



St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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Celebrating Advent and Christmas

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.

On Sundays during Advent, come discover **People of Hope**. Each week, we'll hear the story of a different person in the Christmas story. On Wednesdays, we'll partner with Luther Memorial to enjoy a midweek meal and **Holden Evening Prayer**.

Thanks to the hard work of a number of wonderful artists and computer experts in the congregation, you can enjoy St. Michael's **2017 Online Advent Calendar** (www.stmclc.us/advent). This year artists drew images of angels. 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 and are available to download online.

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 and the images will be posted on our Facebook page each day for you to share as well as on my Twitter account (@wertz_revjohn). It's a simple, powerful way to share the story of Christmas with the world around you.

Since December 24th is a Sunday, we will observe the **4th Sunday of Advent** at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. with Coffeecake and Communion in the fellowship hall. Later that afternoon, we will celebrate **Christmas Eve** with worship at 4 p.m., 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. Each service will have a different approach to telling the story of Jesus' birth. I hope you will come and celebrate with your church family at St. Michael.

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 Lynda Kinzey for helping to organize the To Our House meals and all who helped; to Ron Brewer for organizing the Community Thanksgiving Meal and all who helped; to Jody Smiley for leading the women’s monthly Bible study; to Wanda Pascoe, Betty Falta, Judith Wolfe, Margaret Larsen, Lynda Kinzey and Mildred Wall for folding the November newsletter; 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 for their beautiful work; to Joyce Coupey for her faithful service in providing our bulletin cover artwork week after week; and to all the Micah’s Backpack and Micah’s Soup for Seniors food packers.

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, utilities and salaries for our ministerial staff including our nursery workers, Thanksgiving meal expenses, monthly utilities, nursery worker wages.

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** continues to assist our neighbors in the community and the world. In November we provided assistance for 23 families: 13 with electric bills, 3 with rent assistance, 3 with a water bill, 4 with gasoline and other car help. 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....

Barbara Corbett who recently won first place in a Tennessee Walking Horse event in Asheville, NC. Both Barbara and Lynn Hickok have won with their horse, An American Threat.



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 2018. Our weekly bouquets are very much appreciated by the residents.



Congregational Brunch and Meeting on December 3

St. Michael will have a congregational brunch and meeting on Sunday, December 3 at 10 a.m. to approve our 2018 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 2018 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.**

Thank you to **Ben Simmers and Gary Worley** for their service on the Congregational Council.

2018 Offering Envelopes Available

Offering envelopes for 2018 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 2017 to be received by the church or post-marked by December 31, 2017. 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.

Leaving a Bequest

Have you ever thought about leaving a gift to St. Michael in your will? During the last year, bequests from Irene Ashley and Fred Spengler have made a huge impact in our community. Thanks to these generous gifts, St. Michael completed our new siding and new roofing project, supported other non-profits like the Women's Resource Center and the Montgomery County Christmas Store and significantly reduced the mortgage on our classroom building. If you are interested in learning more about how you can make an enduring gift to support God's ministry at St. Michael, please talk to Pastor John or your financial advisor.



Advent and Christmas Families of Faith Events on Wed., Dec. 6 and Tuesday, Dec. 12

All families and children are invited to be a part of the Advent and Christmas Family of Faith events on Wednesday, December 6 and Tuesday, December 12 beginning at 5:30 p.m.

On December 6, we will meet from 5:30 to 6 PM for conversation and an Advent craft and then join Advent Midweek Meal at 6 PM

On Tuesday, December 12, we will enjoy a simple dinner, sing Christmas Carols, make a craft and act out the Christmas story together. For more information, please talk to Pastor John.

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 26-28, 2018. The cost is \$75. If you are interested in attending, please talk to Pastor John.



Lutheran Men in Mission



The Lutheran Men in Mission will volunteer at the Montgomery County Christmas Store on Saturday, December 9 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.

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 multiple \$250 grants for projects in 2017.

Projects assisted included Soup for Seniors, purchasing books distributed during Micah's Mobile Backpack program, Circle of Grace, purchasing school supplies, and funding for items to go in Christmas help for Price's Fork Elementary school 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 2018 please contact Jody Smiley or Pastor John.



Advent Suppers and Services **Wednesdays, December 6, 13, and 20 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 6 and 20 and at Luther Memorial on December 13. If you are interested in assisting with the meal or service, please sign up on the *Welcome to St. Michael* form in the bulletin.

Decorating the Chrismon Tree and Carol Sing-a-Long

On Sunday, December 10 at 9:50 a.m., come decorate the Chrismon tree and sing some of your favorite Christmas Carols.



Coffeecake and Communion **Sunday, December 24 at 9 AM and 11 AM**

Since Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, we are planning a little something different to celebrate the 4th Sunday in Advent. At 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., we'll enjoy Coffeecake and Communion in the fellowship hall. Come hear the story of Joseph, enjoy coffee, tea and coffee cake with your St. Michael family. This table communion service will take place in the fellowship hall.

Christmas Sweater Sunday

If you've got a colorful Christmas sweater, think about wearing it to worship on Sunday, December 24, at the 9 a.m. or 11 a.m. service. We'll take a festive group picture for the website.

Christmas Eve Services **Sunday, 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.



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.

