



St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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April - July, 2020

Dear Saints,

I am excited to let you know that we just received a \$250 Daily Bread Matching Grant from the Virginia Synod. We have until July 15th to raise \$250 and receive the match.

Because of COVID-19 the number of individuals experiencing food insecurity has risen steadily in Virginia. During this time, Micah's Backpack and Soup for Seniors has continued helping our neighbors in need. With your help, we will be able to continue to meet the needs in our community.

You can help us reach our matching goal by making a gift today. Make sure you write in the check memo, "Matching Food Grant" and then send your gift to:

St. Michael Lutheran Church
Matching Food Grant
2308 Merrimac Rd.
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Thank you for helping fight food insecurity in our community. Thank you for helping us be a church together for the sake of the world. Your generosity makes a difference!

Peace and hope,
Pastor Michelle

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--our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of His gracious love.

Thank you to some “quiet” servants

A big thank you to all of the clergy and lay people who have made it possible for us to continue worshiping each Sunday via Zoom and once a month for a drive-in service in the parking lot at St. Michael. We are truly grateful for the time and effort it takes to make this happen. We thank Pastor Michelle, Pastor Monica, Vicar Bryan, Lay Campus Minister Rachel, musicians from all of our congregations and each and every behind-the-scenes helper. You have blessed us with your gifts!

Because of your gifts



Your continued generous gifts support the purchase of office supplies, postage, building maintenance supplies, cleaning supplies, devotional subscriptions, utilities, food for Micah’s Backpack and Soup for Seniors, our benevolence to the Virginia Synod, donations to MCEAP, Lutheran Campus Ministry, Bedford Lutheran Church, and salaries for our ministry staff. Thank you!

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** continues to assist our neighbors in the community and the world. Funds can be used to help with rent assistance or to help pay water and electric bills.

Annual Congregational Meeting

Our March annual meeting to review and approve the 2019 Annual Report had to be rescheduled. We will be holding the meeting through Zoom on **July 12th** at 10 a.m. Contact Doug Smiley or Suzanne Gay if you do not have a copy of the 2019 Annual Report. Also contact them if you do not have access to the internet. An email with a link will be sent by July 5th so that everyone can test if they can access a Zoom meeting.

July 4th Patriotic Musical Tribute

Join us for a drive-in at St Michael to sing patriotic songs. The program starts at 7 p.m. and will be finished by 8:30 p.m. so you can go to the Blacksburg or Christiansburg fireworks celebrations.



The **July-September devotionals** are available for pick up. *Spark Family, Christ in Our Home, and Hope-Full Living* booklets are taped to the outside of the door closest to the bell tower at St. Michael. All health safety that you precautions were taken when preparing the booklets so please swing by and take the devotionals would like.

Micah's Backpack Sharing the Story

Here is MBP in a nutshell right now:

- Donations accepted on Mondays from 10:30-12:30 at the church
- Donations can be made online as well on our website
- We are not accepting volunteers for packing currently
- Bags are being packed and delivered in a "drive-thru" style on Mondays from 3:00-6:00 at the church. Families can drive up and get bags, books, and produce (when available).



Micah's Mobile Backpack has been discontinued until further notice.

While our daily lives have seemed everything but normal, one of the consonants has been nature and her unpredictability. The winter was mild and the spring was chilly. Summer officially begins soon and the garden has been amazing. We will be harvesting peas soon to be delivered to local families. The potatoes are growing at warp speed. We have peppers and cucumbers blooming. The garden is also rich with nutritious sweet potatoes, carrots, beans, tomatoes, summer and winter squash plants. Bring on the sun and rain!





We have been able to deliver food to our senior friends at Warm Hearth in May and June. With the help from Feeding America and Warm Hearth, we have been able to pack the bags at the church and have the employees at Warm Hearth pick them up and distribute them to the seniors. We have packed and given out 100 bags each month. The bags are “generic” and we have not been able to pack to the normal menu requested items, but we are sure they are giving any items that they cannot use to the other people in the buildings. We anticipate following this same pattern for the next several months as Warm Hearth continues to have certain guidelines they must follow, as does our church.

Special thanks to Doug Smiley and Mickey McGuigan who have gone to Feeding America to pick up the food each month. We have limited our packing group at the church to only four people.

