



ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Worshipping & serving since 1807

Parish Profile

At a Glance

St. Michael's Church is a place of faith, prayer, music, service, fellowship, acceptance, laughter, and love. Located on Manhattan's Upper West Side, known for its parks, family friendly atmosphere, and cultural riches, it's been our home of worship for 218 years.

With a wide array of ways to worship and serve, we're hungry for more. The pandemic, along with ongoing renovation projects, curtailed some of our parish life, but our online programming has expanded. Adult formation classes increased threefold thanks to Zoom. Nearly 100 participated in Sacred Ground, and 45 participated in a multi-week workshop on reparations. We've doubled our food outreach program.

Now, we're looking for our next rector who can build on the church's many strengths and lead us into deeper relationships with each other and the wider community.



This is God's house and God's table.
Wherever you are on your journey,
you are always welcome here.

Who We Are

At a Glance



Average
Sunday
Attendance:
150 - 175

Median age:
56

Female:
56%

Households
with children:
35%

St. Michael's belongs to the Diocese of New York, which spans 190 worshipping communities from New York City to the southeastern part of the state. We have over 400 active parishioners, about three-quarters of whom come from the immediate neighborhood. A sizable contingent joins from nearby Washington Heights and Harlem plus the Bronx, Brooklyn, and New Jersey — and, since the advent of online services during the pandemic, by Zoom.

While the congregation is mostly white, our membership and leadership reflects the diversity of New York City. The church was a pioneer in outreach to the LGBTQ+ community, and that remains a big part of its identity.

Many non-parishioners also have regular contact with the church, through weekly outreach programs, classes, and events in the parish house. The church also owns a cemetery in Queens that serves people of a variety of faiths and backgrounds, including Greek Orthodox, Hindu, and secular, and is central to the local community.



How We See Ourselves

Around 115 congregants participated in listening sessions to provide input for this parish profile. They spoke about what brings them to St. Michael's, where they see areas for improvement, and what qualities they hope the next rector will possess. It is consistent with what we heard in 2018, when we discerned "God's Call," to identify our core values. About 160 people took part in small groups, and six values emerged: following Jesus Christ, spiritual growth, community, diversity, joy, and stewardship.

Key takeaways include:

- Overall, we're happy with the worship services and programming. Many described it as a welcoming, respectful community where all are accepted without judgment, across differences of race, age, sexuality, family structure, background, and strength of belief. We see our diversity as an asset and a quality to build on.
- The church provides spiritually enriching services with thought-provoking preaching, a grounding liturgy, and music that uplifts and inspires.
- Online access to worship and programming extends the St. Michael's community beyond its walls, providing spiritual sustenance and connection.
- Through the church's fellowship and outreach programs we have a variety of ways to connect with one another, explore, and live out our faith.
- Many expressed pride in our outreach ministries but some are concerned that congregational participation in these programs is trending down.



Looking to the future:

We have a range of priorities and interests. But there's general agreement that we want to attract new members, particularly people of color, young adults, and families with children, and develop stronger connections to one another. Other significant findings that came out of the sessions:

- We want to bolster youth and family programs to nurture ties across age groups, foster community for young people beyond our Sunday worship services, and provide ways for parents to support each other. Our goal is a thriving, multigenerational parish.
- We want to raise up new leaders, especially younger lay leaders who can carry the mission forward. Supporting lay leadership and staffing ministries will sustain growth and outreach.
- We want to respect the liturgical traditions and music that are at the heart of how we worship, while continuing to explore new approaches, including diverse music styles, multilingual services, and alternative styles of worship.
- We long for a stronger community life. There is a yearning for more of the small, in-person gatherings and meals that went by the wayside with the pandemic. We want to ensure St. Michael's remains a place of welcome, love, and interpersonal connection.
- We want stronger communication about our ministries, small groups, and events, including through more robust digital media.
- We see community engagement and social justice as central to our mission. Many of us value strengthening partnerships with neighbors, organizations, and other communities of faith to help immigrants, the homeless, and other marginalized groups. We differ on how activist the church should be, though. St. Michael's needs to balance being both a spiritual refuge and an advocate for justice.

