



St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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Preparing for and Enjoying the Season

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.

Thanks to the hard work of a number of wonderful artists and computer experts in the congregation, you can enjoy St. Michael's **2016 Online Advent Calendar** (www.stmclc.us/advent). This year artists created coloring pages based on images in the Christmas Story. Each of those pages was then colored. Each day has a different image to help you prepare for the coming of Christ. Copies of the Advent Coloring Book with all the images will be available at the church.

As you enjoy the Online Advent Calendar, I hope you will **also share these images** 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 **Christmas Eve**, we will have worship with Holy Communion at 4 p.m., 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. Each service will have a different approach to celebrating the story of Jesus' birth. I hope you will come and celebrate with your church family at St. Michael.

This year, **Christmas Day** falls on a Sunday. We will continue our celebration of Christmas at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. with a special worship opportunity called, "**Carols, Communion, Coffeecake and the Christ Child**". This table communion service will take place in the fellowship hall. We will sing our favorite carols, enjoy coffeecake and talk about the meaning of Christmas.

Pastor John Wertz, Jr.
pastorjohn@stmclc.us

Sharing Our Gifts: Time, Talents and Treasure

We offer with joy and thanksgiving what He has first given us--ourselves, 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 Jody Smiley, Alice and Hank Schneider, Sandy Birch, Gray and Lynn Wilkins for organizing the Party with a Purpose; the Brewer family who are coordinating the Salvation Army Angel Tree project; to Ron Brewer, 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 Betty Falta, Judith Wolfe, Margaret Larsen and Mildred Wall for folding the November newsletter; to Jody Smiley for leading the women’s monthly Bible study; to Ron Brewer for cleaning and replacing broken light fixtures in the fellowship hall and for organizing the kitchen supplies; to Dianne and John Krallman for using their Thrivent grant to purchase supplies for the Christmas shoebox project; 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.

Because of your gifts

Your generous gifts in November provided funds for the community Thanksgiving dinner, the Party with a Purpose, 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: 9 with electric bills, 4 with rent assistance, 2 with a water bill, 4 with gasoline 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.

Congratulations to....

Steve and Christine Ray on the birth of their daughter, Elizabeth, on September 19. She was welcomed by big sister Angela.

Jada Brown on the birth of her son Macsen on September 29. Lilia and Tatiana are looking forward to caring for their little brother. Proud grandparents are Mack and Karen Brown.

Alicia and Amanda Williams on the birth of their son, Tyler, on October 30. He was welcomed by big brother Cameron and proud grandparents, Sandy and Howard Williams.



Congregational Brunch and Meeting on December 11

St. Michael will have a congregational brunch and meeting on Sunday, December 11 at 10 a.m. to approve our 2017 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 2017 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 a.m. service, took over as a Sunday Servant Coordinator when Sandy Birch retired from the position and led the Chrismon Workshop.

Matt James worships at the 9 a.m. service, serves as a substitute pianist for worship, and just finished his first term on Council.

John Kell worships at the 11 a.m. service, assists with Micah's Backpack, Micah's Garden and Micah's Soup for Seniors and is a leader in the Boy Scout Troop.

Randy Robinson worships at the 11 a.m. service, is a past member of the Council and plays on the Church softball.

Fran Shepherd worships at the 11 a.m. service, is a past member of the Council and distributes books as part of Micah's Mobile Backpack.

Thank you to **Jim Clemens and Keith Gay** for their service on the Congregational Council for the last six years.

2017 Offering Envelopes Available

Offering envelopes for 2017 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 2016 to be received by the church or post-marked by December 31, 2016. 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.

Youth Christmas Program on Sunday, December 18

Come and enjoy the youth Christmas program at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 18.

All youth are invited to be a part of the program. The group will practice from 9:50 a.m. until 10:45 a.m. on Sunday, December 4 and December 18 and on Saturday, December 17 at 10 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 20-22 or January 27-29, 2017. 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.

Lutheran Men in Mission



For the past several years, our Men in Mission group has served on the final day at the Christmas Store. This year, the final day of operation is Saturday, December 10. We will help load packages into cars, help with cart management, and direct parking lot traffic from opening (8:30 am) to closing (about 1:30 pm).

If you would like to help at the Christmas Store please contact Jeff Birch at jbbirch@vt.edu by Wednesday, December 7.

Last year we had 8 volunteers and everyone had a good time and a meaningful experience.

Also, our Men in Mission group has been asked again to help with Micah's Backpack by unloading the food car and moving the food into the storage bins. We are needed on the second Wednesday of each month, December through May.

The dates are: December 14, January 11, February 8, March 8, April 14, and May 10 at 5:45 p.m. With two volunteers per shift, the task should be completed within 30 minutes.

If you can help, please contact Jeff Birch by December 10.

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 2017. Our weekly bouquets are very appreciated by the residents.



Advent Suppers and Services
Wednesdays, November 30, December 7, 14, and 21 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 November 30 and December 14 and at Luther Memorial on December 7 and December 21. 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 18. 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.



Filling Your Faith Toolbox Christmas Celebration

On Sunday, December 11 at 5 p.m., come enjoy dinner, sing your favorite Christmas Carols and help decorate the Chrismon tree and prepare the sanctuary for Christmas.

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.

Carols, Communion Coffeecake and the Christ Child
Sunday, December 25

Since Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, we are planning a little something different to continue our celebration of Christmas. At 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., we'll enjoy Carols, Communion, Coffeecake and the Christ Child. Come sing a few of your favorite carols, enjoy coffee, tea and coffee cake and share the joy of Christmas with your St. Michael family. This table communion service will take place in the fellowship hall. There will be no 6:30 p.m. service on Christmas Day.

