



THE MIGHTY MESSENGER

January 2022

Volume 61, Number 12



CONNECT WITH OUR CHURCH & SCHOOL FAMILY AT [MIGHTYMESSENGERS.ORG](https://mightymessengers.org), ON FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE

Join Us for a Mountain Top Experience!



OBERAMMERGAU PASSION
PLAY AND LUTHER LANDS

Informational Meeting:
January 11 – 6:30 pm

Trip Dates:
September 19- October 1

Website:
<https://christiantravelplanners.com/tours/germany-passion-play-and-luther-lands-mountaintop-experience-from-calvary-to-coburg-september-19-october-01-2022>

Online Reservation:
<https://christiantravelplanners.com/credit-card>

The pandemic postponed the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany from 2020 to 2022, but as we enter this new year we're looking forward to flying into Frankfurt and finally being able to enjoy this mountain top experience. You can learn more about the trip at a special **informational meeting in Allan Hall on January 11 at 6:30 pm**. It could be the beginning of a very moving and memorable adventure.

Dear family of faith at St. Michael,

Dana and I are very grateful to you for all the love and support that you have shown us and our family over the years. It is especially heartwarming and humbling to receive all your Christmas cards of affirmation and your generous gifts. Since some of the gifts have come anonymously (you know who you are), please accept our thanks for your kindness. Most of all, we treasure your prayers for us and our mutual ministry that we do for our Lord and His kingdom. May the new year ahead be another year of God's grace in which we are privileged to worship and work together.

In Jesus, God's gift to the world,

“MAKING THE BEST USE OF THE TIME”

As the new year begins, I'm up to over 300 consecutive days of using the app on my cell phone called *Duolingo* in order to learn German. I had studied German in college and the seminary, but it was largely to make sense of theological terms like *Heilsgeschichte* and *Offenbarungen*, and not to speak it conversationally. Lord willing, Dana and I will be leading a trip to Germany at the end of September of 2022 and it would good to know how to ask how much something costs or where to find *das Badezimmer*. If you would like to consider joining the tour we're going to have an informational meeting in Allan Hall on January 11 at 6:30 pm (and the itinerary and other details can be found in this newsletter and on our mightymessengers.org website).

If you've ever used *Duolingo*, you know that at the end of every lesson is an opportunity to earn points by watching a little commercial, often an invitation to download a game app. One such ad I got was for a Sudoku game. I've seen the game many times but frankly never learned to play it. So I thought I'd watch a quick YouTube video about it. The video was only about five minutes long, but most of it told me way more than I wanted or needed to know. Simply explaining how to play the game could have been done in less than 30 seconds. So, even though I did learn to play Sudoku, I resented a bit how the video had unnecessarily wasted my time. Of course, if I ever do take the time to play Sudoku I'll probably feel like it was an even bigger waste of time.

The fact is, there are lots of things that I do that are a waste of time (like watching football on TV or inane sitcoms on Netflix), but I do them anyway because I find them enjoyable, relaxing, or even rejuvenating. So maybe they're not a complete waste of time, but I do think about how much more I could be accomplishing if I wasn't doing them (like learning more German!). Our time is indeed a precious commodity. No one knows just how much time they will have on earth, but we know that we only have so much of it and then it's gone. So however we choose to use our time, it is always an expenditure, perhaps it is an investment, and whenever we use it for others it is a gift to them. So it is that God urges us to *“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, **making the best use of the time**, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is”* (Ephesians 5:15-17).

A new year is a good opportunity to consider the times, reflecting back on the old year passing, but also looking forward to the days that are ahead and trying to imagine what 2022 will be like. One of my favorite things to do in a new year is to set goals for myself of what I hope to accomplish and to set in place some new practices that I hope would be an improvement on the old. As a congregation, we're going to have a special opportunity to consider how to make the most of our time on earth when we have our **“Forty Days of Discovery”** during Lent (starting March 2). It will be a time to discover what God has to say in the Bible about our reason for existence as His creatures, not only for our time on earth, but even for our existence beyond time in heaven. For forty days, we're going to be reading every day in the 2012 edition of Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, and discussing it in small groups with the aid of updated videos. Whether you were with us or not when we did something similar in 2004, we're confident that God will use this to bless our congregation and help us all grow as disciples of our Lord Jesus, who used His time on earth for our eternal salvation.

