

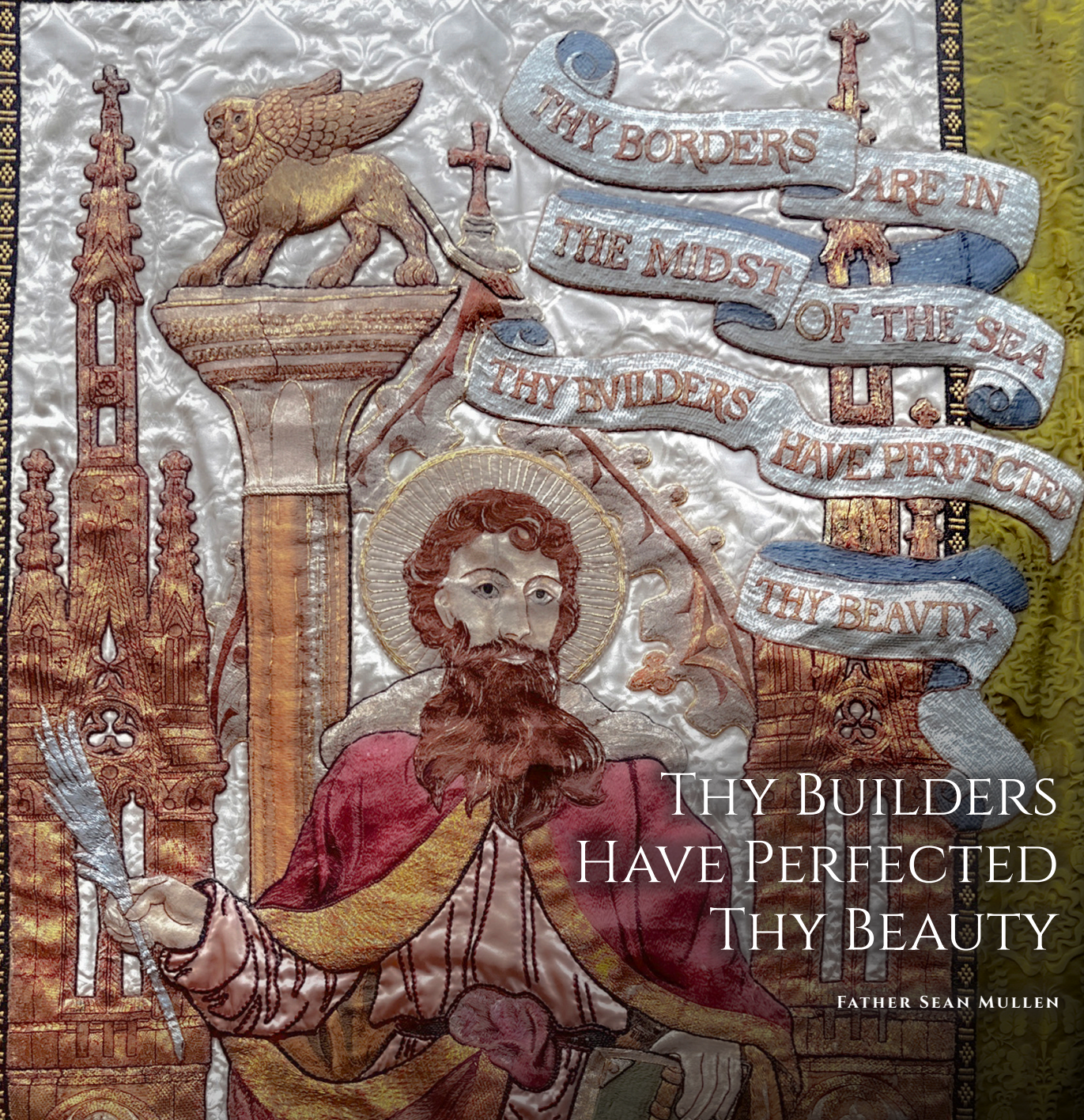


THE LION'S MARK

NEWSLETTER FOR SAINT MARK'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

A COMMUNITY THAT GATHERS IN FAITH, SERVES IN LOVE, AND PROCLAIMS HOPE, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

SAINT MARK



THY BUILDERS
HAVE PERFECTED
THY BEAUTY

FATHER SEAN MULLEN



The banner of our patron saint, Saint Mark, that's often carried in processions is at other times to be found in its place just outside the entrance to the Lady Chapel.

