



# THE MIGHTY MESSENGER

December 2021

Volume 61, Number 12

Christmas 2021

## *Holy Smoke*

Where there's smoke, there's fire



## MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST

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### “WE NEED A LITTLE ADVENT”

Many Christians have bemoaned how early Christmas celebrating begins in our commercialized culture. In the stores, and in the front yards of many of our neighbors, as soon as the Halloween decorations come down the Christmas decorations go up. Round the clock Christmas music can be heard on satellite radio in early November, and frankly I've begun listening to it in the car myself since before Thanksgiving. But if we're honest about it, not many Christians are enamored with Advent music. With the exception of “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” I think it's safe to say that most of us would much rather sing Christmas songs like “Joy to the World” and “Silent Night” than Advent songs like “When All the World Was Cursed.”

But the fact is we all need preparation for Christmas that goes beyond decorating and shopping. We need the time of Spiritual preparation that Advent provides us, so that we will truly appreciate God's gift to the world in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's the nature of gifts. If someone gives you, for example, a golf range finder and you don't play golf, you're not going to appreciate it. But if you are an avid golfer who struggles to know how far from the pin you are on your approach shots, if someone gets you a really nice range finder (*hint, hint*), you'll really appreciate the gift and be very grateful for it.

When you go Christmas shopping for jewelry, and the jewelers want to display for you an exquisite diamond bracelet, they always set it against a dark background so that it really stands out. The dark backdrop for God's gift of the “pearl of great price” (Matthew 13:46) is our sin. When we know we're sinners, as Luther put it, “lost and condemned creatures,” then we appreciate it when we get a Savior from sin in the person of Jesus Christ. But if we don't know we're sinners, we won't appreciate the forgiveness that comes only on account of God's holy Son making a personal appearance into our sinful world, and living the righteous life for us that God demands, and then suffering the eternal death penalty we deserve for our sinfulness so that we do not have to ourselves.

So Advent is a penitential season not unlike Lent. It's a time to appreciate how much we need the Savior whose birth we excitedly celebrate at Christmas. Advent is a time of waiting, longing, and deliberately delaying the full blow joy of Christ's coming into our world. But I must admit, over the years I've not been a big stickler about postponing Christmas decorating and songs in worship. While I do like to delay it for a couple Sundays in Advent, but by the time we get to our third Wednesday night Advent service (*December 15 this year*), it's historically been our particularly musical one, in which we pretty well pull out all

the stops. I've found that people really welcome and appreciate that, maybe especially in these troubled times in which “we need a little Christmas, right this very minute.”

But if we put ourselves through a little pain on purpose, delaying our gratification for a time of quiet contemplation, it is indeed a good thing for us Spiritually. One way we do this is by imagining ourselves back in the Old Testament. In our Advent Bible readings, we tend to give particular attention to the ancient prophets who anticipating the coming of the Messiah long before He appeared. Readings from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah help us to that. Even though John the Baptist is in the New Testament, his message and ministry was one of pointing to the Lamb of God who was yet to come (albeit very soon).

When we do this, we're finding Jesus in the Old Testament, which may surprise some people. But Jesus Himself said that the entire Old Testament is about Him (John 5:31). So that means not only are certain specific “messianic prophecies” about Jesus, but so also are prominent people, places, and practices in the Old Testament. After all, Jesus said that He did not come to abolish the Old Testament, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). St. Paul spells this out for us in his letter to the Colossians when he writes that Old Testament dietary strictures and festive observances were all merely a “shadow of the things to come, but the substance (which casts the shadow) belongs to Christ” (Colossians 2:16-17). This is why, for example, Jesus called Himself “Lord of the Sabbath” (Matthew 12:8) because the Sabbath was designed to point to Him and prepare God's people for His coming. Likewise, it was no mere coincidence that Jesus used the Old Testament Passover celebration as the occasion for instituting the Lord's Supper for the Sacrament of the Altar is clearly congruent with what the Passover was really all about. In Christ we are delivered from our bondage to sin, death, and Satan, for when the innocent blood of Jesus, as a “lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Peter 1:19), is applied to us in our baptism, God passes over our sin (“for Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed” for us - 1 Corinthians 5:7).

