



St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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50 for the 50th : National Youth Gathering

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" - Ephesians 2:8

This summer, over 30,000 Lutheran youth are gathering together in Houston, Texas for the ELCA's 2018 National Youth Gathering, "This Changes Everything." The theme is based on Ephesians 2:8, the central verse for the gathering. Under this theme, our youth will get to explore more deeply what grace means to them and to the world. They will have the opportunity to see and experience the Body of Christ in new ways in the city of Houston. They will get to grow in faith and build relationships with peers in the midst of study and service.

For the first time ever, St. Michael is sending a group of five St. Michael youth to the National Youth Gathering and we need your help to make it happen.

In honor of St. Michael's 50th anniversary, we ask that you consider giving a gift of \$50 or more to support the financial costs of sending Jessie, Maddie, Abby, Kirsten and Jack to Houston. Your gift will help to cover the cost of transportation, lodging and registration so that these youth can share in an experience that will impact their lives of faith in powerful ways. Throughout the month, watch for more information on how you can support this *50 for the 50th National Youth Gathering* project.

Pastor John Wertz, Jr.
pastorjohn@stmlc.us



Serving the community through
faith, fellowship, worship,
learning and grace.

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 Joyce Coupey for her beautiful artwork for the annual report cover and the weekly bulletin covers; Doug Smiley for compiling our annual report; Lynda Kinzey for binding all of the annual reports; Betty Falta, Margaret Larsen, Mildred Wall and Lynda Kinzey for folding the March newsletter; Sandy and Jeff Birch for ordering and picking up the food for the Lenten Meals throughout the season and all who helped set up, clean up and provide dessert for the meals.

Thank you from Women’s Resource Center – Thank you for your gift of Easter Baskets. They are so beautiful. The children will love them.



Thank you to everyone who helped cover and repair our choir chairs. They look great!

Because of your gifts

Your generous gifts in March supported postage, worker’s compensation insurance, lawn care equipment maintenance, Lenten Midweek Services, kitchen supplies for midweek meals, confirmation programs, church directory supplies, our benevolence to the Virginia Synod, donations to MCEAP, Lutheran Campus Ministry, our facilities, and salaries for our staff.

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** continues to assist our neighbors in the community and the world. In March, we assisted 17 families with funds towards 15 electric bills, 1 with rent assistance and 1 with gasoline. Thank you for your generous gifts which make this expression of God’s generous love possible. If you know someone who needs assistance, please refer them to Pastor John.

Make Sure You Receive St. Michael's Weekly Email Newsletter

Each Thursday, St. Michael publishes a weekly email newsletter. We have discovered that in some cases, Gmail is routing the newsletter to your "Spam" folder or to the "Promotions" or "Social" tab. If you have signed up and are not receiving the E-newsletter each Thursday morning, please check these folders. If you would like to sign up, please click the "@news" button on the bottom of St. Michael's webpage: www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org.

Micah's Backpack



March has been a great month for Micah's Backpack. Not only did our regular volunteers come to help pack but we also had a group of students from the University of Georgia's IMPACT Service Break Program come help us pack. IMPACT is similar to the VT Engage program. The students spent their spring break coming to our area to help our community and to learn about what makes us tick. Thank you IMPACT for your help and your care!

In addition, faith communities have joined us this month in "going green" for MBP by donating green beans to our food room to pack in kids' bags. It takes a village to feed hungry kids and make MBP such a wonderful program in our area.

Feel free to check out our Facebook page for more information on the **NRV Give Big Day** coming up on **April 18**. This is a chance for our community to give to lots of area groups, including MBP, who are working to continue to make the New River Valley a special place to live.

In **April**, we hope you will fill the MBP donation box with **granola bars**!