The staff also provided input for this profile. They described their workplace as meaningful, collaborative, and personally fulfilling. They hope for expanded outreach to serve more people in need.

Who We Are Looking For



As St. Michael's prepares to call a new rector, we seek a visionary, grounded rector who:

- Has the imagination and the leadership skills to take us to new places, and can create excitement around that vision.



- Embodies spiritual depth, compassion, and inclusivity, and recognizes the importance of pastoral care.

- Preaches in a stimulating, accessible way that is relevant to people's lives.



- Is a connector who can engage with people of all ages, cultural, racial, educational, and faith backgrounds.

- Has experience leading a parish and recognizes that the parish encompasses a diverse set of opinions, is skilled at reading the emotions of an organization and influencing others.



- Can assemble and lead a team, empower lay and staff leadership, and meet the administrative needs of a parish with complex physical assets.



Where We Are

St. Michael's is located in the Manhattan Valley part of Manhattan's Upper West Side, a neighborhood rich in green space, cultural institutions and architectural charm. Within a mile or so of the church lie some of the world's top museums, Central Park, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The neighborhood is well served by mass transit with multiple subway and bus lines as well as protected bike lanes, so car ownership is low. In the immediate vicinity of the church is a public playground where St. Michael's Palm Sunday processions begin, as well as a public library and police and fire stations.

Like many neighborhoods, ours has undergone gentrification, but remains home to yawning economic divides that are readily apparent in the immediate vicinity of St. Michael's. Within a few blocks of the church is a Whole Foods, as well as a large housing project and Public School 163, where two-thirds of students qualify for free lunch. These disparities bring challenges but also enrich our congregation and provide us with many opportunities to serve our neighbors.



Where We Came From

When the church was founded in 1807, its bucolic surroundings were a favorite summer getaway for wealthy residents of New York City, in those days a compact settlement at the southern tip of Manhattan. As the century progressed, the country estates gave way to factories, almshouses, orphanages, and a mental hospital. St. Michael's rectors adapted, ministering to the residents of the area's institutions and founding long-lived social-service organizations, as well as a local public school.

By the 1890s the area had begun to fill with apartment buildings, and a new sanctuary with seating for 1,600 was built. Within a few decades, though, its pews started emptying. In the 1950s, attendance at even Easter services was in the teens.

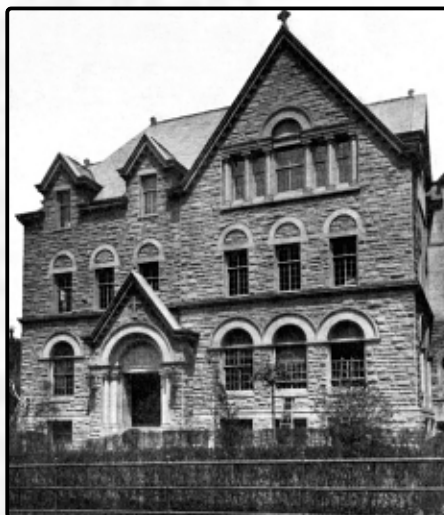
Just over a block away, St. Michael's subsidiary St. Jude's Chapel attracted hundreds of Black worshippers every Sunday, bringing us to an essential thread of our history. Most of the church's founders were enslavers, and after New York abolished slavery in 1827, St. Michael's relations with its Black neighbors remained complicated.



From the 1830s through 1850s, St. Michael's ministered to and eventually built a church in Seneca Village, a mostly Black settlement about a mile away that was destroyed in 1857 to make way for Central Park. In 1905, a vibrant new Black community arose on 99th Street just east of St. Michael's, which eventually built St. Jude's to serve it. When the chapel and several nearby blocks were demolished in the late 1950s to make way for so-called urban renewal, most St. Jude's parishioners were forced to relocate far from the neighborhood. After that St. Michael's finally opened its own doors to Black members, some of whom went on to become pillars of the congregation.

