At left: The Rt. Rev. Samuel Rodman is congratulated by the Most Rev. Michael Curry on his ordination.

Photo: Susan Rountree

COME CHILDREN UNTO ME

THE ST. MICHAEL'S CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM BEGINS
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10.

Something big is happening at St. Michael's on Sunday mornings, and we want your children to be a part of it. Our unique chapel programs draw children ages 2 to third grade into age-appropriate worship, where they learn about living a God-centered life.

Our youngest join children their own age for Sunday School at 9:30 a.m., then attend chapel with their class. Chapel time even for children in kindergarten and younger is filled with song and story and birthday celebrations. Children serve as acolytes and take up a collection.

Children in grades 1-3 join parents for worship at 9:30 a.m., then follow "Miss Kim" behind the cross to Beckwith Chapel during the Sequence Hymn. In chapel, they'll hear the Gospel or Old Testament reading for the day, followed by songs and class time, where the stories will be explored in arts and crafts projects.

Parents are welcome at any time during our chapel services. You'll want to see for yourself how truly special the worship experience is for children at St. Michael's.

Go forth with God!



IF YOU BUILD IT, FRIENDSHIP COMES

Words & Photos: Susan Byrum Rountree

When parishioners arrive for the 9:30 a.m. service on Sunday morning, a quiet coterie has already been at work, gathering up used linens from the 8 a.m. service, washing silver chalices, counting wafers and resetting the table with fresh linens before the next service begins. It's a devoted group, and on Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday mornings, members gather in the sacristy and set about their duties, all performed with love and to the glory of God.

Sue Ann Allen has been part of this coterie for almost 30 years. Joining our parish in 1988 from the Church of the Nativity, she was quickly pulled into the circle to serve on the fourth Wednesday. "I still have the fourth Wednesday," she says. "Early morning is my favorite time," she adds. "You're the only person there, and you think of all the women who for so long have prepared the meal for the congregation. You are in there with God."

With so many years of service, she's had her share of mishaps. Like the time she came for Wednesday communion and forgot it was her day. Or how for one of Greg Jones' first services at St. Michael's, she forgot to put out the alms basin and he had to use a cardboard box. "I always wake up in the night and worry that I didn't do it right."

The St. Michael's sacristy has seen a lot of wear in more than 60 years. Built in 1956, the original fixtures and cabinets — some of which had missing knobs or wouldn't shut — had not undergone even a small update in all those years. There has been no place to safely store soiled but beautiful linens until the linen team picks them up for cleaning. The Flower Guild, which arranges the altar flowers on most Sundays, didn't have access to a sink.

All that changed in late summer, when contractors gutted the area, creating new space for the Flower Guild and updating plumbing, fixtures and cabinets for the Altar Guild. It's a labor of love, brought in part by parishioners Bettie and David Sousa, with the help of the Altar Guild and other parishioners who sought to complete a long-overdue renovation of this important space. And the work is being done in honor of Sue Ann and her husband, Keith, for their longtime service to our parish.

David, who with Keith has worked on every capital project at St. Michael's for 20 years, wanted to finish work long planned but which lacked funding. His days working with Keith on upgrading our property and building were among the most meaningful

volunteer experiences he has had in the church. Together they oversaw the expansion of office and Day School space and nave renovation in 2002, and the transept and organ projects in 2011.

"The sacristy was awful," says David. "Knowing it was something important to Sue Ann and Keith, Bettie and I wanted to help finish our checklist of projects."

Being involved in all the building projects was "my ministry to God," says Keith, 90, a self-described marketing man. "Everywhere I've been, I've worked with building projects. God brought me here to get involved in the remodel," he adds. "But I hope He's finally run out of ideas."

The Allens have plans to move this fall to South Carolina to be nearer their daughter, so their work here is itself near completion.

Being involved with our church's facility has been an important ministry for Keith. "Adding bells to the bell tower was a great project," he says. "The architect didn't want us to cut a hole in the roof of the bell tower but we had to. And we had to reprogram the crane in a 10 mph wind. At 6 a.m. the next day, we started to put them in in the dark."

When the nave was renovated and the transept added, the Building Committee invited all ages to sign the floor. "It was an opportunity for everybody to participate," Keith says.

