

# St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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## Our Ministry Together

A friend in the community was talking to a person in need and suggested they call St. Michael to see if we might be able to provide assistance. When the friend asked if the individual knew where St. Michael was located, the person replied, "Oh, I know them. They are the church that helps people." As a congregation that seeks to care for God's people in need, I can think of no better endorsement for our ministry together. Our helping ministries vary from Micah's Backpack to the Justice and Mercy Fund to the Community Thanksgiving Meal, but all of them are made possible by your gifts, your time and your support. Thank you for reflecting God's caring and compassion to the world around us.

Each year, I keep track of a statistic called "Persons Served in Mission" which counts people in worship, people learning through educational opportunities, people we help, and anyone else touched by the ministry of St. Michael during the year. To me this is the most accurate measure of our response to God's mission to love and bless the whole world. This year, St. Michael served approximately 4025 people in mission. Together, we are making Christ known in the community.

Beginning in 2010, you will see the term, "Core Ministry Fund" replace "Current Fund" in all our publications. Just as gifts to Micah's Backpack or the Justice and Mercy Fund provide direct support to people in need, gifts to the Core Ministry Fund provide direct support for worship, pastoral care, youth ministry, Sunday School - - ministries at the core of what we do as God's people together. Thank you for your generous support of St. Michael's core ministries.

Finally, Kris and I would like to thank you for your generous Christmas gift to us. We are truly blessed to be a part of the St. Michael family.

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 Charlene Harris for arranging for all our altar flowers this year; Alice Noonkester for mailing reminders to Sunday servants; Judy Wunderlich for taking our paper, plastic and cardboard to the YMCA recycling center; Linda Elliott for helping prepare Sunday bulletins; Shirley Linkous, Charlene Harris, Margaret Larsen, Linda Elliott and Bill Greer for helping prepare the newsletters for mailing; Judy Clemens for cleaning the altar linens; the choir for a beautiful Christmas cantata; all who served during our Christmas Eve services; and to everyone who provided food for the Advent Supper and gifts for our 25 Salvation Army Christmas Angels.

### **Because of your gifts**

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** continues to assist our neighbors in the community and the world. In December, we assisted 17 families: eight with electric bills, one with heating oil, one with a water bill and seven with rent payments. 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.

### **Congratulations to**

**Amy Woods**, who was the statewide winner of the 2009 Magnet Excellence in Nursing Leadership award. The award is given to only one nurse in the entire Commonwealth of Virginia each year. Amy, Director of Surgical Services at Montgomery Regional Hospital, was recognized for demonstrating the highest level of professional nursing practice, showing stellar leadership and achievement, and for serving as a role model for other leaders.

### **Micah's Backpack: By the Numbers December 2009**

Here are the results of the ministry of Micah's Backpack during the first three months of school.

- 5 Blacksburg Area Elementary Schools as Partners
- 52 Students Helped
- 273 Volunteer Hours Donated
- 573 Backpacks Delivered
- 3438 Meals Delivered
- 2320 Pounds of Donated Food
- 2716 Items of Donated Food
- \$4000 ELCA Domestic Hunger Grant (Awarded for 2010)

**Thank You for your generous support of Micah's Backpack!**

## Many Thanks

*Dear Friends,*

*We are always so humbled by the generosity of people who share our concern for the adults and children served by the **Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley**. The two SHARE boxes of food and other food and paper items you give helps our shelter residents so much. You are providing hope and help to the thousands of adults and children who face violence on a daily basis. On behalf of those we serve, thank you.*

*In peace, Pat Brown, Director.*

*Thank you to the congregation for your comforting cards and prayers following the death of my mother, Clara Simmers, from Ben and Grace Simmers and family*

***ChildFund International (formerly Christian Children's Fund)** thanks St. Michael Lutheran Church as a Heritage Circle Member in Thankful Recognition for more than 25 years of compassion and generosity towards children. With deepest gratitude from the Children and Families you have touched. Anne Goddard, President & CEO (note: we support 2 children)*



