



St. Michael & All Angels

Our Parish Story



MARCH 25, 2020



Celebrating Christ in Community

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Who Are We Now

We, the people of St. Michael and All Angels, are a warm, welcoming and loving community of Anglicans. In our church, we readily and continuously support one another. In our self examination, we recognize that we are diverse in respect to our personalities and opinions and we seek to grow and learn from one another and our new priest.

Our church is fiscally sound. We have maintained the upkeep on our building, including the addition of a lift and automatic door openers, to be more accessible. We are blessed to have a Memorial Garden (Scattering Garden) for our parishioners. This treasure is located beside our church. Our rectory next door to the church is available for an incumbent to make a permanent home.

St. Michael and All Angels is a place of both spoken and sung worship using the Book of Alternative Services. We have two Sunday morning services and a Thursday worship where uplifting seniors are known as the “angels”. Refreshments and fellowship follow our services.

In summary, we have the spirit, people and finances to continue our momentum to grow as a church for many more years with the leadership of a new minister.

Strengths and Areas of Concern

We pray for an incumbent who will provide us with stability and will continue to build on the legacy of our beloved previous priests. As a church, continuity has been challenging due to a variety of circumstances. Our strength is in carrying on as a parish, reaching back to those who need a hand up this hill of constant change.

Our church is a community of dedicated and compassionate people. We all have many talents to share which keeps our church sufficiently running in stewardship and mission. This blend of people is a special mix of ages, ethnicity, income, education and experience. We are comprised of a greater number of seniors and our focus has been more on stewardship. Our financial stability provides us with a solid base to expand our goals in mission work.

True to the spirit of Thunder Bay, our numbers decrease in the summer while people leave the city to experience the beauty of our Northwestern Ontario wilderness. In the winter, a few parishioners, mostly retired, travel south to escape the cold.

In the coming year we plan to look at our neighbours and get to know them better deepening our relationships. We are also beginning to diversify our parish and grow our Sunday School and Youth Groups through the efforts we have put into hosting events that draw people to our church and then inviting and encouraging them to stay.

We are blessed with three part time employees and a host of volunteers. St. Michael and All Angels has an administrative assistant who works half days four times per week. We have a resourceful maintenance man who also works part time hours. Our talented Music Director is a part time paid position as well.

Congregational Development and Diversity

In 2017 four churches in our Deanery met to discuss amalgamations and closures. This was a time of angst and uncertainty. With much prayer and discussion St. Michael and All Angels decided to continue as a single point parish.

In the past year we have seen a resurgence of energy at St. Michael and All Angels. We began anew to be better and more positive once we worked through our past grievances by the symbolic act of committing them to paper, burning them and prayerfully letting them go. We noticed more parishioners taking on responsibilities and offering to serve on committees. Our meetings and events saw increased attendance. Our Parish Team Leadership Board grew. We gained wardens who volunteered to do the job. We could feel the resurgence of something special happening at St. Michael and All Angels. We began to grow in numbers and in a sense of common direction of who we are and who we want to become.

St. Michael's is an active participant in Deanery and Diocesan meetings and events. We send Synod representatives to all meetings in Sault Ste. Marie. We often host the Deanery meetings and events in our church hall.

Liturgy and Music

Liturgy and music are essential to us. We are blessed with a new Music Director who has injected joy into our music ministry. His talent for encouraging our musical gifts is only exceeded by his talent for singing and playing the organ and piano. Worship is a richer experience at St. Michael and All Angels. You can hear his local community choir practice in our church basement, filling the hall with uplifting sounds. Our new music may be a way we can present ourselves to the larger community.

Lay Leadership and Mission

St. Michael and All Angels stewardship of finances has allowed us to continue through our current changes. We work with our Deanery of Anglican churches to host events, provide workers and help others such as the Deanery barbecue at Shelter House. In our own church we host family suppers such as Spaghetti, Beef on a Bun, and Pancakes, open to all in our parish and neighbourhood. These "funraisers" are often open offerings and help us support Mission to Seafarers, and the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund or another local need. We intend to host a "funraiser" in the coming year and donate all the earnings! Our Anglican Church Women's group continues to thrive with strong dedicated women who meet to talk, listen to speakers and often take on cleaning tasks within the church. Our women also work with the women of the Lutheran Churches in our communion, with a focus on poverty in Thunder Bay and bursaries for female post secondary students. Recently a Craft Group began meeting once a month on Saturdays. We open our church to outside groups to use our newly painted basement hall (initiated and completed by volunteers). These include a Breast Cancer Support Group, AA group, Bikers for Christ and others. We have two Bible Study groups who meet, one in the church on Thursday evening and one that has been active for more than 20 years that meets in parishioners' homes twice a month for study and conversation.

