



November 1, 2003

## ***St. Michael Lutheran Church***

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### ***Advent and Christmas Activities and Celebrations***

*Luther Memorial Lutheran Church would like to extend an invitation to the members of St. Michael Lutheran Church to share worship with them on the three Wednesdays in Advent. The fellowship would include a light supper at 5:30 p.m. and the Holden*

*Evening Prayer service beginning around 6:15 p.m.*

- December 14*                      *Christmas Caroling after the 11 a.m. service and a light lunch*
- December 21*  
*6 p.m.*                              *The Christmas Play, "Greetings from the Heart....Living Christmas Cards" presented by the Sunday School classes. Fellowship time following the presentation.*
- December 24*  
*7 p.m.*                              *Christmas Eve Service with Pastor Bill King (with communion) 6:30 p.m. – the choir will present a musical program*
- December 28*  
*10 a.m.*                              *A service of Carols and Lessons; potluck brunch following (note: no 9 a.m. service)*

### **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 Christmas Season December 25 - January 5**

Christmas is the second season in the church year. The color of Christmas and the Christmas season is white, a color that is used on all the great festivals connected with Jesus. It is the color of purity and holiness. Christmas symbols include the manger where Jesus was born and the star that shined over Bethlehem. Angels who announced Jesus' birth and shepherds who were the first to come and worship the baby Jesus are also used as symbols. The rose and holly are Christmas symbols as well. Each have thorns and red flowers or red berries that remind us of Jesus' suffering and the bloodshed on the cross.

Christmas, the observance of Christ's birth, was first celebrated by the western church which was centered in Rome, and later spread to the eastern part of the church. The date of December 25 was chosen to compete with pagan festivals celebrating the first day of winter, such as the rebirth of the sun-god. Around December 21 the earth turns and each day brings us more minutes of light. In ancient times this period was filled with great celebrations--all would not die, the sun was being reborn--it was a time to decorate the cold houses with evergreens and light the candles. The increasing darkness was reversed. The fourth century Christians recognized the similarity between the solstice, the return of natural light, and the nativity of the Lord--the coming of God's light in human form. In the birth of Jesus, God enters the dying world. The light shines, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Christian Christmas is different from secular Christmas in that it begins, rather than concludes, on the evening of December 24. It lasts twelve days--not twelve hours. Christian Christmas is the beginning of joy, not the end of it. Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ who is "Immanuel", which means "God is with us" (Matthew 1:23). He is the Messiah and Savior promised by the Old Testament prophets. On this day that has become a time for giving and receiving gifts, Christians are to remember that **Jesus is the greatest gift of all.**

#### **PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST**

Today, the twenty-fifth day of December,  
unknown ages from the time when God created the heavens  
and the earth and then formed man and woman in his own image.

Several thousand years after the flood,  
when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant.  
Twenty-one centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah;  
thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt.

Eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the Judges;  
one thousand years from the anointing of David as king;

in the sixty-fifth week according to the prophecy of Daniel.

In the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;  
the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome.

The forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;  
The whole world being at peace,  
Jesus Christ, the eternal God and Son of the eternal Father,  
desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming, being conceived by the Holy Spirit  
and nine months having passed since his conception,  
was born in Bethlehem of Judea of the Virgin Mary.

Today is the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

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## **Kids' News!**

In the month of December we will have Kids' Wednesdays on Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. In addition to food and fun, we will be learning some new Christmas songs and working on our parts for the Christmas program, to be held on December 21.

Practices for the Christmas play will be on Saturday, December 6 and 13 at 10:30 a.m. Parts will be distributed during Sunday School.

For any parents who will be attending the Advent Services at Luther Memorial, we would love to have you drop your kids by on your way to the Service. Kid's night is from 6 – 7:30 p.m.

## **Calling all Carolers**

*If you love singing Christmas carols have we got just the thing for you.*

On December 14<sup>th</sup> we would love for you to join us right after the 11:00 AM service for a light lunch and then an afternoon of caroling to members of St. Michael who are homebound and in nursing homes. We should be finished around 4:00 PM.