*I want to thank everyone in your church for participating in the **2009 Christmas Gift Box Program**. You helped provide gift boxes and other winter items to Lakota children on the Pine Ridge Reservation and to the Lutheran Retreat Center in South Dakota. We were able to ship a total of 438 gift boxes which included over 75 from St. Michael. Your yearly participation in this wonderful program is testimony to an on-going warm ecumenical collaboration between area Lutheran churches and my church, Christ Episcopal Church in Blacksburg. Thank you again for your kindness. Your heart will smile, an Indian child will smile, and*

*God will smile! Peace and blessings of this holy season,*

*Rex Hartson for Christ Church American Indian Ministry and ONE Spirit*

***Note that \$140 was also donated to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation for SHARE food boxes.***

**Another example of ecumenical collaboration was the donation of 483 food items by the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church to Micah's Backpack pantry in December.**

Thank you for your continuing donations to the recycling center in the hallway. In December, 44 pairs of eyeglasses were donated to the Lion's Club in Christiansburg. Your donations of aluminum pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, soap and other personal hygiene items for the Roanoke Rescue Mission, flower vases for hospice flowers, and used cell phones and printer cartridges for Justice and Mercy funds are greatly appreciated.

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2308 Merrimac Road  
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***January Servants***

	<b>January 3</b>	<b>January 10</b>	<b>January 17</b>	<b>January 24</b>	<b>January 31</b>
<b>Altar Care</b>	Hank and Alice Schneider				
<b>9 AM Service</b>					
<b>Greeters</b>	Gary and Sandie Worley	William Allen	William Allen	Linda Elliott Sandra Hough	Linda Elliott Sandra Hough
<b>Worship Asst.</b>	Keith Gay	Jen Daskal	Lori Anne Kirk	Jacob Dennis	Matthew James
<b>11 AM Service</b>					
<b>Acolyte</b>	Sarah Crowder	Corson Wertz	Matthew Pasier	Alex Moehling	Seth Brewer
<b>Comm. Asst.</b>	David Surface		Randy Robinson		
<b>Greeters</b>	James and Wanda Pascoe	James and Wanda Pascoe	James and Wanda Pascoe	James and Wanda Pascoe	Sunday School class
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Lorin Crowder	Carrie Mayer	Jeff Birch	Jay Nagle	Becca Perez
<b>Ushers</b>	Dickie Shepherd Ray Howell M. McGuigan Cindy Lang	David Hillis R Robinson James Pascoe Burn Gross	Ben and Grace Simmers Don Linkous Joanne Pascoe	Bob and Peggy Brown Hank Schneider Philip Isenhour	David and Ann Surface Jeff Birch Jay Nagle
<b>Youth Servant</b>	MaKayla Dowdy	Delanie Veit	Lexi Simmers	Parker Wertz	Cam Nagle



## Women of the ELCA

In January, the Women of the ELCA have planned a “**Ladies Night Out**” on **Tuesday, January 12** at 6:00 at Amelia’s Pizzeria and Restaurant in Cambria (Christiansburg). The food is delicious and the cost of our private Italian buffet, including drink, tax and tip is only \$10. What a deal! All women of the congregation are invited to this fellowship event. Make your reservation on the “Welcome to St. Michael” form. For a ride, call Sandy Birch at 951-3455.

Many thanks to the Women of the ELCA for **providing Christmas gifts** for a needy family of seven through Prices Fork Elementary School.

**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 toilet paper will be appreciated.

## Lutheran Men in Mission



On December 12, the Men in Mission group helped at the Montgomery County Christmas Store (MCCS) by supervising the parking lot. Serving dinner at the Roanoke Rescue Mission is planned for this spring.

## Report on December Congregational Meeting

At the Congregational Meeting on December 13, the congregation approved the 2010 Spending Plan for Ministry and elected three new members of the congregational council: Randy Robinson, Lori Anne Kirk and Michelle Pasier.

