



St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org

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Online Advent Calendar

<http://www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org/advent>

When I was growing up, we always had an Advent Calendar on our refrigerator to help us prepare for the coming of Christ. I remember going into the kitchen each day, opening up the little door and looking to see what picture or verse was inside.

I am excited to announce that this year, St. Michael is putting a new twist on this old tradition by launching an online Advent Calendar. Over the summer, we selected scripture passages for each day from December 1 to December 25 and then artists from around the congregation took those verses to interpret the verse using their artistic gifts. All 25 images were then combined with the verses to create a calendar with 25 “doors” that can be opened. When you click on the number 1 for example, the image will appear on your screen and then when you click on the arrow to the right, you will see the verse that matches the image. Each day has a different image and a different verse to help you prepare for the coming of Christ. If you don’t have access to a computer, all of the images will be displayed in Gallery of Gifts after Advent.

As you enjoy the Online Advent Calendar, I hope you will also share it with your friends and neighbors. The link will be in our weekly e-newsletter, the images will be posted on our Facebook page each day for you to share and I will make them available on Twitter. It’s a simple, powerful way to share the story of Jesus with the world around you.

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 all who contributed to our outreach projects (Christmas gift shoeboxes, Christmas Store items, Angel Tree, Women’s Resource Center supplies, Food Bank), and to all who participated in the Party with a Purpose; to the Brewer family who coordinated the Salvation Army Angel Tree project; to Fran Gallimore, the Caring and Sharing team and all St. Michael members and community members who contributed to the Community Thanksgiving Dinner and the Boy Scouts who helped at the dinner; to Joyce Coupey for her faithful service in providing our bulletin cover artwork week after week; to all the Micah’s Backpack and Micah’s Soup for Seniors food packers; to Mildred Wall, Frances Edge, Betty Falta, and Wanda Pascoe for folding the November newsletter; Deloris Raines for organizing meals; to Gary Worley and Philip Isenhour for organizing and providing technical support for the Online Advent calendar and to all the contributing artists (who will be "revealed" in the January newsletter).

Because of your gifts

Your generous gifts in November provided funds for the community Thanksgiving dinner, Bibles for the confirmands, lawn care equipment maintenance, office supplies, our benevolence to the Virginia Synod and mission partners, donations to MCEAP, Lutheran Campus Ministry, ChildFund International, our facilities and salaries for our ministerial staff.

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** continues to assist our neighbors in the community and the world. In November, we provided assistance for 13 families: 10 with electric bills and 3 with rent. We encourage the congregation to continue their contributions to Justice and Mercy and to refer friends and family to use the fund as you see need.



Altar Flowers and Altar Care

Sign-up sheets are posted on the bulletin board. Thank you for serving in these special ways. The opportunity to donate your altar flowers to Heritage Hall will continue in 2015. Our weekly bouquets are very appreciated by the residents.

Congratulations to....

Olivia Hodge, who placed 12th in the state cross country meet, and contributed to the Blacksburg High School Cross Country Girls Team winning the state 3A championship. The Bruins are now ranked #1 in the country....yes, in the country!

Daniel Ehrich and Melinda Forsyth who were married on September 20. Daniel’s godmother, Sandy Birch, served as the marriage officiant. Daniel and Mindy reside in California, MD.



Congregational Brunch and Meeting on December 14

St. Michael will have a congregational brunch and meeting on Sunday, December 14 at 10 a.m. to approve our 2015 Investments in Ministry and elect new council members.



Congregational Brunch and Meeting

Brunch will be provided by the Stewards Team to thank the St. Michael family for sharing their talents, time and treasures this past year. Child care will be provided.

Copies of the 2015 Investments in Ministry plan are available on the table in the back of the sanctuary and on-line at www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org.

Candidates for the three council seats are:

Butch Akers worships at the 9 AM Service and helped with the Online Advent Calendar.

Sheila McCartan worships at the 11 AM Service and organizes Micah's Closet.

Mickey McGuigan worships at the 11 AM Service and serves as a lay reader for worship.

Ben Simmers worships at the 11 AM Service and helps count the offering weekly.

Gary Worley worships at the 9 AM Service and organized the Online Advent Calendar.

Thank you to John Krallman for his 6 years of service on the Congregational Council and for his work overseeing the church's finances.

2015 Offering Envelopes Available

Offering envelopes for 2015 are now available on the hallway shelf. Thank you for sharing your treasures. Gifts to support the ministry of St. Michael can also be made on-line. See the St. Michael website (www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org/donations/) for details.

End-of-Year Giving Information

If you are planning to make a gift at the end of the year to support the ministry of St. Michael, remember that the IRS requires all gifts for 2014 to be received by the church or post-marked by December 31, 2014. You can make gifts to support the core ministry and to other ministries of St. Michael. You can find more information about these funds or donate online at: <http://www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org/donations/> . If you need assistance with tax advantageous gifts like gifts of stock or donations from an IRA, you can contact Pastor John.