*It only takes a few hours so come join us and help make someone's holiday a little brighter.*

Dan Crowder and Jody Smiley would like to thank the congregation of St. Michael for making it possible for us to attend Lost and Found at Eagle Erie. Lost and Found is a weekend retreat for youth in grades 7 and 8. It was truly an uplifting experience for both of us. We spent the weekend searching for God, making new friends, and getting to know each other better. The worship services

throughout the weekend were amazing. They made us feel that God was truly all around us.

You helped make that happen and we truly thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Be sure to ask Dan how he got his new nickname "Spatula Boy".

### **Happy-Go-Lucky**

We will meet on Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m. for a potluck lunch (though ham will be provided). Please bring a Christmas gift to be exchanged; ladies bring a female gift and men bring

a male gift. At the auction sale at our November meeting, we made \$146.45 which was donated to the Christmas Store.

Please join us for our holiday luncheon.

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### **Women of the ELCA**

Please join us on Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at Alice Schneider's home for our Christmas meeting. We will be preparing candy cups for our shut-ins and collecting gift items for the Women's Resource Center: puzzles, scissors, coloring books and color

crayons for the children. Sandy Birch will provide the program. Please bring a Christmas treat to share.

On Sunday, December 7, the Women of the ELCA will be providing a soup and sandwich lunch for the Lutheran Student Movement group at Luther Memorial

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### ***Holy Baptism***

On November 30, we rejoiced to receive Jack Robert Graves as the newest member of the body of Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. We also welcomed his parents, Elizabeth and Rickey Graves, to our St. Michael family.

## Flowers

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The flower chart for 2004 is posted in the hallway. Our thanks to everyone who provided the altar flowers for 2003 and to Charlene Harris who has ordered the flowers from Angle Florist for us for so many years. Most weeks, you can take your flowers home with you after the 11 a.m. service. Those bouquets remaining by Thursday may be taken to our homebound members or residents of nursing homes.

**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.

**An Advent note:** Due to the new Code of Virginia, we are unable to use our beautiful 9 foot white pine Christmas tree. If you are interested in having the cut tree, please contact Jim Clemens or Donna Oliver.

# Sharing Our Gifts: Time, Talents and Treasure

From the St. Francis Peace Prayer: "For it is in giving that we receive"

## **Red Cross Blood Drive sponsored by area Lutheran Churches.**

This is your chance to give a **gift of life** for another. Donations of soup, sandwiches and beverages are also needed for the donors. Please sign up to donate with Jane Lane, though walk-ins are welcome.

**St. Michael Lutheran Church**  
**Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup>**  
**9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

## **The Girl Scout Tuna Challenge**

*The Girl Scout Troops that meet at St. Michael thank everyone for their donations to the Tuna Challenge. We collected 54 cans for the Montgomery County Christmas Store's Holiday Food baskets! Thank you for helping us to help others.*

## **Women of the ELCA**

WELCA is sponsoring several collections: the monthly Food Bank; sweatshirts, pants, and socks for residents of Heritage Hall (especially for those residents with no family). Collection boxes will be in the fellowship hall through December 7.

## **The Women's Resource Center Holiday List**

Many, many needs at holiday time. A list is available on the bulletin board in the hallway....along with a basket for donations.

## **Time and Talent forms available**

On Sunday, November 9, we dedicated our time and talents to serve God. If you haven't yet completed your time and talent form for 2004, extra copies are available on the table in the back of the church. Sign-up sheets for altar care and coffee hour for the new year are posted in the hallway.

## **Thank you to some more "quiet" servants**

Dave Surface, Tim Smiley, Tom and Jennie Hodge for lawn mowing this summer; Philip Isenhour for managing our website and serving as our "on-call" computer consultant.

To all who took an angel from the Salvation Army Angel Tree. Gifts need to be returned by Sunday, December 7.

To Betty Gross, Alice Schneider, Carol Crawford, Sandy Birch, and Jane Lane who cleaned the church kitchen and workroom on November 20.

## Annual Congregational Meeting

Our annual congregational meeting will be held Sunday, December 14, at 10 a.m. (between church services) for the purpose of electing council members and approving the budget for 2004. Please plan to attend.

Candidates for church council include Mack Brown, Cindy Dowdy, Ray Howell, Lori Shepherd, Ben Simmers and Dean Trimble.

