

'The Mystery and Miracle of Resurrection'



This week, as I walked into the Parish House, I was struck by the new life springing from our garden (see below). What a gift from creation, this reminder that God is in the business of new life! The season calls us to pause and reflect on the mystery and the miracle of resurrection.

In Easter we celebrate the resurrection as a reminder that new life is always possible, even out of certain death. The resurrection story isn't only about Jesus; it's the story of each of us.

Resurrection isn't just a spiritual truth but a living reality that shapes how we engage with the world. We're called to participate in the ongoing work of resurrection, to stand in solidarity with the oppressed and to advocate for the marginalized.

May this Easter be a time of renewal for each of us — a time to reflect on the love that has been shown to us in Jesus and to commit ourselves anew to the work of justice, reconciliation and peace. May the risen Christ meet us there, and may we walk the path of resurrection to bring the light of Christ into the world with courage, joy and love. — *Mother Julie*

Living Into the Season of Renewal

How Does Your Garden Grow?

The east garden is springing back to life with help from Denisha Williams, the landscape architect whose firm designed the new plot, working closely with Walter Cain and Lauren Attinello. Lauren and husband Dan Schneider have long volunteered as gardeners.



Even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these: a Lenten rose, or hellebore, which blooms during Lent; daffodils; azalea; camellia; and clematis, planted on either side of the new gates to meet in the middle.



The Seven-Day Easter



The April 5 Saturday Kitchen overflowed with volunteers, and every hand was needed to serve a line of guests longer than ever.



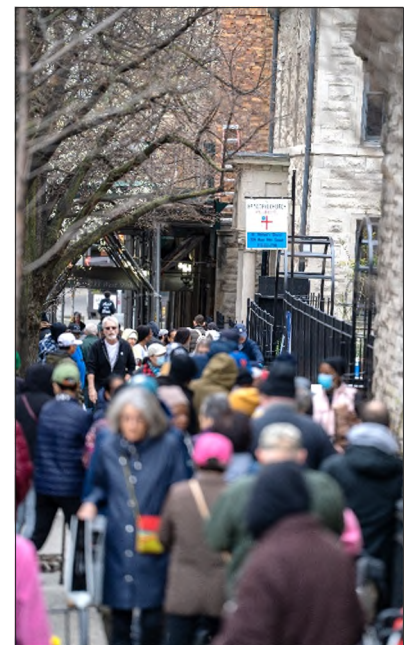
To some Christians, the stone needs to be rolled away from the tomb every day. "We need to renew Christ in our hearts on a daily basis," says John Avery, on a break from volunteering at the Saturday Kitchen and helping to develop the Doors Wide Open accessibility/renovation campaign.

"The purpose of the DWO renewal project is to link back to the church's mission and to our core values," John says. "Renewal helps enable us to do the important work."

Renewal is evident in many forms at St. Michael's, not least in the Saturday Kitchen, where a slight post-election lag in the number of guests has given way to a resurgence, with more than 350 meals served per week. And volunteers are rallying to help.

St. Michael's, like the season, is in transition, a time to reflect on next steps.

On April 6, seminarian Wendy Cañas asked from the pulpit, "What kind of disciples do we want to be in this community? How are we as disciples of Jesus? Proclaiming the Good News of God? How are we thinking about transforming unjust structures of society, and how do we want to respond to the suffering of the people?"



The Episcopal Church welcomes you:
So says the sign by the gate.



The Next Generation Rises



The 2-3-4 Group and friends rallied for Quiz Nite.

The cohort that used to be called the Young Adults has reconstituted itself as the 2-3-4 Group, for 20-, 30- and 40-somethings (and friends).

"That name encourages all church members in that age range to join us," Marianna Hoff says. "We got tired of everyone saying, 'I'm too old for the Young Adults.'"

The 2-3-4 Group has been aborning since last year. Then-seminarian Kate Schneider organized a trivia night, coincidentally around the same time that Marianna approached Mother Julie about forming a group. "It was divine timing," Marianna says.

