

St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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Count Your Blessings

I enjoy going on vacation. I enjoy being on vacation and most of all I enjoy coming home from vacation. One of the things that I enjoy most about coming home is that spot on Interstate 77 when you come over a little hill and the mountains appear before you. As I came upon that spot the other day, I found myself giving thanks to God for the beauty of mountains. I found myself giving thanks for the gift of my family and for the opportunity to be in ministry with you at St. Michael. I took a few moments to reflect upon the blessings God has given me and I was humbled.

I encourage you to take a few moments this week to stop and count the ways that God has blessed your life. I realize that life is busy. I know that things don't always work out the way we want them to work out. I understand that life has its share of disappointments and tragedies, but I also believe that God has abundantly blessed each of us. While we live in a world that often focuses on the things that are wrong or bad, God looked at creation and saw that it was good. We would do well to follow God's example and focus, not on the negatives, but on the good in our lives.

I have a simple suggestion. Make a list of "Ten Blessings in Your Life". Write the list down so that you actually see it on paper. Put the list in a place where you'll see it every day like your bathroom mirror, your refrigerator, your computer or on your wall at work. Take time each day to read the list and give thanks to God for those blessings. I'm not suggesting this will change the world, but I do think it will help put the world in a better perspective and help us to see the many ways that you and I have been abundantly blessed by God's love and presence in our lives.

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.

Sharing Our Gifts: Time, Talents and Treasure

We offer with joy and thanksgiving what He has first given us--our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of His gracious love.

Thank you to some “quiet” servants

To Dave and Ann Surface for helping with the February newsletter mailing; Jeff and Sandy Birch for providing two new tables for the altar area; Alice Schneider and Jody Smiley for coordinating L-Cubed (Luther’s Luscious Luncheon) last Sunday for the Lutheran students on campus; Jeff Birch, Ray Howell, James Pascoe and Gary Worley for putting away the Christmas Tree (yes, we needed all 4!); Steffen Bohn and Jaid Moore who helped distribute our “Thank You”s to Sunday Servants; and John Krallman and Doug Smiley for keeping up with our financial records.

Because of your gifts

Your generous gifts in January supported our benevolence to the Virginia Synod, donations to MCEAP, Lutheran Campus Ministry, Christian Children’s Fund, our facilities, salaries for our pastor, secretary, organist, custodian and nursery worker, church insurance, postal permit, and a stipend for our supply pastor.

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** continues to assist our neighbors in the community and the world. In January, we provided rent assistance for one family, kerosene for a second family, and contributed to one electric bill and one water bill for two more families. We encourage the congregation to continue their contributions to the fund and to refer friends and family to use the fund as you see need. Kroger Gift cards are still available; contact Sandy Birch. Five percent of our purchases are deposited to the fund.

Thank You from Price’s Fork Elementary

Dear Rev. Wertz,

On behalf of Price’s Fork School, I want to thank you and St. Michael for the very generous and kind donation for our families. We were able to send out twenty four gift cards for the holidays to Price’s Fork families. The gift cards were much needed and meant a lot to our school community. In the season of “giving,” you shared so much. We give you a heart felt “Thank you.”

*Sincerely,
Brenda Smith and Dollie Cottrill*

Thank You from Betty Gross

Thank you sincerely for all the prayers and cards sent during my recent surgery and recuperation. You are such a caring, Christian family and I’m so glad that I’m a part of it. May God bless you all.

Betty Gross

Renew Your Wedding Vows

Whether you have been married for 1 year or 50 years, you have the opportunity to renew your wedding vows on Sunday, February 12. The Renewal of Vows Service is a simple, but meaningful service which allows couples to remember and celebrate their life together as husband and wife. If you are interested in renewing your vows, you can sign up on the sheet in the front hallway or you can talk to Pastor John for more information.



Congratulations to our New Congregational Council Officers

At the January 8 congregational council meeting, the following officers were elected:

President:	Jim Clemens
Vice President:	Gary Worley
Secretary:	Lori Anne Sheppard
Financial Officer:	Kathy Albert

Annual Meeting and Brunch, March 12 at 9:50 a.m.

On Sunday, March 12, St. Michael will have a Covered Dish Brunch and Annual Meeting at 9:50 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited to bring a dish to share. At the Annual Meeting, we will receive the 2005 Annual Report and the 2006 Phone Directory and we will take a second vote on the constitutional amendment approved at the December meeting.

Annual Reports Needed February 19

If you are submitting a report for St. Michael's 2005 Annual Report, please have it to Gary Worley by Sunday, February 19. To make Gary's job easier, please save your report as a Word document and email it to him at: gworley@vt.edu. Thank you!

Offering Envelopes for 2006

Offering envelopes for the current and maintenance (Property) funds are available on the shelf in the hallway. Each set of envelopes has the Sunday of the month and a place for your name. If you have never used envelopes before, consider picking up a box. They are easy to use and help with our financial record keeping.

When It Snows

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

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February Servants

	February 5	February 12	February 19	February 26
<i>Acolytes</i>	Kelsey Trimble Katy McGuigan	Sarah Crowder	Scott McGuigan Steffen Bohn	Steffen Bohn
<i>Altar Care</i>	Doug and Jody Smiley			
<i>Comm. Assts.</i>	Tammy Veit		Randy Robinson	
<i>Fellowship Hour</i>		Birch family		
<i>Greeters</i>	Kelsey and Dean Trimble			
<i>Lay Readers</i>	Hank Schneider	Kelsey Trimble	Lori Ann Sheppard	Fred Spengler
<i>Ushers</i>	Jeff Crowder Jeff Birch Philip Isenhour Roscoe Turman	Dickie Shepherd Vickie and Steve Mouras Don Linkous	Hank Schneider J.D. Robinsdon Dave and Ann Surface	Sam Akers Ray Howell James Pascoe M. McGuigan

Women of the ELCA

The February meeting will be held at the home of Lori Anne Sheppard (3356 McCoy Road in Blacksburg) on Thursday, February 16 at 7 p.m. Please join the gathering for friendship and fellowship.



