

Fun Facts About the History of Our Church and Its Name

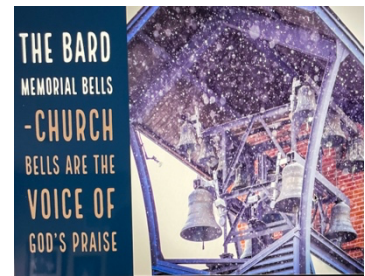
St. Michael's has a special place in all of our hearts. Here is some interesting historical information about St. Michael's and its name:



1945 - Our church is named after Saint Michael the Archangel. On June 12, 1945, the Right Reverend Wallace E. Conkling, Bishop of Chicago, attended a meeting at a Barrington public school where he gave permission to form a parish in Barrington. There were approximately 50 people at the meeting, and the name Saint Michael was chosen by popular vote. The name Michael means "who is like God". St. Michael the Archangel is the protector and leader of the heavenly armies. However, it wasn't until 1954 that there were

enough funds to finance the construction of the church. The architect was parishioner Edward Dart and the builder was parishioner Stanley Pepper, Sr. of Pepper Construction. The cornerstone was laid on May 9, 1954, and the construction was completed five months later.

1955 - The largest memorial bell in the bell tower is named Michael. In 1955, the Bard family gave \$25,000 to build the 30-foot bell tower which has become a landmark for the Village of Barrington. There are twelve bells, and they are often played before the organ prelude. At funerals, a bell is tolled once for every year the person lived. The Bard memorial bells were handset in the Netherlands by the Petit and Fritsen Ltd. bell foundry, and each bell bears an inscription with texts from Holy Scripture. The largest bell is named Michael and weighs 1,100 pounds. It is inscribed: *"To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Mary Spear Bard. I praise the true God, I call the people, I gather the clergy, I mourn the dead, I summon the living, I rejoice with those that rejoice, my voice is the voice life, I summon you, come, pray."*



The next two largest bells are named for archangels Gabriel and Raphael. The nine smaller bells are named after members of the Bard family who gave the memorial gift (Katharine, Deborah, Jennifer, Janet, Mary, Karen, Laura, Grace and Helen).



1972 - We receive a memorial gift, the sacred life-size icon of Saint Michael the Archangel. In 1972, parishioner Georgia Collimore gifted the breath-taking painting of Saint Michael the Archangel in Thanksgiving to God for her children Robert, Christopher and Georgia, and her parents, Wilton and Jo Kuffel.

The sacred painting awakens and nourishes are faith in the mystery of Christ. Saint Michael is depicted wearing armor and wielding a sword of justice, the ultimate symbol of protection against evil which represents his strength and courage to face any challenges that may come our way. He also holds a scroll which reads *"I lead God's angels. I carry the sword. I support those who live of God, but with this sword, I will execute those whose hearts are unclean."*

A little-known fact about the sacred icon is that it is mounted within a metal track and can be moved to one side to reveal a secret Alter Guild room.

*Church history researched and verified by Liz Gabis, Sr. Warden (08/28/25). Join the St. Michael's Historians Committee and sign up for the Sword newsletter at: www.stmichaelsbarrington.org.