

## **NOTES FROM THE RECTOR**

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit (1 Thess.5:16-19).*

What a great New Year’s resolution that would make. What if we determined to rejoice in the Lord always, pray throughout the day, and give thanks for (and sometimes in spite of) circumstances? What if we were more open to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in the life of our church?

There is a lot of excitement here at St. Michael’s as we enter into a new year. It is a time of new beginnings. We have a new Rector, new Vestry members, new faces at church services, and a new “Vision for Growth and Renewal.”

We sense that real growth is just around the corner. Of course, with growth comes a measure of pain. When churches begin to grow, get new leadership on board, and begin to affect changes that will help produce growth, there are, occasionally, some who do not feel they can go in the direction the church is headed. Sometimes they feel called to step away from the ministry of the church for a period. That, unfortunately, was the case for Roland our former senior warden. We were saddened with his decision to leave us. I and others reached out to him and tried to dissuade him from leaving the church he had served and loved so long. We wish him Godspeed and look forward to the day when God would bring him back to us.

Someone reminded me that when one door closes another opens. I am blessed that many doors are opening in our church. We have a Vestry which desires to venture into these open doors

into new vistas of ministry. More and more people in the church are beginning to find new ministries, new ways of serving at and for the church.

We are seeing people who have not been too involved in the church, now wanting to become active. Others who were content to sit back and let someone else do the work, are now volunteering to take on a new ministry.

We are also seeing a reemerging of more cheerful givers; those who don’t give of their time, talent and treasure not out of duty, but out of joy and gratitude to God.

I sense a new spirit at St. Michael’s. It is a spirit of joy in the Holy Spirit. It is a spirit of prayer which is invading the hearts of more and more people. It is a spirit of thankfulness for all that has happened as being a part of God’s plan for the growth of this parish. I see a growth in the Spirit here, while perhaps quenching the spirit of business as usual.

It is a new year, a new day in the life of this parish, and a new life in this church. Would you make it your resolution to rededicate your life to Christ and to his Church at St. Michael’s? Rejoice more, pray more, give thanks more, and above all do not quench the Holy Spirit. This is God’s will for you.

**LET US GROW!**

Fr. Roger

## **ASK THE RECTOR**

### **Why do we read the Psalm in church in different ways?**

The Psalms were originally written as songs to be sung. They reflect the majesty, glory and nature of God. They reflect the human condition as it goes through life. They reflect the heart’s cry to be in communion with God. That’s why we love them.

Some find reading the Psalms together (in unison) more meaningful. Some find that reading them responsively from the asterisk (Lay Reader reading first half of the verse and the congregation reading the last half) has more of a monastic feel to them. Still others like reading them antiphonally (men and women alternating, one side of the church alternating with the other). I leave the style of reading the Psalm up to the Lay Reader each Sunday.

May I suggest that by varying the way we read the Psalm, we are forced to pay more attention to what is being read? We may even find that Holy Spirit might bless us with a new insight because of the way in which the Psalm is read. Even if you might not be so comfortable with one style or another in reading the Psalms, my hope is that just by hearing them you will be inspired to read them again, and perhaps memorize them as a future source of encouragement and strength.

### VESTRY NEWS

The Vestry met on December 10. Some of the more notable things discussed include:

- ✓ Welcoming Carol Weekley as the new clerk of the Vestry.
- ✓ Accepting the resignation of the outgoing Sr. Warden from the Vestry.
- ✓ The nominees to next year's Vestry were announced by the nominating committee. They are Warden: Michael Stroh
- ✓ Vestry members elect- Mike Ham, Gary Kadow, Michael Rickard (3 year term); Bob Duvall-(filling in the 2 yr. term of Beverly Reilly).
- ✓ Finance Committee to be revived. Volunteers from Vestry-

Donna Strain, Jack Bidell, Michael Stroh.

- ✓ Affirmed the new plan for the youth Sunday School. Mark Dascomb and Michelle Rickard to head this up.
- ✓ Set Annual Meeting for Jan. 12.

### ANNUAL MEETING

St. Michael's Vestry announces that the Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 12. There will be one service this day only at 9 a.m.