In recent years we have fulfilled a commitment to sponsor education for students in Africa. We also completed our mission to bring potable water to Haiti after their devastating earthquake. We have taken on the challenge of a local Indigenous organization to provide Christmas gifts to children in their

care. Monthly we contribute food to the local Regional Food Distribution Centre. We adopt a local family within our church (two this past year) to provide for them at Christmas.

Our lay leadership is dedicated and resourceful. We have a two Lay Readers, one of which is a Diocesan Lay Reader, who minister at all three of our weekly services as well as at Bethammi nursing home, a neighbour to our church. Our lay readers offer the rector the opportunity to get involved with the Sunday School, share the service, and take time away as needed.

Children and Families

Like every other church, St. Michael and All Angels strives to appeal to children and youth. Our Sunday School and Youth programs have undergone changes in the last year and we seem to be slowly growing in numbers. Sunday School uses the curriculum which mirrors the gospel and readings of the service. Currently there is not a formal youth program. Rather meetings usually take place informally after church and a couple of times a month. Youth participation swells when there is a mission with clear goals (and food)...in true tradition of our church...where there is food there is support and fellowship. The youth are currently fundraising to send a delegation to the CLAY (Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth) gathering in Alberta this summer. It would be nice to harness some of this energy toward a mission-focused goal.

Historically St. Michaels has had a strong generational family base. However, we now have more first-generation families of diverse cultural backgrounds attending our services.

Evangelism

Our challenge is to welcome those who want to include us in their walk with God. We struggle with the fact that, for many people church is not relevant. In the past we held a discipleship study group. From this we learned that we, as Christians, must “fish for people”. We have challenged ourselves to invite someone to church to show them what St. Michael’s is about and show them our Christian love.

Education and Fellowship

At St. Michael and All Angels we have been blessed with spiritual leaders who have fed us with more knowledge about our faith. We look to the sermons to provide us with a relevant teaching experience. We have come together to do book studies, watch Christian movies and discuss the Bible. We always yearn to learn more. We have maintained two bible study groups on a weekly basis for many years. Our communal suppers draw us together in fellowship and even washing dishes and cleaning up is a time to laugh and share stories. Both the 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. families join to partake in food and fellowship, an opportunity to socialize and get to know each other. We excel at these unifying experiences.

How Do We Wish To Grow

We want to be the same essential warm, welcoming and caring church that we were in the past and are now. We want to continue the momentum begun last year and continuing in 2020. Yes, we can maintain our status while we search for a leader, and we feel inspired to follow where God is leading us by knowing we have a minister who can motivate us, sustain us, mentor us and challenge us.

We wish to be mindful of what is beyond our physical building. We want to focus on a mission that aligns with our diocese and national Church, while being cognizant of what is needed in our community.

We want to encourage more of us to do new tasks of service and mission; and to continue warm and welcoming events created to keep us all connected.

We want to have mission focused youth and young adult programming as well as enough volunteers for an active Sunday school program for both elementary and middle school groups. We hope Bible study will flourish for all groups. Our internal focus will be to grow our faith.

We wish to care for our elderly parishioners who cannot attend church in a pastoral ministry. We wish to combine youth outreach and senior visitation programs to reduce the loneliness and isolation felt by both groups.

We want to be inclusive of others who do not share the same lifestyles as we do whether in ethnicity, family or life choices. We wish to connect with our neighbours and other churches to stay strong in faith and community.

We wish to clearly define and expand our missional objectives and focus more outward than inward.

Our Next Rector

What qualities and skills will our next incumbent possess? They will be:

- **A thoughtful and thought-provoking preacher** who understands that the Sunday sermon is the teaching moment of many parishioners.
- **A pastor who cares for all us**, the familiar and those who are cautiously curious, encouraging and inspiring all of us.
- **An insightful listener** who can hear what is said and perceive what is not.
- **An authentic spiritual leader** who shares their own journey while nourishing ours.
- **A capable administrator** who will be hands-on in overseeing parish programs and reporting in partnership with the Wardens, Parish Board and Vestry.
- **An inspiring teacher** of the Christian faith to all ages: in particular, someone who will energize and expand our youth and Sunday School programs. Someone who connects with youth to encourage their interest and questions of faith.
- **A dynamic guide for ministry** with practical experience in different kinds of mission projects that can inspire us.
- **A joyful person with a sense of humour** and with a love of music. Someone who can sing (but there is no audition for that!).
- **A cheerleader** in all things spiritual, both old and new, traditional and modern.