Micah's Backpack Sharing the Story



In November, volunteers shared 327 hours helping prepare gifts of weekend food for 305 children in our community. We shared 7,068 meals! A huge thanks to Captain Louie's Future Leaders at Kipps Elementary. They sponsored a food drive among all the elementary schools this month. They came each week to count and to pack. Their efforts led to the donation of 3000 food items for Micah's Backpack. Feel free to come out to pack on December 1, 8, and 15. Please contact Susan if you'd like more information on ways to help: hope@micahsbackpack.org.

In December, we will collect peanut butter. Thank you for your generous gifts of snacks in November.

An end of 2016 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".



Our community support continues to grow! Wolverine Advanced Materials did a clothing drive to support Micah's Closet and a food drive to support Micah's Backpack. Many thanks to the employees there for sharing their gifts!

In addition, we received \$40 dollars in Kohl's cash as a donation. In conjunction with coupons, clearance and the Kohl's cash, we were able to purchase 7 shirts and 4 pairs of shorts for youth for free! Great way to add to our closet!



Micah's Soup for Seniors



In November Micah's Soup for Seniors delivered around 90 bags of food to low-income senior adults with the help of 15 to 20 volunteers. **The next packing date is Tuesday, December 27 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 much needed and welcomed. **In December, we'll collect cans of green beans.**

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December Servants

	December 4	December 11	December 18	December 25
Altar Care	Nancy Goad			
9 AM Service				Sign Up Sheet Will Be Posted
Greeters	Gary and Sandie Worley	Mayer Family	Elaine Powers Joe Garst	
Lay Reader	Keith Gay	Carrie Mayer	Mac McCloud	
Comm. Asst.	William Allen	Lylah Shelor	Joe Garst	
11 AM Service				Sign Up Sheet Will Be Posted
Acolyte	Megan Christle		Camden Brewer	
Comm. Asst.	Jody Smiley		Randy Robinson	
Greeters	Anna Rossomando Betty Wingate	Josiah and Litha Tlou	Wanda and James Pascoe	
Lay Reader	Doug Smiley	Anna Rossomando	Lori Anne Kirk	
Ushers	Ray Howell Ben Simmers	Josiah and Litha Tlou	Wanda and James Pascoe	
Youth Servant	Emily Graves		Jack Graves	
6:30 PM Service				No Service
Greeters	Berg Family	Graves Family	Donna Oliver	
Lay Reader	Mike Berg	Tacey Apisa	Guille Yearwood	
Comm. Asst.	Michelle Berg	Tacey Apisa	Guille Yearwood	

Women of the ELCA

Ladies please join us for **Lunch and Learn** Monday at noon, December 12, at the church. We will enjoy a Christmas lunch with a short lesson. It is a fun way to share lunch and fellowship followed by a short Bible study, with time to get back to work afterwards. This month's "Learn" is titled "What wants to be born in you, Advent a time of possibility".



WELCA will again be sponsoring Christmas baskets for students and their families at Price's Fork Elementary School. There is a list on the bulletin board in the front hall with information about what to include in the laundry baskets. There are copies on the back table in the church to take with you. We invite you and your family to make a basket or you can get together with a friend to make one. Please bring the baskets with you to Lunch and Learn Monday, December 12, or to the church by that date. They will be delivered to Price's Fork Elementary by Tuesday December 13.

We organized and decorated about 235 shoeboxes, plus a few more, at our Party with a Purpose. There were an additional 66 from Pastor John's father's church in South Carolina. A big thank you to everyone who filled shoeboxes including those from other NRV Lutheran churches, the DAR and Christ the King in Richmond. Thanks also to everyone who came, enjoyed a delicious dinner from The Cellar Restaurant and worked together to get them ready to go. All shoeboxes were shipped to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota at the end of the month. Thanks again to Ron Brewer who delivered them to Fontaine in Dublin. Fontaine generously donated the shipping cost.

Remember the Food Bank: December we'll collect foods for Christmas dinner – vegetables, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, canned or packaged gravy, roll mixes, pumpkin or fruit pie filling, etc.

Remember the Women's Resource Center: In December we'll collect clothes detergent. There is always a need for children's coloring and craft supplies.

O.K.s (Older Kids)



The Happy-Go-Lucky "5-Course" Christmas Luncheon will be held at noon on December 13 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. Invite a friend or neighbor to join the party. We will also celebrate the "Christmas kids" birthdays as they all need a little extra attention this month: Fay Walters (26th), J.B. Jones (27th), Bert Kinzey (27th), Sandy Birch (29th), Gary Worley (29th), Nancy Goad (30th), Judy Teates (30th), Juanita Simpson (31st) and Josiah Tlou (31st).

After the luncheon on Tuesday, you are invited to attend a workshop on "Health Aging" held at the Blacksburg Library at 2 p.m. The workshop leader, Dr. Matthew Komelski, is an instructor in the VT Department of Human Development.

Thrivent Teams in Action

Thanks to all the Thrivent Action Teams that help support the St. Michael ministries. Thrivent, through these Action Teams, has provided \$2750 in 2016.

Projects assisted included Soup for Seniors, the mission trip to Hungry Mother Retreat Center, purchasing books distributed during Micah's Mobile Backpack program, Across the Spectrum Worship Service, Circle of Grace, purchase school supplies, Christmas Boxes for Pine Ridge Reservation, Personal Care Kits, Confirmation Lock-in, and the Community Thanksgiving Dinner. We hope to get funding for items to go in Christmas baskets for Price's Fork families.

If you are interested in finding out more information about Action Teams, how to apply for funds, or have ideas for projects that need funding in 2017 please contact Jody Smiley or Pastor John.

New Roof Installed

During the week of November 14 through 18, a new roof was installed on the sanctuary. Here are a few pictures from the installation.