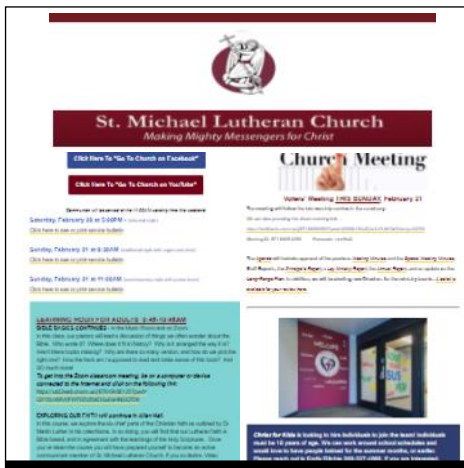
I pray that this new year gives us all the excitement of new beginnings, and that the Holy Spirit provides us with the determination to be good stewards of each of the 365 days of 2022. May God use this new year as a time in which we grow in faith and in our relationship with Him to the point that we are determined to live each day for His purposes and to His glory. There's no greater way to make the most of our time on earth. We all have a limited amount of time. We can spend the time we have trying to acquire what we can't keep, or we can spend our time giving away what we can't lose.



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:

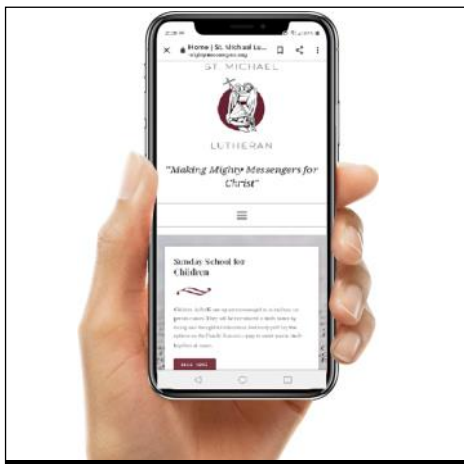
Church + 269-327-7832

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

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

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

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



Dear brothers and sisters at Saint Michael,

Serina and I and all the Toman clan would like to say thank you for the many ways you have blessed us this year, especially in this season of Advent and Christmas. We've been showered with love, whether through the gracious kindness you have shown our children, or by gifts to help us stretch the family budget, or even with homemade consumables for us to put into our fridge. Please accept our thanks for all that you have done for us. We know that you are just as generous with others and with one another, and we are humbled to be a part of this family of Mighty Messengers for Christ. Please pray for us, and for the other pastors, commissioned workers, and lay leaders of the church, that we would boldly and lovingly exhibit the truth of God's Law and Gospel in these times. May God bless all of us with the faith and perseverance we need to be faithful in 2022!

With the love of Christ,

Iason and Serina Toman

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST



Family Welcome

New Members Received - December 19, 2021

David & Kathleen Drzewiecki

(Affirmation of Faith)

616-560-2175 chemicaldave67@gmail.com

(mailbox #241)

417 Kalamazoo Street, Otsego, MI 49078

Danny Duniphin *(Profession of Faith)*

Jessie, Abby, Lily, Charlotte

269-352-8280

(mailbox #154)

8235 Valleywood Ln., Portage, MI 49024

Stephen & Saron Hand *(Affirmation of Faith)*

Jacob, William, Isabella

302-518-9891 (mailbox #235)

saronhand@yahoo.com

s_m_hand@hotmail.com

7131 Roslindale Trail, Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Barbara Handy *(Transfer)*

269-221-3297 Khand63@comcast.com

(mailbox #299)

56726 Tamarac Lane, Three Rivers, MI 49093

Zachary Hansen *(Profession of Faith)*

269-830-5701 fractalgestalt@gmail.com

(mailbox #246)

