



Branches on the Vine

FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 6, 2026



Dan Elliott proudly holds a copy of his recently published book, *The History of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church*, about the first Italian-American parish in Connecticut. PHOTO BY DAVID ELLIOTT

NEW BOOK UNVEILS STORY OF ST. MICHAEL CHURCH, CONNECTICUT'S FIRST ITALIAN CHURCH

Daniel Elliott cherishes his boyhood memories of celebrating the feast of St. Mary Magdalene on Wooster Street in New Haven, when his parents would dress him in a snappy white suit to watch the procession of bands, Italian religious societies, food vendors and the statue of Santa Maria Maddalena being carried on a platform by parishioners of St. Michael's Church.

"Wooster Street would be festooned with red, white and green garland, and our entire family would stand outside my grandmother's apartment watching," Elliott recalls. "As a kid, I went to Mass at St. Michael's, and all the religious processions were so cool to me."

A parishioner and former trustee of the church, Elliott's love of his Italian heritage and his interest in genealogy inspired him to undertake a nearly three-year project, writing his first book, *The History of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church*, about the first Italian-American parish in Connecticut, founded in 1889 to serve the influx of immigrants.

The 375-page work, which is available on Amazon, is also a chronicle of the Italian community and the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo, known as the Scalabrinians, founded by St. John Baptist Scalabrini in 1887 to support immigrants and who staffed the church for almost 120 years.

For more than 130 years, six generations of his family on his mother Barbara Colloso Elliott's side have worshipped at

St. Michael's, which is part of the Blessed Michael McGivney Parish. And while his father David is of Irish, Scottish and English lineage, he has a love of Italian culture and food.

"I always had an interest in St. Michael's history because it seemed to be the most spectacular church," Elliott says. "I've gone there from the time I was a little kid and attended the school until the second grade." Today, the Glastonbury resident and attorney worships there with his wife Lauren and daughters Grace Angelika, 5, and Isla Maddalena, 2.

Elliott's interest led him to Dr. Mary Elizabeth Brown, archivist and historian at the Center for Migration Studies in New York City, where he discovered a treasure trove of material about the church.

"We got to talking, and the idea just came up that maybe I should do a book on St. Michael's," he recalls. "She provided me with access to the records I needed." Elliott's research revealed that then-Bishop Lawrence McMahon "was relentless in his support of Italian immigrants in New Haven and he went all out to help them." Although acrimony between Irish and Italian communities was common, the

Italian immigrants revered the three Irish priests assigned to them before the Scalabrinians arrived.

Religious societies associated with Italian towns were formed to support immigrants, including the Santa Maria Maddalena Society, St. Trofimenia Society, St. Andrew the Apostle Society, St. Catello Society and the Santa Maria delle Vergini Society, along with a society honoring St. Ann.

His book also describes the work of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart, who arrived in 1906 to help the Italian community and run St. Michael's School. The sisters even began day care so immigrant families could

work in the factories and have a better life.

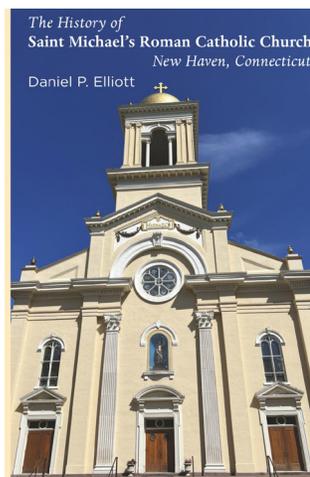
The generation of immigrants that arrived between 1880 to 1920 is gone, but the church is trying to preserve traditions for younger Italian-Americans.

"We're fortunate to have people who are strongly devoted to this culture and want to preserve these traditions for our kids and grandkids," Elliott says.

"And the way that happens

is for us to continue with the processions and the feasts, and I hope in some small way my book contributes to that."

- Story by Joe Pisani



Upcoming Events

03/5 THURSDAY 7PM

"THE CIVIL MESSAGE OF ST FRANCIS FOR AN UNCIVIL TIME" WITH FR BILL BEAUDIN, OFM

Corpus Christi Church, 601 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield

Lenten Evening of Reflection - Year of St Francis: "The Civil Message of St. Francis for an Uncivil Time," will invite us to reflect on how the spirit of St. Francis can guide us today. The evening will include a talk and time for prayer. It will also be livestreamed on our YouTube page. All our welcome!

JOIN US FOR OUR 2026 LECTURE SERIES!

The series features distinguished speakers fostering community conversations on art, culture, science, and law. Please register.



MICHAEL PEPPARD, '09 PH.D
HOW CATHOLICS ENCOUNTER THE BIBLE
Sunday, February 22, 6 pm

The Reverend Richard R. Russell Lecture

BR. GUY CONSOLMAGNIO, S.J.
A JESUIT'S GUIDE TO THE STARS
Sunday, March 1, 6 pm

The Thomas E. Golden, Jr., Fellowship in Faith & Science Lecture



MAKOTO FUJIMURA
ART IS — A JOURNEY INTO THE LIGHT
Sunday, March 29, 6 pm

The Fay Vincent, Jr. Fellowship in Faith & Culture Lecture



Saint Thomas More
The Catholic Chapel & Center at Yale University

268 Park Street, New Haven, CT 06511 | stm.yale.edu

SCAN TO REGISTER



Leadership Formed by Creation: A Scriptural Lens for Adult Learners

A Scriptural Reflection on Creation and Responsibility



GUEST SPEAKER
Fr. David Monaco, CP

University of St. Joseph Student Chapel
1678 Asylum Ave, West Hartford, CT

Saturday, March 14th
9:30AM - 2:30PM

Lunch available for purchase

Through a scriptural lens, discover the wonders of God's creation and the gift of stewardship and responsibility this Lent.



co-sponsored
by



ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD
Office of Missionary Discipleship

RSVP via QR code
Questions?
email jason.rinaldi@aohct.org

03/18 WEDNESDAY 1PM

ROSARY FOR LIFE

Church of the Incarnation, 544 Prospect St, Wethersfield

Christ the King Parish invites all to gather at the Church of the Incarnation for "Rosary for Life" to support and honor all forms of life from conception to natural death.

This event takes place at the same time as the Connecticut March for Life Rally at the state capitol. "Rosary for Life" is offered as a complement to the Hartford event for those who may have difficulty attending due to weather or mobility issues.

At this moment in history, there are so many threats to the sacredness of life in our world (war, abortion, assisted suicide, lack of care and compassion for the sick and dying, etc.) We need this opportunity to pray to our Blessed Mother Mary for guidance and direction.

The Connecticut March for Life in Hartford will also be held on March 18, 2026. The rally will begin at 12 p.m. at the State Capitol in Hartford and the march will start at 1 p.m. in Bushnell Park. Please consider attending one of these events.