In our Wednesday night Advent worship at St. Michael this year, we're going to switch up the metaphor a bit. Christ is still the Substance that casts His shadow back into the Old Testament. But we're going to find that shadow in the smoke that is in the Old Testament, “Holy Smoke,” if you will. And then recall the old saying that “where there's smoke, there's fire.” Jesus is the fire that produces the smoke. But from a distance, the distance of thousands of years of Old Testament history, all that can be

seen is the smoke. But it is nonetheless a Spiritual smoke signal that there is in fact a fire that is producing it, the fire that is Jesus. At our first mid-week service on December 1, we're going to see the smoke that emanates from the burning bush. In Exodus 3, we read that "the angel of the LORD appeared" to Moses "in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush" and that "the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed." (Exodus 3:2). Now granted, there is no mention in this context of smoke, but it's a fair assumption that while the bush was not consumed the fire did in fact produce smoke. The point, really, is that there's a picture of the coming Christ in this appearance of "the angel of the LORD" to Moses and we want to see it. At the second mid-week service on December 8, we'll be back again with Moses on Mt. Sinai, and this time smoke will be a very prominent feature, as the mountain is "wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire" and "the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln" (Exodus 19:18).

But again, our focus is not ultimately on the smoke per se, but on the fire that produces the smoke, the fire that is Christ Jesus Himself for "our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29). If you have occasion to sit in front of a fireplace this Advent and Christmas season, or maybe even an outdoor fire pit, think about these things. Allow the distance fragrance of smoke, move you to reflect upon the thousands of years of Advent anticipation that God's people endured until the coming of our long awaited Savior. Allow the warm glow of the lively fire that produces the smoke to fascinate you, and then focus you upon the "true Light which gives light to everyone" (John 1:9). Jesus is the Light of the world who has come to reveal God to the nations, and as the glory of His people Israel (Luke 2:32).




**ADVENT WORSHIP, MEALS,  
MUSIC & FELLOWSHIP  
WEDNESDAYS BEGINNING AT 5 PM**

Everyone is invited to start with a warm meal and fellowship in the Gym.

- Dec 1st** - Lay Ministry Board - Chili
- Dec 8th** - Quilting Group - Hot Chicken Sandwiches, chips
- Dec 15th** - Learning Skills Class- Taco Bar

Confirmation Study is in the Sanctuary at 6 PM.  
A short devotional time for all will be at 6:30 PM on 12/1 & 8, and a musical worship time on 12/15.  
*A Cookie Reception will follow each week.*

**Christmas Eve – Friday, December 24**  
 Carol Service 4PM  
 Candlelight Service 7PM

**Christmas Day – Saturday, December 25**  
 Communion Service 10AM

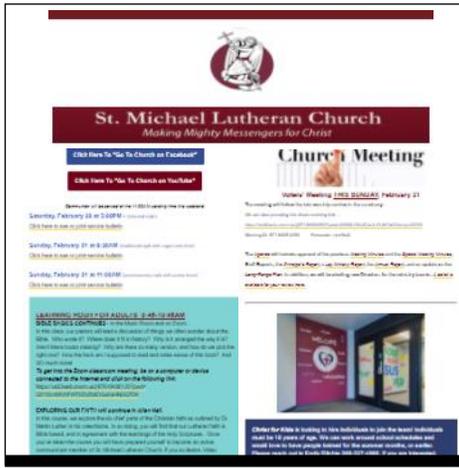
**Sunday, December 26**  
 Divine Worship – 8:30AM  
 Morning Song – 11:00AM

**New Year's Eve – Friday, December 31**  
 Communion Service 6PM

# WE ARE CALLED

to make disciples of *Jesus*

## STAY CONNECTED



### Email Updates

Sign up for regular email updates from St. Michael. We try to send something mid-day on Friday and when special services and events are happening.

### Office Contacts:

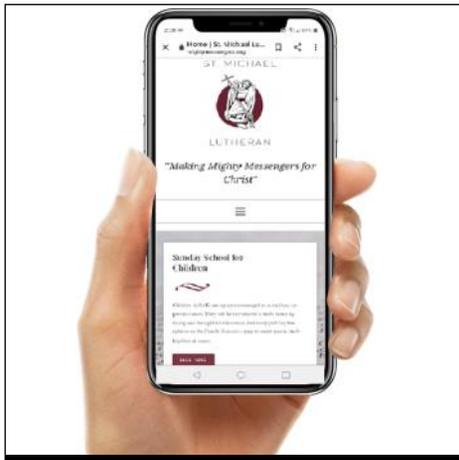
Church + 269-327-7832

School + 269-327-0512

Christ For Kids + 269-327-4889

### mightymessengers.org

St. Michael's website is full of helpful information. *We are excited about the new design and support provided by Computer Guild!*



The vision of St. Michael Lutheran is to be a growing congregation within our local community that is *"Making Mighty Messengers for Christ"* by helping people:

**DEVELOP**, by the power of the Holy Spirit working through His Word and Sacraments, a more vibrant and personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ that expresses itself in consistent prayer and worship; and to

**BELONG** to a loving and caring family of faith with a solid doctrinal heritage through active membership, ministry involvement, and Small Group participation; and to

**GAIN** practical, relevant, biblical insights for faithful Christian living both through personal Bible study and through our various Christian educational offerings such as Sunday School, Bible class, St. Michael Lutheran School; and to

**GIVE** of ourselves to others in loving Christian service and evangelistic witness within the congregation and beyond it to our local community and world.

