

# St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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## An Amazing Christmas Eve Sets the Stage for the Future

What a joyous Christmas Eve we shared together. There were over 150 people in worship at the two services on Christmas Eve morning and 189 people in worship at the two services that evening. Between the four services, there were probably 250 different people who came to St. Michael to worship God and to remember the baby born in Bethlehem. From the choir cantata in the morning, to the soloists and musicians for the evening services, to the greeters and ushers, a tremendous amount of work went into preparing for the services and I would like to thank everyone who helped out this year.

My friend, Dr. Callahan, likes to say that Christmas Eve is one of the ways that God teaches you what your future looks like. Using his theory, this Christmas Eve can teach us that St. Michael has a growing ministry and an exciting future ahead of us.

To meet the expanding needs of the congregation, the Congregational Council has accepted the recommendation of the Facilities Task Force to form a Building Committee which will explore expanding our educational space. Our current educational space is already too small for the youth and adult educational opportunities that we offer and will make it difficult for those ministries to continue to grow. If you are interested in being a part of the Building Committee, please talk to me or one of the members of the Congregational Council. Even if you aren't interested in serving on the committee, please keep this group in your prayers as they explore ways to expand our facilities to meet the growing needs of the congregation.

May God's blessings be with you in this new year.

<p>As a community of believers guided by the Holy Spirit, the mission of St. Michael Lutheran church is to:</p>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Care for all God's people in need,</li><li>Hear of God's love through Word and Sacrament</li><li>Respond to God's grace with thankful hearts,</li><li>Invite others into Christ's community,</li><li>Serve God in our daily lives, and</li><li>Tell the story of God's love for all.</li></ul> |
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## 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 Stan Larsen and his crew of volunteers for setting up the candle holders in the sanctuary; Charlene Harris for arranging for all our altar flowers; Alice Noonkester for mailing reminders to Sunday servants; Jody Smiley, Betty Gross, Fran Gallimore, Dianne Krallman and Alice Schneider for providing lunch for the Lutheran Campus Ministry students; Linda Elliott and Bill Greer for helping with Sunday bulletins; Judy Clemens for cleaning the altar linens; and to everyone who provided Angel Tree Gifts and food for the Advent Supper.

### Because of your gifts

Your generous gifts in December 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 workers.

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** continues to assist our neighbors in the community and the world. In December, we contributed to five electric bills and a water bill. We encourage the congregation to continue their contributions to the fund and to refer friends and family to use the fund as you see the need.

### New Support for the Justice and Mercy Fund

God has richly blessed the ministry of St. Michael. In order to be good stewards of our gifts and to share our blessings with others, the Congregational Council decided to give future interest earned from the money in our General Fund to the Justice and Mercy Fund. This money when combined with your generous gifts to the Justice and Mercy Fund will allow St. Michael to help even more of our neighbors in need.

### Thank You to the Christmas Eve Servants

Thank you to Carol Bland and John Krallman for their duets and solos, Lora Anne Sheppard, Jody Smiley, Kris Wertz, Julie Landes, Ann and Dave Surface for assisting with the worship services, Roscoe Turman and Dickie Shepherd and friends for ushering, Donita Moore for her beautiful music at both services, and the adult and youth bell chime choirs: Doug Smiley, Gary Worley, Linda Elliott, Bill Greer, Sarah Worley, Robert Worley, Emily Garst, and Jaid Moore. Thank you also to all who purchased poinsettias for the sanctuary. Your plants can be picked up after the December 31 and January 7 services; those remaining will be donated to others.



## Thank You from the Wertz Family

Kris and I would like to thank you for the generous Christmas gift you gave us. We appreciate your generosity and kindness. It is a privilege to be in ministry with you and we give thanks for your call to be at St. Michael

## Thank You to Mack Brown and Lori Anne Sheppard

Thank you to Mack Brown and Lori Anne Sheppard for serving on the Congregational Council. Their insight and leadership has been a tremendous help to the ministry of St. Michael.



## Congratulations to Randy Robinson, Shannon Rigsbee and Ben Simmers

At the Congregational Meeting on December 10, Randy Robinson, Shannon Rigsbee and Ben Simmers were elected to three year terms on the Congregational Council. They will be installed as Council members and begin their service in January.