The congregation acknowledged the service of retiring council members Ben Simmers and Tammy Veit. Thank you for your many years of service.

A bountiful brunch provided by the Stewards Team was a “THANK YOU” to the congregation for sharing its time, talents and treasures during 2009.

## 2010 Offering Envelopes Available

**Offering envelopes for 2010** are now available on the hallway shelf. The white envelopes are for our Core Ministry Fund which supports worship, shepherding, Sunday School and pastoral care; the beige envelopes are for giving to special funds such as Micah’s Backpack and Justice and Mercy. Thank you for sharing God’s gifts to you.

## Youth Nights on January 10 and 24

Youth Night for youth from Kindergarten to 4<sup>th</sup> grade will be on Sunday, January 10 and 24 at 5 p.m. Come enjoy the fun and learn a little more about God's love for you. If you would like more information, contact Pastor John at [pastorjohn@stmlc.us](mailto:pastorjohn@stmlc.us).



The LYNX (Lutheran Youth iN Christ) youth group will also meet on January 10 and 24 at 5 p.m.

## The Youth Christmas Program plays to record crowd



Thank you to all the students, angels, shepherds, wise men and stable animals who participated in the Christmas program on December 13. The cast of characters included Erin Albert, Ryan Albert, Bryce Apisa, Elizabeth Berg, Katherine Berg, Steffen Bohn, Camden Brewer, Seth Brewer, Abby Brown, Jessica Brown, Maddie Brown, MaKayla Dowdy, Jack Graves, David Hodge, Olivia Hodge, Alexis Niemiera, Kaylee Pelkey, Mazzy Price, Matt Sharpe, Will Sharpe, Carlie Simmers, Lexi Simmers, Delanie Veit, Corson Wertz, and Parker Wertz. Special thanks to Jody Smiley and Tacey Apisa (directors) and the parents of the cast for all their assistance.

## Souper Bowl Sunday, February 7

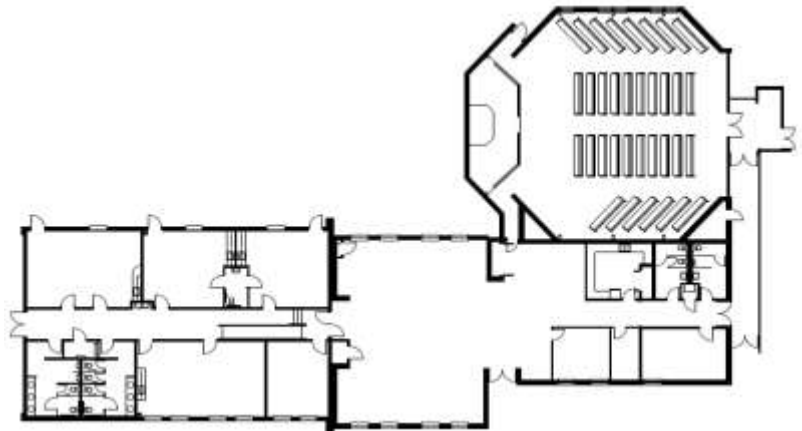
The Annual Souper Bowl of Caring will take place on Sunday, February 7. St. Michael will join thousands of churches across the country by raising money to help fight hunger. Everyone is asked to bring \$1 to place in the Soup Pot and a can of food. The money will be donated to Micah's Backpack and all canned goods will be donated to the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program.