As we celebrate the 175th anniversary of the parish, the image on this banner bears a bit of reflection—it depicts Saint Mark the Evangelist, bearded and clothed voluptuously, with a book in one hand, his own Gospel, and what looks like a quill pen but is actually a silver palm branch in the other, a symbol of his martyrdom.

Various architectural structures are depicted in needlework in the background, including a column upon which stands a winged lion, the symbol of the evangelist.

An elaborately embroidered scroll carries the motto *“Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty.”*

This banner was part of a series of gifts given by Rodman Wanamaker for the Lady Chapel. It was originally mounted on a pole that was topped with a silver-gilt cross set with dozens and dozens of garnets. We now use that cross as a processional cross while the banner is carried on a simpler pole.

The text of the motto is from the 27th chapter of Ezekiel, and it is very curious indeed, for the long passage from which this line is excerpted compares the ancient city of Tyre to a ship of exquisite

craftsmanship, and then to a harbor of exemplary culture, commerce, and wealth. Our Victorian forebears clearly liked the comparisons, and felt they were apt for this church. There is something immodest, however, I think, about invoking this text, which is so self-congratulatory—“thy builders have perfected thy beauty.” But there is no question that throughout our 175 year history Saint Mark’s has sought to employ beauty as a witness to the goodness and love of God in the world.

What should we make of this banner and its motto? I think there are several insights we might glean.

The first half of the motto, “thy borders are in the midst of the sea,” suggests that we have someplace to go, that the work to which God calls us is expansive and missional, that our ministry will carry us beyond the place we are standing at the moment. All of this thinking sounds congruent with what I know of this parish’s work and ministry around the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, when this banner was made, as well as with our own sense of ministry today. This parish has been not only the location of a great deal of active ministry ever since our founding, but also the center from which a great deal of ministry beyond Locust Street has been carried out. And when we discern an expansive ministry to which we are being called in our own day and age, we are very much in line with our forebears, and with the attitude expressed on this banner.

The second half of this motto, “thy builders have perfected thy beauty,” is also true to the long witness of this parish. From the very beginning, this parish was conceived of as a place where beauty would bear witness to God’s love and presence in the world. I feel entirely sympathetic to the view voiced by one commentator that “the perception of true beauty is as reliable a guide to profound truth as reason is.”¹ And I have always felt inspired by the call of the Psalmist to “worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” Saint Mark’s is a living exercise in beauty—from the architecture to the music, to the movement of our bodies in the liturgy; from our service to those in need, to our ministry with children and families. We look for beauty in all of these aspects of our community and our life

1 Brian Zahnd, “When Everything Is On Fire”, p 45

of faith, and we seek to make them expressions of beauty wrought from beauty. It's a bold thing for a parish to declare "thy builders have perfected thy beauty," and as I say, I find it a bit immodest. But it's surely as much an aspirational statement as it is a declaration of fact.

There is another insight to be gleaned from this unofficial motto of the parish. It's an insight we discover when we realize that the line embroidered on the banner is taken entirely out of context. For the prophet does not stop with his description of the exquisite craftsmanship and beauty, the exemplary culture and unsurpassed wealth of the "ship" that is the city of Tyre, as well as its unsurpassed construction and expansive mission. Ezekiel also describes the destruction and ruin of that city, likening it to the tragedy of a shipwreck.

"Now you are wrecked by the seas, in the depths of the waters; your merchandise and all your crew have sunk with you. All the inhabitants of the coastlands are appalled at you... you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever."

What are we to make of the motto on our banner when we read it in context, and we're reminded that even perfected beauty may be destroyed on the rocks and waves?

