

Malachi Matters

The ministries that matter to the faithful and to our neighbors

A publication of St. Patrick Parish with St. Malachi Oratory

Summer 2026



St. Malachi Oratory
of St. Patrick Parish

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Commemorating Our First Anniversary and Going Strong

A message from the pastor

St. Malachi and St. Patrick celebrated a special Mass of Thanksgiving with Bishop Edward C. Malesic on April 11 marking our first year of coming together as one parish. The liturgy was followed by a festive reception with delicious food, music, and the good company of parishioners and long-time friends. It was truly an occasion for us to thank God and those who continue to be a vital part of our community.

We continue to integrate parish life and its many activities and our ministries of charity are growing as we address the needs of our neighbors on Cleveland's Near West Side. Both campuses host meal programs that serve more than 1200 friends each week and we look forward to our new Mother Teresa Conference of Saint Vincent DePaul Society as we address other essential needs including financial assistance for housing, utility bills, and other pressing issues. These ministries are made possible through your generosity and we are grateful for your support!

St. Patrick Parish with St. Malachi Oratory continues our journey together as we begin a dual-campus strategic planning process with the services of LGA Partners, Inc.,

a firm that has worked with many faith-based communities. As we assess our aging buildings, we hope to right-size and adapt both campuses so the focus remains on our mission and ministry for years to come. This period of study will invite us – and our many partners – to offer creative ideas while improving and updating those spaces meant to serve our needs now and in the future.

On behalf of those we serve, thank you for your faithful support and friendship as we joyfully continue to serve with the Heart and Hands of Christ!

Gratefully yours,
Rev. Michael K. Gurnick
Pastor

Why Are You Reading This?

Peter Toomey, *Malachi Matters* Editor

And why is this the middle issue already in the eighth year of publication?
Because The Master said “Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep.”

And why do the story topics tend to repeat?
Because The Master said “The Poor you will always have among you.”

(Yes, in reference to the Disciples' relationship to Himself. But still. Look around?)

And so, the doors at West 25th and Detroit remain open –

- for worship and weddings and baptisms and funerals: with praise to God
- for food and companionship and comfort: to those who can benefit from our help

... just as those doors have been open for so long.

But only through the support of generous individuals and thoughtful retailers and restaurants. Because of the never-ending need for donated foodstuffs and the cash to purchase more.

Since 2019, *Malachi Matters* has shared stories of how our faith informs our service. With transition to Oratory status, our commitment remains – and so we ask your help to ensure we continue to serve.

Use the envelope or the QR Code to make your donation today.

How Blest Are We

Kay Vine, Archivist

When the death of Fr. Jim (James P.) O'Donnell on May 6 was announced, the remembrances and stories began. This tall, humble, gentle priest brought his best to each weekend liturgy, prayer service, wedding, and church event that he presided over at St. Malachi from the 1970s to this century – even while he resided at Ennis Court for a number of years. He also opened his home to all for weekly prayer and liturgy. And, he loved the laughter of a “good joke.”

As he was discerning his own mission in those early times, St. Malachi Parish was struggling to keep its neighborhood presence as membership dwindled. Concurrently, a group of Catholics were searching for the best way to practice the gospel calls of Vatican II. In 1975, they became part of the St. Malachi fabric as the Community of St. Malachi. Fr. Paul Hritz and Fr. Tony Schuerger served as pastors for both groups for the forty years of the Community's active parish status.

Fr. Jim was also part of the liturgical and spiritual life of St. Malachi during those years. Weekend homilies always included challenges reflected in Fr. Jim's sharing of letters and wisdom from friends in ministry across the globe. He often would challenge us in practical, simple ways to discern and deepen our own baptismal call to be ministers and friends to each other, ourselves, and – most especially – those who were on the fringes of a fuller life due to poverty and injustice. St. Malachi Church began to flourish through its development of many ministries in the neighborhood. Fr. Jim's support was definitely a part of that growth.

For all that he gave and all that has been, we are deeply grateful. And while his strong Irish background was always present, he broadened his love to all cultures and asked us to expand ourselves also.