**SEEKING NOMINEES:** St Michael will soon be electing various new lay leaders. Per our bylaws, in February we will be electing ministry Board Directors, Trust Officers and members of the Board of Lay Ministry.

The Parish Planning Council is asking that you earnestly pray that God will reveal to us all those St. Michael members who can and are willing to lead us for the next two years in these positions. We know that only prayer will bring us the right people at the right time, so please do this for us.

As members, you may be contacted to fill these positions, but if you know someone or are interested yourself and would like to be considered, please contact one of the nominating committee members: Jack Spenner, Rob Kuhlmann, Greg Wedel, Barbara Schubert, or Pastor Naumann.



**Advent Devotion Booklets are available in the Communication Center.**

**Poinsettia are a humble way to adorn the Sanctuary Altar and glorify the Lord.** You are invited to place an order in celebration, in memoriam, in honor of someone, or just because!

Poinsettias will be placed in the Chancel on December 12. You can take plants home after the Christmas Day service. Cost: \$14.00 per plant, send payment to the Church Office, before December 10.





St. Michael School Staff Attended The Lutheran Educator's Connections Conference NOV 22 & 23 Grand Wayne Convention Center in Fort Wayne, IN

# CHANGE YOUR WORLD



WORLD MISSION

The school and church mission project for purchasing *The Treasure* audio Bibles in partnership with World Mission continues for another three weeks. The last day of the mission project is Friday, December 17.

Thus far, the school and church have been able to raise enough funds for **97** audio Bibles. It is estimated that each unit is circulated among 144 individuals, which has the potential of impacting roughly 14,000 persons. Students have been selling handmade Christmas ornaments, candy, flavored water, as well as collecting spare change to help fund these efforts. Thank you to everyone for their gifts so far. This is a great way to share God's word with people in the 10/40 Window, most of whom have never heard about Jesus.

Greg Johnson  
Principal

# WORSHIP

Gathering around God's Word and Sacraments to receive His gifts & give Him glory.

*We value worship, as we gather around God's Word and Sacraments, that is meaningful and uplifting, including clear, relevant preaching. We appreciate both traditional liturgy and hymns as well as contemporary music and desire variety and quality in all our worship services so that we might have a meaningful experience of praising and glorifying God with the best that we have.*

*Colossians 3:16-17*

1 John 3:8 – “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.”

“Destruction” might not be the first theme you would traditionally associate with Christmas, but this is one of the reasons Jesus was born in Bethlehem. In fact, the apostle John names it as THE reason for the season: Jesus appeared so that the works of the devil would be destroyed. Jesus Himself said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” Jesus came to give us life, and to do that, He would undo the devil completely, destroying his works of sin and death forever.



This truly is beautiful Gospel, perhaps especially during the cold, dark months of winter. The Advent and Christmas seasons can be brief periods of warmth and light... but then people return to the realities of living in a world so full of sin and darkness. Until Jesus Christ returns, we will all have to face the the wrath of the devil “because he knows that his time is short” (Revelation 12:12). But we can face these things together with the defiant joy of Jesus, knowing that He is already victorious!

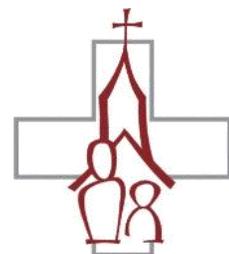
This Advent and Christmas season, may we worship our Lord's victory, even as we remember Him lying in the manger. He came to destroy the devil and give us life, and that eternal life is ours today!

God bless you, fellow saints and victors.

+++

*“This little babe, so few days old,  
Is come to rifle Satan's fold;  
All hell doth at his presence quake.  
Though he himself for cold do shake,  
For in this weak unarmèd wise  
The gates of hell he will surprise.”  
(Robert Southwell)*

*Pastor Maske*



## MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST



**December 5, 2021 – Second Sunday in Advent**

PSALM 66:1-12; MALACHI 3:1-7B; LUKE 3:1-14

“SHARING THE WORD” -

SERMON TEXT: MALACHI 3:1-7B

REV. PAUL SHOEMAKER

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. Through our words and actions, we help to prepare the way so others may hear and believe in our Savior.