The nave renovation included overseeing the re-silvering of the large cross above the altar, which had to be done by hand. Once, during the renovation, Keith showed up in his slippers and robe to inspect the work. "He had been in the hospital, from a heart attack," says Sue Ann, and they were on their way home when he asked her to stop at the church. "I thought he was going in to pray."

"We are happy to be a part of this project," says David. "The Altar Guild decided to dip into their own funds and help us do it right. The church came together to make it happen."



20 YEARS OF WORKING ON BUILDING PROJECTS TOGETHER HAS DRAWN THE SOUSAS AND THE ALLENS INTO A LASTING FRIENDSHIP. THE SACRISTY RENOVATION IS THEIR FINAL PROJECT.

Bettie Sousa says David and Keith wouldn't have become such close friends if they'd not worked on all the projects together. "David is the 'make it happen' guy. He gets invited to do a lot of things because he is that guy."

"Keith's friendship with David has been extremely important to him," says Sue Ann, as David wipes a tear from his eye. They seem much like a father/son team in their efforts to keep the St. Michael's building beautiful.

"Keith and I first formed a bond as fellow parishioners worshipping together," says David.

"As the years passed, and we teamed up to improve all things bricks and mortar at St. Michael's, we built our own relationship at the same pace — caring for each other, helping each other, listening to each other — and all under the watchful eyes of God. That relationship has been a true gift, a reward for helping to build for the future of our church."

"We are not only Christian friends," says Keith. "We're real friends."

"My last name before I was adopted was Plumb," says Keith, who was separated from his twin brother, Johnny, when he was very young. The name seems to suit the man who still works to keep us plumb.

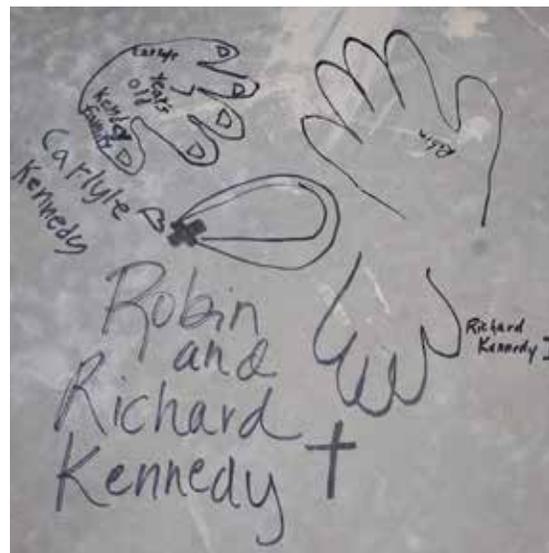


Photo 1: Sue Ann Allen, Bettie Sousa, David Sousa & Keith Allen in the St. Michael's Sacristy, prior to renovation.

Photo 2: Signing the floor of the Transept in 2011

GROWING (UP) WITH GOD



The annual youth mission trip is a bonding experience for our teens and their leaders.

TWENTY-TWO OF US SAT IN A CIRCLE, WITH TEA LIGHT CANDLES AT OUR FEET. I TOOK A DEEP BREATH AND RESTED IN KNOWING THAT GOD WOULD CARRY US THROUGH AN EXPERIENCE NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED. FOUR HOURS AND 17 MINUTES LATER, WE HAD FINISHED.

Words & Photos:
Abby Van Noppen,
Director of Youth Ministry

Great things don't come from staying in our comfort zone. Creating change, keeping things fresh, continuing to build and challenge my students is paying off big time in this ministry! The last three mission trips have built upon themselves to be even better than the last. I continue to challenge the students and my leaders to think outside of tradition, on being better, being more inclusive in ways that will benefit our entire community.

This July we finished a weeklong mission trip to Stanton, Ky., with our high schoolers. Each day we were hammering, building decks, scraping paint, putting new roofs on, fixing leaks in drywall, painting trailers and homes. All of these significant repairs were not only helping to improve



the lives of our “neighbors,” but the lives in our youth community as well. I can’t say more good things about this year’s trip. (Save The Date: June 17-23, 2018 – Greenville, S.C.)

This year, at the end of our mission trip, the annual Saturday night Love Feast took on a new shape. We challenged everyone to openly talk about their gratitude and where they saw God in their peers instead of it being a one-on-one, whispered private conversation.

