



↑ Votive candles create a divine ambiance at Church.

PHOTOGRAPH ABOVE BY JACQUELINE PICCHETTI, RIGHT BY KARLA GRACE



← The high priests of Church: Andrew Archer and Chris Cosack.

Get me to CHURCH

John Crouch kneels at the coolest new bar in the Village

FULL DISCLOSURE — and this may or may not come as a shock — I’m not that religious. The only god I ever pray to is of the porcelain variety, and the older (and arguably wiser) I get, the less I find myself visiting that place of worship. That said, I love all those fun hats the pope wears, nothing gets me tapping my foot like gospel music, and anytime anything from *Jesus Christ Superstar* comes on my iPod mix at the gym is always a treat. All that is to say I totally get organized religion and want to extol the virtues of one of the newest kids on the Village block: ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce you to Church on Church.

God took seven days to create the earth. With fewer than 10 days to complete demolition and install dry wall after receiving the keys to their new space in mid-June, it took a bit of a miracle for co-owners Andrew Archer and Chris Cosack to get Church preview-ready in time for Pride Week. The look was unfinished, to say the least, but the holy water flowed freely and a good time was had by at least me and the band of ne’er-dowells I associate with.

Now reopened, the renovated Church is a trendy mix of old and new. There’s a focus on raw materials: concrete floors, original wood slats on the walls, and 100-year-old repurposed barn board. A small stage and a dancefloor — DJ Alessandro (whose Communion party, held the third Saturday of each month, has been a huge hit) says the space feels “generous yet intimate” — inhabit the back of the bar, while the front is open for mixing and mingling.

Speaking of parties, Church already has a full lineup of both new and familiar events designed, in Archer’s words, to “foster the development of our vibrant neighbourhood, which seems to be reducing in popularity amongst the younger LGBT community.” In addition to Alessandro’s poppy monthly, on the first Friday of every month, everyone is invited to Back to Church, with DJ Delicious. Second Saturdays are dedicated to obtaining Salvation at this new Prism party, and the list goes on. It’s probably worth mentioning that Church is also the proud new sanctuary of the (in)famous College Night, a true Village staple.

What’s better than a fabulous party with sinfully good beats and drink specials, of which Church has plenty? With enough of this holy water you’ll easily confess your sins — and with any luck commit some new ones.

The new hotspot isn’t all drinking and dancing, though. Archer and Cosack recently rolled out a small menu, with light cheese and charcuterie plates for sharing and sandwiches for those who want more than a nibble. And for those who pray at the altar of the almighty carbohydrate, two words: mini doughnuts. Heavenly.

If you’re looking for a new sort of religious experience, put on your Sunday best and get yourself to Church. **F**

John Crouch’s last run-in with organized religion was when the man outside the Eaton Centre screamed “Jesus” at him.