To end this tribute, here is a reflection Fr. Jim gave to me in 2015 during a trying time. This is an excerpt but I believe it captures well what we can say of our good friend.

On the Death of the Beloved

John O'Donohue

*Though we need to weep your loss,
You dwell in that safe place in our hearts,
Where no storm or might or pain can reach you ...
Though we cannot see you with outward eyes,
We know our soul's gaze is upon your face,
Smiling back at us ...
May you continue to inspire us:
To enter each day with a generous heart.
Until we see your beautiful face again
In that land where there is no more separation,
Where all tears will be wiped from our mind,
And where we will never lose you again.*

Contact Us

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Donations:

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St. Patrick Parish
with St. Malachi Oratory

Moving forward together as
the heart and hands of Christ

Fourth Annual Songs For The Soul June 28, 2026

Fun, Neighbors, Food, Music, Tours, Worship



(Photos clockwise from top left: New Connections singer on the concert stage. Local kids enjoying the hot dogs and hospitality of our team. Long-time parishioners and parish supporters offered tours of the interior of the church. Malachi Center and other community organizations promoted their work at event tables)

On Sunday, June 28, we celebrated the 4th annual Songs for the Soul Concert on our St. Malachi Campus. Motown band New Connections played a free concert in the St. Malachi Hall for all to enjoy. Music was pumped out to Washington Avenue where food trucks and community tents were available to draw in friends and neighbors. Church tours were offered for those wanting to learn more about our rich history and our beautiful building. We are so grateful for the committee and volunteers who made this wonderful event possible. Parishioner Margaret Armstead commented, "It is my legacy to have my community come together and celebrate together at my favorite place, St. Malachi Church."

Preparing For Our Future

Peter Toomey, *Malachi Matters* Editor

The Parish is embarking on a 24-week dual-campus study of our existing infrastructure. It is no secret that they have served for generations. But today's question is about how our buildings can best serve, going forward.

We are staying. Committed to our Mission in the neighborhood of worship and outreach.

Both churches will remain.

But this study will evaluate current activities, plus look forward to needs and potential opportunities. Goal is to prioritize function to serve. Possible additions: Sanitation, Hydration, Charging stations? What costs will need to be met?

We will share periodic updates.

Food with a Smile

Lou Keim

Monday thru Friday, Eleshia, Coordinator of the Back Door Ministry, provides a cooked meal for 150-200 individuals and families daily at St. Malachi in the school building from 10 AM until 1 PM. Depending upon the weather, guests are invited into the Hall with their boxed lunch to sit at a table to enjoy their meal and visit with each other.

The Coordinator has been cooking and serving the food for five years and loves every minute of it. She stresses to the volunteers to continue to welcome all and greet each with a smile.

Upon presenting the meal, if one of the guests states that they are not able to eat a portion of it, there are substitutes available and it quickly becomes resolved.

Eleshia, who grew up in the area of St. Malachi, has a good rapport and understanding with the community who appear daily. She and her respective volunteers greet by calling all by name – with a smile. It has become so much like a family that when one of the regulars misses a day, there is a real concern regarding their absence.

With her love of preparing the food and knowing that



the community will be eating a delicious meal Monday thru Friday, she isn't planning on leaving any time soon!!

She is to be thanked for her many years of being a part of this much-needed food program – especially with the attitude she has in cooking and serving all who appear at The Back Door.

A great big thanks to Parishioner Judy Mazur, who supports the program on Wednesdays and Fridays and to all who donate the food for the meals that very much help the continuance of the cooked meals daily at St. Malachi Oratory.

Malachi Matters Summer 2026



The window above the front church doors was carefully selected to view from the outside: "The Good Shepherd invites those who have strayed or have no true shepherd to enter His fold."

Did You Know?

St. Malachi Oratory
at W. 25th and Detroit
Mail c/o St. Patrick Parish
3602 Bridge Avenue
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St. Malachi Church



Celebrating More
Than 160 Years of
Faithful Service in
the Old Angle!

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