The meeting begins with a catered brunch (free-will offering) at the end of the service. After the brunch we will begin the meeting. Annual meetings usually include the election or affirmation of new Vestry and Warden nominees, highlights from the past year, plans for the new year, special reports from organizations, the receiving of the Annual Report.

See you at the one 9 a.m. service on 1/12/03.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CONFIRMANDS

Bishop Garrison visited St. Michael's on December 22. He laid hands on four of our members as he confirmed their faith in Jesus and his Church. Congratulations to **Melissa DiLiberto, Timothy Thompson, Alicia Meacham, and Michelle Rickard.**

### EPIPHANY SERVICE

Since the Feast of the Epiphany falls on a Monday Fr. Roger has suggested that we transfer the Epiphany celebration to Sunday, January 5. This will be a one-time occurrence. Next year we will have a special "Feast of Lights" service on the actual day on which Epiphany is celebrated.

## **KUDOS**

Many thanks go out to all who helped make our Christmas celebrations so special and meaningful. Special thanks go to the Women's Guild for their help with the confirmation reception. Thanks also to Shirley Gardinier for the work she did on the Hanging of the Greens meal. Thanks also to the Acolytes, Lay Readers, Choir, Ushers, Greeters, and all who helped with the Greens.

## **COVENANT SUNDAY REPORT**

December 15 marked St. Michael's annual "Covenant Sunday." On that day those in attendance at our services, after a time of prayer, filled out pledge cards with the amount they believe the Lord wanted them to give to the ministry and mission of St. Michael's for 2003. These pledges were then brought to the front of the church by each individual pledger and placed in a container. The pledges were then set on fire as a burnt offering to God. By this act each member was reminded that their pledge and subsequent offerings are given to the Lord. What they give is between themselves and God.

The congregation was informed by letter and by sermon that St. Michael's is at a critical juncture in its history. Each member was urged to do their best to make sure that this church moves from a maintenance mentality to a mission mind-set. They were encouraged to do what they can financially to allow the Vestry to carry out the Vision for Growth and Renewal and to fully support the return of a full-time Rector. Fr. Roger challenged all members to help St. Michael's not only survive but thrive.

If you were not able to fill out a pledge card at church, would you pray about your pledge for the coming year? Then covenant with God to do what he urges you to do for the expansion of his kingdom through this church in 2003.

## **SPECIAL VESTRY MEETING**

The newly elected Vestry members will join with the current Vestry members for the first meeting of the 2003 Vestry on Tuesday, January 14 at 7 p.m. Members of St. Michael's are always welcome to attend any meeting of the Vestry and observe how decisions are made for your church. We meet in the conference room at the church.

## **CANAAN HOUSE**

It was good to have Shirley Trail with us at the Women's Guild Christmas luncheon again this year. She shared Canaan House news with us, answered questions and was pleased to accept our Christmas gifts for the women residents of the house. There will be nine women (a full house) for the holidays, so our gifts will help to brighten their days. In addition to the general household supplies we give through the year, Canaan House needs to replace the following – twin bed linens, dressers, free standing shelves for a bedroom, and paint for bedroom walls. If anyone could supply any of these items, please phone Shirley at 892-1563 during the daytime. Your continued interest in filling the household needs year around has been inspiring to us and to Shirley. She has remarked to us that many times when they are down to their last bottle of bleach or package of clear trash bags, we come to the door with those very needs. "Our God supplies all our needs in Christ Jesus...." We give Him all the praise. Your Canaan House Coordinators,

*Joan & Brian Webster*

### **WOMEN'S GUILD**

We wish to thank all those who helped us in completing our project "Christmas Child". Our Christmas Luncheon at the Italian Village was very pleasant and were especially blessed that Nancy, Alexandra and Elizabeth could join us. Now that Christmas is past, we must continue our participation in all areas of St. Michael's growth. Let's make a special effort to attend weekday Bible Study. That will give us strength to carry on. So start the New Year right by attending our first meeting of the new year on Wednesday, January 8th. Lunch will again be a brown bag affair at noon with dessert provided.

