



1 November 2021  
All Saints Day

To Our Members and Friends,

If it's good to be together, it must be bad to be apart. And yet, the truth is that life has always been a rhythm of separation and togetherness, exile and return. We may prefer the return part more, but that doesn't mean separation isn't part of the story.

Experiences of separation are part of the stories of our faith, from the Israelites' exile in Babylon to the parable of the Prodigal Son. Jesus and his followers were separated by betrayal and death on Good Friday, and then reunited by forgiveness and resurrection at Easter. Even in more normal times, our lives are a rhythm of gathering and dispersing, of coming together and going apart.

The past 21 months have been a profound experience of this ancient pattern. The Covid-19 pandemic has been a season of separation like no other we've ever known. As we look ahead to St. Michael's next chapter, we may never appreciate the power of gathering together in person more than we do right now. We are together in the beauty of worship and prayer, both in person and online, gathering in new ways in the midst of a world full of distance. We are together in music, singing together in the midst of a world full of silence and loneliness. We are together in community, working together in the midst of a world full of broken systems and broken hearts and being with each other in love and hope.

In short, if the world is full of exile, St. Michael's is a community of hope and home - a place to come home to, again and again. We come together in person and virtually to worship, to pray, to love and to serve. We are part of God's ancient promise to give a future with hope to all in need.

And even when this pandemic is a distant memory, the world will still be full of need and will still be longing for home, for community, for reunion, and for return. That's why we're here. That's who we are as St. Michael's: a place of hope. We follow the way of love that Jesus taught us, helping us build bridges of connection and

companionship, so that everyone might experience a homecoming to God's joy, acceptance, welcome, and love.

St. Michael's will continue to be a place of welcome, of love, and of hope. And in this season, we are all invited prayerfully to consider how we may be called financially to support our future with hope at St. Michael's. Enclosed you will find our Sustaining Member Pledge for 2022, which can be returned in several ways – all listed on the pledge form. All Sustaining Member Gifts will be blessed during our Ingathering at both services on Sunday, November 21<sup>st</sup>.

If circumstances dictate that you must decrease your pledge, it will be alright. If you keep your pledge the same this year, it will be alright. If you are able to increase your pledge, it will be alright. Because no matter what you and God decide you can share, we at St. Michael's will continue to be a place of prayer, of love, of welcome, and of hope – not because of our finances, but because of the gifts of each person in this community. The people are the gifts of love and hope at St. Michael's.

We are here, together, living a future with hope. Thank you for being part of God's hope and love in the world.

Faithfully,

The Ven. Laurie Brock, Rector

and the Vestry of St. Michael's

