

St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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Facilities Expansion Task Force

God has blessed St. Michael with a strong, growing ministry. Over the last two years, the number of youth and adults involved in education has increased significantly. Recognizing the need to support our current and future growth, the Council appointed a Facilities Task Force to evaluate our existing facilities and make recommendations. The Task Force determined that St. Michael has about 850 square feet of open classroom educational space. Based on generally accepted standards, we need approximately 1200 square feet to support our current educational programs. To allow for future growth and a full range of classes, St. Michael needs approximately 2650 square feet of educational space. The Task Force recommended to the Council that St. Michael form a Facilities Expansion Task Force to obtain professional help in determining the possibilities for adding dedicated educational space to the current facility.

The Facilities Expansion Task Force met for the first time on February 18 with Jim and Judy Clemens, Cindy Dowdy, Dianne Krallman, Fran Shepherd, Don Linkous, Sharon Robinson, Carla Schwertz, Jody Smiley and Doug Viet in attendance. After discussing the recommendations and options, the Task Force asked that the congregation approve an expenditure of up to \$3000 to hire three architects for an Architectural Study Process. The architects will be asked to develop specific possibilities for expanding our facilities based on a list of criteria developed by the Task Force. The Task Force will then use the information from this study process to make a recommendation to the council and congregation for how we might proceed with the project. The money requested would be taken from money already in the general fund. Approving the expenditure for the Architectural Study Process does not authorize the expansion of the building, but allows the Task Force to get specific, professional advice in order to make an accurate and appropriate recommendation to the congregation. If you have any questions about the process or the request for funding, please talk to me or to anyone on the Facilities Expansion Task Force.

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



Thank you to our offering counters and financial secretaries who work faithfully after each Sunday and special worship service. Pictured are Julia Landes, Cindy Dowdy, Jim Clemens and Ben Simmers.

Thank you to Linda Elliott, Margaret Larsen and Shirley Linkous who helped with the February and March newsletter mailings; Ray Howell, who installed the new handicap accessible door handles; Carol Crawford for

organizing the kitchen; and everyone who set up, cleaned up, and cooked for the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper.

Because of your gifts

Your generous gifts in February supported the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, music supplies, 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.

Some thank you’s

Please thank your congregation for the generous donation of \$1,500 which you gave to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi. Your donation will be used to support Orphan Feeding Centers and other on-going programs. The Feeding Centers will provide fortified porridge for some of Malawi’s many orphans during extreme times of drought and famine. Although the Feeding Centers are able to provide each child only three servings per week, this porridge is the difference between life and death for many. The remainder of your donation will be used in areas which Bishop Bvumbwe has designated as areas of intense need. God Bless you all for your support to this mission.

Your sister in Christ, Judy Brammer, Treasurer, Malawi Mission Fund

Thank you to everyone for your kindness and caring during my mother’s illness. My family and I also appreciated the special luncheon following my mother’s funeral which was organized by Betty Gross. Thank you to all who contributed food.

With love, Charlene Harris.

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March Servants

	March 4	March 11	March 18	March 25
Acolytes	Sarah Crowder	Sarah Crowder	Scott McGuigan	Katy McGuigan
Altar Care	Burn and Betty Gross			
Comm. Assts.	Karen Mayer		Daniel Crowder	
Christ's Kids	Sandy Birch	Kris Wertz	Andrea Sharpe	Jody Smiley
Youth Servants		Elizabeth Berg	Matt Sharpe	Will Sharpe
9 a.m. Greeters 11 a.m. Greeters	Hendersons	Fay and Clifton Walters Alice and Hank Schneider		Petersons
Lay Readers	Hank Schneider	Jay Nagle	Lori Sheppard	Dianne Krallman
9 a.m. Worship Asst.	Lori Anne Sheppard	Margaret Larsen	Ted Peterson	Shannon Rigsbee
Ushers	Sam Akers Don Linkous Ray Howell Jeff Birch	Hank Schneider James Pascoe Burn Gross J.D. Robinson	Philip Isenhour Roscoe Turman Jay Nagle Mickey McGuigan	Randy Robinson Dave and Ann Surface Dickie Shepherd

Women of the ELCA

The March meeting will be held at the home of Dianne Krallman on Thursday, March 15, beginning at 6:30 p.m. with a social “1/2 hour” followed by a program, led by Jody Smiley, at 7p.m.