Sign-up sheets for Altar Flowers, Altar Care and Fellowship Hour are posted on the hallway bulletin board. Please add your names to the list. Thank you for sharing and serving in these special ways.

## Souper Bowl Sunday, February 4

The Annual Souper Bowl of Caring will take place on Sunday, February 4. 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.



## SHARE

St. Michael has a long history of service as a Host Site for the SHARE Program. Under this popular program for our members and our communities, people receive monthly food packages worth \$35-\$40 for only two hours of volunteer service and \$17. The monthly food package consists of basic foods such as meats, fruits, vegetables and staples. SHARE is open to everyone – there are no restrictions. Contact Betty Gross at 552-2154 to register or for additional information.

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2308 Merrimac Road  
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***January Servants***

	<b>January 7</b>	<b>January 14</b>	<b>January 21</b>	<b>January 28</b>
<i>Acolytes</i>	Sarah Crowder	Sarah Crowder	Scott McGuigan	Katy McGuigan
<i>Altar Care</i>	Sandy Birch and Linda Elliott			
<i>Comm. Assts.</i>	Daniel Crowder		Carol Crawford	
<i>Christ's Kids</i>	Kris Wertz	Sandy Birch	Andrea Sharpe	Jody Smiley
<i>Youth Servants</i>	Corson Wertz	Elizabeth Berg	Matt Sharpe	Will Sharpe
<i>9 a.m. Greeters 11 a.m. Greeters</i>	Tschetter family	Shirley Linkous and Charlene Harris Wanda and James Pascoe		Walters Jr. family
<i>Lay Readers</i>	Jeff Birch	Vickie Mouras	Shannon Rigsbee	Doug Smiley
<i>9 a.m. Worship Asst.</i>	Sandy Birch	Ted Peterson	Lori Anne Sheppard	Sara Bohn
<i>Ushers</i>	Sam Akers Don Linkous Ray Howell Jeff Birch	Bob and Peggy Brown James Pascoe Burn Gross	Philip Isenhour Roscoe Turman Jay Nagle J.D. Robinson	Randy Robinson Grace and Ben Simmers Dickie Shepherd

## Women of the ELCA

**The January meeting** will be held at the home of Sandy Birch (301 Airport Road in Blacksburg) on Thursday, January 18 at 7 p.m. We will be planning our programs and projects for 2007. Please join the gathering for friendship and fellowship and sharing of ideas for programs and projects.



We will be joining the Men in Mission to serve an evening meal at the Roanoke Rescue Mission on Sunday, January 28 from 4 to 8 p.m.

**Remember the Food Bank:** January is cereal month, though any kind of non-perishable food is always welcome.

**Remember the Womens Resource Center:** In January, donations of cleaning products such as dishwashing soap, laundry detergent, all-purpose cleaner, etc. will be appreciated. Thank you to everyone who donated sheets and towels to the Center.

## Lutheran Men in Mission



On December 9, the Men in Mission group helped at the Christmas Store by loading presents into shopper's vehicles, tying Christmas trees on top of cars, and providing shopping cart management. Those participating from St. Michael were Pastor John, Jeff Birch, Dean Trimble, Jerry Gallimore, Doug Smiley, John Krallman, Ben Crawford, Stan Larson, Dave Surface, and Bob Brown.

All the men of the congregation are invited to participate in our first project of the new year – serving dinner at the Roanoke Rescue Mission on Sunday from 4 to 8 p.m. We need servers, dish washers, and a few potato peelers ☺. We will be joined by the high school youth and Women of the ELCA for a time of sharing and caring. Contact Jeff Birch at 951-3455 or [jbbirch@vt.edu](mailto:jbbirch@vt.edu) if you will be participating.

Thanks also to everyone who helped with our clothing drive for the Roanoke Rescue Mission. We have already delivered 37 bags of men's clothes to the Mission. If you would still like to contribute, please bring your clean clothes to the church before January 28. A collection box is in the hallway.

## Dinner With Friends

The *Dinner with Friends* group for 20-somethings, 30-somethings and 40-somethings will be having dinner together on Saturday, January 27 at 6 p.m. Sign-up on the "Welcome" form or talk to Pastor John for more information. Child care will be provided at the church.