The historical record tells us that the city of Tyre did fall when King Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to it, in fulfillment, perhaps, of Ezekiel's prophecy. The fall of so fair and so great a city reminds us that everything in this life is provisional, and this is an important insight for us to remember in the church. By "provisional" I mean what the word means: "arranged or existing for the present, possibly to be changed later." Everything we are and everything we have, even the stuff of beauty with which the

temple of the Lord is made, is provisional and subject to change, and this includes even the beauty of Saint Mark's, perfected by our builders and others, and maybe even a little bit by us. The things we have made or acquired in this life are meant for our use for a while, but things are not given to us for eternity—not even things of great beauty.

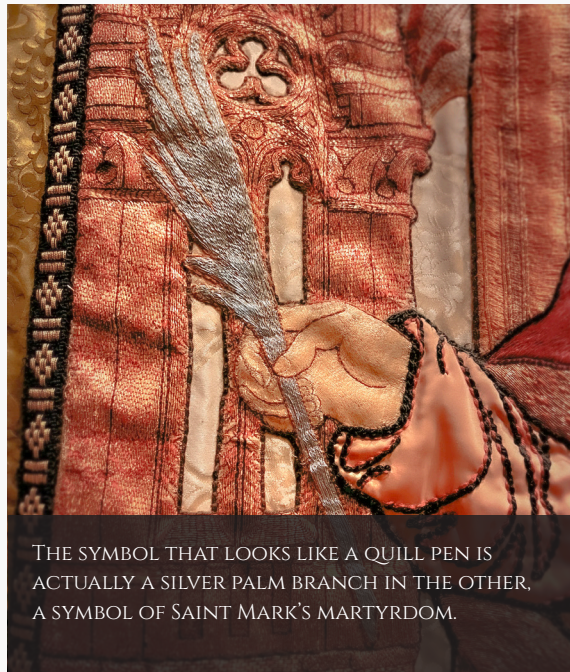
The vision that Jesus holds up for his people over and against the provisional nature of this world is the mystical vision of the kingdom of heaven, wherein beauty really and truly will be perfected, and it will last for all eternity. The beauty that lies in

store for us will be a beauty the likes of which we have only begun to glimpse in this world.

Here and now, we see how everything decays and grows old; how even the perfection of beauty falls into wreck and ruin. But the essence of Christian hope is that that which has grown old will be made new. God has always called his people into a pattern of renewal. The pattern of gift, rebellion, relapse, and love is a pattern of renewal. The promise of resurrection is a promise of renewal. The hope of heaven is a hope of renewal after

everything, we have and everything we are has grown old. There may or may not be puffy clouds in heaven, and white-clad angels playing harps, but whatever heaven is, it is there that you and I will find that we have been transformed by the renewal of resurrection. The Christian vision of the end of all things (the eschaton) is a vision of renewal—the new Jerusalem coming down from God to be for us a place where we can dwell with him in light and joy, without suffering or sadness. Lo, Christ makes all things new.

Long before the testimony of Jesus, Ezekiel, like the other prophets, attested to the promised renewal



THE SYMBOL THAT LOOKS LIKE A QUILL PEN IS ACTUALLY A SILVER PALM BRANCH IN THE OTHER, A SYMBOL OF SAINT MARK'S MARTYRDOM.

that God would bring to his people. Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of the dry bones coming to life is his most famous and well known testimony, bringing into nearer focus the promises God had already begun to make: “Behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you... and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.” (Ez 36:9-11). And Christians see Jesus’ resurrection as the consummation of God’s promises of redemption and salvation.

The church in America is enduring challenges unlike any she has known in many centuries, as fewer and fewer people come to church, fewer and fewer people think they have any need for religion, and fewer and fewer people are willing to attach specific detail to whatever faith they may have. Fewer and fewer people know whether or not they believe in God, or what it might mean if they did. Around the church throughout America and Europe, this can begin to feel like the wreck



of Tyre—our borders had been in the midst of the sea; our builders had perfected such beauty!

But now in many quarters of the church it feels we are on the verge of shipwreck and that everything will come to a dreadful end.

But to predict such a dreadful end is also to read the text out of context without the promise of renewal that is the essence of the prophecy and the core of Christian hope.

