

## A Harvest Season's Blessings



at St. Michael's have a way of growing, deepening our roots in God and community and expanding in new directions and ministries. Our possibilities are abundant.

Today we come together as a community to grow, launching our stewardship drive to fund our ministries in the next year. There's so much going on as we gather in small groups, Godly Play classes, youth dinners, kitchen prep, choir rehearsals, worship services and beyond. Meanwhile we continue to renovate our buildings. Sometimes I wonder how we manage it all. But people

This last month we focused our prayers on our stewardship of creation, naming our complicity in and concern for the crises unfolding on our planet. So much of our tragedy turns on scarcity, our fear that we don't have enough and therefore must hoard more in order to get by. But God reminds us that we're stewards of abundance, that there is always more than we think, not less. The possibilities on this planet are abundant too.

This new year offers a wealth of reasons for hope. On this patronal feast, we have so much to give, and to receive. Happy St. Michael's Day!

— Mother Kate



Doors Wide Open is knocking on the door of our \$2 million goal — alleluia! If you've already given, thank you. If not, please come on in! Alert us or the clergy.

— Lucy Culver,  
Beth Ann Day

## Your Doors Wide Open Dollars at Work

With donations from parishioners and friends, St. Michael's is building for the glory of God — and for the preservation of the sanctuary and Parish House for another century.

On a recent weekday the job-site cacophony started with workers power-sawing an enormous terra cotta pipe for a new sewer connection 15 feet beneath the street.

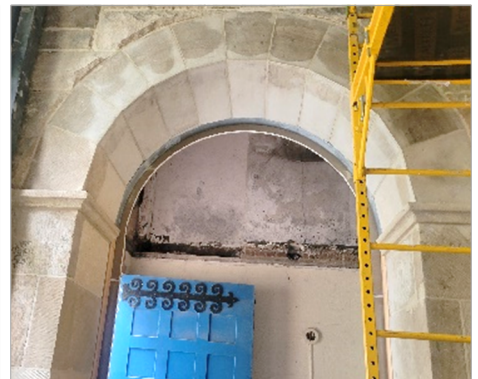
"The old drain pipe was 120 years old," John Avery, co-warden, says. "We're getting these epic rains recently, probably due to climate change, and the new system will help prevent flooding."

Inside the Parish House the elevator lobby, new restrooms and reconfigured nursery are taking shape. The atrium that will soar three stories awaits a custom glass roof. The elevator shaft also awaits machinery. When supply-chain issues cause a delay, workers turn to other tasks.

"In construction you have three elements: quality, money and time," says Walter Cain, vestryperson who also happens to be an architect. "You never have all three. We have quality and economy but we've needed to extend time."

Nearly completed is the accessible loggia ramp at the Amsterdam Avenue entrance. At the ramp's threshold, a new arch echoes the loggia's Romanesque style — and evokes a vision of all the great churches (and their infrastructure) built for God's glory.

The future is taking shape, from left: a sewer-pipe replacement on West 99th Street; and a new limestone arch in the new ramp within the Amsterdam Avenue loggia.



## Gathering to Grow: Stewardship Beckons

The Gathering to Grow stewardship campaign theme reflects a moment of great promise for St. Michael's. This is harvest season, and with construction underway, we as a parish are poised to do much more at a time when the city and the world need God's love in full measure.

By pledging, you do more than help keep the lights on. You infuse life into all our ministries — worship, children's and youth programs, community outreach, small groups, pastoral care, music and more. You help St. Michael's be the church you love.

With inflation, we've been navigating costs about 10 percent higher this year than last for everything from insurance to employee benefits, utility costs, basic supplies and food for Saturday Kitchen.

But more cost does not mean that we're ready for less church. If anything, the pandemic taught us that we need more church. So we ask you not only to pledge but also to consider raising your pledge, if you can.

If pledging helps us keep operating, the Doors Wide Open campaign has raised capital so our buildings can be modernized and remain assets to the neighborhood. They're two separate things: 1) Living ministries and

2) A place where our ministries can sustain for generations to come. We need both.

Gathering to Grow acknowledges that we're committed to be a Living Church and poised to make St. Michael's even more welcoming than we are today.

Gathering to Grow concludes at the Ingathering service on Nov. 19. Stand by for campaign details.

Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for keeping us lively in 2024.

— Kyle Okimoto and Sam Sue, stewardship co-chairs



Gathering to Grow: At the welcome-back barbecue on Sept. 10 we shared our abundance of faith and fellowship.



## A Window Worthy of Meditation

This is the fifth in a series of **Messenger** articles by Keith Christiansen about the windows of St. Michael's.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the 12th-century ascetic, famously inveighed against “the soaring heights and extravagant lengths and unnecessary widths of churches, their expensive decorations and their noble images, which catch the attention of those who go in to pray, and dry up their devotion.”

Indeed, Cistercian architecture is celebrated for its austere beauty — which, ironically, can be as visually distracting as a highly colored stained glass window!

