



St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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Dearly beloved,

Love is what makes God truly God. Of course, in our human experience, love takes various forms. As I learned when studying Greek in seminary the English language by comparison is quite limited in expressing love's meaning. The classical Greek world was far more precise and used various forms of the word to explain the different kinds of love: *philia* is the kind of affectionate love shared between sisters and brothers or close friends, *eros* is erotic love, sexual desire or romantic attraction, and *agape* is that unchangeable, unbreakable, unconditional love which we see in God.

Each of these kinds of love involves risk and vulnerability, including the possibility of rejection. One of my most loved quotations is by a favorite theologian, C. S. Lewis, in his book, *The Four Loves*:

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket – safe, dark, motionless, airless – it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable... The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell.”

Love is not a series of warm feelings, or an assurance that everything will end up well. Love requires commitment and handing over part of yourself to another, both of which come with risk to the heart. In the Gospels, Jesus is quite honest about this risk because it cost him everything. In fact, he makes it very clear, “*No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.*” {John 15: 13}.

Blessed Valentine's Day,
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 Lynda Kinzey and Margaret Larsen for folding the January newsletter; to John Krallman for his work throughout the year as our Financial Officer; and to John Kell for churchyard clean up.

Because of your gifts



Your generous gifts in January supported office supplies, batteries, staff Christmas gifts, poinsettias, annual *Living Lutheran* subscription renewals for members, the yearly pest control contract, the bulk mail permit and postage for monthly newsletters, annual property insurance and Micah’s Mobile bus insurance, heat pump maintenance, our benevolence to the Virginia Synod, donations to MCEAP, Lutheran Campus Ministry and our mission partner, Peace and Hope, and salaries for our ministerial staff and Supply Pastor.

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** continues to assist our neighbors in the community and the world. In January, we helped **five** families: **two** with rent assistance and **three** with electric bills.

Altar Flowers



Sign-up sheets for 2022 are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway. Thank you for serving in this special way. Each week, Sandie Worley and Anna Rossomando purchase flowers from Kroger and create our two bouquets for Sunday worship. The cost of the flowers is \$30 if members of the congregation would like to sponsor the bouquets in memory of a loved one or to celebrate an anniversary or birthday. The donors are welcome to take one or both of the bouquets home after the service. Each week, the “flower ladies” will deliver any remaining bouquets to our Soup for Senior friends at Warm Hearth or to any St. Michael members who might be hospitalized, in nursing homes or at home recovering from surgery.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on March 2, 2022
Micah's Backpack





During 2021 Micah's Backpack packed 9,750 bags of food, representing 58,500 meals, and 136,500 items of food. This includes jars of grape jelly and an extra protein for the Winter break. Due to the increase of in-kind donations and smart purchasing, costs per bag of food decreased to \$4.67.

MBP engaged more than 500 volunteers, to include fundraisers and food drives, which equates to more than 2,500 hours of volunteering. Volunteers included twelve sororities and fraternities, five athletic groups, and four educational groups, all from Virginia Tech who helped with packing, fundraising and food drives. Kipp's Farm Subdivision volunteered and hosted a food drive. The Radford University women's basketball team helped out with packing.

Also in 2021, MBP created an Amazon Wish List which brought more than 1,800 items of food from four different states delivered directly to Micah's. New sponsors for 2021 are Gillman Services, Inc., CharMarie Salon, Clay Corner Inn, Zaxby's, Blacksburg Boxing and Fitness, Next Door Bake Shop, Chicken Salad Chick and Bear Dance Market & CBD Café. MBP partnered with local radio station Positive Radio Station once again, allowing us to expand our social media venue. Micah's Backpack Website has been updated and Facebook interaction has increased, as well as Instagram activity. MBP is also a member of the Virginia Synod World Hunger Team.

A Ford 2007 E150 utility van was purchased for purposes of securing and delivering food to Micah's. The van was also used for the Micah's Mobile Backpack Summer Program. Due to the overwhelming support from our congregation and our community the van has been paid for in full.

MBP received large donations from the following organizations: Graff Research, \$2,560; CFNRV grant, \$4,000; Chicken Salad Chick, \$4,409; Linda Smith Charitable Fund, \$5,000; the Town of Blacksburg Grant, \$5,000; the Eddie Yeatts Memorial Foundation, \$10,000; AT&T, \$10,000. The annual Cummings/Ivers Challenge yielded a total of \$11,156.92 for 2021.

With all the challenges in 2021, Micah's Backpack continued to make a great impact in the community contributing food resources to students and their families. Micah's Initiative will strive to overcome any future challenges with the support of our community.

Due to inclement weather MBP delivered only 750 bags in January. For **February** MBP is collecting individual snack packages such as **peanut butter crackers**, **cheese crackers**, and **Cheez-It® baked crackers**.

For more information please contact John J. Stramiello at hope@micahsbackpack.org.