## Youth Nights on January 17 and 31



All youth from kindergarten through Senior High are invited to Youth Nights on Wednesdays, January 17 and 31. We will all gather for dinner at 6 p.m. and then we will split into three different groups

**Kid's Night**, led by Jody Smiley ([esmiley@tvt.edu](mailto:esmiley@tvt.edu)), will offer games, crafts and learning opportunities for Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Confirmation** for youth from 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade is taught by Pastor John and offers a chance to have fun while learning more about what we believe as people of God.

The **Senior High Youth Group** for 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade is led by Carrie Mayer ([cmayer@mail.mcps.org](mailto:cmayer@mail.mcps.org)) and provides an opportunity for fun and service. This month, the youth have been invited to help serve a meal at the Roanoke Rescue Mission with the WELCA and Men in Mission groups on January 28.

### **The Youth Christmas Program, *Bethlehem P.D.*, plays to record crowd**

Thank you to all the angels, shepherds, three wise queens, and two fine detectives who participated in the Christmas program on December 17. The cast of characters included Dan Crowder, Will Sharpe, Matthew Pasier, MaKayla Dowdy, Delanie Veit, Alexis Niemeira, Hailey Howell, Parker Wertz, Corson Wertz, Bryce Apisa, Erik and Steffen Bohn, Zach Peterson, Connor McComsey, Ryan Albert, Matt Sharpe, Chance Price, Katy McGuigan, Andrew Bales, Emily Hoops, Elizabeth Berg, Katherine Berg and Erin Albert. Special thanks to Donita Moore, Jody Smiley (director), Sarah Crowder, Robert Worley, Michelle Pasier and the parents of the cast for all their assistance.



## **Global Mission News**

When I wrote an article two years ago in August 2004, it was about Papua New Guinea. When I wrote in August, 2006, it was about Malawi, Africa. We will be hearing more about Malawi on **January 14**, because the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malawi, will be visiting St. Michael! Bishop Bvumbwe is an awesome leader, with plans and purpose for the Lutheran Church in Malawi. He has a clear vision for what our friendship and financial gifts can do to help the people of Malawi become self-sufficient.

You had the opportunity to meet Bishop Hynna Motec here in June when he and Dacca Wagai, the youth leader, visited us from Papua New Guinea (PNG) for several weeks. Bishop Mauney and his delegation are planning a trip to PNG in 2008, even though the new building project will begin in 2007.

Diane Giessler, the Virginia Synod Companion Synod Chair, and I both feel that we cannot let a whole year go by without someone from the Synod going to PNG, so the two of us and another member of the Global Mission Committee, Mary Short, will be traveling to PNG in March and April. Three women on a mission! We will be spending Easter there and visiting with some the children whose educations we are supporting, reconnecting with our sister congregations and making new friends.

While I know that Papua New Guinea is our 'official' mission companion, I have no trouble at all with helping other missions as well. I have given money to support a child for a whole year for his or her education in Malawi. Bishop Bvumbwe will choose the child based on need, geographic location, desire and grades. Education is needed all over the world, so no matter where we travel, we will find needs to be met. I am aware how blessed I am to be able to have visited both these countries, to have worshipped with all these Christians, and to have experienced Christ in these wonderful, Spirit-filled people!

Please be in prayer for Bishop Bvumbwe's safe visit here, for the three of us who will be traveling to PNG in March, for relationships to solidify as we work to be Christ's ambassadors to all people and to have Jesus shine through us to others. Thank you for your prayers while we prepare and during our visit!

Karen Mayer

### **Covered Dish Luncheon with Bishop Bvumbwe from Malawi on Sunday, January 14**

You are invited to a covered dish luncheon on Sunday, January 14 immediately following the 11 a.m. Service in honor of Bishop Bvumbwe of Malawi, Africa. Kris Wertz and other travelers from this summer's mission trip to Malawi will be making a presentation about their trip and Bishop Bvumbwe will share the story of his church's ministry. For more information, talk to Kris Wertz.

