

A joyous Easter to you and to us all! See page 3 for a Tiffany perspective on the Redemption story.

## An Expanding Welcome to the Feast



Alleluia! Christ is risen! What good, glorious news we celebrate today: In all our times of darkness and despair, God is with us, opening the doors and lighting the way. Life is stronger than death. Resurrection is here and now. This news is worthy of the Easter feast and beyond.

And here's some more good news: At St. Michael's, that feast is expanding to more of our neighbors. This parish

has long been a "well-kept secret," something wonderful

awaiting those who find their way through our blue doors. Now, increasingly, we are realizing our true role in the larger community. Our doors are opening wider; our table is growing to invite more to the feast.

We still have a ways to go. There is further work to be done on our physical plant, and on the vision of how this campus can serve our entire community. We have more to do to build relationships with our neighbors, too. But the prerequisite to all this is the work being done on our hearts, beyond our own efforts. God is opening our doors and softening our hearts, bringing new Life — and reminding us that this Life is to share. That's Easter for us all. — *Mother Kate*

## A Community Kitchen Worthy of the Future

A new era of service to the community will begin as our renovation project pivots to bring our outdated kitchen facility up to 21st-century standards.

The Saturday Kitchen, 40 years old last year, serves approximately 350 grab-and-go meals every week, double the amount before the pandemic. The world is at our door: the food-insecure, the unhoused and the undocumented. The kitchen is a lifeline.

Each Saturday, more than two dozen volunteers cope with a cramped, crowded kitchen facility that requires constant workarounds. Without a major upgrade, the Saturday Kitchen will struggle to keep pace with the surging demand.

In light of that urgency, John Avery and Walter Cain, with the blessing of the clergy and vestry, have worked with Richard McElhiney Architects to develop a blueprint for the future feeding of the 5,000.

The Doors Wide Open campaign has set the table, with the loggia, the ramps, the elevator, the atrium and the infrastructure improvements. A new kitchen facility will complement these upgrades but still presents a new level of expense.

Due to the kitchen's community mission, the DWO team believes that significant funding may be available from outside funders via St. Michael's Community Programs Inc., our 501(c)3.

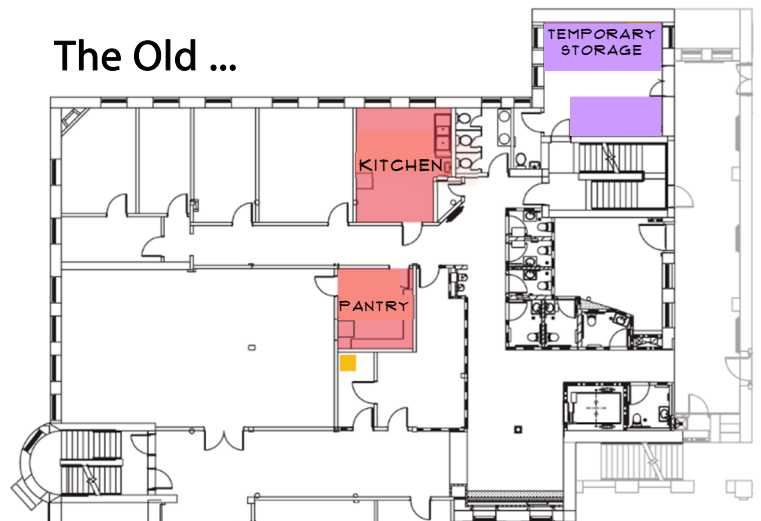
Several donations have already come in, including from an outside funder and from parishioners who have specified the kitchen project.

A selling point to foundations, government sources and the like is that St. Michael's parishioners are all in. The numbers are astonishing, and inspiring: 85 percent of the congregation gave to Doors Wide Open, for a total of \$2 million. The momentum is there.

Time, as ever, is a challenge. By summer, the vestry hopes to assess our chances of raising that outside money. This parish is blessed with many well-connected people. If you know of a potential outside funder, please alert John Stickney or a member of the clergy or vestry.