1226 Breckenridge Way, Portage, MI 49002

Michael & Sarah Kamphuis

(Affirmation of Faith)

Sadie, Norah

574-523-0677 kamphuismr@gmail.com

269-679-5323 srkamphuis@gmail.com

(mailbox #120)

11090 Highley Circle East, Schoolcraft, MI 49087

Jim & Joanne Neumann *(Affirmation of Faith)*

269-365-0371 jneums1@charter.net

(mailbox #228)

2206 Woodbine Avenue, Portage, MI 49002

Eduardo & Heather Martinez

(Profession of Faith)

Emiliano

906-440-4589 hmartinez9008@gmail.com

(mailbox #229)

316 Amos Avenue, Portage, MI 49002

Steve & Thanya Rhoades

269-327-9703 thanyarhoades@yahoo.com

(mailbox # 273)

1719 Bellaire, Portage, MI 49024

Karen Shuler *(Transfer)*

269-315-5911 kashuler@gmail.com

(mailbox #266)

1145 Winter Cherry Lane, Vicksburg, MI 49097

We Are Glad You Are Here!

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

MINISTRY OF PRESENCE

"...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." (John 1:14)

One of my favorite parts about being one of your pastors is the opportunity to be with you, your families, and our school families. I get the chance to hear family joys and challenges. I get to pray with and for you as you see God continue to be at work in your lives. I get the chance to hear our youngest St. Michael students learn and sing and celebrate right through the wall next to our church office. I am so privileged to be called to serve here at St. Michael, because I get to experience a very special corner of God's Kingdom with you all. It's the best job in the world!

What strikes me again and again about our Lord is that His ministry is not far away, but quite near! When Jesus was born and took on our human flesh, He chose to dwell among His creation and His people, to share their joys and sorrows and bring them His Gospel. He does this both here at St. Michael, and wherever His Gospel is proclaimed.

For the first two weeks of January, I will get the opportunity to continue along the ministry path of Naval chaplaincy. I will join 6 other pastors at Naval Station Newport (RI) for my next phase of Naval Chaplain school, and I am looking forward eagerly to see how God will continue to dwell with His people. Military chaplaincy is a special opportunity the church has to bring a *ministry of presence* to sailors, soldiers, airmen and marines as they serve us.

Pastor Maske

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST

January 2, 2022 – Second Sunday after Christmas

***The Epiphany of Our Lord Observed**

PSALM 96:1-8; ISAIAH 60:1-6; MATTHEW 2:1-12

"INCLUSIVE" - SERMON TEXT: MATTHEW 2:1-12

- REV. DR. WALTER MAIER III

A word that is mentioned often today is "inclusive." The Christian Church, the kingdom of Christ, is wonderfully inclusive. Who is in the Church? Sinners are, and that is good news for all of us.

January 9, 2022 – First Sunday after the Epiphany

***The Baptism of Our Lord Observed**

PSALM 29; ROMANS 6:1-11; LUKE 3:15-22

"BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST!" - SERMON TEXT: LUKE 3:21-22

- REV. SHAYNE JONKER

"For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:5). Today we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan, God in the flesh, and so also we celebrate our Baptism into Christ. What a great comfort in the midst of temptation and trial, sin and death, and every distress that we can say to ourselves, *"I am baptized into Christ!"*

January 16, 2022 – Second Sunday after Epiphany

PSALM 128; ISAIAH 62:1-5; JOHN 2:1-11

"OBSERVING CHANGES" - SERMON TEXT: JOHN 2:1-11

- REV. PAUL SHOEMAKER

Jesus revealed the truth of His divine nature by performing miraculous signs and wonders. The first of these miraculous signs were performed at a wedding in Cana where He changed water into wine. With this miracle, Jesus began to reveal His true nature and His reason for coming to the world.

