



November 1, 2003

St. Michael Lutheran Church

***Make me your servant...humble and meek, Lord let me lift up those who are weak.
And may the prayer of my heart always be: Make me a servant today.***

This is just one of the beautiful hymns that we'll sing on **Sunday, November 9 at our Dedication Worship service** – a celebration in word and song as we answer God's call to be His servants.

We are teachers, greeters, ushers, acolytes, knitters, singers, chefs, committee membersso much time and so many talents to share with the community, the world and our St. Michael family. We are stewards of God's gifts and offer with joy and thanksgiving what God has first given us: our time, our talents, and our possessions. God's servants come in all sizes and ages and abilities and with a range of financial resources. A few examples of our more "quiet" servants might include *Leona Criner* and her creative table decorations for holiday events; *Sarah Crowder*, who sold her toys at a recent yard sale and donated all the proceeds to World Hunger in Sunday School; *Dean Trimble* who is preparing a DVD and VHS tape of Pastor Mitchell's last Sunday; the lawn mowers: *Sam Akers, Jim Clemens, Jay Nagle* and *Doug Smiley* who often took time off from work to keep our church property beautiful and *Tom Cole* who donated his Countryside Lawn Care staff and equipment to St. Michael as his schedule allowed; *Betty and Burn Gross* who get our newsletter mailed; *Jenny Akers* who knits prayer shawls...and all the nursery attendants and altar care volunteers and lay readers and communion assistants and table movers and dish washers and donors to the food pantry and Justice and Mercy and World Hunger and the Angel Tree and Warm Hearth and more and more.....

A list of all the ways we can serve at St. Michael is on the back side; please prayerfully consider all these opportunities.

God is calling and we will respond by singing....

"Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, where you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart."

Please join us for the special worship service on Sunday, November 9, at 11 a.m. and at the Birthday Dinner which follows.

Seasons of the Church

According to home calendars, there are four seasons. The church has seasons too, but there are six of them. Three seasons center around Jesus' birth. They are Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. The other three center around Jesus' resurrection. They are Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. When you put those six seasons of the church together, you have the "liturgical year." Just like spring, summer, winter, and fall, each season of the liturgical year has its own colors and things to do.

The Season of Advent November 30 – December 24

In the liturgical year, the first Sunday of Advent starts the new year...not January 1. Advent begins on the 4th Sunday before Christmas Day and ends at sunset on Christmas Eve. Advent is from the Latin word for **coming**. The color for Advent is royal blue or purple. Advent is a season of anticipation – a time to prepare our hearts and homes for the celebration of Jesus' birth.

Many churches and homes have Advent wreaths. The Advent wreath had its roots in the pagan religions of northern Europe—a solstice practice calling for the return of the sun in the dark time of the year by lighting candles placed on a cartwheel decorated with evergreen. Lutheran Christians living in sixteenth century Eastern Europe appropriated this earlier custom for their own and filled it with Christian symbolism. As early as the Middle Ages, Christians used this fire/light symbolism to represent Christ's coming into the world. It became the basis for the Advent wreath, a sign of the waiting and hopeful expectation of the return in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The advent wreath is a circle with no beginning and no end to remind Christians that God's love is never ending. The evergreens are a sign of the faithfulness of God to His people, even in death, and the lighted candles are a reminder of the light that Christ brought into the world. One candle is lit on the First Sunday of Advent and then, one more is lit on each of the following Sundays until all four are burning. On Christmas Eve we light the middle white candle...the Christ candle.

We need the message and season of Advent, for without it we cannot truly focus on the meaning of Christmas. During the four weeks of Advent we wait, we hope, we prepare to receive the promised Savior—in each of his three comings. Christ came to us as a

baby at Bethlehem over two thousand years ago. He comes to us today repeatedly in Word and Sacrament. He will come to us victoriously over evil at the end of time.

Come, Lord Jesus!

Women of the ELCA

Happy Birthday!!

The annual Birthday Dinner will be Sunday, **November 9**, following the 11 a.m. service. Bring a friend...bring the family...and join us for the celebration (and lots of tasty lasagna). A free-will offering will be distributed to area organizations such as the Christmas Store and the Women's Resource Center. Thrivent, our co-sponsor, will match the free-will offering. Thank you to the following hosts for decorating their tables and

providing a delicious cake: Linda Naughton, Peggy Brown and Tammy Veit, Jane Lane, Judy Clemens and Cindy Dowdy, the Worley family, Abbie Penner and family, Teresa Sebastian and family, Kelsey Trimble and Sandy Birch, Dianne Krallman, Betty Gross, Karen Mayer and Alice Schneider.

The next meeting of the Women of the ELCA will be **Thursday, November 20, at the church** for our annual fall clean-up. All able hands and hearts are welcome to help us clean the kitchen, nursery and workroom...and enjoy some fellowship as we work.

For the food bank this month, let's concentrate on holiday dinners – canned hams, vegetables or sweet potatoes, cranberry sauces, pie or dessert mixes and fillings, rice and potato mixes. But any nonperishable items are always welcome.

WELCA will be collecting sweat suits, light weight jackets or sweaters, slipper socks (all washable please) for the residents of Heritage Hall Nursing Home. These items will be given to those in the nursing home who do not have family support. Last year, the residents were most grateful for our gifts. Collection boxes will be in the fellowship hall through December 8. The Happy-Go-Lucky folks have already purchased 20 sets of clothing and slipper socks through a gift from Wal-Mart. Other gifts for the residents would also be welcome and could be brought (unwrapped) to St. Michael. WELCA will wrap the gifts and distribute them.

WELCA is also supporting the Montgomery County Christmas Store by providing gift boxes (don't have to be new or fancy – they will be wrapped), new or used jackets and new or (gently) used shoes. The boxes will be used in the Children's Store – where the children shop for their parents. Please also bring these items to the fellowship hall in November.

On **Friday, November 7 at 7:30 p.m.**, Church Women United will celebrate World Community Day at the Blacksburg Christian Church, 240 Watson Ave. in Blacksburg. The theme of this celebration is “Circles of Love”. Barbara E Joe, Peace Corps volunteer to Honduras, will be the featured speaker.

TOYS TOYS TOYS

If you’ve got some toys in good shape that you no longer need, donations to the nursery are welcome. We’ll be doing some redecorating soon too to make the nursery a more “user friendly” environment. Just bring the toys to the nursery.

Happy-Go-Lucky

Going once....going twice....sold! The monthly meeting will be Thursday, November at 11:30 a.m. We will be holding the annual auction to benefit the Christmas Store – always a lively event. Lunch will be potluck. If you like friendly fellowship, fine food and fun – see you then.

Thank you Wal-Mart for your \$500 gift to the Happy-Go-Lucky group. The funds will be used for projects to benefit the elderly. The first purchases were sweat suits and slipper socks for elderly residents at Warm Hearth.

Favorite Hymn Sunday November 16

Just put the name of your favorite hymn in the offering plate during the next two Sundays....What a Friend We Have in Jesus...Amazing Grace....Joyful, Joyful...so many songs, so little time.

A Communion Note:

Grape juice rather than wine is an option during the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. Just say “juice” to the officiating pastor.

Attention Knitters

To: Anyone interested in knitting PRAYER SHAWLS

From: Jenny Akers

Let’s all get together on Saturday, November 8th from 10:00 to 12:00 noon and work on Prayer Shawls. If you don’t know how to knit yet, there are plenty of people to show you. I always bring extra needles and yarn. Hope to see you there.