



St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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Welcome to Lent dear people of God!

The invitation to Lent spoken on Ash Wednesday reminds us that we as God's people enter this season together. We are created for communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. Though many common Lenten practices rightly invite us to individual acts of repentance, **prayer** and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love, Lent is also a time for deepening of community.

The question for this year is how do we grow in our faith together when we are isolated? Here are some ways we can deepen our community during Lent this year:

***Pray** for one another: Praying for others is a way to care for someone, even if they are halfway across the world. When we pray for others we offer them a piece of our faith, our belief and our heart. Praying for others leads us to a deeper sense of community that sustains us through every challenge.

*** Daily Bible reading:** The Bible teaches us vocabulary in our relationship with God and with each other. We don't read the Bible just to read our Bibles. We read with the goal to commune with God and with all God has created. As we grow in knowledge of God's word, we become more aware of God's voice in our day-to-day life. As we consider how to respond to one another, stories from the Old Testament and New Testament will come into view. The more we read, the more alive and active our relationships become. When we learn the language of God's own heart we engage our community more authentically.

*** Enter into the discipline of mid-week worship:** I know Zoom isn't for everyone, but what we feel makes God no less relevant than expressing our feelings in person. God shows up even when we don't because for God it is a matter of the heart. When we come with an expectant heart God is found there with us. To be a Christian means that we are part of the body of Christ, the Church. There is no such thing as an isolated and solitary Christian. In this way, all Christians are part of the Church, part of the community, and when you are not present the body misses you.

***Send a card:** Now is a good time to let someone in the community know they are missed. Pick up your church directory and look through the names and think of the things you miss about that person: their smile, their laugh, your Sunday morning conversations, hearing them read during church, sharing that morning cup of coffee together at the table. Whatever it is, write them a note and let them know. A handwritten letter says that we care and are willing to give personal attention to our siblings in Christ.

***Make a phone call:** Hearing someone's voice is always something very special, much more so if you don't get to see them as often as you'd like.

*** Sunday service:** Watch online and come to the drive-in service on the fourth Sunday of every month. Open your heart to being a part of community in these difficult times until we can meet safely in person. As a pastor feeling her way through a pandemic, this community has shown me that God shows up every Sunday regardless of what church looks like.

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* Sunday School: Come and join this faith-filled group of people at 6:00 p.m. to discover God at work in the midst of community. Sunday School provides a place to belong. In a Sunday School class we are known personally as God's people. It is a place where we share needs and concerns from our lives. It helps us build meaningful relationships by hearing each other's stories. We share fellowship time with class members. We minister alongside others.

* Write a letter or article for the weekly newsletter: Have some news you want to share? A feeling or idea you want to express? Then write it down and submit it to me via email for the weekly newsletter.

These are some of the ways we can deepen our communal Lenten journey together even though we are physically apart, but I encourage you to be creative. There is someone in this community that is longing to hear from you, to see you. So be of good courage and reach out trusting what God does.

Blessed Lenten Journey, Pastor Michelle

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 Keith Gay for helping fold the February newsletters; to Jim and Judy Clemens for their faithful weekly offering counting; and to our choir members and musicians who share the gift of music at the drive-in worship each month.

Because of your gifts

Your generous gifts in February supported our annual heat pump maintenance contract, our annual worker's compensation insurance policy, communion supplies, Lenten devotionals, monthly internet and phone, online church software renewal, our benevolence to the Virginia Synod, donations to MCEAP, Lutheran Campus Ministry, our mission partner (Bedford Lutheran Church), salaries for our ministerial staff, septic system maintenance and snow removal.

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** continues to assist our neighbors in the community and the world. In February, we assisted **four** families with funds towards **one** electric bill and **three** with rent payments. 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.



Micah's Mini Pantry

Micah's Caring Initiative is seeing some great things happening in 2021. Pastor Michelle has envisioned a new and much needed ministry. In a few weeks, the St. Michael Men in Mission Team will be helping to set up a Mini Pantry outside of the church (exact location to be determined). This pantry will consist of non-perishable items accessible to our Mercy and Justice recipients, with a vision to also assist the neighboring community, providing food for those in need. Donations of non-perishables such as **peanut butter, jelly, canned tuna, canned pasta, large boxes of cereal, large cans of soup, canned beans** and other items to be determined, may be left at the church. Micah's Backpack will oversee the operation of the Mini Pantry for now. If you feel called to lead this ministry, please contact Pastor Michelle at pastormichelle@stmls.us or call St. Michael 540-951-8951. Thank you in advance for your interest in and support of this new outreach. God's Work - Our Hands!