January 23, 2022 – Third Sunday after Epiphany

PSALM 19:7-14; NEHEMIAH 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; LUKE 4:16-30

"REJECTED?" - SERMON TEXT: LUKE 4:16-30

- REV. WILLIAM MUELLER

It is far too easy to look down upon the people of Nazareth for rejecting Jesus. Upon closer examination, however, the same sin has stained our lives as well. What are we to do? Listen in to what Jesus actually has to say and be encouraged that the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him!

January 30, 2022 – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

PSALM 71:1-12; 1 CORINTHIANS 12:31B-13:13; LUKE 4:38-41

"FORSAKE ME NOT" - SERMON TEXT: PSALM 71:9

- REV. DR. THOMAS AHLERSMEYER

What do we do when life circumstances exact their toll not only on our bodies but also on our spirits? Our prayer, "Forsake Me Not," is answered by the amazingly preserving presence of our Savior Jesus Christ!



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

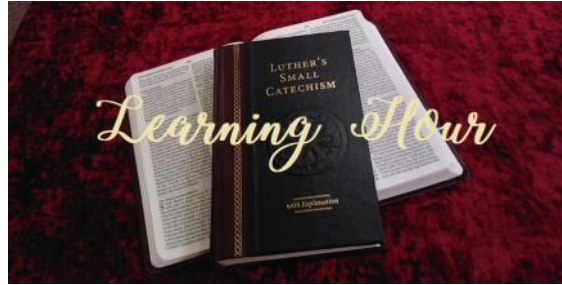
- 30-Minute Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod worship service
- Produced by Lutherans for the homebound, hospitalized...
- Includes the Gospel, Epistle, and Sermon by LCMS pastors
- Music by choirs, soloists, and small groups

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

** A new session of **Exploring Our Faith** will begins January 2 **

Continuing studies:

- ♦ **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)

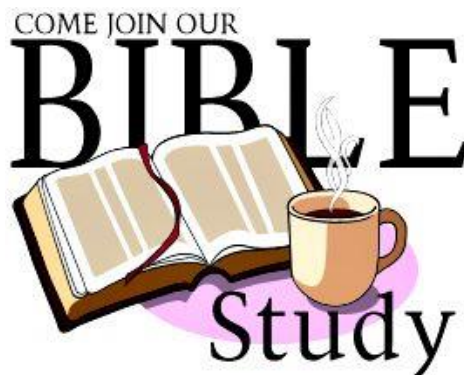


PS-2nd Grades in Room #120
Jenny Maske leading, with parents

3rd-7th Grades in Room #119
Tammy Songer and Aaron Allen leading

8th-High School Sunday Mornings
9:45AM - Youth Room
Ryan & Heather Bigelow leaders

Sunday Evenings - 5:00 to 7:00 pm



Tuesday Evening Women's Bible study will begin the new year with a study in Philipians, "*Get Out of Your Head*" by Jennie Allen. We meet at 6:30pm in the Library. If you are interested, please contact Barbara Schubert schubertbrs@gmail.com or (563) 580-8975 for more information.

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST

Sanctity of Life Sunday will be observed January 23. For those who would like to learn more about the pro-life movement, the **CHURCH LIBRARY** offers many resources. Here are descriptions of three of our newest arrivals.

TITLE: *Angel in the waters*

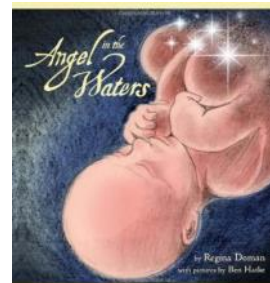
AUTHOR: Regina Doman

TYPE: Picture book

CALL #: 233.5 DOM

LOCATION: Non-fiction "Faith" shelves (short bookcase)

"Angel in the Waters" is a simple, non-confrontational book that makes young children decidedly pro-life long before they ever hear the word "abortion." This special hardcover book tells a special story. It's the first story of every child of God: In its mother's womb, a tiny baby grows, explores the waters, and talks with the angel who is there. With gentle illustrations and wise words, author Regina Doman tells the story of that baby and the angel in the waters ... a story that will delight all young children, because the journey from conception to birth is their story, too.



