



The Anchor

A Newsletter of St. Michael Parish

February 2015

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Did you know?

Did you know that there has been a group of parishioners who have been praying weekly, rain or shine, on the steps of St. Michael Church since our beloved church closed?

The intentions of the rosary are for our parishioners, more financial miracles, Fr. Perkins and all of our priests, and for St. Mary's and other local parishes who have welcomed us during this time. Everyone is welcome to pray the Rosary on Friday evenings at 6:30pm (6:00pm during the season of Lent).

For more information, contact Linda Norton at 860-599-2613.

Upcoming Events

Ash Feb. 18
Wednesday

Pray the Mondays
Miraculous after
Medal 7 am
Mass

Pray the Fridays
Rosary on 6:30pm
the steps of (6:00pm
St. Michael's during
Lent)

A New Direction for St. Michael's!

As was announced at the Christmas Mass at Midnight, the St. Michael Church project will be taking a different direction. Instead of building a new church, the existing building will be repaired and updated. This new direction has come about as a result of feedback provided by the recent Planning Study for the Capital Campaign and an investigation into possible alternatives to building a new church.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Planning Study Survey for the Capital Campaign. Your responses have been helpful in not only gauging the enthusiasm for the project, but also in setting a fundraising goal for the upcoming Capital Campaign. The survey results indicate a high level of commitment to St. Michael's and the efforts to rebuild the church. They also indicate that parishioners are eager to commence with the project.

In the responses, a number of parishioners raised some concern regarding the scope of the project and whether St. Michael's would be able to raise enough money to build a \$9 million church. Additionally, Changing Our World, the fundraising company selected to assist with the upcoming Capital



Photo of St. Michael Church, courtesy of www.gulinophotography.com, 1997.

Campaign, counseled us that a Capital Campaign of that magnitude might not be realistic for St. Michael's. Changing Our World does, however, believe that a \$2-3 million Capital Campaign is very achievable.

Looking back two years, we made the decision to build a new church based on the information available to us, and it seemed to be the more desirable option. At the time, it appeared to be about the same price as an estimated repair, and a new building would eliminate potential problems that often lurk in rehabilitating old structures. The repair that had been proposed involved installing an interior steel structure, which was not very appealing from an aesthetic point of view.

As the process of designing a new

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A New Direction cont.

church unfolded, we were all taken aback by how expensive this option really was. The estimate for the first design which was presented in June 2013 was \$12 million. In response, the building committee worked with the architect to find ways to reduce the cost. The result of that effort was the design presented this past April, which was a drastically scaled-back version of the first design and estimated to cost \$9 million.

A New Direction

In early November, given the significant costs associated with building a new church and the feedback we started to receive from the Planning Study Survey, we began to look at an alternate solution for St. Michael's. We contacted Vermont Timber Works (www.vermonttimberworks.com) to see if they could offer an alternative. They build heavy timber trusses which are used in homes, commercial buildings and churches. After reviewing the engineer's report on St. Michael's, they proposed a conceptual design for a new roof structure. The heavy timber trusses will be made of Douglas fir and spaced 20 feet apart. The trusses will be visible and consistent with the architecture of St. Michael's. In this approach, the old roof structure would be taken out, and the new trusses installed.

This solution will require a significant amount of work done to the rest of the building:

- In the basement, footings and cement piers will be installed to carry the load from the new trusses.
- The walls on the perimeter of the church will need to be upgraded to meet building codes for lateral loads (high winds).
- Other work will need to be completed, such as new wiring, fire alarm, sprinklers, heating and cooling system, insulation, reinstallation of the organ and stained glass, painting, etc.

A preliminary investigation has already been made into the perimeter walls in order to determine what must be done to upgrade them to meet code requirements.

The cost estimate for all the work to be done to the church indicates that the total cost is roughly half that of a new church building.



Drawing featuring the new truss structure by Vermont Timber Work, Inc.

The opinion of many people in the community was sought regarding this new direction for St. Michael's, including the finance council, parish trustees and others with engineering and building experience, all of whom eagerly support this plan.

Looking back at the time and effort spent on designing a new church building should not now be regarded as a waste, but rather seen as confirmation that the path we are embarking on now is the right one. St. Michael Church is a beautiful building, rich in history and a gift to the parish from ancestors in faith that believed in the community over 150 years ago. By God's will, it will continue to be a home to parishioners for many generations to come.