*Virginia Bradley President*

### **UTO THANK OFFERING**

If you do not have a Blue Box in which to express your thankfulness for all of God's blessings – Be sure to pick one up from the rack in the vestibule. The Ingathering this Spring will be on Mother's Day, May 11, 2003. What an appropriate day – All mothers have many things for which to be thankful!

### **LAY READER'S SCHEDULE**

Date	8:00 AM	10:30 AM
5	Jack-Addie	Sarah-Michael
12 (9 AM)	Gordon-Mark	
19	Jack-Addie	Ronna-Donna
26	Donna Mark	Michael-Sarah

### **GIFT SHOP NEWS**

The Gift Shop is pleased to announce the arrival of two new books that are guaranteed to strengthen your knowledge of and faith in our Lord, as well as providing answers to some of the most asked questions people have about God, Christianity, and the Bible.

These books, *The Case for Faith* and *The Case for Christ*, are written by a former atheist and legal editor of the Chicago Tribune, Lee Strobel. He cross-examines a dozen experts with tough questions regarding the evidence for Jesus Christ and the claims of Christ in *The Case for Christ*. In *The Case for Faith*, Strobel turns his skills to the most persistent emotional objections to belief – eight "heart" barriers to faith.

These books make great gifts for loved ones, friends, neighbors, or anyone whom you would like to influence for Christ. Visit the Gift Shop each Sunday to see these books and other new additions. The Shop is open by appointment and each Sunday after the 8 and 10:30 services.

### **NEW PAINT JOB DOWNSTAIRS**

Many thanks go to Michael Rickard for helping to arrange and organize the painting of the downstairs parish hall, bathrooms and stairwells. Michael, as well as donating time and resources to this project, arranged for some prisoners from one of the local jails to be utilized to do all of the painting. This saved us much money in labor costs. Thanks also to Mark Dascomb for his help in this project; and to those who donated money for paint and supplies. Anything we can do to beautify our facilities reflects positively upon us and our God to those who are visitors and potential members of St. Michael's.

### **THANK YOU!**

Our thanks to all of St. Michael's Family for the many remembrances at Christmas and also to the Vestry for their generous Christmas gifts. Happy New Year.

*George Baer and Madeline Schwedt*

### **JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

1 – Daniel DuVall  
9 – Norma Crump  
17 – Michael Rickard  
21 – Ed VonHasseln  
22 – John David Bidell  
24 – Diane Bieber  
25 – Gladys Meacham  
25 – Nancy Von Hasseln  
27 – Norma Fox  
28 –George Crofts  
28 – Melissa Di Liberto  
29 – Natalie Stroh

### **JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

10 – Mary & David Noonan  
29 – Marie & Joseph Zasowski

Make plans now for St. Michael's  
FISH FRIES – beginning on  
March 7,14,21 & 28 and  
April 4 & 11.

If you would like to help, contact  
Jack Bidell at 832-0598 or  
Donna Strain at 655-0573.

The Youth and Adult Sunday  
School will not be meeting on  
January 12 because we will be  
having only one service at 9 a.m.  
before our Annual Meeting. All  
youth please make plans to attend  
the service and the meeting  
following on that day.

### **ANNUAL REPORT REMINDER:**

All organizations must have their annual  
reports into the office before January 6<sup>th</sup>  
so they may be copied and collated into  
the Annual Report to the Congregation  
on January 12<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

### **DIRECTORY CHANGES**

Father Grist Cell Phone:  
430-9111

New:

Jason R. Bulera  
208 Summer St. Apt. 4  
Buffalo NY 14222-2208  
884-1945

Name Change:

Delete (Delles)  
McHugh, Jodi  
92 Campus Dr. N.  
Snyder NY 14226-2538  
839-9341  
e-mail: [mchughagent@aol.com](mailto:mchughagent@aol.com)  
Paul Zackery III  
[Zackattack3@aol.com](mailto:Zackattack3@aol.com)

### **CHURCH ENVELOPES**

Some have not been picked up as yet.  
To save us postage, please do so this  
Sunday. Thank you.