

*We are plain quiet folk and have no use for adventures. Nasty disturbing  
uncomfortable things! Make you late for supper!*  
—from *The Hobbit*

## THE MINISTRY OF MICHAEL HUDSON

### A Three-Minute Reflection

by Marilyn Jody

All of us know the depth and breadth of Michael's many talents—as the ultimate Renaissance Man.

Margot says it all comes together in his ministry is his ability to “make the sacred apparent in any situation.”

I agree, and I hear him saying, “Come and See.” That's an adventuresome invitation. (I also hear him quoting *The Hobbit*: adventures are messy things that make you late for supper.)

When Joanne and I came to St. David's 25 years ago, we told Michael we were looking for a church where we could be truly ourselves; where we would be welcome as a couple; where we wouldn't have to hide our relationship. We asked if he thought St. David's might be that place.

He didn't just smile and answer, “Of course.” And he didn't make any promises or deliver any comforting platitudes. He just said, “Come and See.”

In the years since then, St. David's has become the heart of our lives, our family, our home. And in those same years, a time of incredibly rapid change,

Michael has reminded us every Sunday as we approach the Eucharist that “Everyone is welcome at this table.”

Michael’s version of “Come and See” has come to mean many other kinds of unexpected adventures: visionary moments, like seeing star showers from the top of Water Rock Knob, and equally memorable moments, like picnics featuring close encounters with large, trumpeting elks.

Of course, we all know that Michael creates his homilies while he’s out hiking. And he often uses nature-related imageries in his homilies—insights from mountain wild flowers to phases of the moon— even a whole series based on the wonders of mushrooms.

Sometimes he comes up with those insights at unexpected times.

For example, one time when Joanne and I went on vacation with Michael and Barbara to Hilton Head Island, we were comfortably settled for the night in our condo when Michael said, “Let’s all go to the beach.” Somewhat reluctantly we all trudged down to the beach. When we got close to the dark shoreline, we were watching for the edge of the tide, when Michael said, “Look up.”

At that moment, as he already knew it would, a full moon began rising out of the sea, shining a golden path of light, straight across the dark waves right to our feet.

Seeing the moon rise that night was a little like the recent experience of watching the solar eclipse, knowing it would happen, yet being shocked into a sudden spiritual awareness by the actual awesome experience of it.

Another time that Michael said, “Come and See,” I was even more reluctant to go. It was soon after Joanne died, when I had no heart for much of anything, and Michael suggested I come along on a pilgrimage to Scotland, to the Island of Iona.

On that trip, as some of you may remember, three of us had what Hobbits might call a particularly “messy” adventure. Out on the farthest edges of Scotland’s bare coastline, Betsy Swift, Bob Dodd, and I stood watching as the last ferry of the day left for Iona.

Much later that night—definitely “late for supper”—we arrived at the sacred Island of Iona, in what we like to think of as our version of landing by coracle.

Our luggage joined us five days later, just as we were leaving.

I also had another adventure with Michael that same week. It more clearly echoes what Margot said about making the sacred apparent. We attended a deeply moving evening service one night at Iona’s old Celtic church. Afterward, Michael and I were dawdling along far behind the rest of our group, walking the mile or so back to the cottages where we were staying. That’s when we realized the others had all the flashlights.

We began stumbling blindly along on a rutted dirt road in the true darkness of a remote place. There were no street lights. Michael tried lighting the way with his fading cell phone. When we finally stopped to take a break and turned off the feeble little light, we were suddenly surrounded. By stars. Wrapped in a whole panoramic sky of them. Everywhere we looked into that starry, dark night we saw light beyond imagination.

After a few seconds of stunned silence, Michael burst into song, in full voice.

*O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.*

I joined him on the chorus: *Then sings my soul... .*

As I reflect on Michael's ministry, I think about the many times he has said "Come and See," and a time in the darkness when he led me home through a sky full of stars.