Micah's Garden

March 20th springs newness in the hearts of gardeners! We have started the revitalization of our garden. We hope to make it have an even higher yield of produce than ever! We are experimenting with half of the garden by removing half of the raised beds as they had reached their ability to function properly although they served us well for many years. In addition, a wonderful group of Rotary volunteers is coming to assist with the old walkway removal. We are having new top soil delivered this week, which will be spread in the garden by a group of VT students participating in the Big Event. The garden will be amazing! There are lots of opportunities for anyone wanting to start a plot of their own. What a wonderful community fellowship time. Praises to our Lord.



Micah's Soup for Seniors



The packing date this month is **April 24th**. We appreciate everyone's continued support of our program as we enter into our 6th year. We continue to support over 90 seniors at Warm Hearth with monthly donations of food and Panera. We have had extra help the last several months from the Blacksburg Rotary Club and their time and donations have been greatly appreciated.

For April, we will be collecting cans of **Spam**.

Fools for Christ Lock-In – April 6-7



All youth who are 6th grade and older are invited to the Fools for Christ Lock-In beginning on Friday, April 7 at 7 p.m. at St. Michael. The event will be done in conjunction with other Lutheran Churches in the area and Lutheran Campus Ministry at Virginia Tech. Come enjoy the fun, conversation about faith and life and do a few service projects on Saturday morning.

Youth Lunch and Discussion on April 22 and Group Texting System

On April 22, all youth (6th – 12th grade) are invited to lunch and conversation beginning at noon. We will enjoy lunch together and talk about the problem of evil in the world.

To help keep youth and parents in the loop for upcoming events, we now have a **group texting program** that will allow the church to send text messages to students and parents. The program, called FlockNote, will make it possible for St. Michael to send and receive texts without having to send texts from a personal phone. The system tracks messages and responses and as our ministry with youth grows, it will allow other leaders to use the system as well. You can **sign up by texting "STMLC" to "84576"**. Once you sign up, you should get a welcome text as a response. If you have any questions, please talk to Pastor John.

Upcoming Confirmation Events April 13 and May 10

On Friday, April 13, we will have Late Night Confirmation at Luther Memorial. The group will be discussing how we talk about our faith. On Thursday, May 10 from 5:30 p.m. until 7 p.m., all 6th, 7th and 8th graders are invited to gather at Luther Memorial for dinner and conversation around putting our faith into action.

Families of Faith: Dinner, Discussion and Music

On **Wednesday, April 4 and Tuesday, April 17 at 5:30 p.m.**, families with young children are invited to dinner, activities, music and discussion time. Come enjoy time with other families and children and learn more about faith and life.



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April Servants

	April 1	April 8	April 15	April 22	April 29
Altar Care	Birch				
9 AM Service	Easter				
Greeters	Gary and Sandie Worley	Wilma Pieper Dave Surface	Butch Akers Wilma Pieper	Elaine Powers Joe Garst	Neil and Jackie Muir
Lay Reader	Keith Gay	Mac McLeod	Peggy Morgan	Dianne Krallman	Maggie Maloney
Comm. Asst.	Lori Anne Kirk	Butch Akers	Lylah Shelor	Dianne Krallman	Sandy Williams
11 AM Service					
Acolyte	Emily Graves		Megan Christle		
Comm. Asst.	Jody Smiley		Kris Wertz		
Greeters	Cindy Lang Ray Howell	James and Wanda Pascoe	Gary and Becky Steck	Ferrell Family	JD and Andrea Robinson
Lay Reader	Doug Smiley	Anna Rossomando	Fran Shepherd	Jeff Birch	Marty Gordon
Ushers	Ray Howell Don Linkous	James and Wanda Pascoe	Philip Isenhour Dickie Shepherd	Daniel Ferrell John Kell	JD and Andrea Robinson
Youth Servant	Jack Graves		Bryce Dowdy		
6:30 PM Service					
Greeters	Berg Family	Graves Family	Donna Oliver	Saks Family	TBA
Lay Reader	Mike Berg	TBA	Tacey Apsia	Charlie Saks	TBA
Comm. Asst.	Michelle Berg	Emily Graves	Tacey Apsia	Martie Saks	Emily Graves

Easter Sunrise Service 7:00 a.m.: Lay Reader: Peggy Morgan; Communion Assistant:
Sandy Birch; Greeter: Dianne Krallman

Women of the ELCA



Lunch and Learn: **April 23** (the 4th Monday) is our next Lunch and Learn. We will begin lunch at noon with a short Bible Study to follow and finish by 1 p.m. You are welcome to bring a friend. There will be a place to sign up on the bulletin insert.