O.K.s (Older Kids)



The Happy-Go-Lucky “5-Course” Christmas Luncheon will be held on **Tuesday, December 16**, at noon with social time beginning at 11:30 a.m. Join the H-G-L bunch for a time of good cheer and holiday spirit. Five courses for \$5 – a tasty Christmas bargain.

Out to Lunch Bunch at the Outback Steakhouse on Tuesday, December 30

Ring in the New Year early with your St. Michael family. We’ll beat the crowds as we gather for lunch at the Outback Steakhouse in Christiansburg at noon on Tuesday, December 30. Enjoy delicious dishes and fine fellowship as we celebrate a successful year and toast the new year. Show your AARP card for 15% off your lunch bill too. Make your reservation on the *Welcome to St. Michael* form in the bulletin or contact Peggy Brown at 552-8141 or pabrown1943@comcast.net.

Lutheran Men in Mission

The Lutheran Men in Mission will volunteer at the Montgomery County Christmas Store on Saturday, December 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. or so. Please contact Jeff Birch at jbbirch@vt.edu or 230-5087 if you would like to participate.



Youth Christmas Program on Sunday, December 14



Come and enjoy the youth Christmas program at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 14. The congregation is invited to enjoy a reception immediately following the performance.

All youth are invited to be a part of the program. The group will practice during Sunday School on December 7 at 9:50 a.m., on Saturday, Dec. 13 at 10 a.m. and on Sunday, Dec. 14 during the Congregational meeting. For more information about the Christmas program, contact Patrice Yearwood.

Welcome to Anna and Lilly . . .our Youth Leaders

This fall, St. Michael welcomed Lilly Goldsmith and Anna Lehman to help with youth ministry. Lilly and Anna are both students at Virginia Tech, members of the Lutheran Campus Ministry group, and long-time participants in Virginia Synodical Youth events.



Advent Suppers and Services Wednesdays, December 3, 10, and 17 at 6 PM

St. Michael will join with Luther Memorial each Wednesday night to prepare for Christ's coming. A light meal will be served at 6:00 p.m. and worship, using Holden Evening Prayer, will begin at 6:45 p.m. The service will be held at St. Michael on December 3 and 17 and at Luther Memorial on December 10. If you are interested in assisting with the meal or service, please sign up on the *Welcome to St. Michael* form available in the bulletin.

Christmas Gifts: Poinsettias and Backpacks

Orders are now being taken for poinsettias for Christmas Eve. This year, the poinsettias will cost \$7. To place a poinsettia in the church, in honor of or in memory of a family member or friend, please use the order form on the table in the back of the sanctuary or in the bulletin. The deadline for ordering a poinsettia is December 15. A gift of \$10 can also be designated to Micah's Backpack, Micah's Soup for Seniors, or Micah's Closet in honor of or in memory of a family member or friend.



Invite a Friend to a Christmas Eve Service

Share the joy of Christmas by inviting a friend to worship with you on Christmas Eve. Invitations to our services are available in the front hall. In fact, invite a friend or family to any or all of the Advent and Christmas activities at St. Michael.



Christmas Eve Services Wednesday, December 24 – 4 PM, 7 PM and 11 PM

St. Michael will have three services on Christmas Eve. The Lessons and Carols Service will be at 4 p.m. The Family Christmas Eve Service will be at 7 p.m. and a Traditional Christmas Eve Service will be at 11 p.m. An informal fellowship time will follow the 7 p.m. service. We will celebrate Holy Communion at all three services.

Lessons and Carols - Sunday, December 28

St. Michael's celebration of Christmas will continue on Sunday, December 28 with a Service of Lessons and Carols at all three worship services. Come and sing all your favorite Christmas carols and hear the scripture passages that proclaim Jesus' birth.

Micah's Backpack Sharing the Story

In November, over 275 volunteers shared 335 hours in service at Micah's Backpack. Thank you to all our volunteers who gather to pack on Thursday nights and to deliver on Friday mornings. Together we fed 266 children every weekend in November. We are partnering with Nest Realty in their 3rd Annual Gingerbread House Contest. Please see Jennie or email jennie@micahsbackpack.org if you'd like to create a gingerbread house as a part of the contest.



www.micahsbackpack.org

In December, we will collect granola bars. We share just under 1,200 snacks every month. Please put your gift in the Micah's Backpack collection bin in the hallway. Thank you for your gift of 72 cans of tuna in November!

Thank you to James Pascoe, caretaker of our waterworks. James fills and empties the cistern seasonally so Micah's Garden runs well. He also takes care of the pump that fills the cistern. We appreciate all he does to support Micah's Garden!

