

An Open-Handed, Open-Hearted Parish



This past year, our vestry based its opening meditations on the 12 Habits of a Reconciler, work that comes from the Rose Castle Foundation studies on peace and reconciliation. One of those habits is generosity, defined as “giving of ourselves without expecting anything in return. For people of faith, this imitates the blessings that God bestows on us.”

This is a habit that St. Michael's knows well. Our parish's people are generous — remarkably generous with your financial resources, as we have seen in our campaigns to renovate our buildings and better serve our neighbors near

and far. But you're also generous with your hearts. This is a community not of transactional relationships, focused on “what can you do for me?” St. Michael's is a place of transformative relationships, where friendships and webs of caring are forged and strengthened between people from many walks of life. Whoever you are, you are welcome here — and the people of St. Michael's really mean that.

I myself have received so much from this generosity, and I've learned from it too. You've made me a better priest because of it. This generosity continues to open the way forward for us all — opening the doors for God's blessings to flow. — *Mother Kate*

A New Year Begins With Giving

We Can See Clearly Now



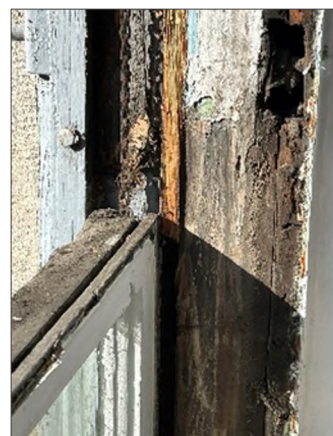
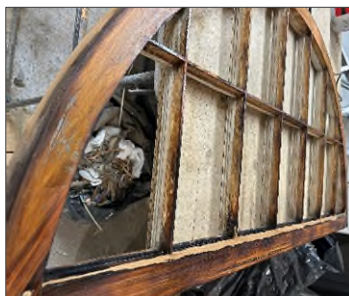
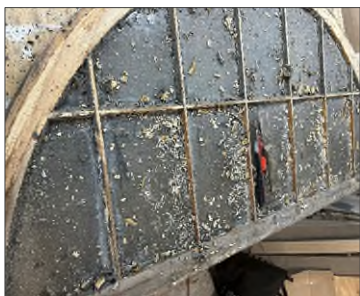
The eight arched windows in the Parish House are all being restored, courtesy of parishioner donations to Doors Wide Open, church resources, grants from the New York Landmarks Conservancy and the Diocese of New York.

Because St. Michael's is landmarked, “the windows must be restored to their original condition,” says Walter Cain, vestry member and architect overseeing the project. The windows have been more or less untouched since the Parish House dedication 130 years ago. Parishioners see through them, darkly. And only a weightlifter could open some of them.

In a workshop in the sanctuary basement, master artisan Miguel Costa, head of the Costa Group, who emigrated from Brazil in 2002, is reviving the windows.

The process is exacting. Among the steps: Each window frame is in three pieces, with 34 different panes of glass, all of which need special cleaning. Frames are stripped, sanded, reputtied and painted. Rotten wood is either replaced or shored up with epoxy. Rusted or corroded sash weights and other hardware operate smoothly again.

“I love this work,” Miguel says. “And it is a mission that demands dedication and perfection, as it is aimed to glorify the house of God.”



The return to glory for the eight arched windows in the Parish House requires many steps. Restorer Miguel Costa masterminds the process as well as doing most of the hands-on work.



Finishing the Race, Keeping the Faith

Back in the day, Linda Turnbull won an NCAA bronze medal for Wesleyan University in the 55-meter dash.

Linda still runs for exercise and fun, but her main race today is for a greater prize: helping St. Michael's thrive and grow into God's kingdom. She serves on the vestry and as co-chair, with Kyle Okimoto, of the Stewardship Committee.

Linda, a business consultant in the banking industry, knows how money flows. Her husband Eugene Diver does financial technology for a bank.

"Running is an individual sport, but I grew up playing team sports, and I took a team mindset to it," Linda says. "As sprinters we had to train by running four 400s, one after the other. I'll never forget one time I looked over and my teammate was in pain, she was crying, and I said, 'Don't give up, Nora, don't stop, we're almost there. And she finished. And people did that for me, too."

"It's the same thing with the church. There are times when my faith may be tired. A friend of mine just passed away, God knows why. But I know there's a community that can give me the wisdom and support I need. The pain goes away, but you need somebody in that time to help you endure."

As stewardship chair, Linda naturally agrees with Jesus that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

"When you give, you demonstrate an openness that can be reciprocated. It gives you a return wave," she says "On a more spiritual plane, you hope that giving passes on the spirit of giving, so there's a forward wave too."

"Recently I found a \$100 bill on the sidewalk. And I said to myself, this is a gift, what should I do with it? I saw a family on the street with a baby, and I gave them \$20. I'm still parceling it out. But mentally I've been given this gift, so I need to pay it forward."

— Tom Phillips



The 2025 *Faith in Action* pledge drive has received pledges totaling \$571,016.



