



November 1, 2003

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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 Epiphany

January 5 is the twelfth day of Christmas. The following day, January 6, is the Festival of the Epiphany. The Epiphany Season lasts until the start of Lent and could have four Sundays, if Easter is early, or as many as nine Sundays, if Easter is late.

Epiphany means "to show" or "to make known-manifest." As the Christ was made manifest on the night of his birth to Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds around Bethlehem, at Epiphany we celebrate his being made manifest to the rest of the world. Epiphany was first observed in the eastern part of the early Christian church as a feast commemorating Jesus' baptism as an adult. In the fourth century, it became a celebration of Christ being made known to the Gentiles, beginning with the Wisemen (Magi) who came from the East to worship the Baby Jesus. Because Jesus Christ is a gift of salvation to all nations, Christians are encouraged on Epiphany to share the good news of Jesus with all people.

The star that guided the wise men to Bethlehem is a symbol of Epiphany.

The Bible does not say how many Magi came to visit the Christ child, but tradition says it was three because they brought three gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. Three crowns and three gifts are also used as symbols. The color for Epiphany Day is white for light and purity. White is also the color for the Baptism of Our Lord and the Transfiguration of Jesus which are celebrated during the Epiphany Season. The color for the other Sundays in Epiphany is green.

The Baptism of our Lord is celebrated on the first Sunday after Epiphany. A sea shell with water is often used as a symbol for this day, and for Baptism in general. The Holy Spirit came down from heaven as a dove at Jesus' Baptism, so the dove is also used as a symbol. In the early church this festival was first celebrated on Epiphany Day. Being baptized was one important way that Jesus took part fully in human life, and he showed how important Baptism is for all his followers. His Baptism also marked the beginning of his earthly ministry.

The Transfiguration of Our Lord is celebrated on the last Sunday of the Epiphany Season, which means it is the last Sunday before Lent begins. This Sunday follows the Epiphany theme of making Christ known. While some of Jesus' closest disciples were with him on a mountain, they saw a vision of Jesus speaking with Moses and the prophet Elijah. Then Jesus' clothes became gleaming white. And just as at his Baptism, a voice said, "This is my Son. Listen to Him." This change, or "transfiguration," of Jesus lasted only a short time, but it gave the disciples a glimpse of how God would later glorify Jesus in the resurrection. Although the disciples wanted to stay, Jesus said they must go down the mountain and finish the work they had begun. The Transfiguration reminds us that we will share in Christ's glory when God gives us everlasting life, but in the meantime, we are to serve God on earth. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (alpha and omega) are used together as a symbol for Christ—who is God's living Word from the beginning of time until the end. Moses, Elijah, and the Ten Commandments as well as rays of bright light and a mountain are used also to symbolize the Transfiguration.

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

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

3-D Meetings

Dessert - Devotions - Down to Business

The monthly 3-D meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month beginning in January. Our first meeting will be January 13 in the fellowship hall. We invite all members of the congregation to share their time and talents at these monthly "joint committee" meetings....and enjoy fine fellowship as well. If you have any questions, contact Sandy Birch at 951-3455.

And speaking of sharing our time and talents....the summary lists from the Time and Talent forms for 2004 are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway. All members are welcome to add their names to any of the many volunteer opportunities at any time throughout the year or submit a time and

talent form available on the table in the back of the church.

The sign-up sheets for Altar Care, Coffee Hour, and Altar Flowers for 2004 are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway.

Calling all Carolers

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

On January 4th, 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. We should be finished before 4:00 PM.

It only takes a few hours so come join us and help make someone's holiday a little brighter. Remember....it's still the Christmas season until January 6.

Women of the ELCA

Please join us on Thursday, January 15th, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Sandy Birch for our first meeting of the **new** year. **New** ideas....**new** projects....**new** participants are encouraged and welcomed.

For January, please bring cereals for the Food Bank...though any non-perishable food item is welcome.