We at St. Michael and All Angles continue to strive to be more of what Jesus teaches us to be. The priest that is called to us might not be everything we think we want, but they may bring what we did not know we needed. We are prayerfully open to a wonderful surprise in our near future.



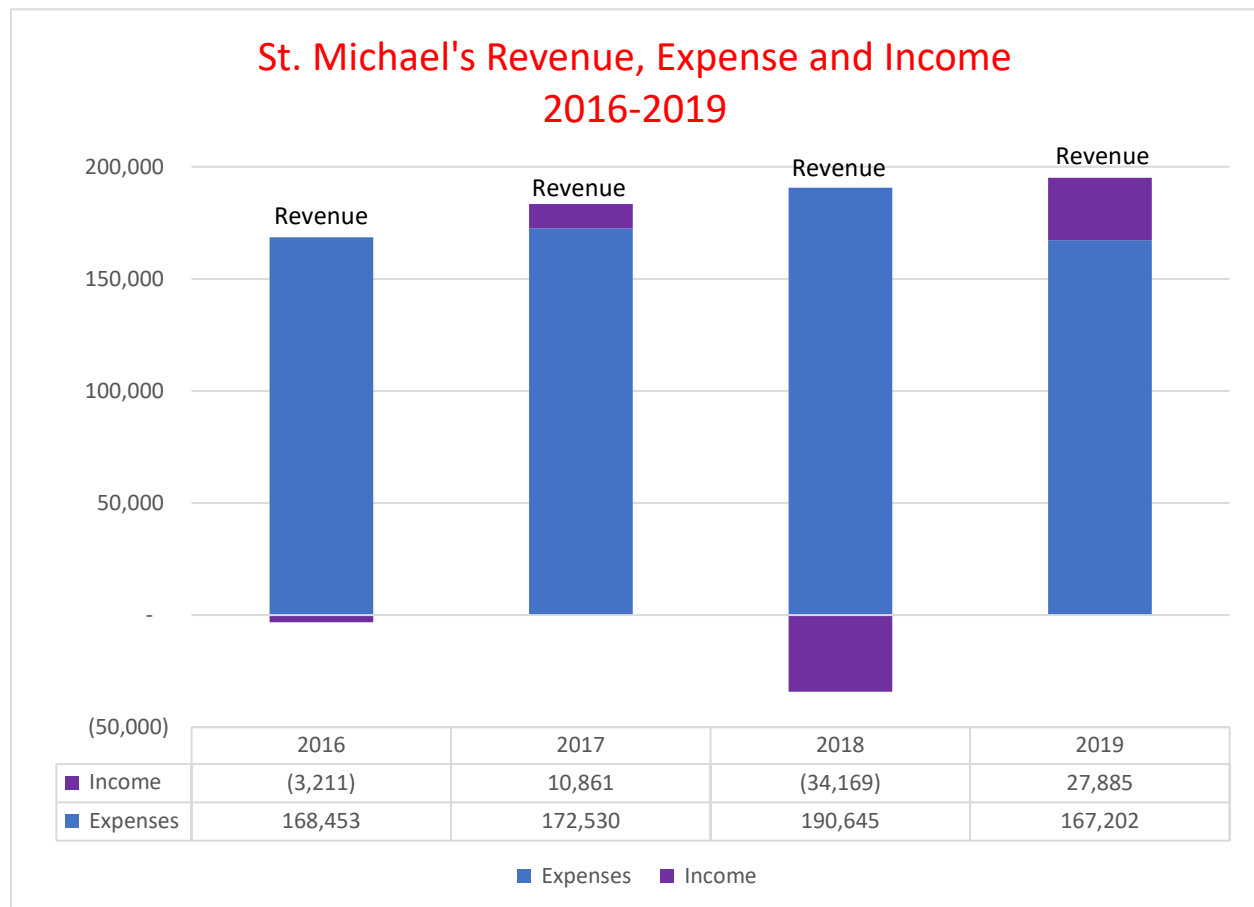
Appendices

Financial Appendix

The financial picture for St. Michaels is very positive. We are able to financially support a full-time minister. We have no debts and approximately \$150,000 in savings. Some of the savings will be used this year to upgrade our audio-visual equipment and for other designated purposes. We currently have a rectory (with no mortgage) beside the church which is available if the Minister would prefer to live there. Otherwise we would provide the housing allowance specified in the Diocesan recommendations.