In 1976, with attendance still low and the church in danger of closing, a new rector made St. Michael's a haven for gay New Yorkers. Amid some initial tensions and the horrors of AIDS — which took the lives of more than 60 church members — this newly welcoming atmosphere helped usher in a renaissance that shapes the congregation and its attitudes to this day. St. Michael's was a creation of New York's elite, but survives in large part because of the contributions of the disfavored and discriminated-against.

At the church's bicentennial in 2007, the altar of St. Jude's Chapel, after half a century under a tarp on the front portico, was installed in a place of honor in the sanctuary.



How We Worship

Our worship style is broad church, and we aim to use expansive and inclusive language. We use incense and high altar on special feast days and clergy wear stoles rather than full vestments on sweltering days. The music is largely traditional, but with ample experimentation and variety. "Lift Every Voice and Sing" gets a lot of use alongside "The Hymnal 1982." The Peace is no longer the 10-minute-long social interlude it was before the pandemic, but is still extended, by Episcopal standards. Parishioners serve as ushers, acolytes, healing prayer ministers and on the altar guild. We're not afraid to experiment. We've tried different forms of the Lord's Prayer. Our Christmas Day Jazz Eucharist is a St. Michael's tradition.

The church itself is a limestone-faced brick Romanesque-Revival building designed by eclecticist Robert Gibson. It features the fruits of a long-running collaboration between the church and Louis Comfort Tiffany, starting with windows from 1895 depicting St. Michael's moment of triumph in heaven and concluding with a 1920 mosaic of "Witnesses to the Redemption" in the side chapel, in addition to other windows, mosaics, high altar, pulpit and lamps. The church was repainted in the 1990s in a palette derived from Tiffany designs.



Sunday Eucharist

7:45 AM (spoken)
10 AM (choral)
(10 a.m. in person and online)

Morning Prayer

Mon - Fri, 7:45 AM (online)

Noonday Prayer

Mon - Fri, 12 PM (online)

Sat. Morning Prayer

9 AM (online)

Church Open Hours

Tue and Thu
11 AM - 2 PM



Our Music

The music at the 10 a.m. services is part of the essence of St. Michael's, considered a key attraction for many of us. Featuring choral and instrumental offerings that span the past 1,500 years and numerous cultures and genres, the music program is always exploring ways to enrich the spirit and elevate the spoken word for a diverse parish.

St. Michael's employs a full-time choirmaster/organist and a part-time children's choir director. Both are gifted musicians and instill a strong sense of spiritual mission with their choirs. Together, the choirmaster/organist and children's choir director lead an adult choir that's supported by a professional octet, and three children's choirs.

The adult ensemble offers several performances yearly outside of 10 a.m. services, and tours internationally about once a decade. In the summer of 2025, it was in residence at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, Ireland. The three children's choirs are organized by age, from preschool through high school. They build musical skill and community, with one or more singing each month.

The church also employs a part-time organ scholar. This distinct program seeks to shape the next generation of sacred music by broadening the scholar's musical study beyond the traditional repertoire to jazz, roots music, and more.

St. Michael's has two organs, three grand pianos, and a harpsichord. The primary gallery organ is a 1967 Von Beckerath from Germany. The secondary organ is a mid-1950s electric Hammond Organ that is used for gospel and jazz.



Children & Youth



Children and youth have long been at the heart of St. Michael's, welcomed and involved in every aspect of parish life. We felt the loss when families with young children fled New York City in droves early in the Covid-19 pandemic, but participation in children's programs has increased in recent years, with a significant uptick in children under 5. We aim to nurture each child's unique gifts and remind them that they are loved by God. A full-time director of children, youth, and family ministries oversees a range of programs with support from volunteers and staff.