We certainly appreciate everyone’s support as we continue this special mission to feed our friends at Warm Hearth. They are always thankful for the bags that bring some needed help each month.



St. Michael Servants

Greeters and Ushers,

I miss seeing all of you. Hope all are well and having a safe wonderful summer. The church council and committees are working on the steps to resume in person Sunday services at St Michael. For those who volunteer as Greeters and Ushers this will involve some changes in how we provide this service. We will be following the guidelines provided by the Synod and the CDC. Once these guidelines are developed, they will be shared with you and the congregation. If you have concerns and/or questions about being a Greeter or Usher, please email me. Blessings, Butch

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2308 Merrimac Road
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Drive-in Services

Join St. Michael, Shiloh, New Mount Zion and Luther Memorial for drive-in services this summer at the St. Michael parking lot. Services will begin at 10 a.m. and will include communion. Join us on **June 28th**, **July 26th** and **August 30th**.

Mowing: 7/4-Dickie Shepherd (back); 7/11-Matthew James/Jacob Dennis (front); 7/18-John Stramiello (back); 7/25-Daniel Ferrell (front)
Rear Lot: 7/6-George Hahn; 7/13-Jeff Crowder; 7/20-Doug Smiley; 7/27-Dave Surface

Congratulations to ...

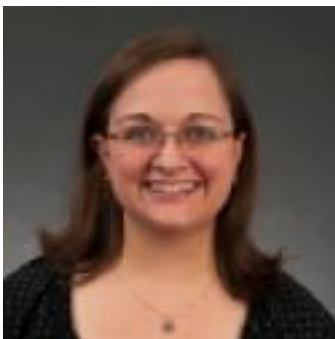


Jim and Judy Clemens who will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on June 27.

Scott Thomas McGuigan who graduated Cum Laude from Virginia Tech with a degree in chemistry in December 2019 and will be attending graduate school at North Carolina State University to begin work on a doctorate degree in chemistry.



Katherine Berg who graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in Biological Sciences. She will be going to graduate school in Plant Pathology at Texas A&M in the fall.



Katie Katz who was recently awarded tenure and promotion at Radford University. Katie is a faculty member in the Waldron College of Health and Human Services at RU.

Disinfectant Wipes Needed

The next time you happen to find some very difficult to find disinfecting wipes on your shopping trip (after doing a little happy dance and trying to suppress the feeling that you won the lottery), please consider picking up an extra package for the church. We have been trying to find a supply to use now and in the coming months as we prepare to meet again. We will happily and gratefully accept any brand (Lysol, Clorox, store brand). Thank you!

Deadline for the St. Michael Scholarship – July 31

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 but if you are unable to get into the church, contact Doug Smiley for an application: smileydc@vt.edu



Women of the ELCA

Easter Baskets: A big thank you to everyone who shopped and donated treats, books, small toys, baskets, etc. for the Easter Baskets we donate annually to the Women's Resource Center. Big thank you also to Sandy and Jeff Birch who gathered the items, packed up 24 Easter Baskets for kids, 8 for moms, and delivered all to Radford. The Resource Center tells us the kids and moms who come in for counseling have big happy faces when they receive their baskets.

Lunch and Learn: During this pandemic, as with most things we normally do, and for the first time ever, we are not meeting for WELCA meetings - Lunch and Learn! We hope everyone is staying safe, maybe getting some projects accomplished, enjoying some extra time with family and with others, virtually or by phone. Jody Smiley has emailed a 3 part Bible Study Series from Lutheran Women "Gather" Magazine entitled "Just Love" to work through at home over the summer. If you haven't but would like to receive it, please send her a note at jdsmiley29@comcast.net or call 540-250-6149. She would be happy to send a copy to you.

Love Offering: Each year our congregational groups and individuals have always been very generous with Love Offerings at our gatherings. The VSWO board (VA Synodical Women's Organization) would like to ask that we continue with a Love Offering for 2020. They agreed the offering would be sent to Women of the ELCA, to support many women's church wide activities including publishing Bible studies, as the one above. If you would like to participate, you may mail your donation to St. Michael by July 20. **Please make payable to VSWO and be sure to note "Love Offering" on the memo line of check.** Sandy Birch, our treasurer, will gather all together and send them to Women of the ELCA.