The goal is faith, fellowship and service, not necessarily in that order. The 2-3-4's can be found on the vestry, on the altar as an acolyte and in children's ministry.

They welcome young families. The next 2-3-4 event may be a picnic in the park to include young families. "The world's our oyster so long as it's within waking hours for children," Marianna says.

Unpacking the Gospel of Luke

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

— Luke 24:32

The Spirit was definitely present in our winter Small Group study of the Gospel of Luke, led by Mother Michelle and Mother Julie. After the March 30 service, some 20 of us gathered in the Parish House for a potluck lunch to discuss our study.

Mother Julie asked us to share our experiences. Our key takeaways: a greater appreciation for the themes of repentance and forgiveness in Luke's Gospel; for the inspiring complexity of Jesus' parables; for Luke's central theme of caring for the marginalized; and for the joy of sharing ideas in community.

— Shannon Hackett



At the potluck lunch on March 30: Sarah Townsend, Susan Wade, Stephanie Braxton, Ned Boyajian and Gayle Robinson.

A Baptismal Font to Celebrate a New Spiritual Life

This is the second of two articles by Keith Christiansen about our font.

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What holy mysteries does our font reveal?

To start: Why is the font eight-sided? In Christian iconography, the number eight symbolizes new beginnings and the Resurrection, for Christ rose from the dead eight days after entering Jerusalem.

Directly above the inscription on the base dedicating the baptismal font to the Rev. Thomas McClure Peters, our fifth rector, is the Greek letter Alpha (Α), signifying "the beginning." Traditionally, it would be paired on the right with the letter Omega (Ω), "the end," as in Revelation 22:13: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

However, on the font the Alpha is flanked by two quite different symbols for the Trinity: a regal fleur-de-lis and an equilateral triangle interlocked with three circles. The fleur-de-lis may refer to the lily that the archangel Gabriel is often shown holding when he announces to Mary that she will bear Jesus. The fleur-de-lis can also symbolize the Trinity because of its three petals.

The triangle asserts the coequal nature of the three aspects of the Trinity. The circles, having neither a beginning nor an end, embody its essential mystery and can't help but evoke the words of the doxology: "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end."

The adjacent panel is decorated with the interwoven letters IHS that derive from the first three letters of the Greek name of Jesus, ΙΗΣΟΥΣ. Those interwoven letters first appear in Byzantine art in the 7th century. Western Christendom



translated them in Latin as Iesus Hominum Salvator — "Jesus, Savior of Mankind."

Father Peters must have liked this particular formulation, for it appears on the cross marking his burial site at St. Michael's Cemetery.

Then comes a very beautiful Greek cross with splayed ends intertwined with another emblem for eternity: a highly decorative knot that makes four circular loops. This formulation calls to mind Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

Next is one of the most ancient and popular of Christian monograms, the chi rho. Formed by the Greek letters Chi (Χ) and Rho (Ρ), the monogram employs the first two letters for Christos (ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ).

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The next panel incorporates the most ubiquitous of symbols: the five-pointed star. A star led the wise men to Bethlehem and thus may represent divine guidance, hope and the revelation of Christ. It also evokes the light in darkness — themes that well accord with baptism. But it can also stand for the five wounds of Christ.

After the fleur-de-lis arrive at the Omega that completes the Alpha — "the beginning and the end."

Such symbols can seem esoteric. But they also prompt meditation. Our archivist Jean Ballard

Terepka has beautifully suggested that when put together these symbols might read, "God in three persons, blessed Trinity, the beginning and the ending, revealed to people in Jesus Christ, who died upon the Cross, was crowned with glory, and draws all people to Him." — Keith Christiansen



Our font's eight sides tell stories in symbols: Alpha, triangle, IHS acronym, Greek cross, Chi-Rho, star, fleur-de-lis and Omega. The IHS symbol crowns the gravestone of our fifth rector, the Rev. Thomas McClure Peters, at St. Michael's Cemetery.