So all 22 of us were sitting in a circle, in chairs, with tea light candles at our feet. Not really knowing how any of this would go, I took a deep breath and rested in knowing that God would carry us through an experience no matter what happened. Four hours and 17 minutes later, we had finished. Yes, you read that correctly! Almost every student

talked about and praised each person in our group. Talk about powerful, talk about the Holy Spirit being in that room. Over FOUR hours filled with students openly speaking about their peers with love, gratitude, and thankfulness of each other and for our community. All of that was possible with my leaders’ help, but also with the trust that the students had in our community.

Continuing the momentum from the mission trip to the start of the school year in EYC is key. We rely heavily on the support of the high school students who went on the mission trip but also on our Junior EYC upperclassmen. These students want to be challenged and pushed when it comes to their faith, so finding the right topics and activities to keep them active and involved is key. This year I’ve found something similar to what we’ve already been doing, but with a little more struc-

See *GROWING* on page 24

LIFE RESURRECTED

Words & Photo: Karen Wagoner



THOSE OF YOU WHO KNOW VAUGHN KNOW THAT THIS IS PRETTY MUCH IN KEEPING WITH WHO AND WHAT HE IS. HE IS A REPAIRER, A FIXER OF THINGS, AND A MAN WITH A BIG, KIND HEART, A MAN OF DEEP AND ABIDING FAITH IN GOD.

Several summers ago, I opened the door from my kitchen to my garage to find a tiny hummingbird flitting around furiously, in a panic, to find its way out. The garage door was open, but the weary little bird was unable to navigate its way out to open space. My grandson Miles was with me at the time, and the two of us tried everything we knew to do to coax our diminutive friend out. Brooms, towels, you name it, we used it. It was no use. I knew what fate lay ahead of that bird; hummingbirds are incredibly small and they need to eat frequently. Without a food source, I knew the bird wouldn't last long.

About the time Miles and I went back inside, my husband Vaughn drove up, and I quickly explained the situation to him. Like us, Vaughn tried everything he could to extract the bird, but it wouldn't budge. It would fly toward the open garage door, but somehow it couldn't see that by flying just a little lower, it could free itself from the confines of our garage. Vaughn came into the house discouraged, knowing as I did, what would happen to that sweet little bird.

We left the garage door open, hoping it would find its way out. Vaughn left again to run an errand, and when he returned, he found the bird on the floor of the garage. Assuming it was dead, he knelt to pick it up and remove it. To his surprise, he discovered that the bird was still breathing ever so shallowly. He came into the house and asked me to get him an eye dropper and some hummingbird food that I had stored in the refrigerator.

Armed with the eye dropper and the sugary sweet hummingbird food, Vaughn and Miles made their way back out to the garage. Vaughn instructed

Miles to simply stay beside him and be very still. I think I can honestly say that the only time I have seen Miles any quieter and stiller is when he is asleep.

Slowly, Vaughn picked up the bird, barely alive at that point, and filled the eye dropper with the sugar solution. Drop by slow drop, Vaughn placed the hummingbird food on the bird's beak, gently easing some into its mouth. He did that for a good 30 minutes, but it seemed like hours. Finally, the bird tried to lift its head. Vaughn kept feeding it.

Then it tried to move its wings. At that point, Vaughn and Miles relocated themselves, their supplies, and the bird to the backyard under our apple tree. We had noticed that the hummingbirds we were attracting to our feeder seemed to be flying back to that tree.

Under the shade of that tree, Vaughn and Miles sat down and Vaughn continued feeding the bird. I watched from our kitchen window, silently offering prayers that the little bird, who was fighting so valiantly to live, would, indeed, live.

It took another 30 minutes or so before our feathered friend really began to rally. It tried to fly a couple more times unsuccessfully. Vaughn continued to feed it.

Fly, little bird, fly! Live! Finally, on its third attempt, the bird flew up and into the apple tree.

Even through the tears in my eyes, I could see that the bird was okay and back in its element. Vaughn and Miles stayed under the tree for a few minutes to make sure the bird didn't need more help, but it didn't. We saw it later in

the day at one of our hummingbird feeders.

Life at our house returned to normal, but I will never forget that incident. Hummingbirds still fly to and from our feeders beside the apple tree. I guess Miles was too young at the time to assign much depth of understanding to the event. He just knew his Papa had helped keep a little, helpless bird from dying. I think it made Vaughn feel good knowing he had been able to help this bird.

