



St. Michael Lutheran Church

Important Date: March 14

Why? Our spring congregational meeting will be held at **10 a.m.** that day to....

- **vote** on extending a call to Pastor John Wertz to serve as the pastor of St. Michael Lutheran Church. The call committee has unanimously recommended this invitation to the church council, and the church council has voted affirmatively to call for a congregational vote on this recommendation and the compensation package. All voting members will be receiving a letter which includes biographical information on Pastor Wertz and a copy of the compensation package. A “voting member” is defined by the constitution as a confirmed member who has both communed at least once and given a “gift of record” in the past two years.
- **elect** two new trustees.
- **celebrate** the work of the church by reviewing the annual reports of all committees. The 2003 Annual Report will be available on March 7.
- **discuss** any concerns of the congregation.

Our new mission banner will be unveiled that day and all attendees will

receive their new mission statement bookmarks.

Light refreshments will be provided during the meeting. The 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services are scheduled as usual, though Sunday School will be cancelled that day. A movie will be provided for the children in the nursery during the meeting time.

Please join your St. Michael family on this exciting day in the life of our congregation.

Our thanks to the Call Committee for sharing their time and talents and caring so much for this congregation: Ben Crawford, chair; Bob Brown, Judy Clemens, Jennie Hodge, Julia Landes, Linda Naughton and David Surface.

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,
Invite others into Christ's community,
Serve God in our daily lives, and
Tell the story of God's love for all.

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.

LENT

The Season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and continues for 40 days (plus six Sundays) ending on Easter Eve. The 40-day period is based on Jesus' 40 days of self-denial and prayer in the wilderness. After baptism, Jesus withdrew to the desert to fast and pray before beginning his public ministry.

In early Christianity, Lent began as a time of preparation and instruction for new converts to Christianity. Candidates prepared for their Easter baptism by practicing public penance, personal self-denial and prayer. In later years, the Lenten emphasis gradually shifted to private penance. Lent became a time of forgiveness and reconciliation for those Christians who acknowledged their sins. During this time they practiced penance, personal self-denial, and prayer. In the middle ages, Lent was a time set aside for all of Christ's followers to show their devotion to God. Strict fasting, the cancellation of all festivities, and worshipping more often was mandatory. The Lenten emphasis today has

shifted to a time of renewal, reflection, and preparation. It is a time for us to examine our lives, strengthen our faith, and renew our Christian commitment as we prepare for Easter.

Purple, the color for Lent, is a royal color and reminds us that Jesus is King. Symbols include various kinds of crosses, the crown of thorns, the nails used to put Jesus to death, and the Lamb—a symbol for the crucified Christ.

The Season of Lent and Ash Wednesday emphasize the confession of sins. The Sundays in Lent remind us of God's forgiveness and how Christ's death opened the way to eternal life for Christians. "O, Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

Our Lenten worship schedule:

Wednesday mid-week Lenten fellowship (light supper at 6:30 p.m.) and worship at 7 p.m. (with Pastor Shirley Larson) at: Shiloh Lutheran Church on March 3, March 17 and March 31 and New Mt. Zion on March 10 and March 24.

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Services will be held at St. Michael; schedule to be announced in the April newsletter.

Prayer List Procedure Change

Purpose: To improve the accuracy of the prayer list.

New procedure: The prayer list that is currently included in the church bulletin will be renewed and updated at the beginning of each church season, i.e., a name will be removed from the list unless a new request has been made.

If you would like to place a name on the prayer list, please fill out and submit a "for the bulletin" request form found on the shelf in the hallway. The forms can be placed in the secretary's box in the workroom. Names can also be submitted to Sandy Birch via e-mail (birch@stmhc.us).

Happy-Go-Lucky

March 11— a St. Patrick's Day potluck for our members and friends...anyone who just enjoys good food and fellowship.

Bring a small item that we can donate to Heritage Hall for prizes at their Bingo

parties, e.g., bottle of perfume, knick-knack, slipper-socks, small stuffed animal.