Micah's Mini Pantry



Micah's Mini Pantry thanks you all for supporting their caring and giving ministry. With your help, we continue to remember the needs of others in our community. Your generous donations make our hearts happy. We are grateful for you!

The colder months are here and warm meals warm the body. Please consider donations of non-perishable, non-expired foods such as peanut butter, jelly, canned pasta, boxes of cereal, cans of soup, canned beans, canned vegetables, snacks, hot chocolate, tea, popcorn, oatmeal, and other canned meats and proteins.

There is continued need for personal care items. They include - toothpaste, toothbrushes, floss, bar soaps, hair products, hygiene products like toilet paper, deodorant and feminine items, band-aids, sunscreen, anti-biotic creams, and even can openers.

Remember - **take what you need and leave what you can.** All donations are greatly appreciated!

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

Peace, love, and many blessings.

God's Work - Our Hands

Micah's Soup for Seniors

We will be packing and delivering the 4th Tuesday of each month. **February 22** is the pack date for this month. We are packing at 10 a.m. and then leaving immediately afterwards to deliver. We are elated to be back delivering to the seniors at Warm Hearth and look forward to continuing our program in this manner. We will be collecting 5-ounce cans of **tuna** in **February**. Thanks for all you do to help out Micah's Soup for Seniors.



Souper Bowl Sunday, February 13



The Annual Souper Bowl of Caring will take place on Sunday, February 13. St. Michael will join thousands of churches across the country by raising money to help fight hunger. Plan to bring canned goods and a dollar or two that day to put in the Soup Pot at church. You can also contribute by mail or online via the church website. Food for Micah's Backpack and Micah's Soup for Seniors can be dropped off at the church. Suggested items: canned vegetables, fruit cups, Easy Mac, tomato soup, vegetable soup, chicken

noodle soup and ravioli. The money and canned goods will help relieve hunger in our community.

St. Michael Lutheran Church
2308 Merrimac Road
Blacksburg, VA 24060

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February Sunday Servants

	February 6	February 13	February 20	February 27
Altar Care	Doug Smiley	and	Sandy Birch	
10:00 AM Service				
Greeters/Ushers	Barbara Corbett Lynn Hickok	Gary Steck Becky Steck	Jenny Kellinger Sandy Williams	Wilma Pieper Dave Surface
Lay Reader	John Stramiello	Margaret Christle	Gary Worley	Mickey McGuigan

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

Women of the ELCA

WELCA Wednesday: Lunch and Learn:

Lunch and Learn for February will be held on **Wednesday, February 16th at noon**. All St. Michael ladies are invited. For now, our plan is to meet at church for fellowship, a light lunch and bible study. We will socially distance and wear our masks when not eating. A zoom link will be provided for those that cannot attend in person. If our plans change, they will

be noted in the weekly News and Notes email. We will continue to explore “The kingdom of God: What does it mean for God to be in charge?” In February, our study is titled “Mysteries of the kingdom: Parables, banquets and children” – We will consider “kingdom parables” and ask how the kingdom of God is like a net or a treasure or a pearl or whatever. We will also look at an “acted parable” in which Jesus dramatizes the “kingdom” as a banquet where honored guests include misfits and outcasts. And then we will discover (or recall) who we should regard as the greatest in the kingdom and the most important members of any church. If you have any questions and/or need the zoom link please contact Jody Smiley, jdsmiley29@comcast.net or Alice Schneider, aa_schneid@yahoo.com .



The Virginia Synodical Women's Organization (VSWO) is pleased to announce the dates for their 2022 convention/gathering. It will be held on August 12th-13th, 2022 at the Hotel 24 South (formerly the Stonewall Jackson) in Staunton. The VSWO will be celebrating coming together in person for the first time in over 2 years. This is a great venue, and the town of Staunton is a wonderful place to explore. Please mark your calendars. Stay tuned for more information as it becomes available.

If you have any questions please contact Jody Smiley, jdsmiley29@comcast.net or visit vswo.org.

Congregational Council Officers for 2022

Council Officers for 2022 are: President – Mickey McGuigan, Vice President – Keith Gay, Secretary – Margaret Christle and Financial Officer – John Krallman. Other Council members are Butch Akers, Jada Brown, Jim Clemens, Lorin Crowder, Forrest Sloan and Fran Shepherd. Please contact any Council member with questions, suggestions, or concerns.

Living Lutheran Magazine

All members of St. Michael are welcome to enjoy the monthly ELCA magazine *Living Lutheran*. If you are not already receiving it and would like to, please email Suzanne at

suzanneg@stmlc.us. If you no longer care to receive the magazine, please let Suzanne know and she will remove your name.

Thank You Notes

St. Michael Lutheran Church,

Thank you very much for your donation to MCEAP. Your generous gift makes it possible for our organization to best serve the needs of the people of Montgomery County while creating a community of caring and sharing.