Karen Mayer will be traveling to Papua New Guinea this month and has learned that our PNG sisters enjoy wearing American women's jewelry. If you would like to **donate any jewelry that you no longer wear**, please bring the items to church by March 11. It would be helpful if you could package the items in zip lock bags. Thank you for providing these gifts.

Remember the Food Bank: March is peanut butter and jelly month, though any kind of non-perishable food is always welcome.

Remember the Womens Resource Center: In March, donations of toilet paper will be appreciated.



Happy Go Lucky

We will gather together on Thursday, March 1, at 11:30 a.m. for our first meeting of the new year. Our spring programs will have a travel theme.

March: Kemvia Adams-Bush from Montgomery County Parks and Recreation will share information about programs and trips for seniors and help us plan a possible day trip.

April: H-G-L members will share their experiences on cruises.

May: Karen Mayer will talk with us about Elderhostel sponsored travel.

Congratulations

At the last meeting of the School Board, the Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools recognized Cindy Dowdy as one of five teachers in the county who has received certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching. This brings the total number of certified teachers in the county to sixteen. National Board Certification is the culmination of an intense research, writing and submission process that takes almost a full year to complete and is a demonstration of a candidate's teaching practices as measured against high and rigorous standards. Congratulations Cindy!

Youth Nights on March 14 and 28



All youth from kindergarten through Senior High are invited to Youth Nights on Wednesdays, March 14 and 28. We will all gather for the Lenten suppers at 6 p.m. The Confirmands will meet with Pastor John during dinner and the other two groups will meet during the service.

Kid's Night, led by Jody Smiley (esmiley@vt.edu), will offer games, crafts and learning opportunities for Kindergarten through 5th grade.

Confirmation for youth from 6th through 8th 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 9th through 12th grade is led by Carrie Mayer (cmayer@mail.mcps.org) and provides an opportunity for fun and service.

Senior High Youth Bowling Trip

The Senior High Youth will be going bowling on Sunday, March 11 from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. If you are interested in going, email Carrie Mayer at cmayer@mail.mcps.org or sign up on the "Welcome" form in the bulletin.

In celebration of **Girl Scouts USA's 95th Anniversary**, Brownie Troop 737 will have a Girl Scout Cookie Booth after the 11 a.m. service on March 11. Troop 737 will use part of their cookie money for a project for the Malawi Mission. Please see Jennie or Olivia Hodge if you would like to order cookies to be delivered at the booth.



Christian Children's Fund Update

by Jennie Hodge and Abbie Penner

Did you know our congregation maintains a decades long international outreach? St. Michael sponsors two children through the Christian Children's Fund (CCF). CCF sends periodic updates on our children that include photos, notes, and other information. We will share these updates in future newsletters and a poster in the narthex.

Christa is a 14 year old girl and Sepri is a 17 year old boy from Indonesia. Last year, the CCF project helped them with health, nutrition, sanitation, and education programs. They also provide a school for children and training for their families to improve their incomes. For 2006, Christa reports that her family received health care and a hog. Sepri shares that he used the school supplies and appreciated the nutrition program. Both children send their gratitude and best wishes to all of us at St. Michael.

Filling Your Toolbox: Claiming Your Strengths

Filling your Toolbox is a new article which will appear monthly in the Messenger offering practical tips and ideas for living your faith in the world.

God invites you to live a whole, healthy life. God has blessed us with a number of strengths for our life of faith. Unfortunately, far too often we spend all our time focusing on our weaknesses. We worry about what we don't have and what we can't do. God invites you to spend less time worrying about your weaknesses and spend more time claiming your strengths.

Try making two lists on a piece of paper. On one list, put two or three things that are an 8, 9 or 10 strength in your life on a scale of 1 to 10. On the second list, put two of three things that are a 5, 6 or 7 strength on a scale of 1 to 10. Identify one strength from each list to grow in your life and look for ways to actively expand those strengths. The key is not to focus on the parts of your life that you think you *should* fix, but rather focus on the strengths God has given you that you *can* grow and expand.