Everyone please stay safe and well. We look forward to getting together in some form in the future.

Thank you to everyone for all the ways you help those in our community, on many fronts, not only during this challenging time, but every day!



Mask Maker, Mask Maker make me a mask. Mama's Side Hustle

by Jane Swing

When COVID-19 raised its ugly head and all my part-time jobs stopped, I wondered about what to do next. Wait... I have a sewing machine. I have lots of fabric stuck away in boxes. The experts said it was a good idea to wear a mask. So, I started searching the internet to see what I could find in terms of patterns and directions. My original intent was to use up idle fabric and provide some protection for my family and friends. I made masks and sent them to my family and my neighbors. Other people saw them and asked if I could make some for them. My Facebook site was overflowing with inquiries and I couldn't keep them all straight. I stepped my two youngest children. My daughter created "Marvelous Masks by Jane" on Facebook. My son created a website. We posted pictures of fabric, completed masks, and family and friends wearing the masks. Our niche in this little venture is to let people chose a print that reflects the person behind the mask. Many people called and wanted to "stop by and pick up a few masks." We explained that we make the masks as they are ordered and so it would take a few days to get masks made and then out to the customer. There was a period of time when I wasn't sure I would be able to keep up. I decided I would charge for the masks and donate a portion to Micah's Backpack and Micah's Soup for Seniors programs at church. I make three different sizes of masks: child size, regular adult and larger adult. We have prints in many categories. Of course in this area, anything Virginia Tech is popular but I have made UVA, Tennessee, Auburn and Ohio State. Hobby themes are popular as well as dogs, cats and other animals. I have lots of red, white and blue prints, all colors of florals and lots of solids. We've shipped masks all over these United States: Alaska! Michigan! Minnesota! California! North Carolina! New Jersey! Florida! Tennessee! and Texas! We had a special order from Pella Window in Greensboro for black and yellow masks so their employees would be prepared to enter customers' homes and businesses. We just shipped an order of 25 Girl Scouts masks to a troop in California. We have one customer who finds her own fabric for her family and friends and brings it to us to make the masks, then she distributes them. I've met many people at church by making masks. I hope all my church family has masks so we'll be prepared for the time we can again gather and worship face to face but six feet apart. Do I think we will be wearing masks for some time? Yes, and I have fall, Halloween, Thanksgiving and December holiday fabrics to

prove it. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you are in need of a mask or masks.

Blacksburg Lutheran Fellowship Vacation Bible School



When: July 5-26th 2020

What: Let's Build our Faith Toolbox Together!

How: Weekly virtual format with hands-on activity packet for pick-up or delivery. Themes will be presented weekly, but accessible at your own pace.

The Tools:

1. Discipleship: Past and Present
2. Music: Make a Joyful Noise
3. Prayer: Talking with God
4. Love: We are the CHURCH

For more information contact Margaret Christle (mrosschristle@gmail.com) or Maggie Maloney (maggiesatch@gmail.com). Watch for more announcements.

Music Notes

We will continue to make a joyful noise unto the Lord at Vacation Bible School 2020. But things will be a little different from years past. Read all about that in this newsletter. More information will be coming your way about other music opportunities- handbells for 5th grade and up, solo, duet singing and other instrumental music as part of our services.

We cannot sing together inside even with masks on but the music will continue...listen for instrumental music, soloists, duets, handbells. We can also record music to be presented as part of worship.

Make sure you tune in to the Blacksburg Lutheran Fellowship virtual service each week (go to lmlc.org and click on the date) AND come to the end of month drive-up service in June, July and August. Each week from Easter 2020 till now, there has been music provided by the Lutheran churches in Blacksburg.

A BIG thank you to Doug Smiley and Reed Yearwood who have helped provide the music for St. Michael.

Remember to tune in to VBS for fun music for kids of all ages!

Contact Patrice, payearwood1@gmail.com to help make a joyful noise at St. Michael and in our larger Lutheran community.