TITLE: *Abandoned: the untold story of the abortion wars*

AUTHOR: Monica Migliorino Miller

TYPE: Non-fiction book

LOCATION: Adult Collection **SHELF:** Contemporary Issues

Every day, thousands of children – fragile, innocent, alone – are abandoned. They are brutally snuffed from the world and left in the trash ... and it's all legal. "Abandoned: The Untold Stories of the Abortion Wars" is the story of those children abandoned by abortion, and it is the story of their courageous defenders. Since 1976, Monica Miller has defended the unborn. She has counseled pregnant women outside abortion clinics and organized pro-life groups and sit-ins at many of those same clinics. She has blocked abortionists' cars, been arrested, and gone to jail. And she has pulled the bodies of thousands of unborn babies out of dumpsters and given them a proper burial. "Abandoned" is the profound, breathtaking, and often daring journey of one woman. It also is a history of the Pro-Life movement since *Roe vs. Wade* and a plea for the protection of the most helpless and innocent members of the human family.



TITLE: *Unplanned*

TYPE: DVD

RATED: R (for disturbing images)

LENGTH: 106 minutes

LOCATION: Adult Collection **SHELF:** Contemporary Issues

Based on the biography of the same title (also in our church library), "Unplanned" is the inspiring true story of one woman's journey of transformation. All Abby Johnson wanted to do was help women. As one of the youngest Planned Parenthood clinic directors in the nation, she was involved in 22,000 abortions as she counseled women about their reproductive choices. Her passion about a woman's right to choose also led her to become a spokesperson for Planned Parenthood and to fight for legislation defending the cause she so deeply believed in. But all that changed the day Abby participated in an actual abortion procedure. What she saw prompted her to quit her job, join her former enemies at the Coalition for Life, and become one of the most ardent pro-life speakers in America. Telling Abby's story from both sides of the abortion clinic property line, "Unplanned" is a must-see movie for anyone who cares about the life versus rights debate and helping women who face crisis pregnancies.



Stop in the **CHURCH LIBRARY** on Sundays 9:30-11 a.m. for assistance in locating and checking out these and other pro-life materials.



ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Annual Update January 2022

St. Michael Lutheran School and Christ for Kids Childcare are outreach ministries of St. Michael Lutheran Church with the mission of ministering to and sharing the Gospel with students, their families, and the greater community, as well as providing a superior education for all students. As an educational ministry, we believe that all children can learn and succeed and therefore accept all children that our resources and expertise allow us to educate. This is accomplished through having fully certified teachers in every classroom with a continuous commitment to professional growth and improvement in our programs. We believe in teaching the whole child - spiritually, socially, emotionally and cognitively. We work to provide a level of education that is more in-depth and higher in quality than other educational options in our area.

Enrollment

The School ministry enrollment for the 2021-2022 school year includes preschool (64), K-8 (108), and childcare (71) for a total of 243 students served. With the coming of COVID, total enrollment in the K-8 program has seen an increase from our annual average of 95. Since 2001, 237 individuals have become members of St. Michael Lutheran Church through the school ministry.

Tuition Assistance

This school year a total of \$32,900 of tuition assistance was awarded to 15 qualifying families. This assistance benefits 23 children. Since 2005, close to \$425,000 in tuition assistance has been awarded to qualifying families. Most of the tuition assistance funding comes through a number of events including the Tuition Assistance Dinner, Golf Outing, and the Gerri Wheeler Scholarship Fund, along with many generous donations. This fund is always in need of donations so please consider a tax-deductible gift.

Staff

SMLS and CFK together employ 33 staff – 12 in the school and 21 in the preschool/childcare. There are a number of individuals, including tutors, school psychologists, speech and occupational therapists, who frequent the school to meet the needs of our students. Portage Public Schools provides (at no cost) four certified teachers for Art, Band, Gym, and Technology, through the Shared Time program.

Tuition Income

Based upon the 2022 budget projections, the school will generate approximately 45% of the total anticipated income from the school ministry, while the Childcare/Preschool will generate approximately 54% with a small fraction of uncollected income at year's end. Tuition is collected through an automatic account deduction program called *Tuition Express*.