Easter Baskets: Thank you to all who contributed candy and toys for the Easter baskets and to everyone who helped put the 36 baskets together. Twenty-eight baskets for children and eight for moms were delivered to the Women's Resource Center.



Easter Breakfast: Thank you to everyone who helped with the Easter breakfast, hosted by the Women of the ELCA, at 8 a.m. on Sunday, April 1, between the Sunrise and 9 a.m. services. It was a wonderful opportunity to enjoy some delicious food and fellowship.

Love Offering: Our annual Love Offering will go towards "Blast Off for Books", the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering Literacy Campaign. Members of our youth group who will be attending the Youth Gathering in Houston will deliver the books purchased with our offering. **We hope to send 50 books in celebration of our 50th anniversary.** The Gathering has recognized the need to lift up literacy in Houston where 3 in 5 children lack reading-readiness skills when entering kindergarten. It is estimated that 74% of the students in the school district come from families who struggle to provide books for their children. Baggies for the offering will be available on April 29 and can be returned during May.

The Food Bank: Please bring **canned or packaged soups**. However, the food bank is always happy to receive any non-perishable foods to help those in our community.

Women's Resource Center: Please bring **tissues**.

Looking Ahead: Sunday, **May 6, at noon** is the date and time of our **annual Sisters' Luncheon**. Invite a friend, mom, sister, or daughter, and bring a salad to share. The theme is "Pearls and Oysters" and we invite everyone to wear a pearl necklace. The women of the church will lead our services on Bold Women Sunday, May 13.



Thank you for everything you provide to help others in our community!

Spring Clean-up on Saturday, April 7

Bring your rakes and work gloves and come out on Saturday, April 7 at 9 a.m. to help get the church grounds ready for Spring. Volunteers will be picking up limbs, weeding and mulching. We also need “supervisors” to assist the VT students who will be helping us out during the Big Event. For more information, contact Ron Brewer: RBSM517@gmail.com.



Deadline for the St. Michael Scholarship - April 22

Applications are invited for the St. Michael Scholarship, a \$600 award for individuals to pursue studies in post-secondary education. Members of Lutheran churches in Montgomery County are eligible to apply. The application is available on the church bulletin board.

Congratulations to ...

Sarah and Eric McDearis on the birth of their daughter **Adaline Helen** on February 15. Proud grandparents are **Sandie and Gary Worley** and **Susan and Tommy McDearis**.

Sandy and Jeff Birch who will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on April 6. The two met in their high school calculus class and have been dating since 1963.



Maggie Maloney, who teaches art, was named the Teacher of the Year at Falling Branch Elementary.

Congregation Approves Updated Mission Statement & Vision Action Plan

At the congregational meeting on March 18, the congregation approved a new Mission Statement and Vision Action Plan. Thank you to all the volunteers who shared their wisdom and ideas to help identify and plan for our ministry focus areas for the next few years. The graphic below shows the new mission statement in the center and the focus areas in the surrounding circle.



The ministry focus areas and goals are:

- **Engagement**
 - Wider and Deeper Engagement
- **Leadership**
 - Develop leadership resources to meet current and emerging opportunities within the church and the community
- **Children, Youth and Their Families**
 - To be known for faith formation among children, youth and their families in ways that encourage a sense of belonging and help to build relationships

Beginning in April, teams will form around each of the focus areas to begin developing the goals and moving toward the desired outcomes identified in the planning process. If you are interested in being a part of one of the teams, please speak to Pastor John or to any of the members of the Congregational Council.