



St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

2308 Merrimac Road

Blacksburg, VA 24060

540.951.8951

hope@stmlc.us

www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org

Volume 45, Number 10

October 1, 2021

Dear Saints,

While on vacation, John and I visited a church in North Carolina that showed us, the way we welcome visitors is a vital step in church growth. Many church members, pastors and greeters have forgotten what it's like to be a stranger in a new church. As John and I walked through the front doors of the church that morning, it did not take us long to become keenly aware that we were mere strangers in a strange place. Being a pastor and knowing that people's Christianity informs them that the stranger is welcome, is not enough to keep the brave stranger walking through the doors coming back.

The redeeming death of Jesus saves individuals, but it does more than just this. It creates communities, miraculously forming redeemed people into churches who live as family with one another. In Romans 15:7, the apostle Paul identifies the ground and goal of true community: "Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

John and I were eagerly hoping that someone would sense our trepidation as newcomers and take some time to let us know that we were welcome among them in order to put us at ease. Walking towards the usher we were greeted with a hello and then given a bulletin. As we stood there, we realized we were left to figure the rest out on our own. With no other conversation we gingerly made our way into the sanctuary and after sizing it up we took a seat at the end of a row.

We arrived early not knowing the traffic patterns of that area, or the approximate time it would take to travel from our accommodations to the church. Being newcomers, we figured it is better to walk in early rather than late. I told John how foreign it feels, even as a pastor, to be in a new place of worship. People walking around in the sanctuary with a sense of mission leading us to believe they had a long history in the church. As the people started to arrive and the sanctuary filled up more and more, people made eye contact with us, but no one raised a hand to wave or nod their head in acknowledgment. It was as if the man with the striped goatee and the lady with the red hair were invisible to the entire congregation.

After the service John left me alone in the fellowship hall to go use the restroom. A crowd of people walked past me as if I was part of the landscape. Not one person stopped to talk, therefore I started to greet people, only to receive a polite hello back as they made their way past me. I couldn't help but wonder how many of their council meetings were spent in conversation of why their numbers were shrinking. They had one chance to welcome the stranger, and if we had lived in that town, next Sunday we would have gone somewhere else. I would have to say that nobody wants to feel that weird and awkward and that much of an outsider when visiting a new church.

Every church wants to be a welcoming church, but the way we think of "welcoming" is often superficial. We limit it to a warm greeting with a smile and a handshake without expressing an eagerness for relationship. Paul's understanding of "welcome" is deeper because it is rooted in the gospel reaching high to accomplish relationship that leads to church growth.

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“Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” Paul wrote these words to the church in Rome, which was experiencing considerable tension between Jewish and Gentile Christians, who disagreed about eating certain foods and observing certain days. Into this conflict, Paul declared the gospel truth that “Christ has welcomed you.”

Christ’s welcome isn’t just a friendly handshake and a pleasant smile. It is salvation, “For, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved ” (Romans 10:13). It is reconciliation, “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life” (Romans 5:10). It is acceptance into the family of God, “It is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16). And it is costly: It took Christ’s death in our place, and resurrection from the dead, so that we could be welcomed by him.

Christ’s welcome of us is the basis of our ongoing welcome of others, “welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.” Because Jesus died in our place to welcome us into God’s family, our welcoming of others means we live as if this is most certainly true.

It takes incredible bravery for a stranger to walk into our sanctuary. May we never miss an opportunity to honor their bravery by welcoming them among us. It is the vital step in growing the church.

God’s Peace,
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

Thank you to Margaret Larsen, Betty Wingate, Judith Wolfe and Keith Gay for helping fold the September newsletter; to Philip Isenhour for fixing office computer issues; to John Krallman for keeping our finances in perfect order; to Jody Smiley for leading the online Lunch and Learn Bible Study; to the lawn mowing team for all their hard work this summer; and to Fran and Dickie Shepherd, John Kell and George Santopietro for working in the church yard in September.