We've already missed two meetings – it's time to party!! 11:30 a.m.

Women of the ELCA

Please join us on **Thursday, March 18 at 6:00 p.m.** for our first “dinner meeting” at the home of Jane Lane. A light meal will be provided and we will be assembling Easter baskets for the children at the Women’s Resource Center and for the Salvation Army. Questions can be directed to Alice Schneider at 552-6995. In February, we learned more about Sarah, mother of Isaac, wife of Abraham and the mother of all nations. Who will be our guest “Woman of the Bible” in March? We invite all women of the congregation to join us for our next meeting and for all or any of our events. Thank you to all the women who contributed over 50 Bingo prizes for the residents of Heritage Hall.

For March, we invite the congregation to bring canned goods for the Food Bank...though any non-perishable food item is welcome. WELCA also provides two SHARE food boxes each month to the Women’s Resource Center. Donations for this project can be given to Betty Gross.

Celebrating the service of special people: Donita Moore

Donita has been with us since 1999 and is responsible for providing organ and piano music for our worship services, weddings, funerals and special events, and rehearsing, directing and accompanying our choir. Donita also volunteers as one of our Sunday School music leaders. She is also a music specialty teacher with Montgomery County Public Schools, teaching music to 42 classes of Pre-K to fifth grade children. As if this didn't keep her busy enough, Donita also owns and operates her own music studio. Her performance and career experiences are most impressive as is her educational background. With a Master of Music from the Eastman School of Music, Donita continues to take classes in a variety of areas including Child Development to improve her expertise. Little known fact: Donita first earned a B.S. degree in Biochemistry at Virginia Tech.

Donita and her son Jaid (and three cats) live in Christiansburg. Her parents, Don and Iris, are regular visitors to St. Michael (sitting in the pew behind the piano) and live in Pulaski. In her 'spare time', Donita loves to read and to garden.

Thank you Donita, for making such beautiful music with your St. Michael family.

Adult Sunday School BIBLE STUDY begins March 7

On Sunday, March 7, the adult Sunday School, led by Betty Gross, will begin a study of the New Testament. Following a well-received study of the Old Testament last fall, the format will be similar: viewing a 30 minute lecture by Professor Bart D. Ehrman of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and then discussion. The class will be using our new 32" TV and DVD player. From the course description, "Dr. Ehrman, an award-winning teacher, will help us understand the content, meaning, and historical accuracy of the 27 books of the New Testament."

In the community In the world.....

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

YMCA “Mornings” meets weekly to bring International people and Americans together for friendship, fun, and support. The meetings are held on Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church. A variety of interesting activities are planned for this spring.

Blacksburg Church Youth Baseball (formerly Blacksburg Church T-Ball) is sponsoring spring registration on Saturday, March 6 and 13, at the Blacksburg United Methodist Church (111 Church St. – enter on side off of Lee St.) from 9 a.m. to noon. All girls and boys are invited to participate in T-Ball (4-6 year olds) or pitching machine (7-8 year olds). Fees are \$35 and \$55 respectively. For more information, contact Tom Bibbins at 951-9697 (league president). The league provides practices, games, opening ceremony, shirt/hat, participation awards and season ending picnic.

A Men’s Rally Day will be held at Auburn United Methodist Church on Saturday, March 6 at 9 a.m. Entitled, “Raise the Standard”, the multimedia event will include songs of praise and worship to God, and inspirational messages from nationally known speakers. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. See George Naughton for additional details.

from Karen Mayer, Global Missions Committee member:

We have been praying for our sister congregation, **Soi Lutheran Church, in Papua New Guinea**, for several years now. Twice there have been delegations from the Synod to visit churches there; and now this summer, lay people are invited to visit their sister congregations. The trip is planned for July 6-21 (approximately) and will cost about \$3,000 per person. If anyone is interested in meeting these beautiful people in Papua New Guinea and having a life changing experience, contact me (552-0879) or Diane Giessler, the chairperson of the Global Mission Committee for the Synod. She and her husband will be going; Pastor Chip Gunsten and his wife will be going, and I am thinking about it too. Pray about it and let me know by March 20 when the committee meets to confirm our plans.

