



St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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Hope Is Stronger

Because of the tragedy at Virginia Tech, we have experienced pain and grief on a scale that most of us could have never imagined. I am convinced, however, that hope is stronger than pain and grief. In the days since the tragedy, I have seen signs of hope all around us. I have seen our community gather together to support each other in powerful and meaningful ways. I have seen people planting flowers and children playing soccer games on a beautiful spring day. I have seen expressions of love pour in from places as varied as South Carolina and North Dakota. I have seen the community of God's people reach out to those in need and I have experienced times of worship that have reminded me that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

At the Convocation at Virginia Tech, the poet, Nikki Giovanni, stood up and said, "We are Virginia Tech. We will prevail." As I thought about her words, it occurred to me that as Christians, we can boldly proclaim, "We are children of God. God has prevailed." While nothing can take away the pain and loss of April 16, the good news, the hope, that shines brightly in the darkness is that God so loved the world that He gave his only Son that all those who believed in him might share in the promise of eternal life. Thanks to Jesus' death and resurrection, God has prevailed over the power of sin and death forever. The pain and loss we all experienced was strong, but the hope that comes from knowing both that Christ is victorious over death and that God is always with us is far, far stronger.

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 everyone who provided Easter candy, toys, baskets and gifts and Wanda and James Pascoe, Alice Schneider, Carrie Mayer and Sandy Birch who assembled and delivered the 30 baskets; Carol Bland for sharing her musical gifts with us during the mid-week Lenten services; Jim Clemens for reworking our Easter cross; the Bohn family for assisting with clean-up after the Easter breakfast; Jeff Birch and Gary Worley who finished the weeding along the fence; Wanda and James Pascoe, Ann and Dave Surface, Sandy and Jeff Birch and Jody Smiley who served dinner at the Roanoke Rescue Mission on Easter Sunday.



Because of your gifts

Your generous gifts in April supported supplies for Youth Nights, 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 assistant.

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** continues to assist our neighbors in the community and the world. In April, we provided assistance with electric bills for three families, rent for a fourth family, and a grant to help several middle school students participate in their eighth grade trip to D.C. 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.

Lenten Offerings for the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance

During Lent, the offering from the Mid-week Lenten Services was designated for the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program (MCEAP). Thanks to your generous gifts, we will be giving \$559 to MCEAP in addition to our monthly gift of \$260.



Under Construction: a Caring Community

A summary of the **Time and Talent** surveys for 2007-2008 is posted on the hallway bulletin board. We are truly GOD’S PEOPLE AT WORK as we share our gifts to make ministry happen at St. Michael. Thank you for volunteering your time and talents.

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May Servants

	May 6	May 13	May 20	May 27
Acolytes	Sarah Crowder Matthew Pasier	Katherine Berg	Sarah Crowder Kelley Robinson	Katy McGuigan
Altar Care	Pat Smith and Juanita Simpson			
Comm. Assts.	Dianne Krallman		Jody Smiley	Kelsey Trimble
Christ's Kids	Jody Smiley	Kris Wertz	Andrea Sharpe	Tacey Apisa
Youth Servants	Andrew Bales	Corson and Parker Wertz	Matt and Will Sharpe	Katy McGuigan
9 a.m. Greeters 11 a.m. Greeters	Clifton and Shelane Walters		Amy and Steve Woods	
	Jane and Scott McGuigan			
Lay Readers	Doug Veit	Jen Daskal	Kelsey Trimble	Sunday School
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 Randy Robinson	Philip Isenhour J.D. Robinson Jay Nagle Mickey McGuigan	Roscoe Turman and the Sunday School class

Spring Clean Up Day

Thank you to the Spring clean-up crew: J.D. Robinson, Jeff Birch, Randy Robinson, Ray Howell, Fran Shepherd, Gary and Sandie Worley, Rick Mayer, Jim Johnson, Michael Belcher and three volunteers from the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity.



Women of the ELCA

The annual **Sisters in Christ luncheon** will be held on Sunday, May 6, in the fellowship hall following the 11 a.m. service. We are all sisters in Christ and all are welcome. Invite a neighbor, daughter, sister-in-law, friend to share in the food, fun and fellowship. Beverages and dessert will be provided for this salad potluck luncheon.