Sincerely, Vicki Kitts, Corresponding Secretary, MCEAP

Thank you! To the members of St. Michael Lutheran Church for your congregation's gift of Mission Support to the Virginia Synod in 2021. Your gift helps ministry happen in Virginia, around the country, and across the world.

From the Virginia Synod, ELCA

Dear Pastor Michelle and the Members of St. Michael,

Thank you for being one of the founding partners for Peace and Hope and for your continuing partnership with the ministry.

With your help, Peace and Hope has grown from a dream to a weekly worshiping community that proclaims God's love to those who are looking for a traditional Lutheran worship experience in a digital space.

In the coming year, Peace and Hope will be adding Virginia Lutheran Homes as a partner, will be providing more faith formation opportunities, and will continue to offer weekly worship.

This will be an exciting year in the development of Peace and Hope. Thank you for helping to make this new ministry possible and for your continued partnership.

Pastor John Wertz, Jr., Director for Evangelical Mission, Virginia Synod, ELCA

Choir News



Thank you to ALL our St. Michael musicians for beautiful music and special anthems in the month of December:

Choir members: Laura Gruss, Lorin Crowder, Inga Solberg, Jane Swing, Gary Worley, Doug Smiley, Mickey McGuigan, Forrest Sloan, Jeff Birch, our accompanist, Daniel Taylor

Handbell Choir Members: Laura Gruss, Rich Gruss, Lily Gruss, Jane Swing, Maggie Maloney, Miles Maloney, Lynda Kinzey, Doug Smiley, Daniel Taylor

Special anthems: Megan Christle, Lily Gruss, Reed Yearwood

Instrumentalists: Katie Katz, Reed Yearwood, Daniel Taylor



The St. Michael Choir rehearses on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. Per Covid protocol, we wear masks and only sing together for an hour. We welcome new members! If you love to sing, come join us! Look for new members Taryn and Kent in our ranks on Sundays. We are so happy they have joined us!

We are looking forward to many inspirational and musically pleasing anthems to sing in February and through May. Rehearsals will also be on Sundays after the church service starting soon. We will be combining with the other Blacksburg-Radford Churches to present *In Calvary's Shadow* on Good Friday and will need more time to rehearse and get ready. This piece will combine music and word for a very special Tenebrae service that you do not want to miss. Mark your calendar now- April 15, 2022. Time to be determined.

Handbells will begin to ring again soon too. Rehearsals will begin late February through the beginning of April. We welcome new members!

Contact Patrice Yearwood, Music Director at payearwood1@gmail.com for questions or to sign up!

Winter Weather Reminder

Winter weather sometimes requires a change in the worship schedule. When that happens, it will be announced through the following outlets:

Post on Facebook

Email to Congregation

Voicemail Message on Church Phone

Change to the Church On-Line Calendar

Post it on Local TV Networks: Channel 7 and Channel 10



Families of Faith Gathering on February 20

All families with children and youth are invited to a time of food, crafts and fellowship with Families of Faith. Come to the fellowship hall on Sunday, February 20 at 4:00 for a fun time.

December 2021



Megan Christle and Lily Gruss



February 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 9:00 AM Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00 AM Worship Service with Communion	31 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 4:30 PM Scout Planning Meeting	1 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons	2 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00 PM Choir Practice	3 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study via Zoom 7:00 PM Scout Troop Meeting	4	5
6 9:00 AM First Communion Class 9:00 AM Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00 AM Worship Service with Communion 11:00 AM Safety and Security Committee Meeting	7 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	8 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons	9 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00 PM Choir Practice	10 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study via Zoom 7:00 PM Scout Troop Meeting	11	12
13 Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday 9:00 AM First Communion Class 9:00 AM Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00 AM Worship Service with Communion 11:15 AM Church Council Meeting	14 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	15 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons 7:00 PM Price Family Historical Society	16 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 12:00 PM WELCA Lunch and Learn In Person and via Zoom 3:00 PM Music Lessons 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00 PM Choir Practice	17 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study via Zoom 7:00 PM Scout Troop Meeting	18	19 12:00 PM Scout Troop Training Meeting in the Fellowship Hall
20 9:00 AM First Communion Class 9:00 AM Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00 AM Worship Service with Communion 11:00 AM Safety and Security Committee Meeting 4:00 PM Families of Faith	21 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	22 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 10:00 AM Packing and Delivering for Soup for Seniors 3:00 PM Music Lessons	23 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00 PM Choir Practice	24 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study via Zoom 7:00 PM Scout Troop Meeting	25	26
27 Transfiguration of Our Lord 9:00 AM First Communion Class 9:00 AM Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00 AM Worship Service with Communion	28 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out	1 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons 5:30 PM Quilting Party in the Fellowship Hall	2 Ash Wednesday 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 3:00 PM Music Lessons 6:00 PM Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00 PM Choir Practice	3 8:45 AM Mother's Morning Out 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study via Zoom 7:00 PM Scout Troop Meeting	4	5