



St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org

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St. Michael's Mission Statement

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.

Preparing for the Season

Thanks to the hard work of a number of wonderful artists and computer experts in the congregation, you can enjoy St. Michael's **2015 Online Advent Calendar** (www.stmlc.us/advent). Artists from all ages have interpreted verses from some of your favorite Christmas and Advent carols to create the one-of-a-kind devotional for the holiday season. All 25 "doors" on the calendar can be opened by clicking on the number. Each day has a different image and a different verse from a carol to help you prepare for the coming of Christ.

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 on my Twitter account (@wertz_revjohn). It's a simple, powerful way to share the story of Jesus with the world around you.

On Saturday, December 12, St. Michael will have a **Parents Day Out** followed by a **Games and Dinner for the Entire Family**. Beginning at 3 p.m., we will provide child care and activities at St. Michael so parents can have two hours to prepare for the holidays. From 5 p.m. until 7 p.m., parents and children will gather in the fellowship hall for dinner and games.

May you have a blessed Advent and a joyous Christmas!

Pastor John Wertz, Jr.
pastorjohn@stmlc.us

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, To Our House), 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, Donna Oliver, Margaret Larsen and Wanda Pascoe for folding the November newsletter; to Jody Smiley for leading the women’s monthly Bible study; to Fran Shepherd who has been replacing the missing tabs in the hymnals and fixed and/or replaced the ribbons to mark pages; to Ron Brewer and his neighbor who owns Curb Appeal Landscaping for removing all the leaves from the yard and to Ron who also trimmed the large boxwood; to Dean Trimble for installing the new shelf and speaker on the pulpit side of the sanctuary; to Dickie and Fran Shepherd for providing our beautiful Christmas tree; 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, Sunday School supplies, music supplies, our benevolence to the Virginia Synod and mission partners, donations to MCEAP, Lutheran Campus Ministry, 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 20 families: 8 with electric bills, 8 with rent assistance, 2 with a water bill, one with car expenses and one with medical expenses. 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.

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.

Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) Machine and Cabinet - \$1700

Elements of the Circle of Grace

Paths and Walkways \$ 2,000 – \$4,000

Benches \$ 750 – \$1,500

Congregational Brunch and Meeting on December 13

St. Michael will have a congregational brunch and meeting on Sunday, December 13 at 10 a.m. to approve our 2016 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 2016 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:

Mike Berg worships at the 6:30 PM service and serves as a Sunday Servant.

Mickey McGuigan worships at the 11 AM Service and serves as a Sunday Servant.

Hank Schneider worships at the morning services and serves as chair of the Stewards Team.

Doug Smiley worships at the morning services and participates in all the choirs.

Tammy Veit worships at the 11 AM service and participates in Sunday School.

Thank you to **Elizabeth Berg** for her service on the Congregational Council.

2016 Offering Envelopes Available

Offering envelopes for 2016 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 2015 to be received by the church or post-marked by December 31, 2015. 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 of minimum distributions 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 **December 8**, 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 29

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 29. 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 pabrown@comcast.net. We will also celebrate the "Christmas kids" birthdays: Fay Walters (26th), B.J. Jones (27th), Bert Kinzey (27th), Nancy Young (27th), Ann Surface (28th), Sandy Birch (29th), Nancy Goad (30th), Judy Teates (30th), Juanita Simpson (31st), and Josiah Tlou (31st).

Lutheran Men in Mission



The Lutheran Men in Mission will volunteer at the Montgomery County Christmas Store on Saturday, December 12 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. or so. Please contact Jeff Birch at jbbirch@vt.edu or 230-5087 or sign up on the *Welcome* form if you would like to participate.

Youth Christmas Program on Sunday, December 20

Come and enjoy the youth Christmas program at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 20. 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 6 at 9:50 a.m., on Sunday, Dec. 13 during the Congregational meeting and on December 20 at 9:50 a.m. For more information about the Christmas program, contact Patrice Yearwood.



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 15-17 or January 22-24, 2016. The cost is \$75. If you are interested in attending, please talk to Pastor John and let him know which week would be best for you.

Advent Suppers and Services Wednesdays, December 2, 9, and 16 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 2 and 16 and at Luther Memorial on December 9. If you are interested in assisting with the meal or service, please sign up on the *Welcome to St. Michael* form 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 13. 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

Thursday, 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 27

St. Michael's celebration of Christmas will continue on Sunday, December 27 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.

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 2016. Our weekly bouquets are very appreciated by the residents.