Because of your gifts

Core
Ministry
Fund



Your generous gifts in September provided stamps, *Christ in Our Home* devotional renewal, our annual music copyright license renewal, online computer back up subscription renewal, online church directory software renewal, supply pastor pay, our monthly support to the Virginia Synod, staff salaries and utility expenses.

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** continues to assist our neighbors in the community and the world. In September, we assisted **eight families**: **two** with rent, **two** with water bills and **four** with electric bills.

Thank You Note ...

*Dear Saints of St. Michael,
Thank you so much for the most beautiful and unique gift of a bonsai tree in honor of my ordination. It sits in my breakfast nook at my parsonage, so I can admire it often. I felt the movement of the Holy Spirit swirling down from Blacksburg that day! I remain so grateful to be connected in faith and love to you all!*

*Peace,
Pastor Alyssa*

Altar Care - Preparing the Sanctuary

We would love some assistance in getting our sanctuary ready for worship each Sunday. Responsibilities include opening the hallway shades, setting up the table in the narthex with the communion elements basket (from the kitchen) and the bulletins, turning on the lights, preparing the bread and wine for the altar and maybe another easy task or two (all written out for you). The sign-up sheet is on the hallway bulletin board. We look forward to altar care returning to its original responsibilities soon but until then, we thank you for your consideration of these special tasks. If you have any questions, please talk with Doug Smiley or Sandy Birch.

O.K. (Older Kids)

While we'd love to celebrate together with our Happy-Go-Lucky luncheons, it just doesn't seem responsible to do so while masking and social distancing is being practiced in worship. In the meantime we'll be patient and look forward to the right time to begin our partying again. Watch for future announcements.



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2308 Merrimac Road
Blacksburg, VA 24060**

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October Sunday Servants

	October 3	October 10	October 17	October 24	October 31
Altar Care	Smiley and Birch				
10 AM Service					
Greeters/Ushers	Sandy Williams Dave Surface	Fran Shepherd Dickie Shepherd	Jody Smiley Doug Smiley	Wilma Pieper Butch Akers	Sandy Birch Jeff Birch
Lay Reader	John Stramiello	Jane Swing	Mickey McGuigan	Dianne Krallman	Anna Rossamando

Please Note: Greeters, please take the attendance, write down the number and place in the offering plate. Paper and pen are in the bookshelf drawer.

Mowing Schedule: 10/2-Matthew James (front); 10/9-Jay Nagle (back);
10/16-Daniel Ferrell (front); 10/23-Dickie Shepherd (back); 10/30-Matthew James (front)

Rear Lot: 10/4-Dave Surface; 10/11-Doug Smiley; 10/18-Gary Steck; 10/25-Jeff Crowder



Micah's Backpack

By the fourth week of the school year, 6,000 meals had been packed and delivered through the Micah's Backpack Program. MBP continues to partner with Jersey Mike's Subs whereby the last Saturday of each month is Micah's Backpack Day! We were presented a check in August for \$401.00. Please stop in to get some freshly prepared food while helping to support our students. Our next event is October 30th.



We are still in need of snacks, specifically individually wrapped peanut butter crackers, cheese crackers and fruit & grain bars.

Sunday, September 21st, was a great success for **God's Work - Our Hands**. We filled up the MCI van halfway with much needed items for the Women's Resource Center. Thank you to all four churches for this concerted effort. Thank you, Mickey, for driving the items to the Resource Center!

Don't forget about our Amazon Wish List. You can find the link on Micah's Backpack Website. Please feel free to share the link with friends and family.

NO CHILD SHOULD GO HUNGRY

In God's Service
John J. Stramiello, Director
PH: 540-599-4682
Email: hope@micahsbackpack.org
Email: stram@stmhc.us

Micah's Closet



Thank you to all the shoppers who purchased clothing for Micah's Closet. This year we are partnering with Mosaic, enabling the number of students served to be increased to 55. The Head Start daycare children were included and their parents let us know of their child's needs. It is exciting to be able to assist more families. Thank you for making this possible.