Meg Billingsley, serving with **Wycliffe Bible Translators**, will be leaving for Canada soon to translate God’s Word into Cree. Meg reports that the Lord has provided 96% of her monthly support. If you would still like to be a part of her team and provide that last bit of support, let her know at meg_billingsley@sil.org. Her newsletter, *Meggo’s Memos*, is posted on the bulletin board.

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

Our smallest cheerleader, **MaKayla Dowdy**, was pictured in the *Roanoke Current* with her Blacksburg Middle School cheerleading team. MaKayla’s mom, Cindy Dowdy, is the coach of the cheerleaders who have performed at Virginia Tech basketball games. In fact, MaKayla attends every VT basketball game and cheers for her Hokies.

Matt Woods was a headliner once again, leading Blacksburg High School to an 11th place finish in the championship round of the Big Orange Wrestling Classic.

On February 18, at the Blacksburg Sports Club luncheon, **Suzie Schneider Emling** was recognized as Blacksburg High School’s 1992 outstanding female athlete. The press release notes Suzie’s success as an all district and state basketball player and volleyball player at BHS and two years of varsity volleyball at Virginia Tech. Hank and Alice Schneider were at the luncheon to accept their daughter’s award.

BHS girls basketball coach, **Mickey McGuigan**, was mentioned frequently in the sports section of the *Roanoke Times*, e.g., “Bruins respond to coach’s message”. The region III Coach of the Year for 2003 again led the Lady Bruins to a River Ridge District championship. Congratulations to Mickey and the team!

She was ‘a real doer...always ready to go’ was the headline of **Clairmont Clemens’** tribute in the obituary section of the *Roanoke Current*. Four decades teaching first grade at Prices Ford Elementary School and attending most of Virginia Tech’s baseball, football and basketball games in the past 50 years were among many stories about Clairmont in the article.

Congratulations to our recently elected church council officers:

President: Jim Clemens

Vice-president: Fran Shepherd

Secretary: Jennie Hodge

Financial Officer: Kathy Albert

*******Sign up now to host a birthday dinner table in November—and take advantage of after holiday sales. The form is on the hallway bulletin board.*******

**DONATIONS FOR OUR EASTER BASKETS ARE WELCOMED
THROUGH MARCH 14 (for the children at the Women’s Resource Center)**

Update your St. Michael Directory:

**Carol and Leslie Bland
108 Canterbury Ct.
Blacksburg, VA
961-2236**

**Amy Garst
2929 Cara Court
Blacksburg, VA
552-2885**

**Lauren and Richard Robinson
893 Merrimac Rd.
Blacksburg, VA
961-2005**

Sharing Our Gifts: Time, Talents and Treasure

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

Justice and Mercy

In February, our fund was used to help two families with their trailer lot rental, a third family with their medical expenses, and a fourth family purchase fuel oil. A thank you note from one family states, "I just want to say thank you for helping me pay \$50 on my rent. It helped me and my husband." Your donations to the Justice and Mercy Fund are appreciated by our "neighbors".

Thank you from the Salvation Army

"The staff, volunteers and clients of the Salvation Army would like to thank you for your wonderful Christmas gifts. To organize and purchase gifts for twenty children is a daunting task. Together, St. Michael and the community provided Christmas for over 300 children. We will never be able to express our appreciation for your generosity. God bless and we look forward to working with you in the future".

Thank you to some more "quiet" servants

To Bob Brown and Ross Brown for some fellowship hall cleaning and fixing the chair racks; to Peggy Price and Marguerite Olinger for pasting the Lord's Prayer music in the hymnals.

To the Sheppard, Kirk, and Crawford families for providing extraordinary altar care during February: preparing the Lord's Supper four (4)! times, changing the paraments 3 times, and replacing the banners. Their service was a real family affair.