Micah's Backpack Sharing the Story



We have been averaging approximately 240 bags per week. The inclement weather has caused undue stress and created confusion for our volunteers because of school closings and delays, but they have all been amazing in getting the job done. Thank you to Doug, Mickey, Bill and Dale for picking up and delivering food items to MBP. I don't know how we would keep the shelves stocked without their assistance. A big shout out to everyone who responded to the request for snacks!

Speaking of volunteers, I would like to recognize Anna Rossomando this month. Anna writes and sends out all the thank you notes for Micah's Backpack. We get many donations during the year and Anna never misses a beat. Without this caring woman, and the gift she brings to this ministry, it would not be possible to thank everyone. She truly is a blessing! Thank you, Anna, this one is for you.



Micah's Soup for Seniors

We are continuing to pack and distribute 100+ bags to the seniors at Warm Hearth. We appreciate everyone's support as we feed those in need. We will be collecting small cans of **tuna** in March. You may drop off those donations at the church.



O.K.s (Older Kids)

March would be the time for our first Happy-Go-Lucky luncheon of the new year, but, unfortunately, the pandemic leprechauns had other plans. So we'll wish on our four-leaf clovers that we'll be able to gather together in June. In the meantime, we're all invited to fellowship and exploration at the monthly AARP meetings held via zoom. The topic for the March 16 meeting at noon is "Emotions in economic and financial decisions". Several St. Michael members are active in the Blacksburg chapter, including Todd Solberg (Board of Directors), Ben Crawford (AARP VA liaison), and Chaplain Sandy Birch who provides an inspirational message at each meeting. For more information about AARP and its activities, contact any of these folks or log onto www.blacksburgaarp.org.



AARP is sponsoring **Books for Vets** to collect gently used paperback and hardback books for our military veterans. Donated books can be brought to the drop box at the Blacksburg Rec Center or contact Sandy Birch at birch@vt.edu and she'll pick them up from your home. The books will then be taken to the Salem VA Center and the Beckley VA Center on a quarterly basis.

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Drive-in Service

Join St. Michael, Shiloh, New Mount Zion, Luther Memorial and Christ Lutheran for drive-in services this spring at the St. Michael parking lot. Services will include communion. Join us on Palm Sunday, **March 28th at 10 A.M.** for the next service. If you aren't able to print the bulletin 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.



Daylight saving time 2021 in Virginia will begin at 2:00 AM on Sunday, March 14.

Women of the ELCA

WELCA Wednesdays: Lunch and Learn: Wednesday March 17th at 12 noon. All women are invited to join our zoom group beginning with some visiting time, followed by a Bible Study, titled "Do We Have Enough?" We all know the story: A crowd of people follow Jesus out to the countryside and by evening they're all hungry. The disciples tell Jesus to send them away so they can go get supper in town. Jesus answers by saying, "**You** give them something to eat." We will explore the story and ask the question, "Is Jesus talking to **us**?" If you have any questions contact Jody Smiley at jdsmiley29@comcast.net.



Easter Baskets

Easter Baskets – You are invited to make an Easter Basket for a child whose family is in the care of the Women's Resource Center. These families are most often divided and struggling. The children are excited to receive an Easter Basket of treats when they come in for counseling. To keep social distancing guidelines, we'd like each family to put together a complete Easter Basket(s) at home, rather than gathering as a group at church to assemble them. Fill each basket with grass and you may include several varieties of candy (**no nuts, please**), a small toy or stuffed animal which easily fits in the basket, a story or learning book, writing or coloring paper & tools, or any other items you think appropriate for young children. You may specify whether your basket(s) are for a boy, girl, or either. We ask that you bring the baskets to church by Palm Sunday, March 28th. We have cellophane and will wrap and tie each of the baskets, then deliver all to the Women's Resource Center.

Hope to see you on WELCA Wednesday – Thank you for making Easter Baskets – and all the various ways you help our neighbors!

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.

Help Wanted

We are in the process of putting up wireless cameras at the fellowship hall double doors. If anyone is knowledgeable in this area and can assist in answering questions and with installation, please contact John Stramiello at 540-599-4682.

Thank You Notes

To the Congregation at St Michael,

My gratitude for all the prayers and support extended to me and my son at the death of my wife Sue.

It is very comforting knowing I have such a wonderful church family.

Thank you,

Butch and Chris

From the Virginia Synod:

I give thanks for your congregation's generous mission support to the Virginia Synod and for the ways that we are church together for the sake of the world.