Service Projects

The school participates in a number of ministry projects throughout the course of the year. This year the following organizations will have benefitted from the efforts of SMLS students: Samuel's Blankets; World Mission; Camp Concordia; Camp Luther Haven; the Michigan District's *Hearts for Jesus* initiative; the SMLC Trunk or Treat; Lutheran World Relief; and the American Heart Association. Additionally, our students regularly send cards and letters to shut-ins from St. Michael Lutheran Church.

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST



SMLS students spread Christmas joy and love when they visited friends at a nearby assisted living home.

Curriculum/Programs

The school continues to offer a strong academic program. Kindergarten students arrive in 1st grade as eager readers. Our Iowa Test of Basic Skills standardized test scores continue to be above the national average and fall in the top 10 among Lutheran schools in the Michigan District that administer this assessment. The curriculum meets or exceeds state standards. Students in grades 1-8 enjoy weekly Art, physical education, vocal music (K-4), computer (K-8), Beginning Band (5) and Concert Band (6-8). SMLS also offers various enrichment classes after school in a program known as *After the Bell*.

The school has an excellent working relationship with Portage Public Schools. Bus service for our students is provided by PPS and our school is a transfer point for their buses. It is common to see many buses move in and out of the parking lot at the close of each school day. PPS also provides limited special education services as well as the sharing of professional development opportunities with our staff.

Sports

Before the days of COVID-19, SMLS participated in an 8-member private school sports league. Currently, this league is no longer functioning, a victim of the pandemic and concern by many of the participating schools about health safety. In normal times, SMLS offers fall co-ed soccer, Girls' volleyball and basketball, and Boys' basketball. We continue to offer *Girls' On the Run* as well as our community basketball camp offered each year in early August despite the pandemic.

St. Michael Lutheran School is accredited by three separate organizations including National Lutheran Schools Accreditation and we continue to work on improving our programs with the goal of touching more lives for Jesus. The school will be renewing accreditation again in the spring of 2022 and we are all busy preparing for that process. This ministry would not be possible without the financial support and prayers of the members of St. Michael Lutheran Church and I ask that you continue to pray for this ministry that influences so many lives.

Greg Johnson, Principal

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



Thank you for continuing to give to the Colonial Acres Community!! Many were blessed through this project.

Gift bags stuffed full of blessings were delivered to the St. Michael friends that are homebound for the holidays.



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

Classes are \$5 each. We accept payment made out to SMLC in our donation box each week. Payment can be made weekly, monthly, or once for the entire session.

Register by emailing Sue at pointdancestudio@gmail.com or calling 734-765-5324
<https://www.facebook.com/SMLCBallet/>



FEED THE MOB

Make plans now to get your “Super Bowl” Sub Sandwiches from the High School Youth Group! *They are also great frozen for school and work lunches, or anytime you are on the go.*

Find an order form in the Communications Center and return with payment to the church office by Sunday, February 6.

Subs are \$5 each, 6 for \$25 OR 12 for \$50

Subs can be picked up at St. Michael on Saturday, February 12 at 2:00 pm, or on Super Bowl Sunday, February 13 between services. Sandwich sales support the youth program.



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

EXCERPTS FROM “BECAUSE OF BETHLEHEM” BY MAX LUCADO

After attending the new Christmas special “The Chosen,” I thought I was moved to find some more inspiration about Christmas from reading through the book “Because of Bethlehem”. Max Lucado is very inspiring and always uplifting. Here’s some of what I learned:

“Jesus entered our world not ‘like’ a human but ‘as’ a human. He endured puberty, pimples, hot weather, and cranky neighbors. God became human down to his very toes. He had suspended the stars and ladled out the seas, yet he suckled a breast and slept in hay”.

Seeing so many nativities out in the neighborhood, we understand that Jesus was born a baby, but there is no information about him growing into a toddler, a young boy or a teenager. He reappears as a man in his early thirties.