Funds to help the hungry

On Ash Wednesday, designated as a "World Day of Fasting" by Bishop Mauny, \$175 was donated for World Hunger. At our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, a free-will offering of \$251 was collected for the Montgomery County Food Bank. Our gifts on Souper Sunday, February 1, added \$130 to be shared by both funds. Thank you.

Recognizing our youth

Thank you to the youth choir for helping the adult choir sing "This Little Light of Mine" on Sunday, February 22 and for serving as our "Sunday Servants" on February 29. You are our future and we love you. Thank you to Linda Naughton for leading the youth choir.

Thank you Caring and Sharing Committee and volunteers

Thank you for preparing and serving delicious pancakes and all the fixings at our Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper on February 24. There were at least 100 hungry revelers at the event. Thank you also to all who came early to set up the fellowship hall, cook, and then stay to clean up.

Kid's Night at St. Michael
March 3, 17 and 31 6 – 7:30 p.m.

All children in grades K-6 are invited for supper,
crafts, music and more....

A DVD and video has been prepared of Pastor Linda Mitchell's last Sunday at St. Michael. The program contains hymns sung by the St. Michael choir and hundreds of pictures of St. Michael members. If you would like to order a copy, submit the following order form along with a \$10 donation to the Justice and Mercy fund. Copies are also available in the back of the sanctuary. Our thanks to Dean Trimble for preparing this wonderful memory for us. By the way, Dean has a small video business which performs such tasks as converting slides and video tapes to DVDs. Contact him for your digital media needs.

Name: _____
Address: _____

Media desired: DVD _____ video tape _____

Mail to: St. Michael Lutheran Church, 2308 Merrimac Rd., Blacksburg, VA 24060.

We're a little closer to paving the parking lot.....

Almost \$18,000 has been promised by thirty five 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 \$7,000 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!

Report of the Long Range Planning Committee

The Long Range Planning committee has been studying St. Michael Lutheran Church since January 2002. The committee was formed to study our congregation with no specific goal or vision set forth by the council. After a few meetings, with little idea of our direction, the group (Bob Brown; chair, Jeff Birch; secretary, Judy Clemens, Cindy Dowdy, Betty Gross, Kevin Krallman, Julie Landes, Pastor Mitchell, Hank Schneider, Tim Smiley and Amy Woods) held an all-day meeting with the Rev. James Utt from Grace Evangelic Lutheran Church of Winchester, VA as our leader. This important meeting helped us get organized and established a productive direction for our study.

The group elected officers, formed work groups for specific tasks, began special studies, and met on a regular basis for discussions and action. The first topic for study was who we are as a Christian body of worshipers at St. Michael Lutheran Church.

In our history, we located copies of the recorded deed to our property, which was “obtained from John Preston, John Breckenridge, and John Brown, executors to the estate of William Preston deceased who was the executor to the estate of James Patton and deeded to the Lutheran and Calvinist German Church of Toms Creek and their successors, at the Montgomery Court of August 1806.” The progression of church names started with St. Michael (the old hewn log church) to St. Peters, Price’s Church (the old brick church). The church gradually dispersed into four separate communities and new churches of the New River Parish. Next, St. Marks and New St. Peters merged to bring our present church, St. Michael Lutheran, back to its original location.

Studies were conducted to determine the major concerns and purposes for our Christian goals. Our strengths and needs for improvement were surveyed in a congregational study. The results were reviewed and compared to our current program of activities and committee groups.

There were studies of membership and the possibilities for expansion in the local area and county. Only about 30% of the population in this area participate in church groups, which is actually higher than other areas of the country (some as low as 10%). We looked at the locations of members within a certain mileage radius of the church and the size of family memberships as well as age, economics, education and other characteristics of our members. We are a very diverse congregation with wide areas of talents and abilities well represented throughout our membership.

One of the last studies was to determine our mission as a church. This study led to the revision of our mission statement. Again, we surveyed our membership in a variety of ways and on March 23, 2003, our new mission statement was adopted by the congregation. Jenny Akers designed the banner and bookmarks for our statement and Linda Naughton created our new banner to hang in the sanctuary. The banner will be “revealed” and bookmarks distributed at our congregational meeting on March 14.