Micah's Soup for Seniors

In November, Micah's Soup for Seniors delivered over 90 bags of food to low-income senior adults. Each bag included a Thanksgiving treat prepared by the Happy-Go-Lucky bunch. **The next packing date is Tuesday, December 23 at 5 p.m.** with delivery at 6 p.m. to three apartment units at Warm Hearth. Since Virginia Tech students are on their holiday break, all volunteers are very needed and welcomed. **In December, we'll collect cans of green beans.**



We may also do some caroling, so bring your cheerful Christmas voices along.

Micah's Closet



Thank you for your donations of children's hats and gloves for Micah's Closet in November. **In December, we will be collecting sweat pants for boys and girls, youth sizes XS to XL.** We want to express our gratitude for your support as we completed the fall distribution of clothing to 23 Prices Fork students as well as share some comments from the students, parents and teachers impacted by the program.

"Your generosity and kindness are greatly appreciated. My students will remember your loving gifts for years to come. Thank you very much!"

"Thank you for my clothes, and my shirt and my shoes a lot. I love you!"

"I love the clothes! I hope you have a great day."

"To the generous people at St. Michael Lutheran Church: We greatly appreciated the gift you have given my son. He loves it and is tickled to death with it. Thank you for graciously helping my son, it's really thoughtful. Thanks again!"

"Thank you so much! Thank you for the clothes. We needed them. Thank you so much."

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December Servants

Christmas Eve Servants – Please volunteer for the 4 PM, 7 PM, or 11 PM service on the St. Michael Welcome form in the bulletin. Thank you.

	December 7	December 14	December 21	December 28
Altar Care	Sandy Birch			
9 AM Service				
Greeters	Rick and Carrie Mayer	Rick and Carrie Mayer	Cliff and Fay Walters	Cliff and Fay Walters
Lay Reader	Keith Gay	Jane Swing	Judith Wolfe	Congregation
Comm. Asst.	William Allen	Dean Rueschman	Sandy Williams	Dianne Krallman
11 AM Service				
Acolyte	Sarah Moehling	Camden Brewer	Maddie Brown	Jessica Brown
Comm. Asst.	Seth Brewer		Randy Robinson	
Greeters	Moehling/Belue family	Brewer/McCartan family	A Rossomando Cindy Lang	Jeff and Sandy Birch
Lay Reader	Laura Gruss	Marty Gordon	Mac McCloud	Congregation
Ushers	Ray Howell Cindy Lang	Josiah and Litha Tlou	Philip Isenhour Don Linkous	Jeff and Sandy Birch
Youth Servant	Lily Gruss		Emily Graves	
6:30 PM Service				
Greeters	Berg family	Deloris Raines	Saks family	Deloris Raines
Lay Reader	Mike Berg	Heather Pettus	Charlie Saks	Congregation
Comm. Asst.	Michelle Berg	Katherine Berg	Martie Saks	G. Yearwood

Unloading for Micah's Backpack: 12/9 – Matthew James, Jacob Dennis

Women of the ELCA

The Women of the ELCA will gather for Lunch and Learn on Monday, December 15 at noon. We will share a meal, learn about one or more of our sisters in the Bible, and celebrate the fellowship of the season. If you need a ride, contact Sandy at 230-8823.



Price's Fork Elementary School is providing "Family Night" baskets for the holidays for some of their families. If you would be interested in helping by purchasing a few items to go into the baskets, e.g., board game, family movie, popcorn, please see the list of needed items posted on the hallway bulletin board. The Women of the ELCA will be collecting our gifts and preparing the baskets from St. Michael. Items should be returned by Sunday, December 14.



We shipped over 200 Christmas shoe boxes to the Head Start program at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The Christmas gift boxes were donated by St. Michael, several other Lutheran churches in the New River Valley, Christ the King Lutheran in Richmond (Jane Lane's home church) and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). We also sent shoe boxes and other gifts to Rev. Karen Rupp, pastor of the Lutheran Retreat Center in Pine Ridge. Rev. Rupp oversees programs for the homeless on the reservation. **Thank you to all who participated in**

this important ministry.

Remember the Food Bank: December is spaghetti sauce and pasta month, though any non-perishable food is always welcome.

Remember the Women's Resource Center: Aluminum foil will be collected during December.

Winter Celebration - Virginia Synod Youth Event (9th - 12th grade)



Winter Celebration is a gathering of several hundred youth and adults from around the Virginia Synod for worship, singing, faith sharing and fun. All youth in 9th through 12th grade are invited to attend. The group from St. Michael will be going January 16-18 or January 23-25, 2015. The cost is \$65. If you are interested in attending, please talk to Pastor John and let him know which week would be best for you.

Hosting To Our House

St. Michael will be hosting the To Our House thermal shelter for homeless men in the large classroom during the week of Dec. 6-13. If you'd like to help out during the week, please talk to Pastor John: pastorjohn@stmlc.us.