Those of you who know Vaughn know that this is pretty much in keeping with who and what he is. He is a repairer, a fixer of things, and a man with a big, kind heart, and a man of deep and abiding faith in God.

I've thought about this incident for a long time. Just as God designs and makes the hummingbird to fly, He makes us to fly, to soar, to be all that He intends us to be. When we are wounded, He gently picks us up, comforts us, nourishes us, and gets us back on our feet. He resurrects us as He resurrected Jesus, in the hope that we will be changed individuals. He resurrects and changes us so that we can go out into the world more loving; more compassionate; more giving of ourselves; more respectful of ourselves, others, and our environment; and kinder to all people. Thanks be to God.



Karen Wagoner, a retired teacher, enjoys children and knitting and singing and weeding and cooking. She has been married to Vaughn "Bubba" Wagoner for 44 years.



A STILL SMALL VOICE

Words: Elaine Bayless

Photo: Susan Rountree

HAVE YOU EVER WOKEN UP FROM A DREAM AND BEEN RELIEVED TO REALIZE THAT IT WAS JUST A DREAM? THAT WAS THE SENSATION I HAD – LIKE WAKING UP FROM A DREAM. GOD WAS GENTLY TELLING ME THAT THIS ENGAGEMENT HAD BEEN A MISTAKE.

I've heard countless people say they just wish God would give them a clear message, some "writing on the wall." Of course, we all forget that when God actually did write on the wall, King Belshazzar was terrified out of his mind. Heck, even an angelic visitation always begins with the angel saying, "Do not fear."

But despite the dearth of angelic messages in our lives, God does speak to us, quite often. God just seems to prefer subtlety. In 1 Kings 19, Elijah begged to experience God. God agreed, and sent an earthquake, a firestorm, and a tornado. But God was not in any of them. Through it all, Elijah remained, waiting for God. And his patience was rewarded with a still small voice.

The first time I heard God, the storm around me was emotional. I was alone, crying in the middle of the night in my childhood bedroom. As I prayed, begging God for comfort, I sensed the Holy Spirit. It was a calling, an invitation: it was time for me to commit myself. My Sunday School training kicked in. Of course! I needed to "invite Jesus into my heart." I prayed, tentative and unsure, using the words I had been programmed to say. My conversion prayer was my response to a wordless voice in the midst of my turmoil. I was 9 years old, but from that point forward I knew my life belonged to God in a way it hadn't before.

When I was 22, I became engaged. It had been a rushed relationship, and it was not a good match. Within months of the engagement, I was tor-



Elaine Bayless, third from left, looks on as her husband, Dale, holds daughter Tori during her June 2015 baptism.

mented by doubts. By September, I was begging God for some direction. At Thanksgiving, God answered me.

We were decorating the family Christmas tree at my parents' house. My brother and his wife were there. I watched as my fiancée interacted with my family members, and I suddenly realized that this was the last time he would ever be in our house. Have you ever woken up from a dream and been relieved to realize that it was JUST a dream? That was the sensation I had — like waking up from a dream. God was gently telling me that this engagement had been a mistake. My epiphany brought an overwhelming sense of peace. I would finish this trip, and then end the engagement.

Now of course, ending the engagement wasn't easy, despite my knowledge that God had spoken. After all, "the truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable." Yet despite the stress and sorrow that I endured, I never wavered in my be-

lief that ending the relationship was the right thing for me to do.

Twenty years later, I can confirm that belief: I met someone else and have been happily married for almost 13 years!

As I grew older and more adept at hearing God's voice, the link between spiritual communion and human language grew stronger. By age 27, I was ready for a career change. I was researching being a lawyer, a psychologist, or a pastor, and I joined a mentoring group being led by my current pastor.

As I walked to one mentoring session, I asked God what career path I should follow. The Holy Spirit brought to mind that wonderful resurrection appearance in John 21, when Peter declares his love for Jesus and Jesus tells him to "Feed my sheep." I understood that Jesus' directive to Peter was also God's directive to me: "Feed my sheep." The still small voice gave me those words as my career

continued on the next page

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guide. It was this moment that led me to get a Master's of Divinity and begin my current business of life coaching and pastoral counseling. Everything I've done in my career since that moment is an attempt to feed the sheep that God sends to me. When God speaks, it is Spirit to spirit.

