



St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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Dear People of God, the wilderness can be a lonely yet holy place where we come face to face with our own heart, and with our living God. I can't help but think about the Israelites. Their story is our story. Their time of wilderness wandering seems to mimic our wilderness wandering through COVID-19. These days of tumult have become a continuous reminder that we are in need of God's grace and peace in our lives. Each waking morning is a call to daily repentance, turning our hearts and our minds back to God that we may be made new. The wilderness seems to stir up a longing in us for the Holy Spirit to fill us, lead us, and strengthen us, for we do not know what lies ahead. Over my life time I have learned, and I am still learning, that God is present in our wilderness, in the dry places in our lives where God seems to be quiet.

For forty years the people of Israel wandered towards the Promised Land that God had given them. The days were intense with heat and long with anticipation for they did not know when it would end, when they would reach the doorway into the Promised Land. Yet God met them where they were. God made sure they had what they needed. They learned through every hard and grueling step how much they had to rely on God. This is what God did for them:

When Pharaoh let God's people go, God didn't lead them on the road that made the most sense. The Bible shows us in Exodus 13, that though the path was shorter right through the Philistine country, God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt" (Exodus 13:17).

In order to protect and preserve their faith God leads them by a desert road that will dead end when they reach the Red Sea (Exodus 13:18). This is perhaps the biggest physical obstacle they will face, seemingly too difficult to overcome, but God didn't forget about them. God splits the sea in two so that they can walk through on dry ground, escaping the Egyptians. The enemy, in hot pursuit, had no idea what they were up against.

Once they reached the other side God went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light (Exodus 13:21). Make note that God never left them alone on their journey. God's presence was always there, a reminder to them that they hadn't been left on their own in the wilderness. God guided them, giving them shade from the fierceness of the desert sun, and a light in the darkest of nights.

"Then the angel of God...withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them" (Exodus 14:19). God did this to protect them, to watch out for their backs. God was faithful to deliver them from attacks. During a battle against the fierce Amalekites God gave his people a great victory. The Bible reads, "Moses built an altar and called it The Lord is my Banner." He said, "For hands were lifted up to the throne of the Lord" (Exodus 17:15-16).

(continued on next page)

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

When they were hungry God sent manna (Exodus 16:4). When they were thirsty God sent water gushing from a rock (Exodus 17:6). Every day a miracle happened right before their eyes. They just had to pick up the manna, drink the water, and accept the blessing. Another time God made the bitter waters sweet again so they could drink. God gave them clothes and sandals that did not wear out. Over and over God provided for their needs, and yet they grumbled.

After all the grumbling, and wanting to return to Egypt to the way things used to be, God still insisted on leading them to the promised land. Just a few verses later the Lord replied, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest” ([Exodus 33:14](#)).

God is faithful in leading his people in order to bring us to completion, to finishing the good work that God started in us at Baptism. God’s faithfulness is never dependent on our ability to manifest faith within our heart. It is not dependent on how good we are. God is faithful even in our hardest struggles. Only God can turn our uncertainty and struggles into rest and peace. These past months of COVID wanderings have been difficult to endure. Forty years is an even longer time, but God doesn’t always work on our timetable. The good news is that God saw them through to the end and will see us through. God has never abandoned us. May we embrace the wilderness where we come face to face with our hearts and with our living God. The wilderness can be a holy place!

Peace and hope,
Pastor Michelle



Drive in Sunday Service July 26, 2020

L-R Pastor Michelle, Pastor Rachel, Pastor Monica, Vicar Bryan

Sharing Our Gifts: Time, Talents and Treasure

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

Thank you to some “quiet” servants

To all the volunteers who help with Micah's Backpack and Micah's Soup for Seniors; to the mowing crew; to John Kell and Fran Shepherd for weeding the yard; to Keith Gay for helping fold the July newsletter; to Elaine Powers for editing the newsletter; to Philip Isenhour for updating software on the church computer; to our church council for continuing to guide us through this challenging time; to all who donated disinfecting wipes (we are still accepting donations!) and to all who helped with our virtual Vacation Bible School.

Because of your gifts



Your generous gifts in July provided Vacation Bible School craft supplies, materials for our upcoming Sunday School, office supplies, batteries, a subscription to Zoom, our benevolence to the Virginia Synod, donations to MCEAP, Lutheran Campus Ministry, Bedford Lutheran Church and salaries for our staff.

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** assisted 8 families: 4 with their electric bills, 3 with rent assistance and 1 with food assistance. 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.

Price's Fork Teachers' Breakfast

We will not be supplying breakfast for the Price's Fork Elementary teachers this year as we have in the past due to COVID. We will be supporting the teachers and staff by supplying snacks and drinks for them. Snacks will need to be purchased and individually wrapped. Suggestions include granola bars, cookies, sandwich crackers or muffins and individual packs of chips and drinks such as water, sport drinks or soft drinks. Items can be left at church. Delivery dates and times can be found in the weekly email. The teachers return on September 1. Thank you for supporting the Price's Fork teachers and staff.