Teamwork prevails in church and in track: from left, Linda Turnbull, Ron Medley, Gene Diver and Mother Kate. In college, Linda competed as a sprinter.



How St. Michael's Helps in Haiti



Students of St. Luke's school in Martel, Haiti, throng with a spirit that reflects the value Haitians put on education.

On Sunday, Feb. 2, the Rev. Sam Owen, rector of the Haitian Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan in the Bronx and president of the New York Haiti Project, is preaching at St. Michael's.

Eight years ago, Fr Sam and a New York delegation visited the folks in the deep-country village of Martel, Haiti, who wanted to build a church and a school. We listened, in a shady front yard. There the New York Haiti Project was born. (Mother Kate and I are now on the NYHP board.)

Parishioners of St. Michael's can be pleased with the progress that has been made in Martel. We're among 19 New York-area parishes who support St. Luke's Church and School there.

The school began with 50 students, pre-K through second grade. Last year 178 students were enrolled through 8th grade. Now the school complex includes several sturdy buildings in a hurricane-prone region, including a hall that serves as a classroom during the week and a worship space on Sunday.

Support from New York parishes has helped. St. Michael's signed on early and we've been consistent in our support. But I want to emphasize and credit the immense creativity, imagination and ingenuity of Haitian people. — Michael Smith

What 'Acts of Reparation' Can Teach

THEN & NOW

On Jan. 16, at the IFC Center, a St. Michael's contingent attended a preview screening of "Acts of Reparation," a new documentary, five years in the making, about how two extended families in the South are exploring their roots in hopes of helping shape a more equitable future for us all.

Filmmakers Selina Lewis Davidson and Macky Alston, professional partners for 25 years, and self-confessed genealogy buffs, felt they were destined to collaborate on this absorbing documentary.

The focus is their families: Selina's in Monroe, La., and Oakland, Calif., descendants of enslaved people; and Macky's, descendants of enslavers, in Penfield, Ga.

Selina and Macky chronicle their odyssey with candor and self-deprecating humor. They discover local seekers, Black and white, who are taking remarkable initiatives to learn from an often lost or hidden past.

After the screening, an audience member asked Selina and Macky what one thing any of us could do to further the conversation. Selina said, "Ask what reparations means to you, your friend, your mother, your grandmother, your community or Washington, D.C."

The filmmakers also outlined a community-organizing "impact campaign" that accompanies the documentary.



Stand by for a screening at St. Michael's and potential engagement in other offerings from the "Acts of Reparations" team.



Selina Lewis Davidson and Macky Alston, co-directors and co-producers of "Acts of Reparation."

Further St. Michael's Generosity

On Dec. 8, John Avery and Susan Wade appealed to the St. Michael's community to donate to the **Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza**, through the auspices of the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. The goal: \$10,000. Within five weeks, the campaign raised \$20,000 for the hospital.



On Jan. 18, in a benefit for the **Choir Tour of Dublin** in July, Rick Hamlin, accompanist/accomplice John Cantrell and friends (such as Meg Parsons) treated a packed house in the Recital Hall to a brilliantly curated bill of show tunes and Irish melodies. Box office: \$1,300.



Last year was the **Saturday Kitchen's** busiest ever, with 17,579 meals served, or nearly 350 per Saturday, according to coordinator Daniel Inzinga.



Jimmy Carter: A Life of Christian Witness



Curtis Compton/The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Former President Jimmy Carter served as the Sunday school teacher at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga., since 1981, when he returned home to Plains from the White House.

I write these words as an 84-year British-born Christian. Throughout most of my adult years, President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter has been one of my true heroes.

Jimmy, born a cradle Christian in Plains, Ga., far from the nation's power centers, graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1946 and served as an officer aboard submarines, including the nuclear-powered.

In 1953, when his father died, Jimmy resigned his commission and returned to the family farm in Plains, famously raising peanuts. There, he married his childhood sweetheart Rosalynn Smith, reared a family and rose to become governor of Georgia.

The Carter presidency, which began in 1977 and quickly became swamped by runaway inflation at home, and overseas by the Iranian hostage crisis and oil embargos, ignominiously ended after a single term.

Jimmy picked himself up — and with the able and lovingly acknowledged support of Rosalynn — went forth to build a record-setting post-presidency of more than four decades.

During these years, Jimmy established formidable moral beachheads in areas such as human rights, fair elections, the battle against guinea-worm disease, a peace between Israel and Egypt, and the building of houses — brick by brick, with his own hands — for the poor in Georgia and elsewhere.

In all these activities, he reached across races, genders, ages, creeds, nations and regions.

Impressive as were his achievements, none was more fervent, or more effective, than his work to combat racism in America. As a white son of the Deep South, he had an ideal pulpit for this issue. During his years as Georgia governor, the number of African American appointees to state boards increased from three to 53.

And in a country where politicians scatter Christian references for their own purposes, Jimmy was the real thing. He didn't just make the Christian life visible; he made it meaningful to the lives of so many millions of others.

Requiescat in pace, Brother Jimmy. Your example is an inspiration to us all — Christians and non-Christians alike.

— Robin Elliott