Despite my best efforts, the words I've written here don't truly convey what it is like to experience God's still small voice. But we are creatures of language, so our first response to that spiritual moment is words.

Our brains valiantly translate the spiritual communion into language. "I just knew." "I felt a weight being lifted." "I was moved to prayer." "I felt peaceful." And once we have put it into words, actions follow.

My conversion prayer was followed by proclamation: I told my friends and family what I had done, and then I was publicly baptized. After my epiphany, I ended my engagement. When I heard God's call to feed His sheep, I enrolled in graduate school.

In 2013, I attended The Gathering. Though we were members of another church, I knew if we ever left our church, we would have to visit St. Michael's because it was so much like the churches that Dale and I grew up in. Except that the Episcopal theology matched our own much better than the churches we had grown up in.

And then our pastor left our church, and there were some major leadership failures, so we decided to become Episco-

paliens. We visited two other churches and when we came to St. Michael's, Dale immediately was ready to join. Actually, come to think of it, perhaps that still small voice was speaking to Dale!

In my life, I have experienced emotional earthquakes and hurricanes and blazing fires, and God's voice has not always been the loudest or most obvious communication to me. But I have learned to stand still and wait in silence, like Elijah. I don't want writing on my wall, or a visit from an angel. Instead I pursue the silence in the storm.



Elaine Bayless is a life coach, pastoral counselor, and Reiki Master in Raleigh, NC. She works with overwhelmed moms and over-achieving perfectionists to help them create a delicious life of ease and joy. Her hobbies include gardening, baking and cross stitch.



GROWING

continued from page 19

ture. It's called The Grow Curriculum, and it'll be taking our students on a spiritual journey with a focus on owning their faith. To help guide our program year and discussion topics, we'll focus on four outcomes:

SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS — The beginning of the year is a great time to talk about Christlike relationships. Everyone's back in school, we get to see our friends, maybe kids we don't get along with. Are we treating others with God's love? We'll cover friendships, wisdom and loving others.

USE YOUR GIFTS — In the winter, we'll talk about how we can identify our gifts and talents to give back to others. Topics include Identity, Christmas and Hurt. We'll also have hands-on activities like service projects and small group discussions.

SPEND TIME WITH GOD — The spring is a great time to talk about our desire to grow our relationship with God. We'll focus on spiritual habits, Easter and family for small group discussions, as well as prayer and Scripture.

SHARE YOUR STORY - Last year we started a series with our volunteer leaders to share their faith stories at EYC, and I know it was powerful for our students. The fourth outcome is for our students to share how God has impacted their lives. We'll talk about Jesus and justice and have hands-on experiences sharing our story over service work and mission trips.

There's no finish line or certificate when it comes to spiritual growth. Our growth is our own personal life-long journey. These four topics are a natural result of living a life of faith in God. Each one builds upon the other in a great way to help challenge every student. I can't wait to see what this year has in store for St. Michael's Youth Ministry. I can tell you, it'll be something awesome and we want every high school student at St. Michael's to grow with us. Come, and grow with God.



Abby Van Noppen has been director of youth ministry for four years.

THE GRAND LADY'S NEW "DO"

Words & photo: Susan Rountree



It's a bright summer morning, and director of operations Lee Hayden is making her daily walk around the campus. She's carrying a tape measure, and she bends down over a storm drain and measures the height. On another day, you might find her in the Nave, putting the kneelers up and down to find which ones aren't working. Or in the kitchen, mounting new kitchen rules on the wall. In her five years as our facilities guru, she's taken a fine tooth comb over every inch of our property, bringing this grand old lady into the 21st century.

This summer, a major task that's been on her list since 2015 has finally been accomplished: a kitchen upgrade.

"In November 2015, I called together a group of people to meet in the kitchen and offer their opinions on creating a healthier, safer and more efficient space for our parishioners who use the kitchen to prepare and/or serve food," she says. "Our wooden cabinets and drawers were aging rapidly and becoming problematic."

Christine Laco, who regularly cooks in the kitchen as part of the Blessings, Friends of St. Michael's and Newcomer Committee Kitchen Crew; Scott Murphy, who has had a 43-year career representing manufactures of industrial kitchen equipment; and Dave Crawford, active kitchen volunteer in Men's Ministries, Pancake Supper and Newcomer Ministry and worked 25+ years in restaurant and food industry, developed a plan to replace cabinets.