Also on May 6, before the 11 a.m. service, the women of the ELCA will recognize **our high school and college graduates**: Lindsay Robinson, Carrie Draper, Kim Lehman, and Matthew James.

Remember the Food Bank: May is “Italian month” -- bring spaghetti sauce, and pasta, though any kind of non-perishable food is always welcome.

Remember the Women’s Resource Center: In May, we’ll collect cleaning products, e.g., dish soap, window cleaner.



**Happy Go Lucky
on the Go!**

Happy Go Lucky

We will gather together on Thursday, May 10, at 11:30 a.m. to share a meal and go traveling with Karen Mayer. Karen will share her experiences with the Elderhostel sponsored travel program.

Let’s go traveling....

Our first adventure will be a scenic drive on the Blue Ridge Parkway on Thursday, May 24, where we will take in the first explosion of color in the spring as the dogwood and redbud trees burst into bloom. We’ll grab a bite at the Mabry Mill Restaurant featuring buckwheat cakes and country ham. The Mill is the most photographed attraction along the parkway. This tour will include a visit to the Chateau Morrisette Winery and a stop at Nancy’s Fudge Kitchen featuring over 100 different flavors. The cost of the trip is \$14 plus the cost of lunch **and the registration deadline is May 17**. Invite friends and family members to come along for the ride. We need a minimum of 8 travelers for the trip; a maximum of 20.

Registration forms and a “travel brochure” for all seven trips planned for this year are available in the narthex and on the bulletin board. Contact Sandy Birch (951-3455 or birch@vt.edu) for more information.

On April 29, the Happy-Go-Lucky group gave “study kits” to our St. Michael college students. We’re certain the homemade brownies, cookies and other goodies will help them all earn high grades on their final exams. ☺



Lutheran Men in Mission Breakfast

All the men of the congregation are invited to the Men’s Breakfast on Friday, May 25 at 7:30 a.m. at the church. If you know of anyone or any organization which could use some assistance from the men’s group, please contact Pastor John or Jeff Birch at jbbirch@vt.edu or at 951-3455. Another trip is planned to the Roanoke Rescue Mission this summer.

Softball Season begins

The team invites everyone out to the Tom’s Creek softball field on Monday nights for some exciting ball. Loud and supportive fans always help the team play better. The times are listed on the St. Michael May calendar and in the Sunday bulletins.



Youth Nights on May 9 and May 23

All youth from kindergarten through Senior High are invited to Youth Nights on Wednesdays, May 9 and 23.

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.

Vacation Bible School for Youth and Adults

The fun begins on Sunday, June 10 and continues through Thursday, June 14. Each night will begin with a light supper at 6:15 p.m. and end at 8:15 p.m.

A planning meeting for anyone interested in helping with Vacation Bible School will be held on Sunday, May 6 at 2 p.m.,



following the Sister's in Christ Luncheon. For more information, see Pastor John or email at: stmlc@earthlink.net

Lutheran Course on Marriage Begins June 24

Whether you have been married for 40 years or are planning to get married in the near future, the Lutheran Course on Marriage is for you. This video-based course will be led by Pastor John and uses *The Lutheran Handbook on Marriage*. The course discusses everything from "Five Noteworthy Things Martin Luther Said About Marriage" to "How to Maintain Your Marriage as You and Your Spouse Change". The class will begin on Sunday, June 24 at 9:50 AM in the Fellowship Hall. Child care will be provided. For more information, please talk to Pastor John

Care of Creation Toolbox

Bring your household batteries and residential fluorescent bulbs to any Blacksburg Merchants Association member in downtown Blacksburg and they'll recycle them –free of charge!

Collections continue for used printer cartridges for the Justice and Mercy Fund and pull tabs for the Ronald McDonald House in Roanoke. The recycle table in the hallway.

Congratulations to ...

Lori Anne Sheppard who was named Employee of the Week at Virginia Tech.
Jeff Birch who was recognized for 30 years of service at Virginia Tech.

On May 5, we're invited to....

Spring Fair 2007 at Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Christiansburg. A yard sale, bake sale, crafts and a hot dog/hamburger lunch. 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Proceeds go to the Church Building Fund.