We have several fund raisers which have been used for a variety of purposes, including fellowship. Although our goal is never to use them for regular operations, we have when necessary. However, fundraising is usually for special projects within the church or for mission work outside the church. In 2019 most of our fundraising efforts were used to save for our audio-visual project. In 2020 we are fundraising to send youth to Youth Synod and to a CLAY (Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth) gathering in Alberta. We are also looking forward to using more of our fundraisers for mission.

Between Rectors, we were less financially stable, but the energy and guidance of our last Rector brought a positive change to our parish that has sustained us through this transition. We were without a Rector for a period of time during 2016 and 2018. These years also reflect completing capital projects for which we had been saving. We tend to be a financially conservative church, but we welcome mission and outreach challenges. Specific financial information is provided from the Vestry Report.



Our Larger Neighbourhood

Our neighbourhood is well established with most homes built in the 1940's to 1970's. Our city's boundaries have developed to the west since church began. Our city is diverse in ethnic backgrounds with British, Finnish and Italian being predominant at one time, but now we see many other nationalities including Ukrainian, French, Polish and German and more recently immigrants from Middle Eastern countries. We have a large Indigenous population with many people from northern communities moving south to settle in a big city. We are neighbours with Fort William First Nation.

Our immediate neighbourhood is residential with mostly single-family homes. There are many retired people living in our city and our neighbourhood reflects this as well as families with children. Schools in our area include a public high school, about approximately 5 elementary schools including Catholic and public. Lakehead University is in our extended neighbourhood. This post secondary school attracts local and international students who study in the arts, engineering, health and other disciplines. We are close to a Seniors' home administered by St. Joseph's Care Group where there is an independent living apartment complex and a long-term care home. There are several apartment buildings in the area along with shopping malls and a few restaurants. Our church is located on busy Red River Road, visible to anyone traveling west through the city.

Historically, our biggest employers in Thunder Bay were the pulp and paper industry, grain elevators at the port, and Bombardier. We are poised to be a hub for mining with the future Ring of Fire north of the city. So, despite losing some resource-based industry, we are thriving with the success of our hospital, university, college, shipping port and innovative small businesses. We have a lively restaurant and arts scene, including our own symphony orchestra in a state-of-the-art venue. Our city supports a thriving country market and local farms that supply many of our restaurants.

Parks and recreational facilities are plentiful. In our own neighbourhood we have Hillcrest Park, Carrick Park and George Burke Park. We have a number of outdoor rinks and two arenas in the area. Our seniors benefit from the 55 Plus Centre on River Street where programming and workshops are available to this segment of the population. Our Canada Games Complex offers fitness, programs for all ages, and a pool for the general public. We are never far from the beauty of Lake Superior where views of the Sleeping Giant are spectacular in any season. Our waterfront, a focal point for taking in the sights or experiencing the activity on the shore or on the lake is a local treasure. We have condos, hotels, restaurants, a historic train station that will see new life soon, and a large marina with an active yacht club. A splash pad for children that becomes a skating rink in winter draws many locals and tourists. Soon we will see our local Art Gallery built on the waterfront.

There are many opportunities for research and education through our university, college, our unique northern law school and medical school. Many specialists are attracted to our city to work in our hospital research programs and teach in our newest faculties. Opportunities abound for those whose passion is found in entrepreneurship. Thunder Bay has so much potential in our unique setting and hub of Northwestern Ontario.

History

In the 1860s, the land where St. Michael's now stands was owned by Frances Brown and used as a small cemetery. The property was up the hill from the small settlement on the Lake Superior waterfront that was called the Station, but that was renamed Prince Arthur's Landing by General Garnet Wolseley when he arrived in 1870.

General Wolseley came to Prince Arthur's Landing to lead the Red River Expedition from Lake Superior to Fort Garry in order to establish Canadian sovereignty in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. The trek was very difficult, with many casualties among his troops. A number of Wolseley's men were buried in Frances Brown's cemetery on the hill.