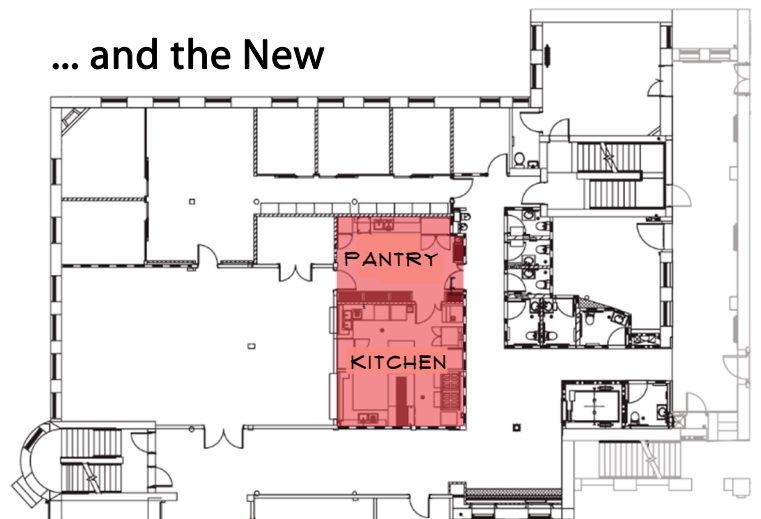
Stand by for more information as the project planning comes into focus.

### The Old ...



The current kitchen and pantry total 378 square feet and are separated by a hallway. A nearby classroom is commandeered to supplement the 269 square feet of food storage in the basement. The cooking and dishwashing are in too-close proximity. Refrigeration is scattered throughout the complex.

### ... and the New



The kitchen and pantry occupy a contiguous 620 square feet. Food storage consolidates into 478 square feet of space in the basement, with a walk-in refrigerator/freezer. All appliances are upgraded. The new layout accommodates more volunteers and provides safer workflow.



## Dance, Dance, Dance

"Rock, rock, rock, HIT IT!" went the song by Rob Base and DJ E-Z Rock, and 20 young heads popped up, most of them right on time, as they began to learn the hip-hop dance.

The kids were laser-focused on their teacher/choreographer, our own Ashlynn Holder-Mosely, from Ballet Hispanico's Community Arts Partnership. Ashlynn is leading a 12-week dance residency for children in the Frederick Douglass Houses. The sponsor is the Children's Aid Society.

The after-school program is a long-held dream of our own Madelyn Innocent, a Douglass Houses resident and former member of Community Board 7. Mother Julie helped make the

program happen by enlisting St. Michael's folk as volunteers.

On March 8, 40 students — third-through eighth-graders — turned out in two sessions for the first day of dance classes at the Children's Aid Society center on Columbus Avenue.

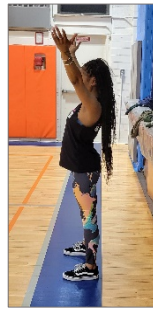
The kids learned the first part of a hip-hop dance that Ashlynn choreographed. For her the session was a lively finish to a long workweek in schools and community centers around the city.

"Dance touches people in so many ways," Ashlynn says. She has three rules for her students: safety, respect and having fun. And for that last one, she wants them to cut loose.

She'll start with hip-hop and then go on in the next weeks to Bomba from Puerto Rico, Merengue from the Dominican Republic, Afro-beats, Bachata, Salsa, Mambo.

The point of Ballet Hispanico's CAP program, Ashlynn says, is not to teach ballet — but to bring contemporary dance at a performance level to the brown and Black people who invented it, who started the hip-hop revolution now 50 years old.

The St. Michael's volunteers: Mother Julie, Barbara Culmer-Ilaw, Val Cook, Rick Hamlin, Madelyn Innocent, Anne O'Loughlin and Tom Phillips.



Step by step, Ashlynn Holder-Mosely demonstrated for the children the moves necessary to build a dance sequence involving individual as well as group performance. (Photo permission for all the kids is in the works.)

