



St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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A Light In the Darkness

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.

Unfortunately it is rather easy to look around the world today and see darkness. Senseless acts of violence seem to happen on a regular basis. There is an ongoing conversation in the media about the poor state of the US economy and the general decline in our culture.

In the midst of that darkness, I invite you to remember these words from the Gospel of John.

*The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it. - John 1:5*

No matter how dark things may seem at any given moment, these words from John promise us that as children of God, we have a hope for the future that no darkness will ever overcome - the light of God's love.

With that in mind, I invite you to join me in looking for rays of light in the midst of the darkness. It's not always easy, but the more we focus on the light, the easier it becomes to see the world as God intends it to be - a community of people working together for the building up of the common good.

As a start, consider these rays of light that help push back the darkness.

- According to all the statistics I can find, violent crime has **actually decreased** in the US by about 50% since 1993.
- According to National Philanthropic Trust, Charitable Giving in the US **increased** to record high levels in 2015.
- According to the latest statistics from the US Department of Education, **over 80%** of students in the US are receiving a high school diploma - a new record high.

Do we have problems in our country and in our world? Yes, of course we do, but I am convinced that the answers to our world's problems will be found by looking to the light, not the darkness.

Pastor John Wertz, Jr.
pastorjohn@stmclc.us

Sharing Our Gifts: Time, Talents and Treasure

We offer with joy and thanksgiving what God has first given us--our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of God's gracious love.

Thank you to some "quiet" servants

To Ron Brewer, Matthew James, and John Kell for assembling the storage shed in Micah's Garden; to Mildred Wall, Wanda Pascoe, Margaret Larsen, and Judith Wolfe who helped with the July newsletter mailing; to the St. Michael softball team for representing us with great sportsmanship and fine playing; to John Kell and Dickie Shepherd for moving the Micah's Backpack food to the bus; to Ron and Seth Brewer for weeding the flower beds and planting a new bush.



Because of your gifts

Your generous gifts in July provided funds for confirmation camp expenses, heat pump maintenance, Across the Spectrum supplies, supply pastor salary, altar supplies, three St. Michael scholarships, our benevolence to the Virginia Synod, donations to MCEAP, Lutheran Campus Ministry, our facilities, and salaries for our ministerial staff.

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** assisted 6 families: 3 with their electric bills, 2 with rent, and one with car expenses. 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.

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 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

A Thank You from Michigan

Thank you for your special gift to the sisters and brothers of Salem Lutheran Church in Flint, MI, which will be used to help both the congregation and the community it serves. While there is still no end in sight to the safe-water crisis, the prayers, support and care from members of the Church have been an enormous gift and blessing going forward. We thank you for your willingness to reach out in care and compassion.

Grace and peace, Donald Kreiss, Bishop, Southeast Michigan Synod and Monica Villarreal, Pastor, Salem Lutheran Church

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August Servants

	August 7	August 14	August 21	August 28
Altar Care	Inga Solberg/Doug Smiley			
9 AM Service				
Greeters	Dave Surface William Allen	Butch Akers Lylah Shelor	Fay and Clifton Walters	Elaine Powers Joe Garst
Lay Reader	Judith Wolfe	Dianne Krallman	Betty Falta	Peggy Morgan
Comm. Asst.	William Allen	Lylah Shelor	Sandy Williams	Joe Garst
11 AM Service				
Acolyte	Ryan Lund		Megan Christle	
Comm. Asst.	Doug Smiley		Jay Nagle	
Greeters	Ray Howell Cindy Lang	Becky and Gary Steck	Ferrell family	Josiah and Litha Tlou
Lay Reader	Mickey McGuigan	Marty Gordon	Margaret Christle	Lori Anne Kirk
Ushers	Ray Howell Dickie Shepherd	Becky and Gary Steck	Daniel Ferrell Don Linkous	Josiah and Litha Tlou
Youth Servant	Lillie Lund		Parker Ferrell	
6:30 PM Service				
Greeters	Berg family	Donna Oliver	Graves family	Saks family
Lay Reader	Mike Berg	Heather Pettus	Tacey Apisa	Charlie Saks
Comm. Asst.	Michelle Berg	Katherine Berg	Tacey Apisa	Martie Saks

Mowing: 8/6–Daniel Ferrell (back); 8/13–James/Dennis (front); 8/20–Jay Nagle (back);
8/27- J.D. Robinson (front)
Rear Lot: 8/1–Reed Yearwood; 8/8-Dave Surface; 8/15- Charlie Saks; 8/22-Mike Berg;
8/29-Reed Yearwood

Women of the ELCA



Remember the Food Bank: August is “macaroni & cheese” month, though any kind of non-perishable food is always welcome.