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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 **August 30th**. If you aren't able to print the bulletins from the website (lmlc.org), we will have a limited number available the morning of the service. You can listen to the service on channel FM 88.9 on the radio.

Mowing: 8/1–Dickie Shepherd (back); 8/8–James/Dennis (front); 8/15–John Stramiello (back); 8/22- Daniel Ferrell (front); 8/29–Dickie Shepherd (back)
Rear Lot: 8/3–Gary Steck; 8/10-George Hahn; 8/17- Jeff Crowder; 8/24-Doug Smiley;
8/31-Dave Surface

Women of the ELCA



Love Offering: Thank you to everyone who contributed to the annual Love Offering sponsored by Women of the ELCA. There is still time if you would like to participate, you can mail your donation to St. Michael, c/o Sandy Birch. Please make payable to VSWO and note “Love Offering” on the memo line of the check. She will forward them to VA Women of the ELCA.

Lunch and Learn: We will soon be making plans for how we may “meet” for fall, possibly by Zoom on your phone, iPad, computer, etc., as our church services have been since the beginning of COVID-19 and social distancing. There will be more information coming soon.



School Supplies: Each summer we collect school supplies for Price’s Fork Elementary. They are given to children who need extra assistance getting materials together for the school year. Black and white composition books and glue sticks are their suggestion this summer. If you would like to contribute, you may order online, shop yourself, or contribute money and we will shop. More details and drop off instructions will be in Thursday emails.

Linus Blankets: You may remember we made quite a few blankets for Project Linus last year. They are given to comfort children who are in local hospitals. We would like to make and donate some more this year. This will obviously be a “stay at home project” for sure this year. There is no need to sew, just measure, cut and tie knots! Fleece fabrics are on sale frequently at Walmart, Joann’s and other local fabric stores. There will be more information later about collection and delivery of the blankets. You may print out directions at: <http://nrprojectlinus.org/>

Summer Bible Studies at home: If there is anyone who does not have but would like the 3-part Bible study series “Just Love” from Lutheran Women’s *Gather* magazine, please contact Jody Smiley at jdsmiley29@comcast.net or call 540-250-6149. She’ll be happy to send it to you.

Thank you to everyone for all the many ways you help those in our community - every day!



Micah's Backpack Sharing the Story

Thank you to everyone who has continued to support Micah's Backpack and Micah's Mobile Backpack throughout this unusual and difficult summer. We are currently distributing bags on Mondays for families in a drive-thru fashion. This will go until the end of August. A big thank you to the many volunteers who have stepped up in so many different capacities to help with this.



As we approach a new school year, Micah's Backpack will be brainstorming ways to continue to meet the need in our community no matter what it may look like. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we figure out the safest way to pack and deliver food to the children in need. Unfortunately, in the midst of this pandemic, the need will only increase.

As you fill your Clicklist orders, we would appreciate donations of peanut butter this month. PB is always a fan favorite in the MBP world! Thank you in advance for considering.

We are continuing to pack and distribute 100 bags to the seniors at Warm Hearth. We are getting food from both Feeding America and Kroger. We are packing the bags at the church with four volunteers and then the staff at Warm Hearth picks the bags up about 4-5 days later and they give out the bags to the seniors. At this time, we are packing generic bags and are not following our normal "menu" option as in the past. However, this seems to be working well and the bags contain quite a few of the basic items - tuna/ peanut butter/ soup / spaghetti / cereal / fruit cups and crackers.



We recently received a COVID-19 response grant from the Virginia Synod. We are also looking at working with a catering kitchen to supply prepackaged meals to the seniors and hope that will work out.

We are excited we have found a way to continue to assist the low-income seniors at Warm Hearth and look forward to maintaining our program in this manner.



Micah's Garden continues to meet the needs of so many!
Thank you John Kell & Vicki Wall for your generosity
to deliver this bounty our Lord has provided!



Council Update

The past few months have left all of us wondering about one another. With no services, what has the Church Council been doing? After taking off the month of April, Council began to meet monthly in May. St. Michael was able to secure a PPP grant/loan from the U.S. government to assist with employee salaries and electricity. This has allowed us to continue to pay all employees. You may have read in emails that the mortgage on the new educational wing was paid off on May. This gives you the opportunity to direct your mortgage contribution to other ministry activities. Thank you for your continued support. The main focus at recent Council meetings has been to discuss the reopening of in-person services. The Virginia Synod has given us guidelines and questions to discuss as we prepare for the return to in-person services. We will let you know when decisions have been made and what those services may look like. We know there will be differences.

At the Zoom Congregational meeting on July 12 the Annual Report was approved. The motion to assist Pastor Michelle with the issues created by the black mold in her house was approved.

The Council appreciates your support and comments during this time. We know it is difficult not being able to attend worship services or to enjoy fellowship.

Thank You ...