Gathering Again: Guidance for Congregational Leaders in the Virginia Synod, ELCA May 14, 2020

We know everyone is eager to gather in-person for worship and that Safer at Home Phase 1 of Forward Virginia allows for religious organizations to gather again at 50% capacity. However, the highly infectious nature of COVID-19, the lack of available testing, the absence of an effective treatment for the disease, and the time needed to prepare for gathering again leads the **Bishop's Office to recommend abstaining from in-person gatherings through Forward Virginia Safer at Home Phase 1, Phase 2, and possibly beyond.** As each new Phase of reopening occurs in Virginia, congregational leaders will need to consider how to protect the health and well-being of the entire community, not simply do what is allowable or legal.

As you prepare to gather again when it is safer and legal, please remember these considerations:

- Our objective is NOT to return to in-person gatherings. **Our call is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ!** As followers of Jesus, we also have a call to protect our members and the wider community. ([Galatians 5:13-14](#))
- If we are distracted by our own desires, financial concerns, or the noise around us, **we may find ourselves working hard to gather again only to discover in doing so we put the most vulnerable in our congregations and communities at greater risk.** We must not let that happen. ([Philippians 2:3-4](#))
- **The risks of COVID-19 come primarily from the air we breathe;** COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets (meaning moisture that comes from talking, singing, coughing and sneezing) and the aerosol - literally, the air we share, (talking and breathing). This article provides a helpful overview of the science around potential transmission: [The Risks - Know Them - Avoid Them](#)
- We are **obligated to follow the legal and medical directives** provided by governing authorities. An updated list of requirements can be found at: <https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus/forwardvirginia/#856622>
- Check with your **insurance carrier** to examine their guidelines to limit your liability risks.
- **Clearly communicate** all of your plans multiple times, ways and places.
- Develop a plan to **notify the congregation** if someone in a gathering develops COVID-19.
- Be sure to develop **clear expectations and guidelines for outside groups** using church facilities.
- Remember that pandemics often come in waves that **may require a retreat from our progress** in gathering again to an earlier phase or “stay-at-home” orders.

Gathering Again for Worship

For the foreseeable future, the safest way to gather for worship is online. Congregations are encouraged to continue to offer digital worship opportunities through all Phases of Forward Virginia and beyond.

While the Office of the Bishop recommends not gathering for worship in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of Forward Virginia, **now is the time to prepare** for the future. The Virginia Synod staff prepared a Gathering Again document, but, after reviewing **ELCA Considerations**, based on Federal Guidelines, we decided not to duplicate their efforts. While the ELCA guidance does not align exactly with the Forward Virginia Phases of reopening, it is thorough, linked to additional resources and can be easily adapted to fit guidance from our Synod and the Forward Virginia Phases. **We ask that you carefully read and follow ELCA Considerations before gathering again in-person in any context.** Go to: vasynod.org/gathering-again for document links.

For a quick snapshot of how the Virginia Synod Office of the Bishop guidance on gathering again applies to the Commonwealth of Virginia's Phased Plan for Reopening, **see the following chart.**

GATHERING AGAIN

A guide for congregational leaders | May 2020



| | PHASE 1 | PHASE 2 | PHASE 3 | PHASE 4 | |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| RESTRICTION LEVEL | STRICT | SIGNIFICANT | LIMITED | RENEWAL | |
| Timeline | As declared by the Virginia Governor – Friday May 15, 2020 | As declared by the Virginia Governor | As declared by the Virginia Governor – and continues until an effective treatment or vaccine is available | <p><i>We see the Holy Spirit using this crisis to bring about welcome opportunities to refocus and reprioritize who we are, why we exist, and to what we are called</i></p> | |
| Worship | In person gathering NOT RECOMMENDED | | Review and follow ELCA guidelines | | |
| CONTINUE online, recorded, and/or printed worship resources for those unable or unwilling to attend | | | | | |
| Distancing | 6 feet of separation | Follow ALL of the most up-to-date Virginia, CDC, US and local directives for a safer gathering | | | |
| | Seating in every 3rd pew only | | | | |
| Communion | Do NOT celebrate Holy Communion | | WAFER ONLY | | |
| Pastors, Deacons, + Staff | Work primarily from home | | Return to workplace – on a limited basis | | |
| Staff in high risk status work primarily from home | | | | | |
| Visiting | NO hospital/care facility visits, homebound communion | | Limited visits and homebound communion (MASKS!) | | |