(The stove was replaced last year.) Lee asked the Wednesday lunch crew how best to organize the space to suit their needs. After new metal cabinetry and counter space was installed, Lee and assistant Carolyn L'Italien sorted through the entire kitchen, labeling every cabinet and drawer to make the kitchen more serviceable for everyone who uses it, not matter the event.

"It is my hope that our more orderly environment will make it easy for all to use and enjoy the kitchen," Lee says.

She also turned her sights on the burial garden, where early this year, two unused squares containing 30 spaces each were prepared to receive ashes.

"The original 1996 plans for our Memorial Garden called for 10 large plots containing 30 spaces each," Lee says. "In mid 2016 only 10 spaces within the squares were available. With that in mind I contacted Mike Wyer, stone contractor who rebuilt our front steps, and parishioner and craftsman Gary Mazur, who built our walkway to the Labyrinth."

Mike had the knowledge and talent to create the brick work, she says, while Gary and his son Ryan had the expertise to prepare each individual space within the larger square, set the granite markers and lay selected river rock between makers.

Sandy Page and Christine Laco from our Grounds Committee advised on landscaping within the plots. The

plantings in the original plots have been difficult to maintain, so they chose natural stones to fill the space between burial plots.

The use of natural elements was important to maintain this beautiful and sacred space," she says.

Around the campus, more work has been done, including:

- Security access doors added for safety of our preschoolers
- pruning and care of 22 mature maple trees in our parking lot
- repair of 28 kneelers in the nave
- replacement of brass hardware on nave-to-narthex doors
- window cleaning
- refurbishment of Smedes Chapel doors and woodwork
- washing, prepping and painting of tongue & groove board ceiling in our covered walkways
- installation of new carpet for Parish Hall
- stripping and waxing of all downstairs floors
- Sacristy renovation (to be completed in September)

Now sporting a shiny new "do", the grand lady St. Michael's is ready for her flock to return.





LIFELONG DISCIPLE

SUNDAY FORUM

September 10

Reconciliation and Scripture I

ADAM, WHERE ARE YOU?

SCRIPTURE AND GOD'S SEARCH FOR US.

WITH THE REV. ROBERT FRUEHWIRTH

Introducing the parish theme of reconciliation, Associate Rector Robert Fruehwirth will reflect on the overarching story of Scripture, the Old and New Testaments, as that of God's search for us, culminating in a new kind of reconciling community in Christ.

September 17

Reconciliation and Scripture II

SEEING THE FACE OF GOD IN THE OTHER: JACOB,

ESAU AND RECONCILIATION

WITH JEFFREY HENSLEY

Reflecting on a key episode in the Hebrew Scriptures, Parish Theologian Jeffrey Hensley will explore the elusive experience of God and of reconciliation in the Old Testament.

WRITING YOUR FAITH STORY
THROUGH NOVEMBER 12

WITH SUSAN BYRUM ROUNTREE

Explore some of the Bible's most interesting characters with the writers of St. Michael's and discover how their faith stories mirror your own. In-class exercises encourage writing your own story.

September 24

Reconciliation and Scripture III

LOVE'S REDEEMING WORK IS DONE:

JESUS AND THE GOSPELS

WITH THE REV. GREG JONES

Greg Jones, Rector of St. Michael's, will explore how Jesus accomplished humanity's reconciliation, and still accomplishes it today.

October 1

Be Reconciled To God

Join our Annual Fund team for the annual kickoff.

Sunday, Oct. 8

Coffee & The Word for Parents

Parents of children aged 0 up to age 15 are invited to an informal coffee hour discussion of the Gospel and the sermon. It will be held in the Convocation Room. Regular Sunday morning child care provided.

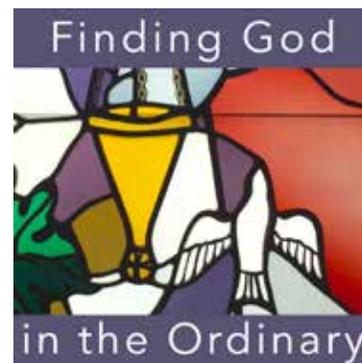
SMALL GROUPS

Finding God in the Ordinary: Small Groups to nurture Christian and Contemplative Spirituality

The aim of the program is to introduce Contemplative and Christian Spirituality and to explore together what helps us respond to God in ordinary life.