Over the past several months, empty dishes have gone unclaimed in the church kitchen.

If you're missing your favorite casserole dish or bowl, it just might be there. Please check and reclaim your lost container. Thanks.

Many thanks to Wal-Mart Store 1292 in Christiansburg and the Wal-Mart Foundation for a generous gift of \$200 to be used to purchase food items for the Food Bank.

Holy Baptism

On December 24, we rejoiced to receive Alexis Price Niemiera as the newest member of the body of Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Alexis is the daughter of Alex and Jennifer Teates Niemiera and the great-granddaughter of Stella Mae Keister.

Chance Allen Price was born on November 8, 2003. Happy parents are Brian and Allison Price; grandparents are Jeanne Keister and Jon Keister; great grandmothers are Peggy M. Price and Stella Mae Keister.

Welcome little ones.

Worship Notes: Grape juice rather than wine is an option during the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Just say "juice" to the officiating pastor.

The Lord's Supper will **not** be celebrated at either the 9 a.m. or 11 a.m. service on January 4.

If you wake up on Sunday morning and there is snow on the ground....watch WDBJ 7 or check the church answering machine for church cancellations.

Poinsettias which were purchased in memory or in honor of loved ones can be picked up now at the church.

BIBLE STUDY BIBLE STUDY BIBLE STUDY

Bishop Mauney is leading a Bible study on the book of Luke via e-mail. If you would like to participate, send mail to Worley@roanoke.edu and they will send the study to you twice a week as well as readings from the Lutheran Confessions on Wednesday.

In the community In the world.....

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

On January 4, 2004, at 5 p.m., “Early One Morning”, an account of Mary Magdalene’s journey to faith, will be performed by the Reverend Clare Fischer-Davies at Blacksburg United Methodist Church. An offering will be received to support the Transient Fund of the Blacksburg Minister’s Association. This fund provides assistance to travels passing through our community who may need food, gas, or other aid so that they may reach their destination.

Our St. Michael family “in the news” in December

In the *News Messenger* on December 3, Kevan Harris was featured in an article entitled, “Harris helps Auburn High students build on their successes.” Kevan, in his 25th year as a technology education teacher, was cited for his unique blend of skilled craftsmanship and natural talent for conveying his knowledge to students. According to the Auburn High principal, “students often find success and a sense of self-worth in Mr. Harris’s class when they have not been successful anywhere else. He demands nothing less than the highest quality work from his students, and they eagerly seek his advice and approval.”

Current and maintenance fund envelopes available for 2004

Some good reasons to use an offering envelope...they help

1. the church bookkeepers;
2. us remember our gift of “treasures”;
3. us catch up if we’ve missed a Sunday (since the envelopes are dated);
4. us remember to prepare our offering ahead of time instead of frantically writing the check while the ushers are nearing our pew.

Offering envelopes are available on the table in the back of the sanctuary.

We offer with joy and thanksgiving what He has first given us...our time, our talent and our possessions.

Sharing Our Gifts: Time, Talents and Treasure

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

Women of the ELCA

For January, let's donate lots of boxes of cereal....though any non-perishable food item is always welcome.

Thank you to everyone who donated clothing items for the residents of Heritage Hall. We collected 40 sweatsuits, 15 sweatshirts, and 20 pairs of slipper socks.

We collected \$203 at the November Birthday Dinner which was matched by Thrivent and donated to the Women's Resource Center, World Hunger, and the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program (MCEAP).

Red Cross Blood Drive a success

A big thank you to all who donated their blood so that others might live. The area Lutheran churches Christmas Blood Drive held at St. Michael Lutheran Church on Saturday, December 13, was a success. We made our quota and more for a total of 41 units. The donors were delighted with the variety of delicious food available. Members donated soup, chili, sandwiches, donuts and drinks. A special thank you to our youth volunteers: Dan Crowder, Lauren Robinson and Kelsey Trimble.