**December 12, 2021 – Third Sunday in Advent**

PSALM 85; PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7; LUKE 7:18-28

“THE LORD IS AT HAND!”

SERMON TEXT: PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7 - REV. WILLIAM MUELLER

The Apostle Paul is moved by the Spirit of God to write encouraging words to God’s beleaguered, but faithful, people. Do not let your current circumstances be the final verdict on God’s assessment of you. Instead, look to Jesus and rejoice that the Lord is at hand!

**December 19, 2021 – Fourth Sunday in Advent**

**\*The Nativity of Our Lord - Christmas Day Observed**

PSALM 2; HEBREWS 1:1-6; JOHN 1:1-14

“HI GOD!” - SERMON TEXT: JOHN 1:1, 14

REV. DR. THOMAS AHLERSMEYER

Hi God! Can you imagine addressing the Lord of the Universe in such a familiar way? When we recognize that He became flesh, that He “moved into the neighborhood” of our messy lives and, through our witness, into the lives of others then we rejoice that He became one of us

**December 26, 2021 – First Sunday after Christmas**

PSALM 111; EXODUS 13:1-3A, 11-15; LUKE 2:29-30

“LIFE AFTER CHRISTMAS” - SERMON TEXT: LUKE 2:22-40

REV. THOMAS EGGOLD

In the days to come, as the decorations go back into the attic, as the lights come down, and as the tree disappears from the living room, please remember that the Christmas story doesn’t end here. And, as we begin a New Year and move forward each day in Christ, we draw closer to the truth that there is life after Christmas.



**Great news!**

**St. Michael’s traditional 8:30 AM service will now be posted to the Spiritual TV Channel, according to this schedule.**

Monday	6AM
Tuesday	10:30 PM
Wednesday	5PM
Thursday	Midnight & 8AM
Friday	5AM & 1PM
Saturday	7AM & 8:30PM
Sunday	3:30 & 11:30 AM, 2PM

**Charter Spectrum Channel 189**

### TV MINISTRY YOU CAN TRUST!

**Spiritual Channel 189      AT&T U-Verse Channel 99**

**Access for Kalamazoo and Portage**

WJPG-LD 26 (TCT)

Sunday 6 AM    12 Noon, 6PM    12 Midnight

*Repeats on Wednesdays*

**DISH Network Channel 54 Sunday 11:30 AM**

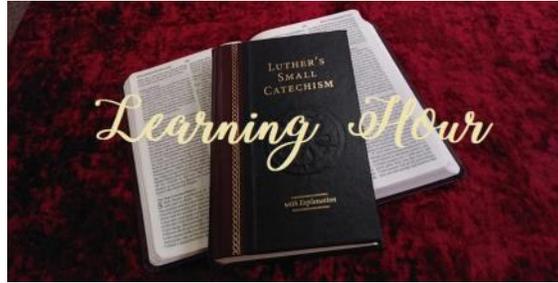
- 30-Minute Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod worship service
- Produced by Lutherans for the homebound, hospitalized...
- Includes the Gospel, Epistle, and Sermon by LCMS pastors
- Music by choirs, soloists, and small groups

# DISCIPLESHIP

Christian education is vital to our Spiritual health and growth.

*We value discipleship through the Christian education of children and adults of all ages as essential and vital to our spiritual health and growth. While we highly value people of every age, we are especially excited about our population of young families, many of whom come into our congregation through our Christian education programs for children.*

*Luke 18:15-17*



## ADULT LEARNING HOUR CLASS OFFERINGS

*Between Worship Services beginning approximately 9:45 AM*

- ◆ **Foundations Video Series from Answers in Genesis**, led by Jesse Hogue, in the Music Room (114)
- ◆ **Wurmbrand Video Series from *The Voice of the Martyrs*** led by Matt Heintz, in the Naumann Room (230)

A new session of *Exploring Our Faith* will begin in January!



KIDS IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM

**PS-2nd Grades in Room #111**

Jenny Maske leading, with parents

**3rd-7th Grades in Room #119**

Tammy Songer and Aaron Allen leading

*Good news is contagious!*

From Genesis the Revelation, we celebrate the redemptive plan that unfolds throughout all Scripture.

Learning... Loving...

Living saturated by His grace.



**Thank you to all for supporting the youth by purchasing holiday pies! And to all the adult volunteers that joined us!**

We had lots of fun-crushing and shaving chocolate, mixing the apple mixture, pouring the pumpkin and the fellowship. We made over 90 pies... and we are looking forward to the LCMS National Youth Gathering in Houston, TX next July.