## **Report on December Congregational Meeting**

The Congregational Meeting on December 10 accomplished a great deal. Following breakfast, the 2007 Spending Plan for Ministry was approved. Randy Robinson, Shannon Rigsbee and Ben Simmers were elected to three year terms on the Congregational Council. A constitutional bylaw officially closing the Historic Cemetery was passed and the first vote necessary to approve constitutional amendments establishing a Mission Endowment Fund was taken. The proposed amendments passed and must be approved again at the annual Congregational Meeting in March before they will be officially added to the Constitution.

## **New Red Hymnals and Pew Bibles Coming in January**

In January, St. Michael will begin using the new red hymnals, Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW). The hymnals will replace both the green, Lutheran Book of Worship, and the blue, With One Voice, hymnals. The ELW retains many of the resources from these two hymnals including most of the hymns and worship settings we currently use. In addition, you will discover new resources like Luther's Small Catechism, new hymns, some old hymns that have returned and new worship settings including one set to familiar hymn tunes. As with all new things, it may take a few weeks to become comfortable with the new page numbers, but I think you will enjoy using the new red hymnal. As a part of the transition to the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnals, St. Michael will be placing Pew Bibles in each of the pew racks. The scripture readings for each Sunday will still be available on the back of the bulletins, but these Bibles will now be available if you would prefer to see the Sunday reading in the context of the surrounding verses. The Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnals and Pew Bibles will be dedicated at both services on Sunday, January 7.

## **Would You Like a Hymnal at Home?**

Once St. Michael begins using the ELW hymnals, some of the Lutheran Book of Worship (green) hymnals will be made available to the congregation. If you donated an LBW in memory or in honor of someone and would like to have that book to use at home, or if you would simply like to have a copy for your personal devotions, the LBWs can be picked up beginning on January 14. In addition, a box of the old red hymnals, the Service Book and Hymnal (SBH), was recently discovered at the church and if you would like a copy of the SBH for your home, they will also be available beginning January 14.

## **Discipleship Matters Conference**

Peace Lutheran Church in Charlottesville will be hosting the *Discipleship Matters Conference* on February 9 and 10. Pastor Kelly Fryer, author of the book *Reclaiming the "L" Word*, will be the keynote speaker for the event and several workshops will be offered on discipleship. The cost for the conference is \$75. If you are interested in more information, go to [www.discipleshipmatters.blogspot.com](http://www.discipleshipmatters.blogspot.com) or talk to Pastor John.



## Celebrations

Congratulations to Kirsten Solberg and Mark VanderZanden on the birth of their son, Willem. He joins big sister Ingrid and proud grandparents, Inga and Todd Solberg.

Congratulations to Kathy and Mike Albert on the birth of their son Jake Pierson. He joins big sisters Erin and Sara and big brother Ryan.



Congratulations to Jennifer and Alex Niemiera on the birth of their twins Olivia Lee and Bennett Xavier. He joins big sister Alexis.

We celebrated the baptism of Abigail Lee Birch on Christmas Eve. Abbey is the daughter of Brian and Dorothy Birch and granddaughter of Jeff and Sandy Birch.

An Eagle Scout Court of Honor was held on December 2 for Daniel Crowder. Daniel served St. Michael for many years as an acolyte and now serves as a communion assistant.

On December 15, St. Michael's Boy Scout Troop 158 had its first Board of Review and Court of Honor. The festivities included presentations to five Cub Scouts who will soon become Scouts.

## **WORDshop on Daily Bible Reading on January 10**

**Tools for a Life of Faith** *WORDshops* offer practical tips and ideas for growing in your relationship with God. Each *WORDshop* will focus on one aspect of a life of faith. There will be a **WORDshop on Daily Bible Reading** on Wednesday, January 10. You are invited to come for a light supper at 6 p.m. and the *WORDshop* will run from 6:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m.. Child care is provided. The *WORDshops* are based on the book "Real Faith for Real Life" by Pastor Mike Foss. If you are interested in learning more about any of the tools discussed in the *WORDshops*, you can borrow a copy of the book from the church. Sign up on the "Welcome to St. Michael" form or talk to Pastor John for more information.

## **Care of Creation Team**

Are you passionate about caring for the creation God has given us? If so, please talk to Pastor John about being a part of a new Care of Creation Team being formed at St. Michael. The group will look at ways to encourage individuals and the congregation to be good stewards of the gift of creation. A sample project might be recycling used printer cartridges. Sign up on the "Welcome" form or talk to Pastor John for more information.