

Branches on the Vine

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

JULY 4 - 10, 2026

New Trees Transform Hartford Parish into Peaceful Community Gathering Space

- Story by Karen A. Avitabile

St. Justin-St. Michael Parish in Hartford recently beautified its grounds by planting some 25 trees. The enhanced landscape now invites the community to linger, offering a peaceful setting for passersby to rest on the grass or connect with loved ones and friends.

The new trees planted on the church and rectory grounds, at 230 Blue Hills Ave., were a donation through Trees for Hartford program offered in the city of Hartford to property owners in several neighborhoods including Blue Hills, Northeast, Upper Albany, Asylum Hill, Clay Arsenal, Parkville, Frog Hollow, Barry Square, South Green and Sheldon-Charter Oak.

The recent church tree plantings served as a core component of Hartford's citywide Arbor Day and Earth Month celebrations. These efforts are part of a broader, multi-year plan to expand the city's urban tree canopy and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Administered as part of a four-year urban forestry program, the initiative will enhance neighborhood green spaces. To date, Hartford property owners have successfully planted more than 250 trees citywide, contributing directly to the city's long-term environmental sustainability goals.

On April 25, the community of St. Justin-St. Michael Church, including parishioners and nearly 50 faith formation students, volunteered to plant trees on the church grounds. In addition to planting, participants learned about tree care, applied mulch and watered the new trees.

Father Mathieu Isaac, pastor of St. Michael-St. Justin Parish, cherishes the trees for their deeper significance, viewing them as a meaningful connection to his mother and father.

"My parents were farmers," he says. "I grew up in a rural region where trees of different varieties, such as mango trees, avocado trees and many others formed my natural environment. It therefore seemed entirely natural for me to adapt to a setting where the surrounding vegetation helps reveal the beauty of the place. That is why I volunteered to adopt some trees in our church garden."

As an extension of the Capital Forest Stewardship Initiative, Trees for Hartford benefits from an estimated

\$6 million investment provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Urban and Community Forestry Program. The program targets the planting of 1,225 free trees across public and private Hartford spaces, supported by ongoing community education and tree maintenance.

During the summer, parish youth are tasked with tree irrigation several times a week.

"These trees will provide a conducive setting for people going through stressful times, allowing them to come and meditate, pray or take a walk in a peaceful space, amidst the restorative atmosphere offered by the St. Justin-St. Michael site," Father Isaac says.



In April, hardworking volunteers of St. Justin-St. Michael Parish helped add new greenery to the church and rectory grounds. They pause for a photo after doing their work.



Upcoming Events



JUNE 4 - AUGUST 27 @ 6 - 8PM
SUMMER ALPHA YOUNG ADULT GROUP
 St. Margaret Mary Church,
 Rectory Basement, South Windsor

Welcome to all people ages 18 to 39 years old. Join us for food, friendship, faith, and fun, every Thursday throughout the summer! Every week we share pizza, watch faith-based videos, and participate in small group discussions. If you have any questions, text 860-816-6149. Our welcoming group would love to have you join us!



JULY 9 - 11 @ 5PM - 9PM
SUMMER FOOD FESTIVAL
 Our Lady Queen of the Apostles
 Parish, St. Mary Church, Derby

Our Summer Food Festival brings our parish and our community together for a joyful celebration held right in our church parking lot. Featuring delicious food tents, special evenings with live music, family-friendly games for children, and the excitement of announcing our annual raffle winners, the festival is a highlight of the summer season! Visit us on Facebook @StMarysChurchDerbyCt or on our website www.OLQADerby.org.



JULY 9 - 11
ST. ANTHONY CHURCH CARNIVAL
 St. Anthony Church, Prospect

The St. Anthony Church Carnival brings three exciting nights of food, games, and community spirit from July 9–11. Admission and parking are completely free, with food service featuring daily classics alongside unique nightly Polish, Italian, and Mexican cuisines.
 Thursday, July 9th: 6PM - 10PM
 Friday, July 10th: 6PM - 10PM
 Saturday, July 11th: 3PM - 10PM



JULY 24 - 26 @ 7PM
TRIDUUM IN HONOR OF GOOD SAINT ANN
 Blessed Michael McGivney Parish,
 St. Michael Church, New Haven

The Saint Ann Society would like to invite you to the annual Triduum in honor of good Saint Ann. The dates of the Triduum will be July 24th, 25th, and 26th (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) at 7:00pm. The Triduum begins with two nights of rosary and prayers invoking the intercession of Saint Ann. The third and concluding night is a Mass with a reception afterward. Please extend this invitation to anyone whom you feel may benefit from this experience or just wants to join us. Also, we are always actively looking for women who may want to become new members of the St. Ann Society.



JULY 16 - 19
88TH ITALIAN FESTIVAL
 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church,
 Waterbury

Join us for our 88th Annual Italian Festival in Honor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel! Delicious Italian food and entertainment. All are welcome!
 Thursday, July 16th – 5 - 10PM
 (Feast Day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel)
 Friday, July 17th – 5 - 10PM
 Saturday, July 18th – 2 - 10PM
 Sunday, July 19th – 11AM Mass with Procession, 1 - 8PM.

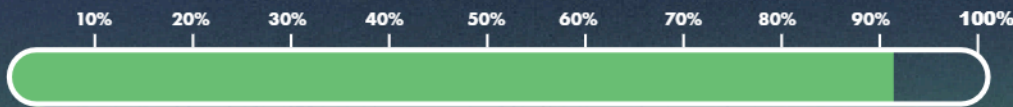


JULY 18 @ 5PM \$20
ST. MARTIN OF TOURS FAMOUS BBQ
 St. Joseph Church Grounds, Canaan

Join us for St. Martin of Tours Famous Chicken BBQ, with Potato, Coleslaw, Corn on the Cob, Bread, Beverage and Ice Cream Cups! Our Event is on Saturday, July 18th from 5PM until sold out! Price is \$20 Adults - \$10 Children. Drawing for Great Raffle Prizes will be in the evening.

2026 ARCHBISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

Scan the QR code to learn how you can make a lasting impact!



Total Goal: \$10M 92.74% as of 6/23/26

\$9,274,289.50 in pledges from 25,599 generous donors

*This figure does not include bequests given to the Archbishop's Annual Appeal



www.archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal