



# St. Michael Messenger

St. Michael Lutheran Church

2308 Merrimac Road

Blacksburg, VA 24060

540.951.8951

[hope@stmlc.us](mailto:hope@stmlc.us)

[www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org](http://www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org)

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April 1, 2023

Women's History Month is a celebration of women's contributions to history, culture and society. It has been observed annually in the month of March in the United States since 1987. Although you will be receiving this letter in April, I am writing it on March 14<sup>th</sup> and Women's History Month is on my mind.

Therefore, I would like to hold up to you the achievements of Sally Azar who is making history in the Holy Land. Sally Azar is graduate of intercultural theology in Gottingen, Germany. She was ordained on January 22, 2023 by a Lutheran church in Jerusalem; she is the first Palestinian woman pastor in the Holy Land. She has been called to head the English-speaking congregation at the Church of the Redeemer. Her position will also entail building bridges with the Arabic-speaking congregation. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land sent an invitation for the event that emphasized gender equality and justice: "Sally's ministry sends a powerful message of acceptance and progress in the church's journey toward gender justice." Speaking to the Lutheran World Federation, of which Azar is a council member, she hopes her journey will inspire other women to follow God. Her hope is that not only will young women be inspired to pursue theology, but also that women of all ages who may have wanted to study theology but didn't think it was possible be encouraged to do so.

Christians are a minority in the Palestinian territories. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 47,000 Christians resided in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 2017. Most of them belong to Christian denominations (Greek Orthodox and Latin Catholic churches) that do not allow female clergy.

The ordination of women, however, is not such a foreign practice in the Protestant church. Although they are a very small percentage of the Protestant congregation in the Holy Land, they do have an active presence in schools and hospitals. According to an Associated Press report, the Evangelical Lutheran Church has about 3,000 members in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Jordan.

The Arab world is highly patriarchal and has been throughout history, with practices and stereotypes that are challenging to break. Although in the Middle East three female ministers have been ordained by churches in Lebanon and one in Syria, where Christians play an active role in politics and society, the ordination of a woman is still a rare occasion. According to the Middle East Council of Churches, Azar will be one of five ordained women in the region.

I ask as people of God that we remember Rev. Azar in our prayers: That we ask God to protect her as she lives out her calling to the office of word and sacrament in such a heavily patriarchal place.

In His Service,

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 Sandy Birch, Jada Brown, Suzanne Gay, John Kell, Lynda Kinzey, Wilma Pieper and Jody Smiley as silent servants for the Lenten Meals; to all those who donated items for the Easter baskets given to the Women’s Resource Center; to Meg Peterson, Fran Shepherd and Judith Wolfe for folding the March newsletter; to Anna Rossomondo for writing many thank you notes on behalf of the congregation; to Betty Wingate for delivering The Women’s Resource Center donations; to Lynda Kinzey for delivering the food pantry donations; to Judy Clemens for stuffing the weekly bulletins; and to those who shopped for spring clothing for Micah’s Closet for students at Price’s Fork Elementary and Head Start.

### Because of your gifts

Core  
Ministry  
Fund



Your generous gifts in March supported Altar flowers, paper goods, attorney services for new trustee, Easter egg hunt supplies, building maintenance supplies, office supplies, devotional subscription renewals, stamps, communion supplies, children’s sermon supplies, games for Families of Faith, church directory supplies, our benevolence to the

Virginia Synod, donations to MCEAP, Lutheran Campus Ministry, our facilities, and salaries for our staff.

The **Justice and Mercy Fund** continues to assist our neighbors in the community and the world. In March, we assisted **19** families with funds towards **13** electric bills, **five** with rent assistance, and **one** with gasoline. Thank you for your generous gifts which make this expression of God’s generous love possible.

### Deadline for the St. Michael Scholarship - April 30

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. Applications are available on the bulletin board table. Please contact Jenny Kellinger for more information. 540-354-9384

## Congregational Meeting

Plan to attend the Congregational Meeting on April 16 at 11:15 a.m. Speak with any Church Council member if you have any questions about this important meeting.

## Micah's Backpack



The Micah's Backpack Program thanks those who purchased a #3 bag of oranges from the Price's Fork Food Lion last month. Every purchase benefited both Feeding America and Micah's Backpack.

For further information contact John J. Stramiello, Director at 540-599-4682. Email: [hope@micahsbackpack.org](mailto:hope@micahsbackpack.org) or [stram@stmlc.us](mailto:stram@stmlc.us)

**Let No Child Go Hungry**

## Recycle, Recycle



Pictured is Jeff Birch depositing about 40 pounds of **pop top tabs** at the bin at the Ronald McDonald House recently. Thank you everyone for saving those tabs. Keep it up. Also keep collecting those **small shampoo and conditioner bottles and bars of soap** from your travels. We use them all for small gifts for seniors who shop at the Montgomery County Christmas Store. We are also still collecting **eyeglasses** but **NOT printer cartridges or batteries**. Sorry. Our recycler only wants rechargeable batteries and is very specific about the type of printer cartridge. The recycle bin is outside the pastor's office under the welcome table. One more thing - **flower vases** can be reused, too, for our "Friends with Flowers" program. We deliver our altar flowers to friends and family who are in the hospital or in nursing homes who just may need a tulip or two to brighten their day.



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### *April Sunday Servants*

	<b>April 2 Palm Sunday</b>	<b>April 9 Easter Sunday</b>	<b>April 16</b>	<b>April 23</b>	<b>April 30</b>
<b>10 AM Service</b>					
<b>Altar Care</b>	Dianne Krallman	Doug Smiley	Jane Swing	Inga Solberg	Sandy Birch
<b>Greeters</b>	Barbara Corbett Lynn Hickok	Dickie and Fran Shepherd	Dave Surface Butch Akers	Jenny Kellinger Wilma Pieper	Gary and Sandie Worley
<b>Lay Reader</b>	TBA	Jim Grealish	Dianne Krallman	Seth Peery	John Stramiello
<b>Communion Assistant</b>	Dianne Krallman	Jody Smiley	Butch Akers	Jay Nagle	Sandy Birch
<b>Youth Servant</b>	Gesine Newman	Lilia Villegas-Brown	Tatiana Villegas-Brown	Ada Peery	Tatiana-Villegas Brown

**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 Wednesdays Lunch & Learn:** We will meet on **Wednesday, April 19th at noon**. All St. Michael women are invited. We will gather at the church for fellowship, a light lunch and a special guest. In April **Laura Beth Weaver, Director of the Women's Resource Center, will join us and share information about the work of the center.** Lunch, desert and drinks will be provided. If you have any questions please contact Jody Smiley, [jdsmiley29@comcast.net](mailto:jdsmiley29@comcast.net) or Sandy Birch, [birch@vt.edu](mailto:birch@vt.edu)



**Easter Baskets:** We prepared Easter baskets during Sunday School on April 2nd. The baskets are for children (and moms) that are currently at the Women's Resource Center Shelter.

**Montgomery County Food Bank and Blacksburg Interfaith Pantry:** In April we are asking for donations of **healthy snacks**. The food bank always appreciates receiving any non-perishable food items.

**Women's Resource Center:** In April we are collecting **Paper Towels**.

The collections for the Food Bank and the Women's Resource Center are located in the Fellowship Hall next to the kitchen window. As always thank you for your donations.

## O.K.s (Older Kids)

**Save the Date . . . Tuesday, May 9**

Our spring Happy-Go-Lucky luncheon will be Tuesday, May 9 at noon. Expect a delicious meal and a theme based on flowers and friendship. All friends are welcome.



## Hello from Mother's Morning Out

We would like to say thank you for all the support you give our program especially for all the extra measures you have provided to make our building safer for our little friends. It is greatly appreciated. Our goal is to provide a safe and nurturing social setting where children can learn, play, grow, and explore.

We currently have 12 students enrolled in our program. We are a staff of five: three regular teachers and two substitute teachers.

We are open Monday through Thursday year-round from 8:45 a.m. until 11:45 a.m. We serve children ages 18-months to 5 years.

**About Our Program:** MMO is a religiously exempt program that can support eight children per day with two teachers. The cost is \$23 per day plus snack fee (paid three times annually - January, May, and September). Parents set their child's schedule when they enroll anywhere from 1 day to 4 days a week based on preference and availability.

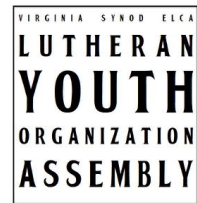
We prepare students for preschool by offering circle time, sensory play, art, and motor skill activities. Circle time includes studying the calendar, letters, shapes, colors, and singing songs.

**Our Routine:** We start our day with free play in centers and weekly themed activities. The themes revolve around letters during the school year and a fun topic during the summer (circus, ocean life, pirates, the beach etc.). After free play, we have circle time where we sing songs and read a theme related story then we wash hands and eat snack. After snack, we work on art projects followed by outdoor play (weather permitting).

If you would like to know more about our program you may contact me, Valerie Jessee, director of St. Michael Lutheran Church Mother's Morning Out at [mmo@stmhc.us](mailto:mmo@stmhc.us)

## Youth News

Youth Assembly for 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders (two from each congregation, with the option of a third after April 24) will be held in conjunction with the 2023 Synod Assembly, June 9-11, 2023 (noon Friday to noon Sunday) at Roanoke College. For more information and registration instructions, go to <https://vasynod.org/event/youth-assembly>



Youth assembly is an event where youth learn about the life and work of the church beyond the local organization. In 2023, the Virginia Synod will also be electing a new bishop and the youth will have the opportunity to observe.

## Music News

Choir practices in April are April 5 at 7:00 p.m., April 16, 23, 30 at 11:15 a.m. **Come sing with us!** There was a choir retreat April 1<sup>st</sup> from 9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

If you have any questions please contact Patrice Yearwood: [payearwood1@gmail.com](mailto:payearwood1@gmail.com)

## Spotlight on Harley Atwell

Now that Harley has a few weeks as our administrative assistant under her belt, it's time to get to know her a little bit better.



Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, Harley moved to Fairlawn when she was in the ninth grade. She graduated from Pulaski High School in 2013 and now lives in Christiansburg. She's pursuing a business degree from Radford University.

Harley loves spending time with her second-grade son Noah, her boyfriend Andrew, and other family members in the local area. She loves Virginia Tech football. For now, schoolwork is her "hobby," but she'd rather be hiking.

## Lenten and Easter Services at St. Michael

- |                    |                              |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| April 2<br>10 a.m. | Palm Sunday                  |
| April 6<br>7 p.m.  | Maundy Thursday              |
| April 7<br>7 p.m.  | Good Friday Tenebrae Service |
| April 9<br>10 a.m. | Easter Sunday                |

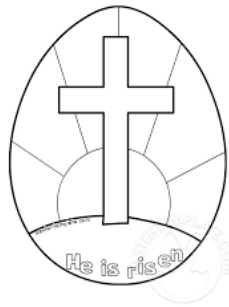
We will have a coffee hour following the Easter Sunday church service. Donuts and coffee cake will be provided. Please plan to stay for a bit.



## History of the Easter Bunny

The Easter bunny has its origin in the pre-Christian fertility lore. The hare and the rabbit were the most fertile animals known and they served as symbols of the new life during the Spring season. The bunny as an Easter symbol seems to have its origins in Germany, where it was first mentioned in German writings in the 1500s. The first edible Easter bunnies were made in Germany during the early 1800s and were made of pastry and sugar.

The Easter bunny was introduced to American folklore by the German settlers who arrived in the Pennsylvania Dutch country during the 1700s. The arrival of the "Oschter Haws" was considered "childhood's greatest pleasure" next to a visit from Christ-Kindel on Christmas Eve. The children believed that if they were good the "Oschter Haws" would lay a nest of colored eggs. The children would build their nest in a secluded place in the home, the barn or the garden. Boys would use their caps and girls their bonnets to make the nests. The use of elaborate Easter baskets would come later as the tradition of the Easter Bunny spread throughout the country.



## Why Do We Give Easter Eggs?

The Easter egg is venerable indeed. While the gaily colored cardboard ones and rich chocolate ones that we enjoy are quite recent in origin, the real egg, decorated with colors or gilt, has been acknowledged as a symbol of continuing life and resurrection since pre-Christian spring celebrations. Given as gifts by the ancient Greeks, Persians, and Chinese at their spring festivals, the egg also appears in pagan mythology, where we read of the Sun-Bird being hatched from the World Egg. In some pagan customs, the Heaven and Earth were thought to have been formed from two halves of an egg. As the egg was an obvious symbol to early Christians of Jesus' Resurrection, it was felt to be a most appropriate and holy part of the Eastertide celebration. Even as early as the Middle Ages, eggs were colored to be given as gifts at Easter: Edward I's accounts for 1290 included the expense of purchasing hundreds of eggs to be distributed to his household. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Pope Paul V blessed the humble egg in a prayer to be used in England, Scotland, and Ireland: "Bless, O Lord, we beseech Thee, this Thy creature of eggs, that it may become a wholesome sustenance to Thy Faithful servants, eaten in thankfulness to Thee, on account of the Resurrection of Our Lord." Forbidden during the solemn fast of Lent,



eggs were reintroduced on Easter Sunday, both as part of the feasting and as gifts for family, friends, and servants.

## April 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b> 9:30am Choir Retreat
<b>2</b> Choir Brunch at Inn @ VT after 10:00 a.m. service. Passion/Palm Sunday 10:00am Worship Service with Communion	<b>3</b> 8:45am Mother's Morning Out 7:00pm Cub Scout Pack Committee Meeting in Large Classroom	<b>4</b> 8:45am Mother's Morning Out 3:00pm Patrice's Music Lessons	<b>5</b> 8:45am Mother's Morning Out 3:00pm Patrice's Music Lessons 7:00pm Choir Practice	<b>6</b> 7:00am Men's Bible Study and Breakfast 8:45am Mother's Morning Out 6:00pm Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00pm Maundy Thursday Service	<b>7</b> 3:00pm Patrice - Music Lessons 7:00pm Good Friday Tenebrae Service at St. Michael	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> Easter Day 10:00am Worship Service with Communion 11:15am Coffee Hour Fellowship	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 3:00pm Patrice's Music Lessons	<b>12</b> 3:00pm Patrice's Music Lessons	<b>13</b> 7:00pm Scout Troop Meeting	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 9:00am Sunday School for Adults 10:00am Worship Service with Communion 11:15am Choir Practice 11:15am Church Council Meeting 4:00pm Confirmation Class 4:00pm Families of Faith	<b>17</b> 8:45am Mother's Morning Out 7:00pm Cub Scout Meeting	<b>18</b> 8:45am Mother's Morning Out 3:00pm Patrice's Music Lessons 7:00pm Price Family Historical Society	<b>19</b> 8:45am Mother's Morning Out 3:00pm Patrice's Music Lessons	<b>20</b> 8:45am Mother's Morning Out 6:00pm Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00pm Scout Troop Meeting	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> 9:00am Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00am Worship Service with Communion 11:15am Annual Congregation Meeting	<b>24</b> 8:45am Mother's Morning Out 7:00pm Cub Scout Meeting	<b>25</b> 8:45am Mother's Morning Out 10:00am Packing and Delivering for Soup for Seniors 3:00pm Patrice's Music Lessons	<b>26</b> 8:45am Mother's Morning Out 3:00pm Patrice's Music Lessons	<b>27</b> 8:45am Mother's Morning Out 6:00pm Packing for Micah's Backpack 7:00pm Scout Troop Meeting	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 9:00am Sunday School for Adults and Children 10:00am Worship Service with Communion 11:15am Choir Practice	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>