In a series of 90-minute sessions, we will build friendships as we explore Christian spirituality using the book *Soul Feast* by Marjorie Thompson.

In each gathering we will discuss a chapter from Thompson's book and practice attentive listening and response to scripture. We will also experience silence and contemplation as uniquely powerful ways of being open to God.



Participants will be asked to commit to regular attendance, modest reading, and to follow a light but consistent, daily practice of prayer and reflection.

STRUCTURE

The course begins with an open invitation to everyone to a "Come and See" session, during which time you will be asked to state your preference for when to meet, as different groups will meet at different times.

We will then meet for eight consecutive weeks, and participants will agree to attend all eight sessions. The sessions start the week of Sept. 25 and end the week of Nov. 13.

Each group will have two trained facilitators with a maximum of ten other participants.

HOW TO SIGN UP

'Come and See' Introduction to the Program
Visit holymichael.org and sign up for one of the four introductory taste and see sessions, email Robert at fruehwirth@gmail.com, or sign up at the Front Desk at church.

BIBLE & BOOK STUDIES

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Finding I AM

TUESDAYS: 7 – 8:45 P.M., OCT. 3 – Nov 7
FRIDAYS: 9:30 – 11:30 A.M., OCT. 6–Nov. 10

What is the deep cry of your heart? Do you have a nagging ache in your soul that causes sleepless nights? Do you whisper the same prayer repeatedly with no apparent answers or satisfaction? Jesus not only cares about this spiritual wrestling, but He also longs to step in and guide you through it.

In this six week Bible study, author Lysa Turkeurst explores the seven I AM statements of Jesus found in the Gospel of John. Through the understanding of these promises, we will learn "How Jesus Fully Satisfies the Cry of Your Heart".

Child Care available on Friday
Workbook Cost - \$16
Contact: Frances Penick fhpenick@nc.rr.com or
#919-810-1298

WEDNESDAY STUDY

11 A.M. WEDNESDAYS, ONGOING
This clergy-led study examines the lectionary for the upcoming Sunday.
In the Parlor

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

THURSDAYS, 7 A.M., YEAR ROUND
An informal discussion of the week's lectionary led by lay members of the parish.
Conference Room

YOUNG ADULTS

THEOLOGY ON TAP
Check our Parish Calendar on holymichael.org or the Young Adult Ministry Facebook page for current events.

JULIAN OF NORWICH STUDY

Drawn by God

FRIDAYS, 1 P.M.

Starting September 15, a new book group will meet with Associate Rector, the Rev. Robert Fruehwirth, every Friday, 1p.m.-2 p.m. to discuss his recently published book on Julian of Norwich, the great 14th century English mystic and spiritual writer.

Participants will be asked to read a chapter a week from this book and to reflect on and explore their faith and prayer in the light of Julian's experience of God. Everyone is welcome. No sign up or previous knowledge of Julian is required.

WORDS & WISDOM

SECOND WEDNESDAYS, 7 P.M.
IN MEMBER HOMES

A study of a wide range of books, ranging from spiritual memoir and fiction, to science and culture. Enjoy wine and cheese and informal discussion. Newcomers always welcome.

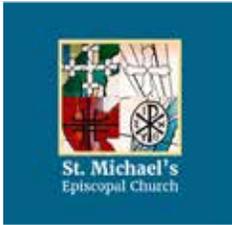
- Book Choices for Fall**
- September — *When Breath Becomes Air*
 - October — *Eudora Welty Collected Short Stories*
 - November — *Orphan Train*
 - December — *Formed by Love*

Locations will be announced in Canterbury Tales
Contact: Lisa Williamson
lisa@dtsssoftware.com

ARCHANGEL

A PUBLICATION OF
ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1520 Canterbury Rd.
Raleigh NC 27608-1106
919.782.0731 holymichael.org

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
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Raleigh, NC
PERMIT NO. 696



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The Most Rev. Michael Curry, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, joins the procession of bishops at Duke Chapel for the consecration of the Rt. Rev. Samuel Rodman, the XII Bishop of the Diocese of NC. See the story on page 12.
Photo ©Brian Mullins for the Diocese of NC.