Micah's Mini Pantry



We are excited to see that Micah's Mini Pantry is being used so much! We continue to see a lot of movement with items being taken and being left, just as a successful pantry should be. Thank you all for your support of this most needed community outreach program! It makes our hearts happy. Remember to please **take what you need and leave what you can**. All donations are greatly appreciated.

We are in special need of personal care items to include toothpaste, toothbrushes, dental floss, bar soaps, hair products, hygiene products like toilet paper, deodorant and feminine items, band-aids, sunscreen, anti-biotic creams, and even can openers. They are being taken as soon as they are placed in the mini pantry.

Other donations of non-perishable, non-expired foods such as peanut butter, jelly, canned tuna, canned pasta, boxes of cereal, cans of soup, canned beans, canned vegetables, and canned meats and proteins are needed as well.

Please continue to donate at the in-person church services and on Mondays from 10 a.m. - noon. Thank you!

God's Work - Our Hands

Micah's Soup for Seniors

We are continuing to pack and distribute over 100 bags to the seniors at Warm Hearth. We are getting food from both Feeding America and Kroger. We are starting back to our almost "normal" routine of packing the bags at the church with volunteers and then loading up the cars and delivering them to Warm Hearth. We are being asked at this time to only knock at the door and leave the bags. Since we are packing generic bags and are not following our normal menu option as in the past this worked well during our delivery in August. The bags contain quite a few of the basic items: tuna, peanut butter, soup, spaghetti, cereal, fruit cups and canned vegetables along with any special items we may be able to get from Feeding America.



We will be packing and delivering the 4th Tuesday of each month. We are packing at 10 a.m. and then leaving immediately afterwards to deliver.

Our schedule for the next several months will be:

October 26th

November 23rd

December 28th

We are excited to be back delivering to the seniors at Warm Hearth and look forward to continuing our program in this manner.

We will be collecting **tomato soup** for the month of **October**.

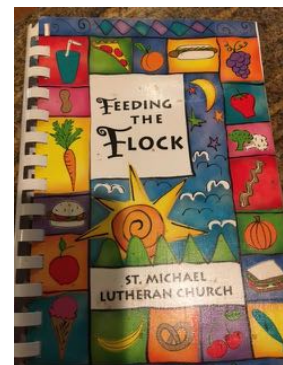
Gardening



October 2 will be the last gardening and weeding day for this season. Some areas need a little work and some areas haven't been touched this year. Bring your gloves and gardening tools to put the beds to rest. Come anytime between 9:00 a.m. and 12 noon.

There is such a thing as a free lunch...

...or in this case, a **free** cookbook with recipes for **lunch**. In 2007, we published the *Feeding the Flock* cookbook filled with favorite recipes of our St. Michael family. We not only covered our printing costs but also were able to donate over \$1,400 to our Justice and Mercy fund from the profits. Now it's time to clean the closet and offer the cookbook **for free** to our St. Michael family and friends. The cookbooks are available on the front hallway shelf. Please take one or two for friends and family. Enjoy!



Women of the ELCA



WELCA Wednesdays: Lunch and Learn: All St. Michael ladies are invited to participate in the next of our fall Lunch and Learn series, at noon on Wednesday October 20th. Weather permitting, we will meet outside church, share lunch together, have fellowship and a Bible study. Our Bible study will continue to explore “The Gifts of the Spirit”. **Session 2 is titled Breath of**

God: Reviver and reformer. The Holy Spirit is the breath of God, giving life and building community. Beginning with the breath God gave that first human, continuing with the breath that made dry bones dance, God’s Spirit continues to revive us. We will see the ways that the Spirit gives life—not just to us as individuals, but to our communities, reconciling us and forming us into life-giving communities, even in our diversity. If you have any questions please contact Jody Smiley, If you have any questions contact Jody Smiley, [jdsmlley@comcast.net](mailto:jdsmiley@comcast.net) or Alice Schneider, aa_schneid@yahoo.com.