*we're grateful*



# MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST



8th-High School Sunday Mornings  
9:45AM - Youth Room

Ryan & Heather Bigelow leaders

Sunday Evenings - 5:00 to 7:00 pm

This month's events are:

- December 5** 5-7:00 PM Setup Nativity Outdoors & Movie Night
- 12** 1-3:00 PM **Junior High Youth Christmas Party** (Grades 5-7)  
@ Sakura Hibachi Grill near Portage Target Store Cost is only \$10 with RSVP
- 4:00 PM **Christmas Caroling** at Colonial Acres - Families Invited!  
5374 E Deadwood Dr. Kalamazoo, MI 49002
- 5-7:00 PM **Senior High Youth Christmas Party** (Grades 8-12)  
@ Sakura Hibachi Grill near Portage Target Store Cost is only \$10 with RSVP

*Please RSVP to the church office for the Christmas Parties!*

Watch the Friday email announcements, as well as the weekend worship announcements, for more information or feel free to email Pastor Maske at: [dmaske@mightymessengers.org](mailto:dmaske@mightymessengers.org).



# EVANGELISM

Reaching out with the saving Gospel and proclaiming His truth to all people.

*We value evangelism and believe that the good news of the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the main message of the church. We care about meeting all human needs but recognize that the most important need people have is for a love relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and so we reach out with this saving Gospel and proclaim the truth of God's Word to all people without compromise. Acts 1:8*



**Supporting low-income families, living in the Colonial Acres Community, will make Christmas a little brighter.**

**18 Families will take home a *Notes From Jesus* devotion book, sharing the living Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

**Friends, you are asked to help by providing items to fill a basket with personal hygiene items, paper products, and cleaning items for each family.**

***Like shopping?*** Select a tag from the tree in the Welcome Center and bring the items to the church, as soon as possible before Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>

***Don't want to shop?*** We would be thrilled to have a financial gift to work with, or a Thrivent Action Team card.

***Thank You for taking part in this ministry to help those less fortunate in our community!***

**Thanks to all who participated in Operation Christmas Child by filling a shoebox with gifts!**

The shoeboxes have left our building and are now on their way to fill a child with joy and the knowledge of Jesus. Together, we filled **52** shoeboxes.



## HOMEBOUND FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Through December 19, you can add to the gift bags lining a table in the Welcome Center. Greeting cards and small items will be appreciated by our friends that are alone or in a care facility. A small item and holiday wishes will go a long way for so many during these hard times. Please keep in mind that most bags need to be quarantined for a few days until they can be dispersed, per care facility guidelines. A list of names can be found near the bags in the Welcome Center.

Remembering



Our  
Homebound  
Friends...

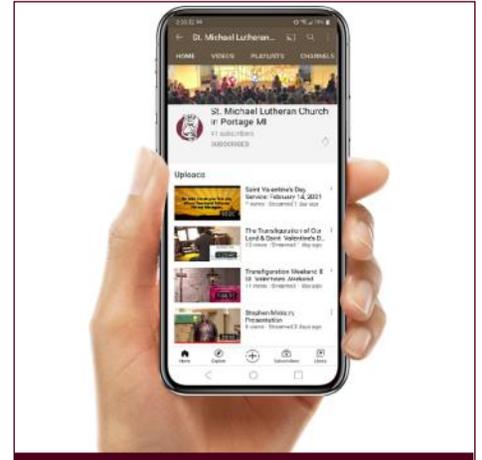


Caroline Barkow  
Sally Beck  
Thelma Burrell  
Shirley Cosgrove  
Ginny Evans  
Dorothy Ferguson  
Nola Geissel  
Audrey Glover  
Maxine June  
Virgil Harrison  
Nancy Heath  
Bob Johnson  
June Kucks  
Flo Kangas\*  
Phyllis Kurlowicz

Lowell Loomans  
Carol McCarty\*  
Nancy Miller  
Ardean Monck  
Wilma Ritchie  
Margery Selden  
Marilyn Sible  
Joyce Stafford  
Darlene Surch  
Carol Truhn  
Ernie & Judi VanOrman  
Sharon White

*\*non-member friends*

*We thank the St. Michael Girl Scout troop for getting the bags ready and helping with delivery!*



## STAY CONNECTED

### YouTube

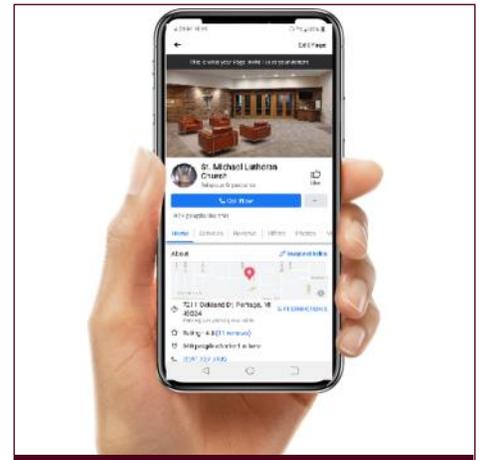
On the St. Michael  YouTube page, You can find sermon videos, Bible classes, guest speakers, children's devotions and Vacation Bible School lessons. Find us at:  
St. Michael Lutheran Church in Portage MI

### Facebook

Find worship service videos, devotions, special event announcements and more:



@StMichaelLutheranChurchPortageMI



*Mark Your New Calendar!!* VBS WEEK IS JULY 24-30, 2022

Please pray about how you will be serving the Lord during this week.

Crafts, Snacks, Storytelling, Music, Registration, Crew Leader, Decorations, Media...

Already know what you hope to do?  
Talk to Tammy in the Church office!



# FELLOWSHIP

Reconciled through Christ, actively loving and caring for one another.

*We value fellowship and want a friendly church that is like a loving family that actively cares for one another in times of need. When inevitable conflicts arise among us, we desire to be reconciled to one another, to communicate honestly and lovingly with each other, and to worship, work, and play together in peace and harmony.*

*Acts 2:42-47*



Jr. High Youth were great servants, as we sorted and organized the food collections for Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry. After a pizza lunch, they also enjoyed open gym time.



WINTER SESSIONS  
Saturdays 9:30-11:00 AM  
Room 114

January 8, 15, 22, 29  
Feb 5, 12, 19, 26  
Mar 5, 12, 19, 26

## MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST

### OCTOBER FINANCIALS Fiscal Year-End

11/1/2020-10/31/2021

Church Revenue	\$ 837,463
School Revenue	\$ <u>997,252</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 1,834,715
Total Expenses	\$ <u>1,777,451</u>
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$ 57,264
Expense Budget	\$ 1,751,607
Under/(Over) Budget	\$ 83,108
Working Cash Balance	\$ 110,910
Mortgage Balance	\$ 759,648

#### Designated Fund Balances

Endowment Fund	\$ 587,962
Building Contingency	\$ 40,221
Technology Refresh	\$ 8,819
Sunday School	\$ 448
Youth Donations	\$ 13,569
Youth Accounts	\$ 10,325
Good Samaritan	\$ 9,891
Memorials	\$ 5,680
L.A.M.P. Mission Trip	\$ 9,264
Quilting	\$ 902
Church Worker Scholarship	\$ 435
School Improvements	\$ 11,808
Tuition Assistance	\$ 51,947
School Music	\$ 312
Flower Fund	\$ 1,204
CFK Grant Fund	\$ 0
Women's Fellowship/LWML	\$ 3,683

**“Do your givin’ while you’re livin’, then you’ll be knowin’ where it’s goin’!”**

-- Rick Warren, Author of *The Purpose Driven Life*



Year-end gifts should be received in the church office prior to December 31, to be considered tax-deductible for 2021.

## LCMS Foundation

TODAY | TOMORROW | FOREVER

Do you like to build puzzles? Some have thousands of pieces. As the pieces come together, so does the picture the pieces form. Often, when someone gets stuck on a puzzle, a new set of eyes can insert a piece that gets the whole project running again.

Your life is a puzzle. It has many beautiful pieces, all constructed by our Lord. As we move through life, more and more pieces get put in place, reflecting God’s marvelous plan.

But sometimes, we need that special someone to come along to figure out how to put a piece in place when things have been stuck for a while. That can be true about getting your estate plan in place, or your plan for gifts to family and ministry found inside of that estate plan.

Your trusted advisors can help get you going again. Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor can be the encourager and organizer to keep you on track. Working together we get to see God’s good things unfold in front of our eyes, enabling us to do far more than we could have ever imagined. For help getting started, contact...

#### Julie Burgess, Gift Planning Counselor

Church Extension Fund  
713-822-5284

1863 Hunters Creek Dr  
Superior Twp, MI 48198

### DIFFERENT WAYS TO DONATE TO THE MINISTRY AT ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL :

- 1) <https://www.mightymessengers.org/donate/>
- 2) Mail or bring your donation envelopes to the church.
- 3) Fill out this [electronic giving form](#) and bring it into the church office.
- 4) Download the VANCO FAITH App from the Google Play or Apple Store.
- 5) Text to give 269-338-8196 with the amount of your donation.
- 6) Check out these designated giving options <https://secure.myvanco.com/YHHN/home>

*“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” – Jesus, in Acts 20:35*

# SERVICE

Good stewardship of time, talents and treasure for the work of ministry.