## When Jesus Came to St. Michael's ...

... he appeared in power and glory in the center aisle on the palm-strewn path to his destiny in Jerusalem as children shouted "Hosanna!"

On March 9, Holy Week arrived early in an enactment of Christ's passion, death and resurrection as staged by Mary Ellen Lehmann (and family), seminarian Kate Schneider and new parishioner Marianna Breland. The Youth Group older kids co-hosted the event.

The script was adapted from Gretchen Wolf Pritchard's "Prayer Walk," which gives children an active role in the passion story: sharing the Last Supper communion, carrying the cross and singing along to "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?"

The kids even explored the empty tomb (as built by Raj Harold & Co.).

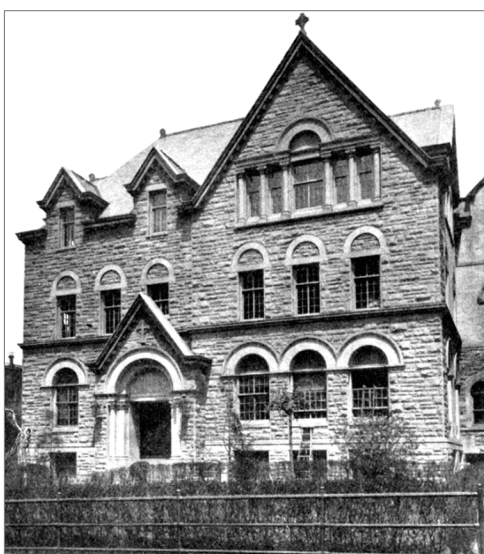
Then suddenly, out of the darkness at the top of the stairs to the balcony, Jesus appeared, bearing a candle, and rejoined the children. Smiling, he opened his arms as if to show the marks, and said, "I have risen from the dead. All who believe in me will enter the kingdom of heaven prepared for you. God did not abandon me."

Mary Ellen's son Danny, just graduated from the University of Arizona, played Jesus after another candidate had to cancel. "The saying for that day was, 'Jesus quits,'" Mary Ellen says. She has staged the production in different venues for some 30 years. Mary Ellen's old friend Paul Johnson provided guitar accompaniment.



On March 9, Danny Lehmann, Mary Ellen and Mike Lehmann's son, took the role of Jesus in the youth ministries' production of the passion play, "Prayer Walk."

## The Parish House, Always a Community Resource



The Parish House, dedicated in 1898, had been built in stages. But even before construction was complete, the national publication *The Churchman* (September 1897) noted that the Parish House was acquiring a reputation for "elaborately planned and equipped ... religio-social work."

Two months later, *The Churchman* noted that the Parish House, conceived as a memorial to the Rev. Thomas McClure Peters, the fifth rector, would enable St. Michael's, "that throbbing center of Christian influence and catholic humanitarianism," to significantly benefit the church's "helpful endeavors in behalf of the community in which it is located."

Over more than a decade around the turn of the century, the monthly *Messengers* gratefully acknowledged parishioners' funding of Parish House construction. In addition, women's committees raised money for tables and chairs, kitchen equipment and tableware. — *Jean Ballard Terepka*

The Thomas McClure Peters Memorial Parish House as it appears in "The Annals of St. Michael's," a history by John Punnett Peters, our sixth rector, published in 1907 for the church centennial. (TMP was JPP's father.) "The old must pass away; let us mightily strive to make the new better," JPP wrote.