Remember the Women’s Resource Center: In August, we will donate toilet paper.

The annual Virginia Synodical Women’s Organization (VSWO) convention will be held at Epiphany Lutheran Church in Richmond, VA on August 5-6. The convention theme is “All Anew to Serve Others”. The service projects are part local, part global and include personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief and sani-panties for Little Dresses for Africa. If you are interested in attending the convention, please contact Alice Schneider at 552-6995 or aa_schneid@yahoo.com. More information is also available on the hallway bulletin board.

O.K.s (Older Kids) on the Go



Six O.K.s took a leisurely tour of the Blue Ridge Parkway in July and enjoyed a lovely lunch at the Chateau Morrisette



Winery. The next trip is to the Autumn Leaves Festival in Mount Airy in October.

Out-to-Lunch-Bunch

Our next lunch will be on Tuesday, August 16 at 11:30 a.m. at Lefty’s in the S. Main Kroger Plaza in Blacksburg. Make your reservation with Peggy Brown at pabrown1943@comcast.net or 552-8141 to reserve your place at the table or sign up on the *Welcome* form in the bulletin.

Happy-Go-Lucky Luncheon on Tuesday, September 13 Back to school “gourmet school lunch”

Social time begins at 11:30 a.m. with lunch at noon. Really tasty food (mac and cheese supreme!) and fine conversation ...

Hunt up one of your elementary school pictures for “show and tell” time.



Backpack Blessing on August 7

With the school year preparing to start, St. Michael will have a Backpack Blessing as a part of worship on Sunday, August 7. All youth and teachers are invited to bring their backpacks or school bags to church for this time of prayer and blessing for the new school year. Consider inviting your friends or teachers you know to come and have their backpacks blessed as we ask for God's blessing for all teachers and students.



Backpack Blessing

Back to School Breakfast for the Teachers at Price's Fork Elementary



St. Michael will be providing a back to school breakfast for the teachers at Price's Fork Elementary School on Wednesday, August 3. If you can help provide food, please sign up on the insert in the bulletin.

School Supplies for Children in Need

St. Michael will be collecting school supplies for children in need at Price's Fork Elementary School. The deadline for donations is Sunday, August 7. The collection box is in the church foyer. Thank you.



Needed Items

Backpacks	Wide Rule Notebook Paper
Pencils	School Scissors
Glue Sticks	Pocket Folders with Prongs
Crayons	Colored Pencils
Anti-Bacterial Soap	Tissues
Notebooks	3-ring Binders
Black and White Composition Books	

Make a Joyful Noise at St. Michael

The St. Michael Choir will meet on Sundays between services this year and we welcome men, women and youth to join in. A schedule will be posted in August. The choir leads in worship and sings at most 11 a.m. services on Sundays in September through May. A Kick-off Picnic at the Yearwood Farm will be held soon as we start this year, so watch for that announcement in future bulletins and newsletters.



The Handbell Choir will have 3-4 practices beginning in November and play during Advent this year. We will also practice and play during Lent. Come and ring with us.

Micah's Backpack Sharing the Story

Blueberries from Three Birds' Farm and veggies from Micah's Garden are making kids smile as the Micah's Mobile Backpack (MMBP) bus arrives in their neighborhoods. In June, we were able to take blueberries to the kids the last two weeks and all the weeks of July, and the veggies have been bagged and put on the bus for all the weeks in July.



In June, we served 190 different children and packed 936 bags. 305 volunteer hours were spent in packing and delivering the bags.

In July, volunteers have been making it happen at MMBP, and they will continue to do so. Susan is taking a long planned trip to Alaska with her family in late July so the last three packing nights and delivery afternoons of the summer will be handled by volunteers. So many stepped up to the plate to make sure MMBP could stay on the road. The volunteers are giving so much of themselves to feed hungry kids in our community. Make sure to give them lots of thanks.