*We value service and good stewardship of our time, talents, and treasure within our congregation and community. We put a high premium on the volunteer ministry of our members, believing that the primary role of our professional church workers is not to do all the ministry themselves but to equip the saints for the work of ministry.*

*Ephesians 4:12*

*Romans 12:4-8*



## Enjoy a holiday visit from Stephen Ministry

You don't have to unwrap a pair of new slippers to experience "warm fuzzies" at Christmas. The season's familiar songs, memories of past gatherings, and family traditions can create strong feelings of nostalgia, that wistful longing for times long gone. Feelings of loss can be more profound for those of us who can't always reconnect with friends and families during the holiday season. If your far-flung family is unable to visit, or the virus cancels your social plans, a person may be left companionless and feeling sad when Christmas arrives. For those anticipating a heavy-hearted holiday, our Stephen Ministers especially want to connect with you. We would cherish the opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas as we chat with you on the phone or in person. Call one of our Stephen Leaders, such as Dana Naumann at (269) 808-7832. We will visit with discretion and with gratitude.



Christmas is almost here and just in time the quilters have delivered approximately 22 quilts to Children and Family Services! We found out that in December CFS invites clients to choose a quilt of their own, so a mad rush was on to make Christmas themed blankets. Whew!

Now for a small break before January when we cut out receiving blankets, burp cloths and hand mitts for Alternatives of Kalamazoo that will be sewn throughout the year.

Thank you for the continuing support the St. Michaels family gives us! Your donations of Queen and King size sheets, 100% cotton fabric and monetary donations keep us busy.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## SHEPHERD GROUPS

Lay Minister	Family Names Start with	Family Names & include
<b>Geoff Bohren</b> 231-679-4927	A	Boelman
<b>Rich Conklin</b> 616-889-0201	Bohren	Chenevare
<b>Dan Bryer</b> 269-323-7416	Chilcott	D
<b>Mel Schroeder</b> 734-646-9652	E	Franzen
<b>???</b> XXXXX	Frommann	G
<b>???</b> XXXXX	H	June
<b>Cory Luma</b> 269-365-8281	Jung	Lapekas
<b>Ernie VanOrman</b> 269-548-5714	Lausman	McNees
<b>Eric VanOrman</b> 269-249-7915	Messing	Nelson
<b>Jeff Burnett</b> 269-491-3700	Nieto	P
<b>Andy Allan</b> 269-370-7052	Q	Shook
<b>Greg Wedel</b> 312-961-4636	Sible	Stolsky
<b>Matt Heintz</b> 269-290-8507	Sullivan	T
<b>Arlan Wendzel</b> 269-816-5632	U	Z

We, as a church, are all better together.  
If someone is in need, please reach out to your assigned Lay Minister for assistance.

## FAITH FORMATION

**CHILDREN** - Sunday Morning Classes are available during the 9:45 AM Learning Hour

**TEENS** - Classes are available during the 9:45 AM learning hour on Sunday mornings; Confirmation studies for 6-8th grade are on Wednesday evenings during the school year at 5:45 PM; Youth Group meets on Sunday evenings at 5:00 PM

**ADULTS** - Topical studies are available during the 9:45 AM Learning Hour on Sunday mornings; various Bible study groups, prayer groups, and activity groups meet during the week. *Exploring Our Faith* is for those that are interested in learning more about being Lutheran, and especially being a member of St. Michael. This course is taught in the fall and winter.

## NURSERY

Childcare is available for infants up to 3 years old on Sunday mornings during classes and worship times in Room #205 located off the Communication Center.

## BAPTISM

Anyone desiring baptism should visit with a pastor who will set up a meeting and schedule an appropriate time.

## WEDDINGS

We believe that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24-25), and that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the Church (Eph. 5:32). A Wedding in the church is an act of worship. The purpose of a church wedding is to thank and praise God and to petition His blessings upon the couple who solemnize their marriage before Him.

## ENEWS DEADLINE

Please consider items you might need to submit to the Church Office for the next email newsletter, as you read the current one. Items need to be submitted by 4:00 PM on Thursdays.

## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

To insure a quality product is available for the membership, please consider items you might need to submit to the Church Office for the next monthly newsletter, as you read the current one. Deadline is the 20th of each month.

