



The Herald

St. Michael & All Angels, Kauaʻi Monthly Newsletter October 2019

Upcoming Events

- Animal Blessing at all worship services
October 5-6
- Shabbat Shuvah
October 5, 10:00 am
- New Strings Attached!
A benefit concert for St. Michael's grand piano restoration
October 6, 4:00 pm
- Finance Committee
October 9, 12:00 —1:00 pm
- Property Committee
October 16, 3:30—4:30 pm
- Open Vestry Meeting
October 21, 5:00—7:00 pm

A New Way Forward...

Andrew McMullen, Rector

I am old enough to remember a very different era in the life of the Episcopal Church, and indeed of most Christian churches, in our country. It was a time when attendance at services was high – churches were relatively full. Many saw themselves as “religious” and they came to church to live into that identity and responsibility. It was a time when families made it a point of emphasis to worship together. People tended to dress up for church; I still can feel the pinch of the clip-on tie that as a child I endured on Sunday mornings. The focus of the church was rather internal, primarily upon communal worship and tradition. Outreach, mission and spirituality were not in the forefront; the primary social outings were coffee hour and the annual summer picnic. Financial giving was high, a reflection of a sense of moral and ethical obligation to support the church. This model, this presence of the church, had survived for generations before my time.

But times have changed, particularly in the past 40 years. Church attendance is declining with often near-empty sanctuaries on Sunday mornings. While a relatively large number of people identify themselves as “spiritual,” far fewer claim to be “religious.” Church and a commitment to worship has fallen on the list of most individual's and family's priorities. Any sense of moral or ethical obligation to financially give to the church (continued on next page)

New Torah Scroll to be Dedicated by Jewish Community of Kauai together with St. Michael's

Press Release

Jewish Community of Kauai officially becomes the Synagogue-in-Residence at St. Michael's with its Ark and Torah placed in the church sanctuary.

A new Torah scroll from Israel will be dedicated by the Jewish Community of Kauai (JCK) on



October 5, 2019, with the participation of St. Michael's Episcopal Church. For the past thirty years, a partnership has existed between both faith communities.

The dedication will take place upon the celebration of Shabbat Shuvah, (continued on next page)

A New Way Forward (continued)

has likewise faded for many, again falling down the list of priorities. It is a picture of the church becoming irrelevant, as if it belongs to a distant time and place. And, at the same time, we live in a country which is seemingly becoming stretched and divided, with many extreme voices leading the way. While this might not be particularly new in our country's politics, what is new is that it has increasingly reached into the religious life of America. The voices of fear and intolerance have become louder, and with them, we see the horrors of Charleston Church, Burnette Chapel, the Tree of Life and Poway synagogues and countless others.

This is the world in which we live; the history which we inherit. Overall, St. Michael and All Angels has done relatively well during challenging times. But the question remains: How will St. Michael and All Angels find its way forward in the midst of this ongoing story? There are many possible answers to this question, and quite frankly, it is a broad and complex challenge beyond a small offering in *The Herald*. But I will briefly share two of my answers. First, we will continue to celebrate our Christian life and faith in this place, striving to follow Christ and be his love in the world. We will do so by honoring the rituals and traditions of our worship, and always looking outward to love and serve those who most

need it. Second, we will grow our faith community as we formally recognize our 30-year relationship with the Jewish Community and embrace them as our "synagogue in residence." This will be defined further as we live into it, but for now it is our commitment to make space on our campus for Rabbi Rob Kvidt and the Jewish leadership – to give them an actual presence among us. We will also strive to bring the individuals and families of the Jewish Community into our outreach efforts, such as HUGS, Loaves and Fishes, and others, as well as increase our joint opportunities for fellowship. As a combined faith community, we will have the resources to share and do more, for each other and those who call this island home, and as we do so, it is my hope that we will serve as a living reality that we are all one creation before God, and if we are to live into the love that we are created to be, we must do it together.



Torah (continued)

during the annual Jewish High Holiday observance. Officiating will be visiting High Holidays Rabbi Aryeh Azriel, of Omaha Nebraska, and recently ordained Kauai Rabbi Rob Kvidt. The Reverend Andrew McMullen of St. Michael's will also participate. Members of the community, including Father Andrew, will be invited to complete the last letters on the parchment with the support of Rabbi Aryeh and Rabbi Rob.

"It is a privilege to be at St. Michael's, one of Kauai's most venerated and sacred houses of prayer. The Ark will become a permanent Jewish presence here, weaving a new thread into the history of Kauai," said Carol Pescaia, JCK Board co-president.

For the past thirty years, the Jewish Community of Kauai, a progressive, liberal community, that may soon be affiliated with the Union of Reform Judaism, has held services for Shabbat and Jewish holidays at St. Michael's. Through a generous gift received from the Mary S. Lovell Trust, the community was able to have written a beautiful new Torah.

The hand-made Kauwila wood Ark, which contains the Torah, will for the first time officially be part of the church sanctuary. The Torah arrived on Kauai from Israel in August 2018, and it has been an incredible multi-year journey. It consists of 304,805 hand-written letters on 65 pages of parchment. The Torah is the sacred text of the Jewish people containing the Five Books of Moses which are highly esteemed by both Christians and Jews.

Rabbi Rob Kvidt said, "This is a dramatic, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to complete the unique Torah, which includes hand-made wooden scrolls (Eitz Chaim) that were inlaid with Koa wood from Kauai. These were a gift to the community, as was a beautiful hand-embroidered tree of life cover."

Father Andrew McMullen commented,, "St. Michael's is a community of faith based upon love, compassion, relationship and service to others. We fully embrace the Jewish Community as one of our own as we honor the roots and traditions of our faith."

St. Michael's HUGS Ministry is Making a Huge Difference

Marilyn Allen, St. Michael's HUGS Chair

The newest ministry for St. Michael's, HUGS, Help, Understanding, and Group Support is up and running. We are supporting Kaua'i HUGS families to "improve their quality of life as they face the emotional and financial hardships of caring for a seriously ill child."

Currently, we have identified 17 families, whom we hope to offer peer-to-peer support, emergency airfare assistance, and providing opportunities for families to come together.

On August 25, St Michael's sponsored 4 Kaua'i families totaling 15 people, to fly to Oahu to attend a Celebration of Life service. They were able to honor and remember their children who have passed away in 2019. Held at Sunset Ranch, these families planted a young Hawaiian koa tree for their deceased child in a Waimea Valley Park, leaving a living legacy, marked with a plaque.



St Michael's was honored and recognized for their loving support and generosity at a luncheon for the families. Personally, it was an honor to be a representative of our church and their commitment to HUGS.

In September, a private donor gifted one of our HUGS parents partial tuition to get a degree in accounting from KCC. This person has demonstrated a firm commitment to improving their family's financial situation, even with difficult circumstances.

Coming up on October 19, we are hosting a Kauai Plantation train ride for 35 at Kilohana's, including St Michael's kids and the HUGS families. Purchased at the St. Michael's Gala, "Who Dunnit," it was gifted to HUGS. There will be a picnic lunch following the train ride.

Oahu case manager, Judith Wilhoite, will be flying over to assist with the families; however, volunteers are needed to help with lunch. If you are interested in helping out, please contact me at PerformCoach@gmail.com.

I promise this will be whistleblowing fun and you will get a HUG!



Pictured from left to right is Chery Tamura, Development Director, Marilyn Allen HUGS Ministry and Joan Naguwa, Executive Director.

Parish Life!



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