On Sundays, children from pre-K to fifth grade attend Godly Play during services, while middle schoolers and high schoolers have their own forums for Christian development and fellowship. A nursery, staffed by qualified caregivers, is thriving, with about half of the parish's 15 babies attending each week. Elementary programs draw about a dozen children each Sunday. Middle- and high-school participation is still low, but there is hope for renewal as the youngest members grow.

Children and their parents participate year-round in pageants, sleepovers at the church, Parents' Night Out, and service projects. A highlight has been the Emerging Peacemakers Program, which has brought together Jewish, Muslim, and Christian teens for a week-long residential program in the UK with the Rose Castle Foundation and in Northern Ireland at Corrymeela.

Fellowship

Beyond worship services, music and children's activities, we deepen our relationship with God and each other during a variety of fellowship and formation opportunities:

- Coffee Hour
- Small Bible Study Groups
- Men's and Women's Retreats
- Affinity groups

Festive backyard gatherings marking the start and end of the programming year are a popular tradition.



Outreach

St. Michael's sponsors a number of outreach ministries, focused both on needs of the local neighborhood and those of the wider world.

Saturday Kitchen

Founded in 1983, the Saturday Kitchen is one of the largest food programs in the neighborhood, distributing 350-plus grocery bags, including pantry items and hot meals to guests — along with coffee and juice — outside the church each Saturday. The number of meals served has more than doubled since before the 2020 pandemic, when the program pivoted from a sit-down meal in the parish house to bagged meals. In 2024, more than 17,500 meals were served, a record high. The Saturday Kitchen is staffed by parish and neighborhood volunteers, with support from a per-diem chef and church staff. Funding comes from church support, grants, and local businesses.



Serving Our Neighbors

Other neighborhood-focused initiatives include English Help, where every Saturday volunteer tutors provide one-on-one help for conversational practice and reading to individuals who speak English as a second language, and Homework Help, where every Monday from October through May, volunteers provide free “kitchen table” help for students in grades 1-8, both in the church and online. Outreach activities have also included a first-ever block party in 2024, summer movie nights, and a St. Nicholas gift and grocery gift-card drive for neighborhood families.