A few years later, Bishop Frederick Fauquier, the Anglican bishop of Algoma, bought the land for use as a cemetery by the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Prince Arthur's Landing and he consecrated it as a cemetery in July 1875.

However, by the late summer of 1887, the Rev. C. J. Machin of St. John's stopped all burials in the cemetery because he realized there could be other uses for the property. By 1900 a few Anglican families living at the top of the hill began gathering in homes for services and Sunday School, and the group of twelve families became known as the Outstation.

The Outstation group met on December 2, 1906 to plan the construction of a new Church and decided that the new parish would be called St. Michael and All Angels. A Mission Hall was built in 1907, as a mission of St. John's, on the lower northwest corner of the cemetery property. The first service was held on June 16, 1907 with Rev. C. W. Hedley of St. John's presiding and 25 people present. The building was heated with a box stove, with kitchen chairs as seats. The first Altar Guild was formed on October 29, 1908.

On May 12, 1917 the Finance and Advisory Committee of St. John's Church passed a resolution (with the Archbishop and Chancellor present) consenting to the division of St. John's parish. By this division St. Michael's was set apart as a Mission separate from three others in the parish, but still under the mother church of St. John's.

A Ladies' Guild was formed in 1912 and a Women's Auxiliary in 1921. The Women's Auxiliary was renamed Anglican Church Women in 1949. A Girls' Guild was started in 1922 and reorganized into the Girls' Auxiliary in 1925. The younger girls split off into the Junior Auxiliary in 1947.

The Boy Scouts were established at St. Michael's on October 10, 1922, and re-established as the 11th Port Arthur troop on January 23, 1950. This troop continued to December 13, 2006.

The first Choir (for men only) was formed in 1924. A Ladies Choir was added in 1946.

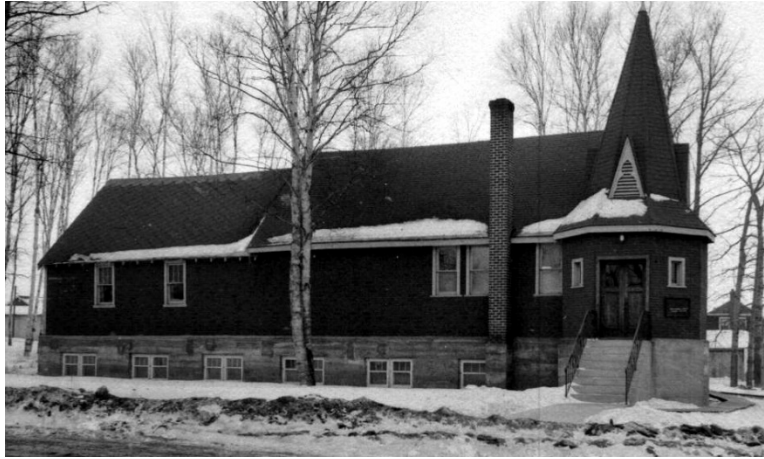
In 1927 St. Michael's proposed to improve the church building, and in order to get a mortgage for this purpose, it was necessary for St. John's to give up its interest in the former cemetery property. A "Quit Claim Deed" dated October 31, 1927, was executed by the Incumbent and Wardens of St. John's Church, to the Synod of Algoma, to officially separate St. Michael's from St. John's parish. In 1928 St. Michael's became a self-supporting Mission. However, in the rocky economy, St. Michael's did not go ahead with the planned improvements or the mortgage.

The depression hit the new parish very hard, and the property reverted to the Corporation of the City of Port Arthur when the taxes on the land fell into arrears. The portion of the land on which the church sat was redeemed with a Quit Claim Deed on May 4, 1936.

In 1937-38 the roof of the church was repaired; the east end was expanded with an addition and the exterior covered with Insulbrick siding.

The first pews were purchased, and a curtain hung between the addition and the altar, separating the altar from the Sunday School.

In 1947, Rev. Alvin Thomson was appointed the first fulltime Incumbent at St. Michael's. In June 1949 the building was raised, and a basement was built under it. The basement took six months to finish.