Micah's Backpack Sharing the Story



November has been a great month at MBP! We continued to pack over 300 bags each week for hungry kids and had lots of people in the community hosting food drives and collecting food to fill the bags.

Special thanks this month goes to Joe Ivers and Connie Cummings for sponsoring the third Cummings/Ivers Matching Grant Challenge. For the third year in a row, they are matching gifts up to \$1000 made for the purpose of infrastructure needs for MBP, including keeping the bus filled with gas and up to date in maintenance, shelving and food bins in the food room, Director's salary, and office supplies. The challenge is still on through the end of the year. If you would like to contribute, go to www.micahsbackpack.org, click on the donations tab. Then, click on the CIC Challenge tab or make a check to the church with CIC in the memo line.

More thanks this month goes to two BHS students who are working on an app for Micah's Backpack as part of a school project and to a group of VT students who for a school project hosted an oatmeal drive at a VT basketball game. It takes a whole community to make MBP the great success that it is.

Our last packing night of 2017 will be December 14. Feel free to come help pack on Thursday nights at 6:00 until then. We will start again on January 11. Hope to see you at a packing night soon!

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 19, 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.**



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 17. 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.

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December Servants

	December 3	December 10	December 17	December 24	December 31
Altar Care	Smiley				
9 AM Service					
Greeters	Dave Surface Wilma Pieper	Gary and Sandie Worley	Dianne Krallman Elaine Powers	Lynn Hickok Barbara Corbett	Clifton and Fay Walters
Lay Reader	Butch Akers	Judith Wolfe	Mac McLeod	Peggy Morgan	John Krallman
Comm. Asst.	William Allen	Lori Anne Kirk	Butch Akers	Sandy Birch	Dianne Krallman
11 AM Service					
Acolyte	Emily Graves		Megan Christle		Emily Graves
Comm. Asst.	Bert Kinzey		Jeff Birch	Kris Wertz	
Greeters	Don Linkous Ray Howell	Gary and Rebecca Steck	James and Wanda Pascoe	Hank and Alice Schneider	Josiah and Litha Tlou
Lay Reader	Emma Patterson	Anna Rossomando	Bert Kinzey	Lori Anne Kirk	Marty Gordon
Ushers	Don Linkous Ray Howell	Gary and Rebecca Steck	James and Wanda Pascoe	Hank and Alice Schneider	Josiah and Litha Tlou
Youth Servant	Jack Graves		Emily Graves		Bryce Dowdy
6:30 PM Service					
Greeters	Saks Family	Graves Family	Berg Family		
Lay Reader	Charles Saks	Guille Yearwood	Mike Berg		
Comm. Asst.	Martie Saks	Guille Yearwood	Michelle Berg		

Women of the ELCA

We invite all ladies to come for **Lunch and Learn** Monday, **December 11th** at noon. Bring a friend if you'd like. We'll start with lunch, topped off by a special holiday cake, then a Christmas Bible study program. Sign up to attend on the bulletin insert.



Price's Fork Elementary School Christmas Stockings: This year Price's Fork Elementary will have a Christmas Stocking project that we would like to support. The counselors have selected a group of children who could benefit from Christmas gifts. They envision gifts totaling about \$50.00 for each child. The school will forward the list of each child's age, gender, size (for shirt and pants) and suggestions for toys on their wish list. We will have stockings available in the back of church. The due date to bring the gifts to church will likely be Sunday December 17th, so it's a short time frame.

Women of the ELCA Fall Gathering – was November 5, at Our Saviour. Our offering donation of \$388 was sent to the VSWO (VA Synodical Women's Organization) to support programs for women. Our service project this year was to help Faith Lutheran Church in Dickinson, TX in their recovery from Hurricane Irma. A Love offering that day, some Thrivent grant money and extra donations from congregations combined for a total **\$1,132.66 sent to Faith**, to help those in Texas. They will use these funds for sewing machine replacement and craft needs that they use to support local charities and for their diaper and "Ark Book Pantry" ministries that they share with the community. We also included Lutheran prayer beads made by all the women in attendance that afternoon, to give to the women of Faith Lutheran as a reminder to pray for all of our sisters and brothers.

Thank You Everyone: **276 shoeboxes** for Head Start children. In addition, many warm hats, gloves, scarves, baby blankets, toiletries, and other items were sent to the homeless shelter at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota. Many thanks to Ron Brewer who delivered the boxes to the shipper in Dublin.

The Food Bank: In December please bring **ingredients for Christmas Dinner** – boxed or canned potatoes, sweet potatoes, vegetables, gravy, cranberry sauce, roll mixes, pie filling, dessert mixes.

Women's Resource Center: please bring **children's craft supplies** and **laundry detergent**.

Thank you for all the things you provide to help others in our community!

O.K.s (Older Kids)



The Happy-Go-Lucky Christmas Luncheon, "Ice Cream and Iceland", will be held on **December 12**, at noon with social time beginning at 11:30 a.m. Jody and Doug will share their recent adventures in Iceland and Lynn and Barb are gathering supplies for their delicious peppermint ice cream pies for dessert.

Join the H-G-L bunch for a time of good cheer and holiday spirit. Five courses for \$5 – a tasty Christmas bargain. Special Christmas music is also on the menu.