This year, we will continue preparing Christmas shoeboxes for the Head Start program on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Now would be a good time to purchase winter items on sale. In preparation for our annual Easter basket donations to the Salvation Army and Women's Resource Center, be on the lookout for toys and candy too.

Remember the Food Bank: February is SOUP month, though any kind of non-perishable food is always welcome.

Remember the Women's Resource Center: In February, please bring items for infants such as diapers, pull-ups, baby wipes, teething rings, baby toys.

Souper Bowl Sunday, February 5

The Annual Souper Bowl of Caring will take place on Sunday, February 5. St. Michael will join thousands of churches across the country by raising money to help fight hunger. Everyone is asked to bring \$1 to place in the Soup Pot and a can of food. The money and canned goods will be donated to the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program.



Thank you from the Free Clinic

Dear friends at St. Michael,

Our New Year's celebration at the Free Clinic of the New River Valley is an especially joyous one, thanks to the generosity of you and others....accept my heartfelt appreciation for your gift of \$130 from your annual birthday dinner.thank you again for your ongoing support – the simple solution for so many people in need.

Sincerely,

Amy Forsyth-Stephens, Executive Director



Kid's Nights on February 1 and 15

All children from kindergarten to 5th grade are invited to Kid's Night on Wednesdays, February 1 and 15. For more information, contact Jody Smiley at esmiley@vt.edu or at 961-2472. Join us for supper, music, crafts and more.

Christ's Kids

Christ's Kids is St. Michael's Sunday morning program for youth from Kindergarten through 5th Grade. The youth are invited to go to the fellowship hall following the Children's Sermon for a brief lesson. On Communion Sundays, the youth will return to worship prior to communion so that families can commune together. If you are interested in helping with Christ's Kids, please contact Jody Smiley. February topics for Christ's Kids will be:

February 5	God is Joyful
February 12	God is Loving
February 19	God is Good
February 26	God in First Place

A Day of Baptisms

On Sunday, January 29, Cole Walker Price, son of Allison and Brian Price, and Victoria Lynne Tschetter, daughter of Doug and Jolynne Tschetter, were baptized into God's family and into our community of faith at St. Michael. Welcome!



Shower of Blessings



We are richly blessed by God. Our life is a gift, a blessing. As members of the community of faith at St. Michael, we share our life in many and various ways. We share God's blessings in our actions. We give time to the ministry of St. Michael. We share our talents and skills and participate in God's work. We offer a portion of our money to further God's mission at St. Michael. We are richly blessed by God and our thanks is shown in our sharing. This is

a truth of Christian faith and living.

Many people have discovered another amazing truth. As we give thanks through our sharing, we experience greater blessings. During the next months at St. Michael, we will be reminded of our many blessings...and we will have the opportunity to share the blessings of our time, talents and treasures.

United Lutheran Appeal

Why have a United Lutheran Appeal (ULA)?

- because we care,
- because the nine agencies and institutions of our synod supported by this appeal serve on our behalf,
- because these ministries respond to the needs of many people – our youth, the aged, church leadership, families, and educators,
- because this once-a-year appeal takes the place of separate appeals by each of the ULA ministries: Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp, Lutheran Family Services of Virginia, Chaplain Services, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Hungry Mother Lutheran Retreat Center, National Lutheran Home for the Aged, Lutheran Council of Tidewater, Roanoke College, Virginia Lutheran Homes.

Offering envelopes will be available for the ULA during the month of February. As Ambassadors for Christ, let us make a difference in the lives of others and give generously.

March 15 Deadline for the St. Michael Scholarship

Applications are invited for the St. Michael Scholarship, a \$600 award for individuals to pursue studies in post-secondary education. Members of Lutheran churches in Montgomery County are eligible to apply. The application is available on the church bulletin board or from Sandy Birch (951-3455 or birch@vt.edu).

Shrove Tuesday – February 28.....PANCAKES!!!

Shrove Tuesday is an annual celebration marking the final day before the season of Lent, a 40-day period traditionally marked by self-denial and reflection.

At St. Michael, we indulge in PANCAKES....lots and lots of pancakes and all the trimmings. Please join us at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 28, for our annual Pancake Supper. Bring your friends and family for the celebration.



Lenten Service Schedule

Ash Wednesday Service

March 1 at 7 p.m.

Wednesday Night Lenten Soup Supper and Service

Supper at 6 p.m. and Service at 6:45 p.m.

2 to 1 Men's Choir

If you enjoy singing, but don't have time to be a part of the Service Choir, come and sing in the 2 to 1 Men's Choir in February. The Choir will practice twice during the month and then sing on one Sunday in February. Come and share your musical talents in the 2 for 1 Men's Choir. Watch the bulletin for practice times and dates. For more information, contact Donita at: domoore1@vt.edu.

Lutheran Men in Mission Breakfast

All the men of the congregation are invited to the Men's Breakfast on Saturday, February 11 at 9 a.m. at the church. For more information, contact Jeff Birch at jbbirch@vt.edu or at 951-3455.

Happy Go Lucky



Our first potluck and program of the new year will be Thursday, February 16 at 11:30 a.m. Bring a dish to share and a friend for fellowship. Please note the change in date this month – the 3rd Thursday rather than the 2nd Thursday.