St. Michael's about 1950

In 1950, the congregation of St. Michael's paid \$900.00 to the Corporation of the City of Port Arthur to redeem the rest of the property, including the old cemetery property. On August 3, 1950, the City of Port Arthur conveyed the land once again to the Synod of Algoma. Thus the whole of the original cemetery property (with the exception of a 12-foot strip lost through the widening of Windemere Ave.) is now the property of the Church.

The Rev. Ken Rutter was appointed Incumbent in 1952.

A Little Helpers group for babies and pre-schoolers was formed in 1955 and met monthly. In 1957, at the height of the baby boom, there were 114 young members.

In 1957 Rev. John Jordan succeeded Rev. Rutter.

At the Vestry Meeting in 1958 approval was given to construct a new church building at the corner of Red River Road and Rockwood Avenue. A modern style of architecture was chosen, using laminated wooden beams, exposed brick interior and light-coloured furniture. The project came together quickly, with the foundation stone laid by Archdeacon Hinchcliff on December 4, 1958. The first service in the new building was Trinity Sunday, May 24, 1959, and the new St. Michael and All Angels Church was officially dedicated by Archbishop William Wright on June 8, 1959.

Archdeacon Mark Conliffe was appointed Incumbent in 1968 and served for 33 years. A parish visitation in October that year determined that there were 344 registered Anglicans on the parish roll.

The first seven stained glass windows were installed in the west wall of St. Michael's in 1979. In August 1992 four more stained glass windows were installed.



Stained glass windows on the west wall

Construction of a large addition on the west side of the building began in June 1989.



Addition under construction in 1989

Modern rooms for meetings and classes were added, and the kitchen was updated and expanded. The seating capacity of the nave of the church was increased to 350 with non-fixed seating in the new area, to accommodate a variety of needs.



Non-fixed seating in the addition

A Men's Fellowship Group was started in 1991, meeting for breakfast on the last Saturday of the month. A Tuesday Morning Home Study Group was formed in 1993 and continues to meet biweekly for study and discussion. In October 1994 work started on St. Michael's Memorial Garden and the first scattering of ashes took place in November of that year.

The Rev. Peter Smyth served as Incumbent from February 2002 to June 2011. He added an Irish flair to our church, a paid youth worker position, and introduced us to services from around the world. After almost ten years, Rev. Smyth was replaced by Rev. Lynn Fisher as interim and then Father Chris Harper as incumbent.

Rev. Chris Harper was the first Indigenous Minister in our Diocese. He joined our church from a parish in Saskatchewan. During his ministry from September 2012 to June 2016, we enjoyed several new ways to worship and spent a little more time with people from the communities to the north of us, hosting events such as the annual jamboree.

In October of 2016 Rev. Gordon Holroyd agreed to be our three-quarter time minister. During this time, we completed a discernment process and realized that we wanted to stay an independent, full-time parish. The Rev. Charlene Scriver came to St. Michael's in 2018 to become our incumbent minister and healed many of our frustrations and resentments. She brought a fresh infectious energy that has helped us continue even during our grief after her sudden passing.

We are currently blessed to have the Rev. Nancy Ringham serve at the Church of St. Michaels. She has come out of retirement to guide us through this time of transition. She is helping to complete projects that Rev. Charlene had begun and leading us spiritually each week. She has brought a passion for youth ministry that has helped to increase both the number of youth and the frequency of our youth meetings.

We celebrated 100 years as St. Michael and All Angels Church in June 2007. Some families in the parish can still trace their loyalty to St. Michael's to the time of the twelve families who initiated the idea of building The Little Mission, while the majority are relative newcomers, each one adding to the vitality of our parish.



St. Michael's in winter

Links

St. Michael's church website: <https://www.stmichaelstbay.com>

Diocese of Algoma website: <https://www.dioceseofalgoma.com>

City of Thunder Bay website: <https://www.visitthunderbay.com/en/index.aspx>

St. Michael's church Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelsthunderbay/>

Parish Communication

- The website <https://www.stmichaelstbay.com> provides messages, announcements and methods for keeping in touch
- Currently Sunday Morning Prayer services are available with links from our Facebook page or our website <https://www.stmichaelstbay.com/services>
- Announcements have been displayed on the projector prior to the beginning of each service
- Our 2019 Vestry report is posted on our website <https://www.stmichaelstbay.com/updates-news>
- Weekly "News and Notes" are emailed to parishioners upon request and copies are available at the back of the church for visitors and those wishing to receive communication in written form. They are also available on our website <https://www.stmichaelstbay.com/updates-news>