# Let's Pave the Parking Lot

On October 12, the congregation approved the initiation of a fund raising campaign to pave the parking lot. Pledges will be encouraged through December; members can watch the progress of the commitments on the diagram of the parking lot located in the narthex. Thus far, \$15,250 has been promised by twenty three families (including a \$1,000 matching gift from Thrivent). We look forward to hearing from all members of the congregation by using the commitment card below. Only \$10,000 to go.....

Thank you for your support of this major and **critical** maintenance project.

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### St. Michael Parking Lot Repaving Commitment

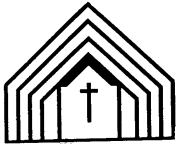
Name \_\_\_\_\_

I/we intend to give \$ \_\_\_\_\_

to be paid \_\_\_\_\_ in one payment OR

\_\_\_\_\_ in installments of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ over a period ending July 31, 2004.

Please mail to the church (2308 Merrimac Road, Blacksburg) or place in the offering plate. Thank you!



## *December Servants*

	<b>December 7</b>	<b>December 14</b>	<b>December 21</b>	<b>December 24</b>	<b>December 28</b>
<i>Acolytes</i>	Kelsey Trimble Abbie Penner	Scott McGuigan	Daniel Crowder Sarah Crowder	Isaac Nagle Scott McGuigan	Kelsey Trimble
<i>Altar Care</i>	Birch and Naughton families				
<i>Comm. Assts.</i>	John Krallman		Betty Gross	Doug Smiley	
<i>Coffee Hour</i>		Christine McCauley			Potluck brunch
<i>Greeters</i>	Julie Landes				
<i>Lay Readers</i>	John Krallman	Doug Veit	Betty Gross	Doug Smiley	
<i>Nursery Assts.</i>	Jane Lane	Sandy Birch	Karen Brown Jada Brown	No nursery provided	Jody Smiley
<i>Ushers</i>	Ray Howell Philip Isenhour Sam Akers Cindy Lang	Josh Mouras Steve Mouras Don Linkous Randy Robinson	Mickey McGuigan Scott McGuigan Hank Schneider Dickie Shepherd	Jay Nagle Roscoe Turman Jeff Birch Sandy Birch	Burn Gross Betty Gross Gary Worley Brian Simmers

**The January Sunday Servant schedule will be printed in the next newsletter (after time and talent forms for 2004 have been summarized).**

Church Office Phone Number: (540) 951-8951  
Church e-mail address: stmlc@earthlink.net



## **In the community .... In the world.....**

**More details on all these activities are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway.**

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### **“Mornings”: Internationals Sharing Friendship**

The YMCA at Virginia Tech is sponsoring a program to help international spouses in their adjustment to a new country and culture. We are invited to participate, make new friends, and help these friends practice their English in conversation. “Mornings” is held at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church on Wednesday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

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### **Our St. Michael family “in the news” in November**

In the *Roanoke Times*, Zach Nagle was pictured in a story about the Christiansburg High School basketball team. He will be starting for the CHS Demons this year. On a related note, Lauren Robinson and Kelsey Trimble are members of the Blacksburg Middle School basketball team. Lauren’s AAU team, coached by her dad Randy, was featured in a *Roanoke Times* article earlier this fall. Game schedules for our athletes will be posted on the bulletin board. Go teams!

In the *Roanoke Times* Current section, on November 30, our annual community Thanksgiving dinner was featured. Over 90 people attended the dinner on November 27. Thank you to the Caring and Sharing committee for organizing the dinner and to all the volunteers who served that day, made salads and desserts for the dinner, or donated money for some of the fixings. Our thanks also to Wal-Mart for donating the turkeys and an additional \$200 for our Food Bank collection for MCEAP.

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Al and Thelma Hylton are residing in Heritage Hall. Their new address is 3601 S. Main St., Room R18; phone number is 961-0632. They would both love to hear from their St. Michael friends.

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### **Mission Statement**

As a community of believers guided by the Holy Spirit, the mission of St. Michael Lutheran Church is to:

Care for all God’s people in need,  
Hear of God’s love through Word and Sacrament,  
Respond to God’s grace with thankful hearts,  
Invite others into Christ’s community,  
Serve God in our daily lives, and  
Tell the story of God’s love for all.