## CHANGE OF NAME / ADDRESS / PHONE / EMAIL

You can always call the Church Office or use the form on the website to reach out and share a message with us!  
<https://www.mightymessengers.org/contact-us/>

## WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

August Avg . . . . .	270
September Avg . . . . .	276
October Avg. . . . .	274
November Avg . . . . .	293
<i>Annual Avg. 2019 . . . . .</i>	<i>347</i>
<i>Annual Avg. 2020 . . . . .</i>	<i>197</i>
	<i>(+ uncounted online viewers)</i>
Annual Avg. 2021 . . . . .	253

# Welcome!

We believe that the more you study the Bible and encounter God in prayer, the more you learn to trust Him with all you have. Carve out time in your day to nurture your relationship with God and spend time encouraging others.

We believe the best way to follow Jesus is through forming community and sharing our faith with a heart of generosity, not just with money and time, but with our love, appreciation, praise and encouragement.



## **STAFF:**

### **SENIOR PASTOR**

Rev. Dr. Paul R. Naumann  
naumann@mightymessengers.org

### **ASSOCIATE PASTOR**

Rev. Daniel Maske  
dmaske@mightymessengers.org

### **ASSISTANT PASTOR**

Rev. Jason Toman  
jtoman@mightymessengers.org

### **BUSINESS & FINANCE MANAGER**

Jay Koski  
jkoski@mightymessengers.org

### **CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT AND CHILD MINISTRY COORDINATOR**

Tammy Songer  
tsonger@mightymessengers.org

### **SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

Greg Johnson  
gjohnson@mightymessengers.org

### **SCHOOL SECRETARY**

Sharon Robinson

### **KINDERGARTEN TEACHER**

Brenda Heintz

### **FIRST GRADE TEACHER**

Maralyse Worm

### **SECOND GRADE TEACHER**

Annie Hecht

### **THIRD GRADE TEACHER**

Kim Ruesch

### **FOURTH GRADE TEACHER**

Dawn Heid

### **FIFTH GRADE TEACHER**

Emily Lauterbach

### **SIXTH GRADE TEACHER**

Julie Prentice

### **SEVENTH/EIGHTH GRADE TEACHER**

Lisa Lam

### **CHRIST FOR KIDS CHILDCARE DIRECTOR**

Emily Ritchie  
eritchie@mightymessengers.org

### **PRESCHOOL TEACHERS**

Becky Mohler  
Cheryl Julian  
Jessica Lonc

### **WORSHIP MEDIA SPECIALIST**

Lorraine Dudash

### **CHOIR DIRECTOR**

Carolyn Bertrand

### **ORGANIST**

Keith Eiser

### **MORNING SONG DIRECTOR**

Jane Connon

### **SEXTONS**

Bryan Chandler  
Matthew Wright

## **VOLUNTEERS:**

### **PRESIDENT**

Jack Spenner

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

Peter Robert

### **RECORDING SECRETARY**

Tammy Songer

### **TREASURER**

Jan Jett

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Peter Robert, Assistant Director

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Angie Heimlich, Director  
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### **BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR**

Linda West

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Dar Swift

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Lisa Robert

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Chad Doublestein, Assistant Director

### **YOUTH GROUP LEADERS**

Jerry Kuss, Jeff Burnett,  
Ryan & Heather Bigelow

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Matt Heintz, Director  
Greg Wedel, Assistant Director

### **ALTAR GUILD**

Kristi Rudowske, Linda Fry

### **LECTORS**

Virginia Hetrick, Jan Chilcott

### **PRAYER MINISTRY COORDINATORS**

Barbara Schubert, Virginia Hetrick

### **USHERS**

Mike Minger - Early Service  
Jesse Hogue - Late Service

### **STEPHEN MINISTRY LEADERS**

Pastor & Dana Naumann  
Heather Crampton, Lynda Rae, Virginia Hetrick

### **STEPHEN MINISTERS**

Zoe Miller, Kelley McNees, Lane Bertrand  
Bill Semrau, Peter Robert, Jackie Michels

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Valerian Kwigizile, Director  
Matt Quardokus, Assistant Director

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Arlene Groll, Mark & Jan Chilcott

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Kristin Shook, Assistant Director

### **ADULT EDUCATION COORDINATOR**

Jesse Hogue

### **CRADLE ROLL**

Peggy Makowski

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Diane Gibson, Assistant Director

### **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

June Kucks

### **LWML**

Sandy Maya

### **SOFTBALL**

Shannon Miskovich

### **ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE**

Todd Foster, Dave Johnson, John Engelmann,  
Brad Hunter, Rick Jacobs