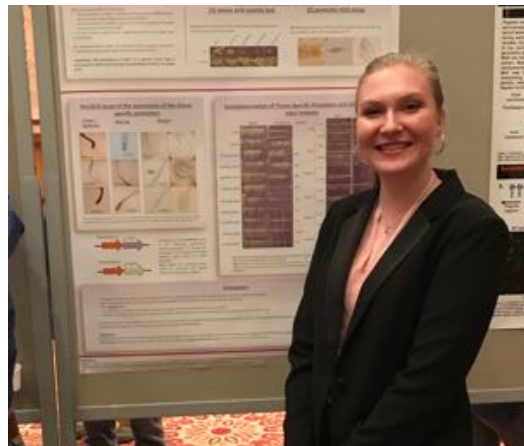
To our Vacation Bible School leaders during four fun weeks in July. Ten families enjoyed the Blacksburg Fellowship Virtual VBS with lessons, crafts and music created by Pastor Michelle, Vicar Bryan Katz, Maggie Maloney, Margaret Christle, and Patrice Yearwood. During the month, the children made sock puppets, prayer flags, and homemade musical instruments, played "Bingo", sang special songs, and prepared a prayer journal while filling their toolboxes with lessons on Discipleship, Music, Prayer, and Love. Snack time was based on Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" ... and all the snacks were "fruity", like applesauce, fruit roll-ups, and fruit bars, and were packaged with the craft supplies, song sheets, and lesson plans by Sandy Birch and Jody Smiley each week. Some of our Older Kids (O.K.s) enjoyed the Galatians lessons and snacks too and received a fruity package during the first week of VBS. It was a month filled with joy and love and a little bit of experimenting with new ways of learning.

Congratulations to...



Lindsay and Peter Hayes on the birth of their son, **Landry Benjamin**, on May 11. He joins proud big sister Lynnleigh, grandparents Sharon and Randy Robinson, Aunt Lauren and great-grandfather, Ben Simmers.

And to VT graduate, **Katherine Berg**, who will be attending graduate school at Texas A&M.



August 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 Watch the Sunday Service using Link found on LMLC.org 10:00 AM Drive-In Service at St. Michael	27 3:00 PM Micah's Backpack Drive-Up Deliveries (Volunteers are not needed at this time.)	28	29 10:00 AM Packing for Micah's Backpack (Volunteers are not needed at this time.)	30 9:00 AM Mother's Morning Out Open House for Parents 10:00 AM Packing for Micah's Backpack (Volunteers are not needed at this time.)	31 9:00 AM Mother's Morning Out Open House for Parents	1
2 Watch the Sunday Service using Link found on LMLC.org 6:00 PM Sunday School - Zoom with Pastor Michelle	3 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Micah's Backpack Drive-Up Deliveries (Volunteers are not needed at this time.)	4 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	5 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 10:00 AM Packing for Micah's Backpack (Volunteers are not needed at this time.) 7:00 PM Families of Faith - Zoom with Pastor Michelle	6 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 10:00 AM Packing for Micah's Backpack (Volunteers are not needed at this time.)	7	8
9 Watch the Sunday Service using Link found on LMLC.org 12:15 PM Congregational Church Council Meeting 6:00 PM Sunday School - Zoom with Pastor Michelle	10 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Micah's Backpack Drive-Up Deliveries (Volunteers are not needed at this time.)	11 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	12 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 10:00 AM Packing for Micah's Backpack (Volunteers are not needed at this time.) 7:00 PM Mid-Week Gathering with Pastor Michelle and the St. Michael Community on Zoom	13 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 10:00 AM Packing for Micah's Backpack (Volunteers are not needed at this time.)	14	15
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August-September Zooms with Pastor Michelle

	Date	Time	Meeting ID	Password
Families of Faith	Week 1 - August 5	7:00 p.m.	984 5321 1814	861560
1st and 3rd Wednesday	Week 2 - August 19	7:00 p.m.	911 1794 8895	902232
	Week 3 – September 2	7:00 p.m.	948 9456 2967	503318
	Week 4 – September 16	7:00 p.m.	957 6857 7254	582015
Midweek Gathering	August 12	7:00 p.m.	929 9668 6485	269972
2nd and 4th Wednesday	August 26	7:00 p.m.	714 838 7569	436144
	September 9	7:00 p.m.	934 1652 8634	882713
	September 23	7:00 p.m.	924 0396 5510	763522
Sunday School	August 2	6:00 p.m.	975 9938 2676	827052
	August 9	6:00 p.m.	975 9938 2676	827052
	August 16	6:00 p.m.	975 9938 2676	827052
	August 23	6:00 p.m.	975 9938 2676	827052
	August 30	6:00 p.m.	975 9938 2676	827052
	September 6	6:00 p.m.	975 9938 2676	827052
	September 13	6:00 p.m.	975 9938 2676	827052

Pastor Michelle will send out a Zoom link in an email each week for the Zoom meetings.