During August, Micah's Backpack will collect cans of spaghettiOs. Clean, intact plastic grocery bags are also needed. Thanks.



July has been the month for growth at the garden! Harvest time with the children from Rainbow Riders has been such a joy and has yielded a bumper crop of summer squash (120 lbs), peas (5 lbs), green beans (20 lbs), and cucumbers (55 lbs). As crops continue to produce, there will be opportunities to help with harvesting and delivering to food pantries. E-mail Mary Nickle at: hope@micahsgarden.org

for more information or to help out. If you have a bountiful home garden harvest and would like to share with our neighbors, let Mary know. We will bring the produce to our food pantry partners or share with children through MMBP. Many homes in Blacksburg are enjoying fresh produce due to Micah's Caring Initiative programs.

The garden supply shed has also expanded. The small one has been replaced with a nice 7' shed assembled by John Kell, Ron Brewer, and Matthew James. The sturdy foundation was installed by Mark and Hayden Henderson. All these kind men donated their time during hot, humid days.





Volunteers will gather at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, August 23 to pack food for our seniors at Warm Hearth.

Delivery will begin around 5:45 p.m. Join us! The Tech students won't be available to help, so we really need you.



In August, we will collect cans of tuna.



As the beginning of the school year draws near (August 9th), Micah's Closet (MC) is beginning preparations for the fall clothing distribution. MC has been blessed by your support and the support of many in our community to provide new school clothing to 99 students in the previous year. Here is one view of the impact on the students from someone who works with the children

every day:

“Dear Micah’s Closet: Prices Fork Elementary School would like to thank you for all the amazing ways that you have blessed our students and families. Thank you for the generosity, love and compassion that these gifts reflect. You have given so many of our students a sense of dignity and care. We are deeply grateful for all that goes into these gift bags. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. This is an amazing example of love.”

We will begin working with the teachers and administrators after the school year starts as they provide information on families that can use assistance. If you would like to participate in this ministry and share your love with the children in our community, here are some ways you can help:

- Volunteer to sponsor a child by yourself, with a group of friends or with a work team
- Volunteer to shop for a child
- Purchase packages of boys or girls socks to fit shoe sizes toddler 5 through youth size 2

Please let us know if you are interested in supporting Micah's Closet or if you have questions by emailing hope@micahscloset.org

Congratulations to

Hank and Alice Schneider who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 23.



Sunday Bible Study on August 21 on Faith and Sports

On Sunday, August 21 at 7:15 p.m., Pastor John will be leading a Bible Study in the large classroom at the church on "Faith and Sports" (originally scheduled for last November).

Stay Connected!

Our Website, Facebook Page, Email Newsletter and Bulletin Boards

If you are looking for the most current, up-to-date information on the ministries of St. Michael, be sure to check the St. Michael website: www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org (useful when the newsletter is late in arriving), "Like" the St. Michael Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/stmichaellutheranchurch>, or read the weekly, "Happening at St. Michael" email newsletter. If you aren't currently receiving "Happening at St. Michael", email the church at: hope@stmlc.us to be added to the distribution list. Also, current information is always posted on the hallway bulletin boards – check them out!



Get Connected too – met a new friend at church?...need some information?...there are "Let's Connect" forms at the back of the sanctuary for you to use to help us get and stay connected to one another.



"Second Sunday" Summer Brunch on August 14 at 10 a.m.

You are invited to be a part of St. Michael's "Second Sunday" Summer Brunch on Sunday, August 14 at 10 a.m. in the fellowship hall. Bring a dish to share and come enjoy fine food and fellowship. We will get an update of new projects and ministries starting in the fall at St. Michael.

St. Michael at the Price's Fork Fair on August 19-20



St. Michael will have a booth at the Price's Fork Fair on Friday, August 19 and Saturday, August 20. The booth will offer free games and face painting for kids, free Bibles for families and provide an opportunity to share the ministry of St. Michael with the community. If you have the talent of face painting or would be interested in working at the booth, please sign up on the *Welcome* form in the bulletin or talk with Pastor John. Volunteers always have a great time.