With the prospect of a new pastor to help with leadership, and the addition of our newest member, George Naughton, we plan to resume planning which includes special worship services related to the mission of the church and congregational cottage meetings consisting of committee representatives, council members, and congregation members. At these meetings, we will develop goals and the ways and means for carrying out our mission. As our activities progress, we may discover opportunities to expand our presence in our community as servants of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Submitted by Bob Brown, chair



March Servants

	March 7	March 14	March 21	March 28
<i>Acolytes</i>	Daniel Crowder Sarah Crowder	Scott McGuigan	Kelsey Trimble Abbie Penner	Isaac Nagle
<i>Altar Care</i>	Tammy Veit and Peggy Brown			
<i>Comm. Assts.</i>	Steve Mouras		Bob Brown	
<i>Coffee Hour</i>		Before cong. meeting		Veit and Brown families
<i>Greeters</i>	James and Wanda Pascoe			
<i>Lay Readers</i>	Steve Mouras	Dave Surface	Doug Veit	Jeff Birch
<i>Nursery Assts.</i>	Cindy Dowdy Abbie Penner	Dean Trimble Kelsey Trimble	Sharon Robinson Lauren Robinson	Linda Naughton Chelsea Naughton
<i>Ushers</i>	Ray Howell Sam Akers James Pascoe Dickie Shepherd	Josh Mouras Steve Mouras Don Linkous Gary Worley	Ben Simmers Roscoe Turman Burn Gross Betty Gross	Ann Surface Dave Surface Peggy Brown Bob Brown

St. Michael Scholarship – Deadline: April 15

Applications are invited for the St. Michael Scholarship, a \$600 award for individuals to pursue studies in post-secondary education. The scholarship is available to members of Lutheran churches in Montgomery County. The application is available on the church bulletin board or from Doug Smiley, scholarship committee chair. He can be contacted at 961-2472 or 231-5364 or at smileydc@vt.edu.

United Lutheran Appeal: Faith in Action

In March, we have the opportunity to assist the nine special outreach ministries of the Virginia Synod: Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp and Retreat Center, Chaplain Service of the Churches of Virginia, Hungry Mother Lutheran Retreat Center, Lutheran Council of Tidewater, Lutheran Family Services of Virginia, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, National Lutheran Home, Roanoke College and Virginia Synod Lutheran Homes. The needs of these institutions and agencies are increasing every year as more and more people are being served in more ways than ever before. All of us together, through these institutions and agencies, can proclaim the Gospel to others in ways that our individual congregations cannot.

Let's be **Ambassadors for Christ....Stewards of the Kingdom....**and support the ULA with our generous donations. Offering envelopes will be available in our bulletin during the month



April Servants

	April 4	April 11	April 18	April 25
<i>Acolytes</i>	Isaac Nagle Abbie Penner	Kelsey Trimble Scott McGuigan	Dan Crowder Sarah Crowder	Scott McGuigan
<i>Altar Care</i>	The Smiley family			
<i>Comm. Assts.</i>	Jody Smiley	Jane Lane	Jeff Birch	
<i>Coffee Hour</i>		Easter breakfast after the service		Hodge family
<i>Greeters</i>	Karen and Jada Brown			
<i>Lay Readers</i>	Amy Garst	Jay Nagle	Lori Sheppard	Mickey McGuigan
<i>Nursery Assts.</i>	Jane McGuigan Katie McGuigan	No nursery provided	Lorin Crowder Chelsea Naughton	Jody Smiley
<i>Ushers</i>	Mickey McGuigan Scott McGuigan Tom Hodge Jay Nagle	Ray Howell Sam Akers James Pascoe Dickie Shepherd	Josh Mouras Steve Mouras Don Linkous Gary Worley	Ben Simmers Roscoe Turman Tim Turman Burn Gross