Justice and Mercy

In December, our fund was used to help a family with 11 children to pay their water and electric bills; a single woman to purchase medicine; two families (with small children) with rent payments; and for medical expenses for a couple who have served as foster parents (and referred to us through the Synod). Your donations to the Justice and Mercy Fund are appreciated by “neighbors” who are less fortunate.

Sunday Servants needed

Please reserve your dates for altar care, altar flowers and fellowship/coffee hours. The sign-up sheets are on the bulletin boards in the hallway.

We're still hoping to hear from a few more of our St. Michael family – time and talents sheets can be submitted during January. Extra copies are on the table in the back of the church.

Thank you to some more “quiet” servants

To Carol Crawford for washing and ironing all of the Christmas pageant costumes and to Carol Bland for sewing the costumes many years ago.

To Sam Akers for taking tapes of the worship services to the Manning family each week.

Applause for our St. Michael thespians

Thank you to all our talented children and teachers who participated in the Christmas Pageant on December 21. “Greetings from the Heart...Living Christmas Cards” featured the following members of our St. Michael family:

Gwyn Emmet, Olivia Hodge, Kylie Naughton, Dominique Sebastian and their teacher, Linda Naughton.

Erin Albert, Katy McGuigan, Jaid Moor, Nicolas Shabanowitz, and their teacher, Kathy Albert. Ryan Albert appeared with this class – and in just about every other scene as well 😊.

Sarah Crowder, Abbie Penner, Scott McGuigan, Chelsea Naughton, Alex Emmet , their teacher, Sandy Birch....and three nice fathers: Jeff Crowder, Tom Hodge, and Mickey McGuigan who were our Wise Men.

Daniel Crowder, Lauren Robinson, Jamison Shabanowitz, Kelsey Trimble and their teacher, Lorin Crowder.

Lesley Bland, Tim Smiley and Stu Worley who created the sets.

Donita Moore who provided the wonderful music.

AND Jody Smiley.... director, props coordinator, “mom” of the story, microphone mover...and while we’re expressing thanks....let’s add Kid’s Night planner, Sunday School superintendent, Sunday School opening leader and teacher, Children’s church supervisor, giver of children’s sermons , youth leader, and nursery attendant too. Jody Smiley – the “patron saint” of our youth at St. Michael...thank you so much.

Annual Congregational Meeting

Our annual congregational meeting will be held Sunday, January 11, at 10 a.m. (between church services) for the purpose of electing council members and approving the budget for 2004. Please plan to attend. Light refreshments will be served.

Candidates for church council include Mack Brown, Cindy Dowdy, Ray Howell, Lori Sheppard, 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, \$15,450 has been promised by twenty four 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.

St. Michael Parking Lot Repaving Commitment

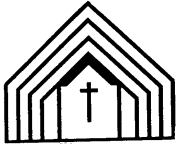
Name _____

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!



January Servants

	January 4	January 11	January 18	January 25
<i>Acolytes</i>	Daniel Crowder	Scott McGuigan	Kelsey Trimble Abbie Penner	Isaac Nagle
<i>Altar Care</i>	Birch, Corbett and Hickok			
<i>Comm. Assts.</i>		Hank Schneider	Jeff Birch	
<i>Coffee Hour</i>		Christine McCauley		Birch family
<i>Greeters</i>	The Naughton family			
<i>Lay Readers</i>	Sandy Birch	Hank Schneider	Jeff Birch	Amy Garst
<i>Nursery Assts.</i>	Kathy Albert Chelsea Naughton	Sandie Worley Sarah Worley	Sandy Birch Braden Birch	David Burke Teresa Sebastian
<i>Ushers</i>	Ann Surface Dave Surface Peggy Brown Bob Brown	Ray Howell Sam Akers James Pascoe Philip Isenhour	Josh Mouras Steve Mouras Don Linkous Gary Worley	Jay Nagle Roscoe Turman Burn Gross Betty Gross

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