



Detroit Catholic

Local filmmaker follows hit documentary with new film: 'Detroit: The City of Faith'

[Gabriella Patti](#) Dec 15, 2023



A man and woman pray before a stained-glass window of the risen Christ at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery on All Souls Day, Nov. 2, 2023. The cemetery will be featured among several Catholic churches in Metro Detroit in an upcoming film, "Detroit: The City of Faith," directed by local film producer Keith Famie. The documentary is scheduled to premiere March 22. (Valaurian Waller | Detroit Catholic)

New film by Keith Famie will highlight richness of Christian faith in southeast Michigan, set to premiere on March 22

DETROIT — Local award-winning filmmaker Keith Famie is inviting viewers to take a seat in the front pew and experience Detroit through the eyes of Christian faith in his new film, "Detroit: The City of Faith."

The film, set to premiere on Detroit Public TV / PBS on Friday, March 22 at 8 p.m., is a natural follow-up to the successful film Famie and his team at Visionalist Entertainment Productions debuted at the end of 2022, [“Detroit: The City of Churches.”](#) which looked at the history of Detroit through the lens of 17 different churches and spiritual leaders. The 90-minute film won four Emmys, and Famie, who over the years has mainly focused his lens on Detroit, began to consider what would come next.

“When we stepped back, we decided, ‘Let’s take a deeper dive into faith,’” Famie said. “(We decided to) branch out not just into Detroit’s historical churches, but into Metro Detroit as well and focus especially on rich ethnicities and how faith has driven their desire to come to Michigan and Detroit and build a home, to build community neighborhoods and churches.”



Filmmaker Keith Famie talks with Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron on the grounds of Holy Sepulchre Cemetery following the All Souls Day Mass on Nov. 2. Famie and his team filmed the Mass for his new project, "Detroit: The City of Faith." (Valaurian Waller | Detroit Catholic)

Famie told *Detroit Catholic* the new film will feature a handful of Catholic churches, including Holy Name in Birmingham, Sweetest Heart of Mary in Detroit, St. Thomas Chaldean Catholic Church in West Bloomfield, and St. John Armenian Church in Southfield, among others, and has spoken to many church leaders, including Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron.

Each of the churches is representative of the diversity of southeast Michigan, Famie explained.

“(The film) is a really unique opportunity to shine the light on some really diverse, interesting ethnic communities that are really culturally rich,” Famie said. “For instance, at (the Basilica) of Ste. Anne, we are following the Hernandez family through the (Our Lady of) Guadalupe celebration in December. This four-generation family came from the state of Jalisco in Mexico and they’ve built their lives here, and that celebration is an integral part of their faith and their celebration at Ste. Anne.”

Famie, who was raised Catholic, said while the film will likely resonate with those who already have deep faith, he looks forward to the questions it will raise for those who are perhaps not part of a church community.

“The film is going to take a deeper dive into faith. What is faith, and how do we understand faith? In the case of our Catholic churches, how did faith drive immigration, and what did the immigrants bring with them? Why is it important to their lives today?” Famie said. “I think, in this day and age, we all wrestle with what is faith, how is faith relevant to us?”



A member of Famie's production company, Visionalist Entertainment Productions, films the All Souls Day Mass as part of the upcoming documentary. (Valaurian Waller | Detroit Catholic)

Detroit is a particularly unique city, thanks to Henry Ford’s institution of the \$5 work day in the early 20th century — a then-unheard of wage — which brought immigrants flocking to Metro Detroit.

“When Ford did that, that opened up doors of opportunity to come to America, and you had people coming from all over the world: Yemen, Ireland, Poland, Italy, Greece, etc.,” Famie said. “And then, the first thing they did once they came here and started settling in neighborhoods was to build a church.”

Many diverse immigrant communities brought their faith and family with them, held them close and then passed on these values generation to generation.

While younger generations may view faith differently, Famie said faith remains an integral part of who they are.

“The younger generation, while they may not profess their faith the same way or pray the same way, they have a respect for it and an understanding,” Famie said.

In times of difficulty, faith can bring people under one roof to process tragedy and diminish loneliness, Famie said.



Famie, right, was raised Catholic and said while the film will likely resonate with those who already have deep faith, he looks forward to the questions it will raise for those who are perhaps not part of a church community. (Gabriella Patti | Detroit Catholic)

While the film will focus on faith from a Christian standpoint, Famie's goal is eventually to produce films that focus on Detroit through the lens of other religions, such as Judaism and Islam.

Like with the first film, Famie plans to host a community premiere, bringing people of different faith backgrounds and a variety of faith leaders together — a perfect representation of the diversity of Detroit itself.

“The beauty of who we are as Michiganders and Detroiters is that we are probably one of the most diverse melting pots in the world, and we get along pretty harmoniously and pretty well,” Famie said. “I think there is a great message here of how well we have found ways to get along and to understand.

“We should be proud of that diversity,” Famie added. “It brings so much to us: music, culture, art, food, faith, business, leadership, and we have a lot to teach the world. We do such a great job harmoniously working and living together and cohabiting together in the same community.”