The Virginia Synodical Women’s Organization had a successful 2021 Annual Convention with a gathering of around 50 women from throughout the state on Saturday, September 25th. The theme was “Planted in Love, Pivotal in Purpose”.

Blacksburg-Radford Lutheran Fellowship Reformation Day Service

The Blacksburg-Radford Lutheran Fellowship is forming a choir to sing as part of a special Reformation Day service on October 31, at 3:00 p.m. at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church. Singers from Luther Memorial, New Mount Zion, St. Michael, Shiloh, Christ Radford and Our Savior Lutheran will present choral music for Reformation Sunday with organ and brass accompaniment. Singers can attend rehearsals at St. Michael on Wednesday evenings or Sunday mornings after church. Please contact our St. Michael Music Director, Patrice Yearwood, for more information. (payearwood1@gmail.com)

Men’s Bible Study

Attention gentlemen! John Stramiello will lead a men's Bible study on Thursday evenings at 7 p.m. via Zoom. The first meeting will be October 7. John would be happy to answer any questions regarding this exciting new opportunity. He can be reached at stram@stmlc.us or 540-599-4682. Be on the lookout for a Zoom link and sign in information in the weekly email, News and Notes.

St. Michael Lutheran Church

October 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 9:00 AM Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00 AM Indoor Worship Service at St. Michael 10:00 AM Watch Virginia Synod Online Worship Service at peacehopeva.org 11:00 AM Choir Practice	27 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	28 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 10:00 AM Packing and Delivering for Soup for Seniors 4:00 PM Music Lessons 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack	29 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons 6:30 PM Choir Practice	30 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study via Zoom	1	2 9:00 AM Church Yard Clean Up 10:00 AM The Quilting Party to Meet in Parking Lot
3 9:00 AM Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00 AM Indoor Worship Service at St. Michael 10:00 AM Watch Virginia Synod Online Worship Service at peacehopeva.org	4 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	5 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 4:00 PM Music Lessons	6 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 6:30 PM Choir Practice	7 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study via Zoom	8	9
10 9:00 AM Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00 AM Indoor Worship Service at St. Michael 10:00 AM Watch Virginia Synod Online Worship Service at peacehopeva.org 11:00 AM Choir Practice 11:15 AM Congregational Church Council Meeting	11 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	12 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 4:00 PM Music Lessons	13 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 6:30 PM Choir Practice	14 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study via Zoom	15	16
17 9:00 AM Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00 AM Indoor Worship Service at St. Michael 10:00 AM Watch Virginia Synod Online Worship Service at peacehopeva.org 11:00 AM Choir Practice	18 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	19 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 4:00 PM Music Lessons 7:00 PM Price Family Historical Society	20 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 12:00 PM WELCA Lunch & Learn 3:00 PM Music Lessons 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 6:30 PM Choir Practice	21 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study via Zoom 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study via Zoom	22	23
24 9:00 AM Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00 AM Indoor Worship Service at St. Michael 10:00 AM Watch Virginia Synod Online Worship Service at peacehopeva.org 11:00 AM Choir Practice	25 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	26 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 10:00 AM Packing and Delivering for Soup for Seniors 4:00 PM Music Lessons	27 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 6:30 PM Choir Practice	28 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study via Zoom 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study via Zoom	29	30
31 9:00 AM Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00 AM Indoor Worship Service at St. Michael 10:00 AM Watch Virginia Synod Online Worship Service at peacehopeva.org 3:00 PM Blacksburg-Radford Lutheran Fellowship Reformation Day Service at Luther Memorial	1 All Saints Day 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	2 General Election - Office Closed 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	3 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 6:30 PM Choir Practice	4 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study via Zoom	5	6

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