Yes, everything we have is provisional, subject to change. And yes, we are always

in danger of shipwreck, of foundering on the rocks. It has happened before, and it will happen again. For now, we are living in the meantime. And in the meantime, God continues to supply us with provisions. God continues to plant our borders in the midst of the sea, giving us an expansive mission. God will make all things new, but until then, I suppose we may go on doing what we can to perfect the beauty of everything we offer to God.



SAINT MARK'S CHURCH
PHILADELPHIA

SAVE THE DATE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2024

Gather together to celebrate our 175th anniversary for an evening of music, dancing, food & drink, with fun for families and kids as well as a special performance by all three of our choirs! As we celebrate the breadth and diversity of our parish, we'll give thanks for generations past and present, and look eagerly toward the future. The gala will mark the culmination of our drive to raise \$175,000 to strengthen ministries with families and children at Saint Mark's, and to support St. James School.



SaintMarksPhiladelphia.org/Gala

Save the date on your calendars, and scan the QR code for information on how to be a sponsor of this event and for ticket information.



MUSIC AT SAINT MARK'S

ROBERT MCCORMICK

As I write this article on August 11, I am eagerly looking forward to our joint celebration of the Feast of St. Mary the Virgin with our friends at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Rosemont. A number of our singers will join their choir, and it promises to be a beautiful and prayerful occasion. In less than a month's time, of course, our three choirs—the Parish Choir, the Boys' and Girls' Choir, and the Saint Mark's Singers—will be back in full swing. I have missed the music that all of them make, as I am sure you have. However, the summertime has not been entirely devoid of beautiful music, thanks to superb congregational singing, terrific volunteer cantors each Sunday at the High Mass from each of these three choirs, and a fulfilling and energizing Choir

Camp for children at the end of July at which we welcomed nearly 35 children, the most we've had since the pandemic. I am thankful not only to Thomas Gaynor and our Ministry Residents, without whose help we could not have run the camp, but also to terrific staff and volunteers Jenny Brown Baer, Sharon Gray, Jim Flager, Tom Murray, David Stoverschlegel, and Priscilla Wortman.

We anticipate installation of our new organ console sometime in September. This will mean minimal use of the organ two Sundays during the transition from old to new, but it will be worth that relatively minor inconvenience. On September 17, we will be without the Nave division; on September 24, we will have only the Nave division playing

We remain extraordinarily grateful to Fred Haas and the Wyncote Foundation for their generous support of this project. Kegg Pipe Organ Builders is building the new console; not only are they one of the nation's finest firms, they also are widely known for the beauty and elegance of their consoles. Down to the very smallest design details, this console will reproduce the look and feel of Aeolian-Skinner consoles of the late 1930s (our organ having been installed in 1937), but with fully modern controls. Additionally, our own Davis d'Ambly has consulted on the choice of finish and wood stain, to ensure it is a perfect match for our chancel furnishings.

This console will be our organ's fourth and, I hope, last.

The original console was replaced scarcely twenty years after the organ's installation, out of a desire, I believe, to incorporate the latest technology of its time. That console served for decades and was replaced in 2002 when the organ was enlarged with a division in the West End of the church. In 2017-2018, the Nave division was reconceived with historic Aeolian-Skinner pipework. The tonal success of these changes meant that we could eliminate a large number of digital voices, no longer requiring a console with such a large footprint. Anyone who has been in our organ loft knows that we could never host coffee hour up there, but it will be helpful to be able to accommodate 3-4 persons when needed, as the new console will be about 30% smaller. Additionally, the current console is showing its age, with components rapidly failing and unable to be replaced due to changes in technology.

A private buyer will repurpose this console with digital voices for home practice, so it will be put to very good use, and I am grateful for that.