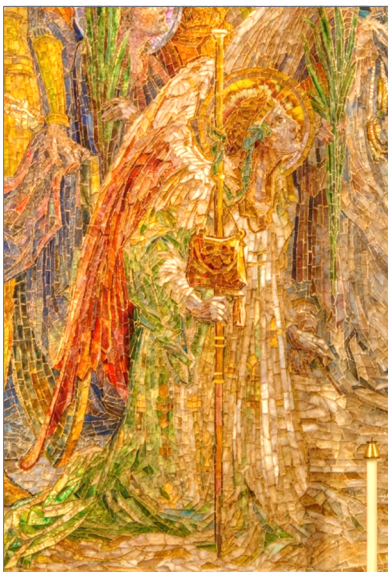
THEN & NOW

# 'Revelation' in the Chapel of the Angels

Brian Kutner



The chapel has been described as the *Gloria in Excelsis*, realized in color. The Rev. John Punnett Peters, our sixth rector, worked out the iconography with the Tiffany Studios. This visionary mosaic includes the hierarchies of angels gathered in adoration around an opaline Eucharist surrounded by stars, symbolic of the universe. Two angels, one with a star of David emblazoned on his breast, hold aloft the crown of life.



Raphael, holding a pilgrim's staff and purse that are emblematic of our spiritual journey, kneels in adoration.

Eastertide and our small-group immersion in the Book of Revelation prompt another look at the reredos, or altar screen, in the Chapel of the Angels, representing the Witness of the Redemption. The altar was designed by Tiffany Studios and installed in 1920, 25 years after the seven great Tiffany apse windows.

Can there ever be too many of those winged messengers of God who also intervene as guardians of humankind in times of distress?

The St. Michael's chapel is dedicated to angels. Richly decorated by Tiffany Studios with mosaic-encrusted columns, hanging lamps, a richly embellished marble altar, tessellated pavement and a dazzlingly luminous mosaic reredos, it's a uniquely special place for meditation and prayer.

How many times have you found yourself rapt by its beauty, your thoughts transported to a higher realm by the visionary scene? Conceived as a counterpoint to the windows in the apse of the sanctuary, which awe us with an expansive vision of St. Michael's triumph in heaven at the end of time, the chapel's shimmering, iridescent mosaic seems quieter and more intimate as it evokes the mystery of Redemption.

At the summit of the composition, beneath an arched sky of midnight blue, shines the star that once hovered over the stable where Jesus was born. From its golden radiance beams descend to a jeweled crown held aloft by two kneeling angels who also hold palms of victory: "the crown of life that the Lord hath promised to those who love him" (James 1:12).

Below the crown we see the crescent moon and sun as they appear in medieval depictions of the Crucifixion. Below these emblems is another radiance within which is a glowing opalescent disc that must represent the Eucharist commemorating Christ's death and Resurrection.

John Punnett Peters, the sixth rector of St. Michael's, worked out the iconography of the reredos: "To and through the crown to the cross on the altar beneath shine the rays of the star; heaven and earth are joined thereby, while the heavenly host marvels at and adores the divine plan by which God reveals himself in man's humility and suffering."

Among that heavenly host, one angel holds a chalice, another an open book and the third a pilgrim's staff and purse decorated with a cockle shell.

On St. Michael's Day in 1920, at the dedication of the chapel, Fr Peters cited several passages from scripture that relate to the symbolism of the mosaic and further enhance our contemplation of its imagery:

**Revelation 8:2:** "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God." (Easily recognizable are the archangels Michael, clad in splendid armor, and Gabriel, richly vested and holding a scepter in one hand and in the other the lily he delivered to Mary at the Annunciation.)

**John 1:51:** "Verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

**1 Kings 6:27:** "And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord ... that the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time ... and the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication ... I have hallowed this house, which thou has built, to put my name there forever — and mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually."

(Our archivist Jean Ballard Terepka's "A Brief Tour of St. Michael's Church and Interior and Windows" cites Fr Peters' explanation of the reredos, from which I have quoted.) — *Keith Christiansen*

*The altar crown brings to mind the words of the spiritual:*

## Wait Til I Put On My Crown

I came this night for to sing and pray,  
Oh yes! Oh yes!  
To drive old Satan far away,  
Oh yes! Oh yes!  
That heav'nly home is bright and fair,  
Oh yes! Oh yes!  
But very few can enter there,  
Oh yes! Oh wait 'till I put on my crown  
Wait 'till I put on my crown  
Wait 'till I put on my crown  
Oh yes, Oh yes.