Micah's Backpack Sharing the Story

In November, volunteers shared 392 hours helping prepare gifts of weekend food for 267 children in our community. We shared 6,366 meals! This month, a new restaurant in Blacksburg, Hwy 55, and the Eddie Yeatts Memorial Foundation shared generous financial support with us. Feel free to come out to pack on December 3, 10, and 17. At the last two packing nights of this month, we'll have a special holiday guest volunteering with us. Please contact Jennie if you'd like more information on ways to help: jennie@micahsbackpack.org.



www.micahsbackpack.org

In December, we will collect 100% juice boxes. Thank you for your gift of 90 granola bars in November.

An end of 2015 Giving Opportunity: Double your impact for Micah's Backpack with an infrastructure gift during the Cummings & Ivers Challenge period. All gifts to Investment in our Infrastructure through December 31 will be matched by Connie Cummings and Joe Ivers up to \$1,000. Your gift will help bring weekend meals to hungry students. Use the beige giving envelopes in the pews and mark your gift with "Cummings & Ivers Challenge".

Micah's Soup for Seniors

In November, Micah's Soup for Seniors delivered over 90 bags of food to low-income senior adults. **The next packing date is Tuesday, December 29 at 5 p.m.** with delivery around 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.



Congratulations to....

Anna Lehman, who will be graduating from Virginia Tech in Human Development this month. Anna has served as the youth leader at St. Michael and planned several successful family events including the Fall Festival for the Head Start program and the Family Fun Night last month.

Olivia Hodge who signed a national letter of intent to run track and cross country for Radford University this fall. Olivia has earned 8 varsity letters to date at Blacksburg High School. Twice she garnered All-American Honors as part of 3rd Place 4 x Mile Relays on the track and twice qualified with her team to compete in the Nike Cross Nationals Meet. During her junior year, the community honored her with the New River Valley Leading Lights Award for her volunteer work for Micah's Backpack. Pictured with Olivia are her parents, Jennie and Tom, brother David, sister Abi, and her coach, James DeMarco.



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December Servants

	December 6	December 13	December 20	December 27
Altar Care	Nancy Goad			
9 AM Service				
Greeters	Elaine Powers Joe Garst	Rick and Carrie Mayer	Ben and Carol Crawford	Clifton and Fay Walters
Lay Reader	Keith Gay	Carrie Mayer	Judith Wolfe	Congregation
Comm. Asst.	Joe Garst	William Allen	Nancy Goad	Dianne Krallman
11 AM Service				
Acolyte	Camden Brewer		Seth Brewer	
Comm. Asst.	Sheila McCartan		Randy Robinson	
Greeters	Brewer/McCartan family	Josiah and Litha Tlou	A. Rossomando Cindy Lang	Jeff and Sandy Birch
Lay Reader	Lori Anne Kirk	Kris Wertz	Margaret Christle	Congregation
Ushers	Ray Howell Dickie Shepherd	Josiah and Litha Tlou	Philip Isenhour Don Linkous	Jeff and Sandy Birch
Youth Servant	Jack Graves		Megan Christle	
6:30 PM Service				
Greeters	Berg family	Saks family	Donna Oliver	Sandy Birch
Lay Reader	Mike Berg	Charlie Saks	Heather Pettus	Congregation
Comm. Asst.	Michelle Berg	Martie Saks	Katherine Berg	G. Yearwood

Unloading for Micah's Backpack: 12/9 – Matthew James, Jacob Dennis
Warm Hearth Flowers: Barbara Corbett

Women of the ELCA

The Women of the ELCA will gather for Lunch and Learn on Monday, December 14 at noon. We will share a meal, participate in a Christmas Bible lesson, 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., hot chocolate packets, popcorn, please see the list of needed items posted on the hallway bulletin board and in the back of the church. The Women of the ELCA will be collecting our gifts and preparing the baskets from St. Michael. Items should be returned by Sunday, December 13.



We shipped 304 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 warm blankets, hats,

gloves 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 Ron Brewer who delivered the boxes to the shipper, Fontaine Modifications in Dublin, which donates the cost of shipping. **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.

2016 Proposed Investment in Ministry Plan Question and Answer Session on Dec. 6, 2015 at 10 AM

On December 6 at 10 a.m., Pastor John will be leading an informational session in the large classroom to answer questions about the 2016 Proposed Investment in Ministry plan. While the proposed plan will be considered at the Congregational Meeting on December 13, time for discussion may be limited, so the Congregational Council felt it would be helpful to have an informational session on December 6 to answer more detailed questions about issues like increased health care costs and changes required to create a balanced plan for 2016.

You can pick up a copy of the 2016 Proposed Investment in Ministry Plan in the front hallway at the church or download a copy at:

<http://www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org/proposed-2016-investment-in-ministry-plan/>