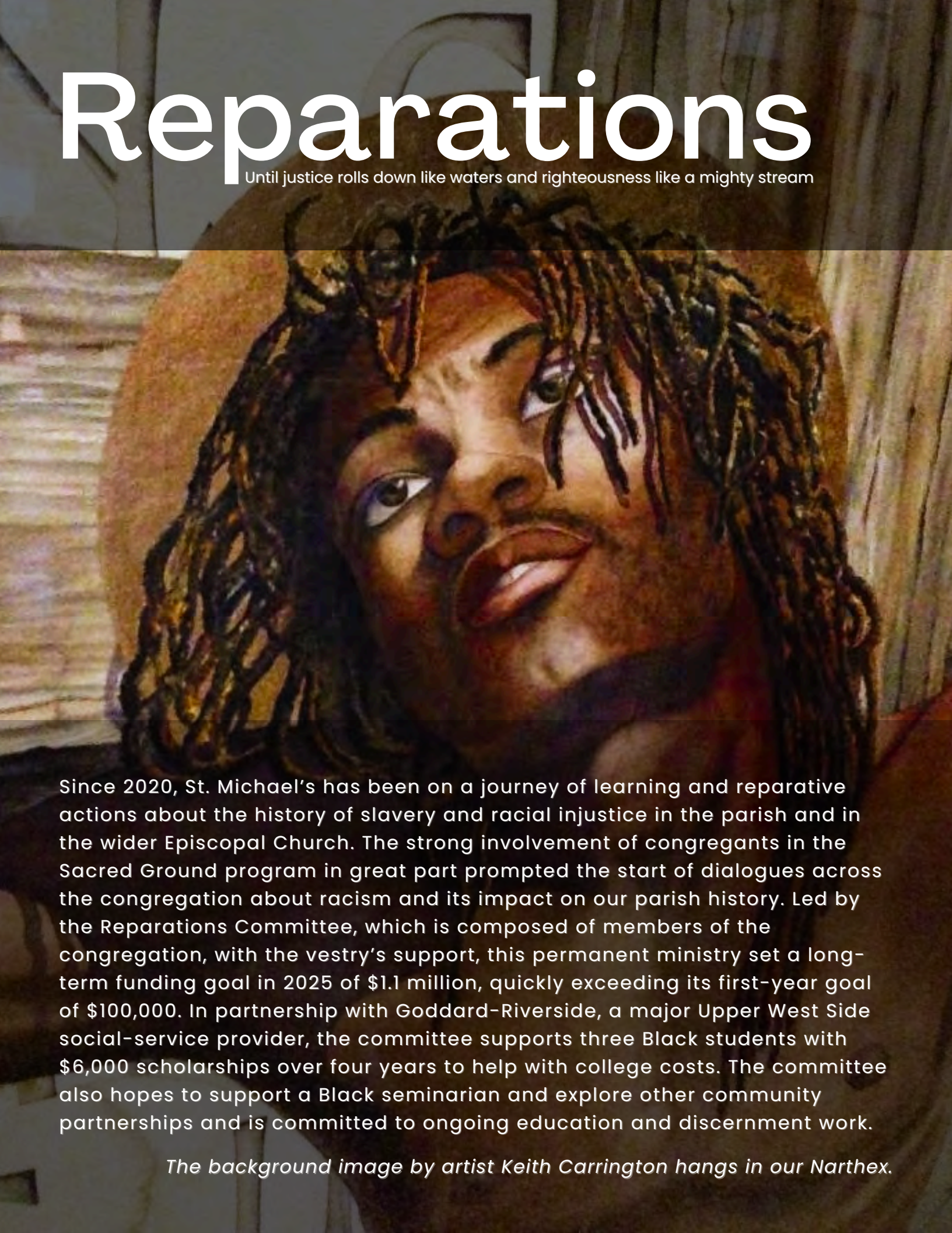
Serving the World

Beyond the neighborhood, St. Michael's is a founding parish of the New York Haiti Project, established in 2016 to support the construction, expansion, and ongoing operation of St. Luke's Episcopal Church and School in Martel, Haiti. It also provides financial support to Al Ahil Arab Hospital in Gaza via the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, raising over \$17,000 for the hospital in 2024.



Reparations

Until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream



Since 2020, St. Michael's has been on a journey of learning and reparative actions about the history of slavery and racial injustice in the parish and in the wider Episcopal Church. The strong involvement of congregants in the Sacred Ground program in great part prompted the start of dialogues across the congregation about racism and its impact on our parish history. Led by the Reparations Committee, which is composed of members of the congregation, with the vestry's support, this permanent ministry set a long-term funding goal in 2025 of \$1.1 million, quickly exceeding its first-year goal of \$100,000. In partnership with Goddard-Riverside, a major Upper West Side social-service provider, the committee supports three Black students with \$6,000 scholarships over four years to help with college costs. The committee also hopes to support a Black seminarian and explore other community partnerships and is committed to ongoing education and discernment work.

The background image by artist Keith Carrington hangs in our Narthex.

Physical Assets

Along with the church itself, the St. Michael's campus consists of two other limestone-faced Romanesque Revival buildings — the parish house and the rectory — as well as a large garden along 99th Street and a small play area over which the church has a permanent easement with a neighboring apartment building. The church also owns the land under another adjacent apartment building, as well as the cemetery in Queens.