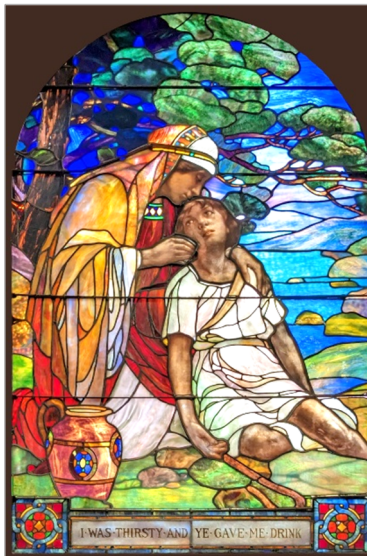
Has your mind ever wandered during a sermon or a particularly long service? It's then that what St. Bernard saw as visual distractions become objects of attention — and meditation.

I'm thinking of one of the four windows on the church's east wall. Each was designed by a different artist and made by a different firm.

All relate a particular story except for the one on the far left. The window was designed by the French-trained painter Frederick Lincoln Stoddard and fabricated by Rudolf Geissler, an émigré from Germany who partnered with Louis Lederle, a noteworthy craftsman who had worked with Louis Comfort Tiffany.

The window's inscription, taken from Matthew 25:35, identifies the subject as one of the seven acts of mercy: “I was thirsty and you gave me drink.” But Stoddard must have had in mind a specific story from the Bible.

We see a woman cradling an exhausted youth. They gaze tenderly at each other. Before her is a large pitcher. The two — I think of them as mother and son — have taken shelter beneath a tree. Behind them is a vast landscape. This must be the story of Hagar and her son Ishmael. The subject resonates powerfully today.



On the east wall of the church is a window whose subject is open to inspiration. Installed in 1912, the window was a gift from then-sexton Samuel Luckings and his wife in honor of their parents. To Keith Christiansen, the window represents the story of Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 16-17; 21): “Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.”

As told in Genesis 16-17; 21, Abraham's wife Sarah had an enslaved Egyptian servant named Hagar, who bore Abraham a son, Ishmael. Fourteen years on, Sarah, well beyond normal child-bearing age, also had a son, Isaac. Whereupon she vindictively ordered that Hagar and Ishmael should be banished.

Just as the two victims of Sarah's wrath were on the verge of dying of thirst in the wilderness, an angel revealed a source of water and affirmed God's promise that he “would make of [Ishmael] a great nation.” Thus, through Isaac, Abraham became the father of the Jews while Muslims regard Ishmael as an ancestor of Muhammad. A story worth meditating on, indeed.

— Keith Christiansen

## Celebrating My First Eucharist

The Rev. Eva Bogino, now a chaplain at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, will lead worship at St. Michael's when schedules allow.

Celebrating my very first service at St. Michael's was a great joy for me! I'm so grateful to this congregation for supporting me in the formation of my ministry. It was an honor to lead my first service as a newly ordained priest at the altar where I watched Mothers Kate and Julie for two years of my seminary education.

After my ordination to the diaconate, setting the table at St. Michael's felt so sacred and special. This congregation placed a trust in me that I wanted to offer in each part of my ministry.

After my ordination to the priesthood on Aug. 3, I felt that same strengthening of trust. I returned from the ordination and feverishly prepared for my first service at the altar on Aug. 6.

I prayed for a stillness in my heart to carry out the work I intended to do and the offering I would provide. Then, at the altar that day, the stillness came.

Each prayer carried a weight that I hadn't felt before. I was more aware than ever of the responsibility and duty that would only be possible with the blessings that God and the St.

Michael's community have bestowed on me.

Each part of our liturgy felt new to me as I was serving the absolution, the breaking of the bread and the blessing. This congregation's warm reception enhanced the sacred element within each element of the mass.

The crack of the host as I elevated it to share with everybody was both communal bread at a table and Christ crucified, dead and risen right in front of our very eyes. The joy and holiness of that service has deepened my appreciation for the power of community.

— Mother Eva



On Aug. 6, the newly minted priest Mother Eva Bogino held aloft the Eucharist for the first time within a service — three days after her ordination to the priesthood.

## Sharing a Legacy



Our former seminarian the Rev. Jennie Talley welcomed Mother Kate to help celebrate the 335th anniversary of Trinity New Rochelle. Note: Mother Jennie's red stole was a gift from St. Michael's when she was ordained nine years ago.

At a Sept. 17 evensong, Trinity St. Paul and its offspring St. John's Wilmot and St. Simon the Cyrenian celebrated the 335th anniversary of Trinity New Rochelle, the mother church. Bishop Matthew Heyd officiated and preached.

Mother Kate joined the Rev. Jennie Talley, our former seminarian, now priest-in-charge at the three sister churches.

Trinity St. Paul's origins go back to a French Huguenot community. In the turbulent aftermath of the American revolution, the church called the Rev. Theodosius Bartow as rector, who led the parish from 1790 to 1809.

Bartow's sixth son, John Vanderbilt Bartow (1787-1836), became St. Michael's first leader, staying for two years after its founding in 1807. Bartow then led Christ Church in Savannah, Ga., and Trinity Church, Baltimore.

St. Michael's has a tradition of raising up priests and assistant priests who go on to lead major parishes. Continuing that tradition, Mother Jennie completes a Trinity St. Paul's-St. Michael's circle and locates St. Michael's in a continuous historical religious line from the early colonial era to the present.

— Jean Ballard Terepka

THEN & NOW