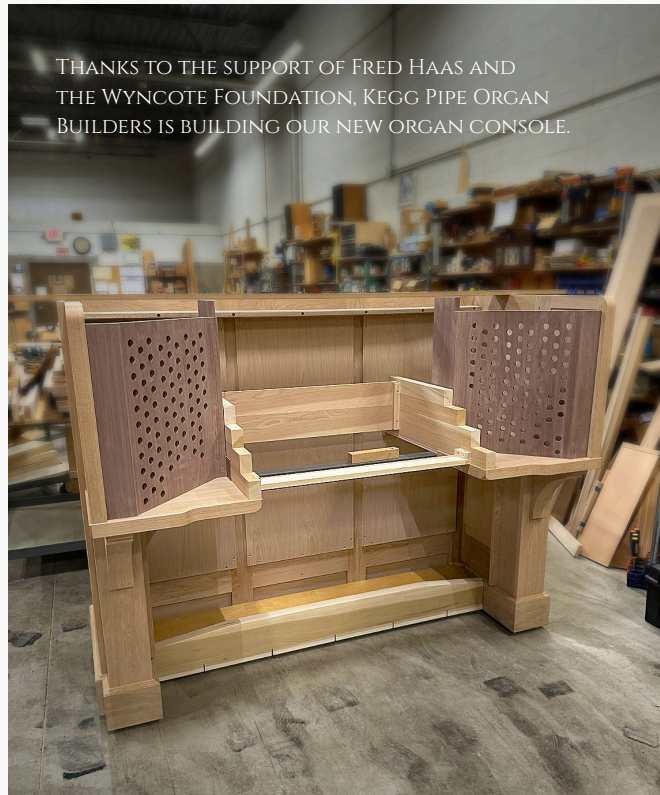
At the end of July, we received delivery of a new choral mass setting that esteemed composer and

Episcopal church musician David Hurd wrote for our 175th anniversary. I am thrilled with the results. The new mass will be premiered on Saint Mark's Day 2024. It is a great privilege to commission and perform new liturgical music, especially from such a distinguished composer.

This academic year will be a busy one, likely even busier than usual, as the Parish Choir and Boys' and Girls' Choir will make a pilgrimage to Ely Cathedral, England, in August 2024, to sing daily services at

that beautiful and historic house of worship. This promises to be a transformative week most especially for our children; please stay tuned for further details, including plans for ambitious fundraising. Such an endeavor is, of course, not inexpensive, and we hope to raise as much money as we can to enable all members of these choirs to be able to go. Other fine American choirs who have made similar journeys nearly unanimously report that they return more energized and committed to singing God's praises than ever before. I am grateful to the Rector and Vestry for their support of this endeavor.

Finally, we hope to welcome a new organ scholar from the Curtis Institute of Music, and will share more news of that appointment in due course. In the meanwhile, I look forward to seeing all of you in church, soon and often.





SAINT MARK'S SINGERS

FALL REHEARSAL SCHEDULE AND CONCERTS/LITURGIES

THOMAS GAYNOR

The Summer Sing series focused on some warhorses of the choral repertoire, with the group singing movements from Haydn's *The Creation*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and Vivaldi's *Gloria*. As always, Bota flowed afterward, and it was a tremendous time together.

Like last season, the choir will offer four main concerts or liturgies. The Singers will also be an important part of our parish's 175th anniversary celebrations and I encourage you to please put the following dates in your calendars and join us.

November 5 *Evensong and Benediction at 4 p.m., sung with the Parish Choir*

December 17 *Winter Concert*

March 17 *Lenten Concert*

May 19 *Spring Concert*

Although we welcome new members throughout the year, the beginning of the choral year is an especially great time to come and see if Saint Mark's Singers is for you. Please be in touch with me at tgaynor@saintmarksphiladelphia.org or find me at Coffee Hour after Mass if you have any questions or are considering joining the ranks. The choir is a great way to get friends involved in parish life here at Saint Mark's, but it is by no means necessary to be a parish member to sing in the choir. **Our first rehearsal of the new season is on Sunday, September 10 at 5 p.m. followed by Bota at 6 p.m. All are welcome!**



LADY CHAPEL PRESERVATION

Work on the preservation of the Lady Chapel exterior masonry continues as we move into fall. The foundations have been inspected and improved, and a trench around the foundations has been filled in with gravel to facilitate better drainage.