A **Brunswick Stew Sale at Prices Fork Elementary School**. Proceeds from the sale, at \$7.00 per quart, will support Kiwanis and PTA programs for the students at Prices Fork Elementary. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

May Friendship Day at Blacksburg Christian Church (240 Watson Ave.) at 11 a.m. sponsored by Church Women United. Potluck lunch



Filling Your Toolbox: Facing Grief

The emotions we face in a time of tragedy and pain can feel overwhelming and difficult to understand. The following information is from “The Lutheran Handbook” pages 120-122. While this information can’t fix or take away your pain and grief, it can give you some insight into normal responses to loss and tragedy and offers some ideas for how you can offer consolation to others.

How to Cope With Loss and Grief

1. **Familiarize yourself with the stages of grief.**
Experts identify five: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Some add hope as a sixth stage. Grieving persons cycle back and forth through the stages, sometimes experiencing two or three in a single day. This is normal.
2. **Express your grief.**
Healthy ways may include crying, staring into space for extended periods, ruminating, shouting at the ceiling, and sudden napping. Laughing outbursts are also appropriate and should not be judged harshly.
3. **Identify someone you trust to talk to.**
Available people can include a spouse, parents, relatives, friends, a pastor, a doctor, or a trained counselor.
4. **Choose a personal way to memorialize the loss.**
Make a collage of photographs or start a scrapbook of memories to memorialize the event. This helps you to begin to heal without getting stuck in your grief.

Be Aware

- \$ The pain immediately after suffering a loss is usually deep and intense. This will lessen with the passage of time.
- \$ Even Jesus cried when his friend Lazarus died (John 11:35).

Resources Available

Both Augsburg Fortress and Thrivent donated books about dealing with grief and loss to St. Michael. The books are available in the Fellowship Hall and in the front hallway. The books are free. Please take what you need for you or for a friend or co-worker who might be helped by the book.

As additional resources become available, they will be posted on St. Michael’s web site: www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org. The site currently includes prayers and a copy of Pastor John’s sermon from April 22, 2007.

Facilities Expansion Task Force Update

Following approval of the funding request at the Congregational Meeting on March 11, the Facilities Expansion Task Force contacted four architects who have agreed to participate in the Architectural Study Process. Each architect is developing preliminary design concepts which will be presented to the Task Force on Saturday, May 19. The Task Force will review the presentations and make recommendations to the Congregational Council regarding the possibilities for expanding our facilities. The Council will discuss the Task Force recommendations at its meeting on June 3 and then make recommendations to the congregation. The Council's recommendations will be formally presented to the congregation at a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, June 17. For more information on the work of the Facilities Expansion Task Force, please talk with Pastor John or any of the Task Force members.

Congregational Meeting on June 17 at 10:00 a.m

St. Michael will have a congregational meeting on Sunday, June 17 at 10 a.m. to consider recommendations from the Council regarding possible facilities expansion. In addition, the congregation will also be reaffirming the six trustees of the congregation. All six, Jeff Birch, Jim Clemens, Betty Gross, Fran Shepherd, Ben Simmers and Dave Surface, have been elected at previous meetings, but our lawyer has asked that we affirm all six at one meeting so that all six names will appear in one place in the minutes of a congregational meeting.

St. Michael Mission Endowment Fund

With approval at the March 11 Congregational Meeting, the St. Michael Mission Endowment Fund is now officially a part of the ministry of the congregation. The purpose of the Mission Endowment Fund is to provide for mission work beyond the normal operating budget of the congregation in the following areas of ministry: Youth and Family Ministry, Caring and Sharing Outreach Ministry, Music Ministry, Major Maintenance and Improvement, and Scholarship Funds. If you are interested in making an enduring gift to the Mission Endowment Fund, please speak with Pastor John, Sara Bohn, Jim or Judy Clemens, Ben Crawford or Fran Gallimore.

Online Giving Option Available

St. Michael now has the ability to receive gifts through a link on our web site. The "Make A Donation" link, which is found on the left side of our home page, will take you to a secure server where you can make a donation through an electronic fund transfer, debit card or credit card. The site allows you to make a one-time, weekly or monthly gift. If you are currently using an online service which charges a fee to make a donation to St. Michael, you can use this service at no charge to you or the church. See <http://www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org/donations.html> for more information.