Summary

- New approach to dealing with St. Michael's involving the installation of heavy timber trusses and other upgrades, which all totaled will be roughly half the cost of a new church building.
- A successful capital campaign to commence in the New Year, combined with the \$2 million already in the bank, will provide the necessary funds to do the work.
- If all goes according to plan, St. Michael's should be re-opened within about two years.

Look for updates on the project in the bulletin, *The Anchor* newsletter, and on the parish website at www.stmichaelpawcatuck.com.

Parish Happenings



Fr. Christopher Feeney

Welcome, Father Feeney!

St. Michael, St. Mary and St. Thomas More Parishes have been blessed with a new priest!

Fr. Christopher Feeney has joined the Holy Cross Community as Parochial Vicar.

Fr. Feeney comes

to us from Sacred Heart Church in Groton and St. Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, in Groton Long Point. He lived in both Rhode Island and Connecticut before attending Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland. He was ordained to the priesthood in May 2010.

Good Luck, Father Noe

We have had to say goodbye to Fr. Martin Noe, our Parochial Vicar. Fr. Noe has joined the parishes of St. John in Old Saybrook and St. Mark in Westbrook as Parochial Vicar. We are sorry to see him leave us!

We are grateful to Fr. Noe for sharing his first parish assignment with us, and wish him the best of luck in all his future endeavors!

Update from Our Seminarian

By Mike Bovino

Seminary has been going really well for me so far! It has been such a transformative time, even through only one semester. Through our daily prayer schedule, Jesus has been continuing to lead me deeper and deeper into friendship with Himself. In learning how to come face-to-face with my weaknesses and failings, and allowing the Lord to enter in and heal them, I have been challenged in many ways, but also very encouraged and reassured that He is truly leading me to be the man that He is calling me to be.

Of the classes that I've taken so far, (Latin, Music, Cosmology, Ancient Philosophy, Body and Soul, and Catechism), I think that my favorite was Cosmology. We read a lot of great philosophical writings from Plato and Aristotle, all the way up through some modern philosophers like Cardinal Ratzinger and others. I think that the most fascinating and inspiring thing that I learned from that class is the importance of recognizing the fact that our lives are truly a gift. Life is not something that we will ourselves to possess, but rather, it is given to us by God. As Scripture tells us in Ephesians, "He chose us in Him

before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him" (Eph. 1:4). In other words, our life is a gift from God, and He gives it to us with the hope that we will choose to be with Him in this life and in the life to come. I found this truth very inspiring because it shows us that our lives are proof that God loves us even in the face of our failures and faults because He still chooses to give us life in the world!

If there is one thing that I am trying to learn more profoundly, it is to trust in God always and to give my life more completely over to Him, trusting and knowing that He desires my greatest happiness, in this life now, and with Him in eternity. In this, I would encourage every person to surrender to Jesus more deeply, no matter where you are in life. He always calls us to more trust, more faith in Him, and therefore, a greater love!

I hope that you are doing well and I'm praying for you all!

Thanks and God bless!

Parishioner Michael Bovino is in the first of two years of philosophical studies at Mount Saint Mary Seminary. After completing his philosophical studies, Michael will begin his theological studies with an anticipated ordination in 2020. Please keep him and all seminarians in your prayers.



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St. Michael Church Launches New Website

In the last issue of *The Anchor*, we announced that St. Michael School had launched a new website. Now parish families will also have an updated, easy-to-use reference for St. Michael Parish's latest news, newsletters, and events, along with information on everything that makes St. Michael's unique.

The new site features information on Mass and Adoration times for the Holy Cross Community, faith formation and religious education information, and sacramental requirements.

There is information on the Cornerstone project and the latest on the church's renovation plan, a history page which tells the story of our parish since its beginning in 1861, and much more.

There are also convenient links to many resources, includ-



Visit the new St. Michael Parish website for news and events at www.stmichaelpawcatuck.com.

ing St. Michael School and the Diocese of Norwich. Visit the site at www.stmichaelpawcatuck.com.

Parishioners can also continue to follow the latest church news on Facebook!