## The 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade Sunday School class goes on a journey

In our Sunday School class, we are learning about the Holy Spirit. One Sunday morning in December, the class went on a journey to see how the Holy Spirit was guiding our service at St. Michael. First, we looked around our classroom and spotted the collection of stuffed animals that we'll be taking to the nursing home this spring when we visit the residents and sing to them. Next, we walked down the Education wing hallway and peeked in the Sunday school rooms to watch teachers leading and students learning. We passed by an art exhibit, through which one of our members is sharing her photographic talents. The class stopped in the fellowship hall, where the smells of a successful turkey dinner lingered and during which over 165 members of our community shared fellowship and fine food provided by St. Michael members. The journey continued into the sanctuary, where we noticed the altar flowers which will be shared with hospital patients in the coming week and the offering trays which contain gifts for our church like money for the heat and lights, Sunday School books and salaries for our church staff. The altar space was filled with Christmas Gift Boxes for children on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. We walked through the places where our music ministry provides beautiful music, our pastor and lay readers share God's Word with us, and into the narthex where the ushers and greeters make worshippers feel welcome. On a small table is a Christmas tree with names of Salvation Army Christmas "angels". St. Michael members will provide gifts for 25 angels this year. On the bulletin board are pictures of our foster children in Indonesia who write to us to tell us they are doing well in school. Green bins contain used bulletins because we recycle at St. Michael whenever we can.

We walked down the front hallway, where we paused in front of our class recycling center. There are bins for pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, used cell phones and printer cartridges which are exchanged for money for the Justice and Mercy Fund, used eyeglasses which are sent overseas to poor countries, and soaps, shampoo and other items which can be used by homeless people at the Roanoke Rescue Mission. We opened the closet door



and inside discovered shelves filled with food for Micah's Backpack. We provide over 50 backpacks for children at our schools who now have enough to eat on weekends with our help. We learned that other churches in Blacksburg and clubs at Virginia Tech are helping us fill the backpacks. There is a grocery cart in the hallway containing food for the Food Bank and a laundry basket filled with paper towels and toilet paper for the Women's Resource Center in Radford. We heard that these gifts go to families who are hurt and sad. The class looked over the bulletin board and saw news about SHARE food boxes which are distributed in the fellowship hall each month. We returned to our classroom, knowing absolutely and without a doubt that the Holy Spirit is here at St. Michael, showing us how to serve and making us servants of God.

When we left the sanctuary, we walked under a banner that declares SERVANTS ENTRANCE - now we know what that means.

The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade "travelers" at St. Michael



**Welcome**

## **Hospitality Ministry in the First 3 Minutes**

A new worshipper walks into St. Michael. The new worshipper has taken the first step – a giant step toward connecting with God through the ministry of St. Michael. They have overcome every barrier that might keep them away; fear, intimidation, social inertia, weekend distractions, preconceived notions and a million other reasons that might have kept them away until that moment.

Many people have said, “You only have one chance to make a first impression.” When it comes to churches, you might get two opportunities: the first three minutes after someone arrives at St. Michael and the first three minutes after the worship service is over. During those first and last three minutes, you have the opportunity to make someone feel welcome and connected to the people of God at St. Michael. You don’t have to be an official greeter. You don’t have to say something clever or scripted. Simply reaching out in Christian love, to say a word of welcome is a powerful ministry of hospitality. The next time you see someone you don’t recognize at worship, remember the words of the angels, “Be not afraid,” and take a moment to welcome them to God’s family of faith at St. Michael.



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

We will continue to donate our altar flowers to hospice programs, such as Good Samaritan Hospice in Christiansburg.

## **St. Michael Wish List**

The Wish List consists of items which would enhance and strengthen ministries of the congregation. Gifts may be given for these items in thanksgiving for God’s goodness or in memory/honor of a loved one, friend or occasion. If you have an interest in contributing toward one of the following items or if you have an idea for something that could be added to the wish list, please contact Pastor John.

Kids Play Handball Song Card Sets - \$25

4 x 6 White Dry-Erase board (3 needed) - \$125 each

3 x 5 Bulletin Boards (4 needed) - \$50 each

Portable Ice Machine - \$250

**Thank you** to Chris and Cindy Dowdy who donated the *Kid's Play Handbell set* from the November Wish List. The donation was made in honor of MaKayla Dowdy and the children of St. Michael.



## Celebrating the Joy of Christmas at St. Michael