The three-story parish house has abundant program space that is rented to nonprofit tenants, introducing us to and serving the wider community. Tenants include Russian- and Spanish-language children's schools, two theater groups, tai chi and gym classes, another spiritual organization, and 12-step programs. Some members of the church staff live in apartments in the parish house. The adjacent rectory was built to accommodate the social needs of a rector of a large parish at the time. The first floor was built for hosting and entertaining. The new rector's living space would include this space and four bedrooms on the second floor.

In 2019 St. Michael's embarked on a multi-phase renovation project and capital campaign under the slogan Doors Wide Open:

- The first phase, completed in 2024 with the aid of \$2 million in parishioner support, focused on accessibility and infrastructure upgrades. It added ADA-complaint ramps; an elevator; accessible bathrooms; an enclosed atrium between the church and parish house; new nursery and choir room; and electrical and plumbing upgrades.
- The second phase, begun in summer 2025, focuses on the building of a commercial kitchen and food storage to support the Saturday Kitchen. St. Michael's is attracting robust funding for this critical project from parishioners as well as grantors and other supporters.
- An anticipated third phase will focus on the performance hall and other spaces on the parish house's second and third floors.



814 Amsterdam Avenue

St. Michael's owns a lot next to the church and is the landlord of a new, 15-story apartment building that sits on it, under a 99-year ground lease. The rent from the property provides predictable income to support the cost of operating St. Michael's and maintaining its landmarked buildings.



St. Michael's Cemetery

Since the 1850's the church has owned and operated St. Michael's Cemetery, located near LaGuardia Airport in Queens. Like the Amsterdam Avenue property, the cemetery is a key source of the church's revenue. The cemetery sells graves, mausoleum crypts, and niches for cremains, and provides cemetery services. It also operates a

crematorium. The cemetery is run by a general manager and staff who report to the rector. The rector has customarily been involved in major cemetery events and provided support for grieving families. The cemetery has a long-term legal obligation to maintain its physical plant, a responsibility that will ultimately be supported by endowment funds and revenue from services and the crematorium.



Financials

St. Michael's position is solid. We have multiple sources of revenue, most of it going toward maintaining our landmarked buildings and programming, while ensuring the church's long-term financial well-being.

We will complete two multi-million dollar renovation projects, with most of the funding coming from the congregation and other sources. Thanks to these projects and committing annual funds to necessary upgrades, our buildings are in good shape.

Our operating budget, of about \$2.4 million in 2025, is funded chiefly by pledges and tenant rent, followed by transfers of funds by St. Michael's Cemetery and ground rent from the Amsterdam Avenue property.

Pledge support has been steady, and fully 85% of the congregation contributed to the renovation fundraising campaign. The church also has modest endowments that can be tapped for capital upgrades.

St. Michael's Church
Summary Financial Report
2024-2025
Dollars in Thousands (\$000's)

	2024	2025
Revenue	Actual	Budget
Offerings	702	685
Rental Income	701	723
Cemetery Fees & Transfers	505	461
814 Amsterdam Rental & Other Income	429	525
Total Revenue	2,337	2,394
Expense		
Maintenance	776	761
Pastoral	374	390
Administration	310	321
Music Programs	295	327
Apportioned Share	276	260
Education, Outreach & Other	306	335
Total Expense	2,337	2,394

Staff

In addition to the rector, the staff consists of a full-time associate rector, a deacon, and includes full- and part-time staff that manage music, children's programs, administration, finance, and maintenance.

Communications

St. Michael's offers multiple avenues for the congregation to stay connected. A weekly email newsletter, "Looking Ahead," informs 766 subscribers about upcoming events, news, and resources. A monthly newsletter, "The Messenger," features articles and reflections about the life of the parish and greater church. Pew welcome cards help newcomers to get involved.

St. Michael's is also active on Facebook and YouTube and has a growing reach with its website.



How to Apply

Email cover letter, resume, and OTM portfolio to: transitions@dioceseny.org, please note "St. Michael's Church, Manhattan," in the Subject Line of your email. Receiving names until the position is filled.