Thank you for your partnership, your prayers, and your willingness to share your congregation's gifts to make ministry happen.

Peace and hope,

Pastor John Wertz, Jr.

Assistant to the Bishop

Director for Evangelical Mission

Virginia Synod, ELCA

Congratulations to...



Lorin Crowder who retired this past fall. Lorin enjoyed 31 years of teaching first grade (and sometimes other primary grades) with most of her experience in Montgomery County. She is spending her retirement training for a triathlon, spoiling a new kitten, and serving on the St. Michael Church Council. Lorin is also a volunteer with Virginia Department of Health Medical Reserve Corps and is helping with COVID vaccinations.

Deadline for the St. Michael Scholarship - April 25

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. Please contact Lorin Crowder for more information. lorinhcrowder@gmail.com

February 16, 2021

Vaccinate VIRGINIA

This is an update from the Virginia Department of Health about the status of COVID-19 vaccinations in Virginia. The available supply of vaccine is still very limited around the country, and **we know the wait has been frustrating**.

The good news is that state and local public health officials and many partners have been **working tirelessly to get vaccines to as many people as possible**, as quickly as possible:

- More than 1.4 million doses have already been administered by Virginia, including nearly 95% of the first doses available to the state. You can track Virginia's progress on the [Vaccine Dashboards](#).
- Virginia ranks 12th among all states for percent of the population that has received at least one dose, and 9th among all states for percent of available doses administered, according to CDC data presented by the [New York Times](#).

Today, we launched a **new statewide vaccine pre-registration system**, to make it easier for people to sign up for a free COVID-19 vaccination. If you receive an email containing the information on this page, you have been transferred automatically to the new statewide system and **you do not need to do anything at this time**. You will maintain your current status, and can confirm that you are in the new system at any time, at vaccinate.virginia.gov.

The country still needs more vaccine supply to be able to get shots in the arms of everyone who wants them. **Unfortunately, it may take weeks or months** before everyone currently on waitlists is able to make an appointment. Although the complexities of vaccine distribution do not make it possible to give an estimated appointment date, we will send you regular reminders that you are still on the pre-registration list.

When your appointment becomes available, there will be no charge. State and local agencies will never call, email or text you to ask for your social security number or immigration status in connection with vaccination. For additional information, including frequently asked questions and details about vaccine eligibility, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/ or <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines>.

St. Michael Lutheran Church

March 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Second Sunday in Lent Sunday School Will Resume April 11 Watch the Sunday Service using Link found on LMLC.org 10:00 AM Drive-In Service at St. Michael	1 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	2 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	3 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lesson 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00 PM Mid-Week Lenten Service via Zoom	4 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 4:30 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study via Zoom	5 10:00 AM Delivering Micah's Backpack Gifts of Food	6
7 Sunday School Will Resume April 11 Third Sunday in Lent Watch the Sunday Service using Link found on LMLC.org	8 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	9 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	10 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lesson 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00 PM Mid-Week Lenten Service via Zoom	11 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 4:30 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study via Zoom	12 10:00 AM Delivering Micah's Backpack Gifts of Food	13
14 Daylight Savings - Spring Forward Fourth Sunday in Lent Sunday School Will Resume April 11 Watch the Sunday Service using Link found on LMLC.org 12:15 PM Congregational Church Council Meeting	15 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	16 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	17 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 12:00 PM WELCA Lunch and Learn via Zoom 2:30 PM Music Lesson 5:30 PM St. Michael Quartet Practice and Record 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00 PM Mid-Week Lenten Service via Zoom	18 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 4:30 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	19 10:00 AM Delivering Micah's Backpack Gifts of Food	20
21 Fifth Sunday in Lent Sunday School Will Resume April 11 Watch the Sunday Service using Link found on LMLC.org	22 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	23 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	24 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lesson 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00 PM Mid-Week Lenten Service via Zoom	25 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 4:30 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	26 10:00 AM Delivering Micah's Backpack Gifts of Food	27
28 Palm Sunday Sunday School Will Resume April 11 Watch the Sunday Service using Link found on LMLC.org 10:00 AM Drive-In Service at St. Michael	29 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	30 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	31 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lesson 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	1 4:30 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Service Live via Zoom	2 10:00 AM Delivering Micah's Backpack Gifts of Food 7:00 PM Good Friday Tenebrae Service Live via Zoom	3 Easter Vigil Service (details tbd)

Updated Calendar Information is available online at: www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org