Care of Creation Toolbox

St. Michael has a new Care of Creation Team and they offer the following simple tip for how you might care for God's beautiful creation.

Recycle Ink Cartridges – St. Michael now has a box in the front hallway to allow you to recycle printer ink cartridges. The cartridges can be remanufactured so they don't go into landfills and the church will also receive a small check from the company that will support the Justice and Mercy Fund.

WORDshop on Worship on Tuesday, March 27

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 Worship** on Tuesday, March 27. 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.

April 15 is New 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.

Under Construction: a Caring Community



1 Peter 2:5-10 presents a concept of God's people as "living stones" built into a "spiritual house." We are God's building materials and as we allow God to work through us, we become witnesses to God's love and care in the world. One way that we witness to God's presence in our lives is by being good stewards of the time, talents and treasures that God has given us and by using those gifts in our community of faith and in the world. In March, the congregation will have the opportunity to complete a

Time and Talent survey to share ways that you would like to use your gifts to build the caring community at St. Michael. Your willingness to share your gifts makes ministry happen!

Here are a few examples of the ministry opportunities you'll find on the Time and Talent survey.

- Sunday Servants: *Serve as a Lay Reader*
- Mission and Service Opportunities: *Organize the Angel Tree Project*
- Fellowship Opportunities and Common Interests: *Play on Softball Team*
- Prayer and Shepherding: *Be a part of a Prayer Team*
- Leadership Teams: *Serving on the Caring and Sharing Team*
- Teaching: *Willing to Teach a one-time Adult Sunday School Class*

Hints, Tips and Helpful Thoughts for Reading the Bible

1. Don't start with page one and try to read cover to cover. Try reading the Gospel of Luke, Acts, Romans, Genesis, and Psalms to get started.
2. Recognize that the Bible can be confusing even for people who have studied the Bible for years. If you get confused pray about it, keep reading to see if it makes sense and don't be afraid to ask someone you trust for help.
3. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - a. *What is the context for this passage?* It is helpful to see individual verses in the light of the whole witness of scripture.
 - b. *How does this fit with my understanding of Jesus?* If what you think scripture is saying runs counter to the witness of Jesus, then perhaps you need to reconsider your interpretation.
 - c. *What is God saying to me?* Try and hear how a particular passage is speaking to your life today.
4. Simply start reading. The more you hear and read scripture, the more it has to say for your life.

(Adapted from a Sermon by Pastor John on February 25, 2007 and a presentation by Pastor Mike Foss at the Lutheran Men in Mission National Gathering on July 23, 2004.)

Lenten Service Schedule

Wednesday Night Lenten Soup Supper and Service begin on Wednesday, February 28

Supper at 6 p.m.

Holden Evening Prayer Service at 6:45 p.m.



Each Wednesday will focus on different Key Bible Verses.
February 28 – Exodus 20:1-17

March 7 – Psalm 121

March 14 – Micah 6:6-8
Pastor Philip Bouknight, guest preacher

March 21 – John 3:14-17
Pastor Terrie Sternberg, guest preacher

March 28 – Romans 8:31-39

If you'd like to help provide food for one of the Lenten Midweek Meals, you can sign up on the back of the "Welcome" form in the weekly bulletin.

2 to 1 Women'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 Women's Choir in March. The Choir will practice twice during the month and then sing on Sunday, March 18. Watch the bulletin for practice times and dates. For more information, contact Donita at: [dmoore \[at\] pathwayacademy.us](mailto:dmoore@pathwayacademy.us).

New Members to be received on March 25

St. Michael will be receiving new members on Sunday, March 25 at both services. If you are interested in joining St. Michael, please talk to Pastor John.

Annual Meeting and Brunch, March 11 at 9:50 a.m.

On Sunday, March 11, 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 2006 Annual Report and the 2007 Phone Directory, take a second vote on the constitutional amendment approved at the December meeting and address a funding request from the Facilities Expansion Task Force.