Part of this project is to move moisture more effectively away from the building in several ways, including the installation of a dry-well in the east garden toward which rainwater from the roof is led by underground pipes. Work above grade has now begun. All the masonry will be cleaned; damaged sections of stone will be removed and then patched. Repointing will take place with appropriate mortar. Missing or damaged sections of the pinnacles along the top of the chapel will be replaced with cast stone elements that will be less susceptible to deterioration. Exterior lighting will also be installed in the ground to highlight the architectural beauty of the chapel. If all continues on schedule, the project should be completed by the end of October.



STEWARDSHIP AT SAINT MARK'S

TERRY MOORE
STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
CHAIR

The 2023 Stewardship Season is quickly approaching and the Stewardship Committee is hard at work. This year's theme is based on Ephesians 3:17

**Rooted In Love,
Growing in Faith,
and Blessing the Future.**

This theme will challenge us to ponder the past, present, and future as we are challenged to ask God to help us understand our responsibility to share with our community far and wide the blessings of this place, sharing God's love. This year, we will be hosting ten to twelve simple supper groups. They will be held in the homes of various parishioners all around the region, with the hope of helping us gather without the concern of geography. These groups will be held beginning October 22 and will conclude by November 4. Look for sign up information in late September.

CHILDREN'S FORMATION

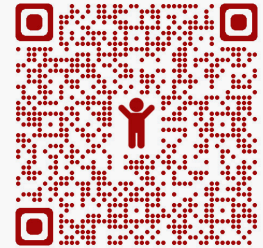
FALL 2023

The beginning of the program year is a particularly exciting time since it marks the return of formation for children at Saint Mark's. There are four sections of children's formation that meet at 10 a.m. on Sundays after the Family Mass: **Schola** for ages 3-7, **Young Disciples** for ages 8-10, **Connect** for ages 11-13, and **Compass** for ages 14 and up.



FORMATION IS TAUGHT BY OUR MINISTRY RESIDENTS ALONG WITH ADULT VOLUNTEERS. LESSONS AND DISCUSSION CENTER AROUND ASPECTS OF SCRIPTURE AND THEOLOGY AND HOW IT RELATES TO THE LIVES OF CHILDREN TODAY.

**Please register your children
for formation so we may
better plan their experience.**



Please scan the QR code to register today. If you have any questions about formation, feel free to email Michael Castro at mcastro@saintmarksphiladelphia.org.

**Click here to
register your child**



On Homecoming Sunday, we will be having a special Coffee Hour after Family Mass with treats and games for the kids to kick off the program year. Formation classes will resume on Sunday, September 17.

ADULT FORUM

Every Sunday at 10 a.m., parishioners and visitors gather in the Parish Hall for a cup of coffee and a conversation aimed at deepening our understanding and experience of the faith. This is a great place to bring questions, to meet people, and to grow with us in faith. Drop in whenever you can make it!

SEPTEMBER THROUGH OCTOBER 2023: NINE WORDS

As we celebrate the 175th anniversary of our parish this year, the Adult Forum will be celebrating aspects of the spirituality embodied here on Locust Street. We will in particular be looking at Anglo-Catholic traditions—liturgical and theological—and asking where they came from and how they shape our lives together. We'll start the program year with nine words that matter to Anglo-Catholics in a particularly urgent way. We'll talk about what these words mean to us, how they link us with other Christians, and whether there are differences between Christians that we can understand more fully by examining these words. One of our resources for this series will be the *Saint Augustine's Prayer Book* (revised edition, 2014). You don't have to read it to join us, but this little book can become a rich accompaniment to our explorations and to your own relationship with God if you are able to have a look at it.

SEPTEMBER 10: SACRAMENT

SEPTEMBER 17: EUCHARIST

SEPTEMBER 24: ADORATION

SEPTEMBER 31: BENEDICTION

OCTOBER 1: CONFESSION

OCTOBER 8: ABSOLUTION

OCTOBER 15: MARY

OCTOBER 22: SAINTS

OCTOBER 29: DEVOTION