Why did God go so far to prepare this journey for His son?

“A chief reason is this: he wants you to know that he gets you. He understands how you feel and has faced what you face. Jesus is not ‘out of touch with our reality’; He’s been through weakness and testing, experienced it all – all but the sin. So why not walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help” (Hebrews 4:14-16)

“Jesus radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God. Jesus himself stated, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9)

“Anyone who has seen me weep has seen the Father weep.”

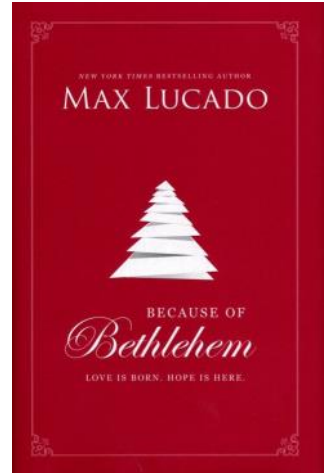
“Anyone who has seen me laugh has seen the Father laugh.”

“Anyone who has seen me determined has seen the Father determined.”

Would you like to see God? Take a look at Jesus. Everything changes when we see the face of God.

“As Mary lay in the manger exhausted, probably in pain after giving birth, all she wanted to do was lay her head down and rest. But first Mary had to see this face. His face. To wipe the moisture from his mouth and feel the shape of his chin. To be the first to whisper, “So this is what God looks like.”

Talk to God, he is real!



Virginia Hetrick – Prayer Team

You are

25th Anniversary
Worship & Celebration

1997-2022

REV. DR. PAUL NAUMANN (*and DANA*)
IN MINISTRY AT
ST. MICHAEL CHURCH & SCHOOL

5:00PM **29** JANUARY

hors d'oeuvres reception

*INVITATIONS WENT TO MEMBERSHIP. IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND, PLEASE
RSVP TO CHURCH OFFICE 269-327-7832 BY JANUARY 17, 2022*

REQUEST FOR ENDOWMENT FUND DISTRIBUTIONS DURING 2022

Hello church members. It has been an amazing year of growth in 2021 for the Endowment Funds at St. Michael. At the beginning of the year there was **\$463,684** in the Endowment Fund (this included designated funds towards specific ministries and what we call the "General" fund.) By Sept. 30 this had grown to nearly **\$685,000** with more than **\$196,000** in new contributions. Two new designated funds were established by members: The Maxine M. June Flower Fund and the School Scholarship Fund. A full financial report will be provided in February.

We need your help if you would like money to help support St. Michael Lutheran Church and School ministries. During 2021, approximately \$9,500 from the general endowment fund helped support ministries such as Lutheran World Relief, Quilting Ministry, Youth For Christ and renovations of Allan Hall. We anticipate having about **\$10,000** to distribute during 2022. In addition, another \$7,500 was given for school staffing salaries and scholarships.

If you are interested in applying for some portion of this money for a ministry during 2022 please note the following:

Members, ministry leaders and Board Directors are encouraged to identify mission and ministry programs within the Church or School that you believe need financial support above and beyond those provided through the General Fund Budget. Or if there is a worthwhile community or even global ministry, where you would like to request funding, please complete a Grant Request form and submit it to the Endowment Fund Committee by February 15. These forms are available in the church office, from Jay or any of the committee members

The Endowment Fund Committee will evaluate all Grant Requests and decide which requests will or will not be funded based on the priorities and goals of St. Michael Lutheran Church and School. All those who submitted a request will be informed accordingly by April 1.

The Financial Secretary will arrange for transfer of the approved amount from the Endowment Fund account to the respective ministry account.

Contact any of the Trust Fund Committee members (John Engelmann, Todd Foster, Rick Jacobs, Dave Johnson, Brad Hunter) or Jay Koski (Business & Finance Manager) to obtain a copy of the Grant Request Form or to answer any questions you may have.

Todd Foster (Chairperson) for the Endowment Committee Members

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



Students from the Life Skills Class were excited to bless the congregation and serve the Advent Dinner on December 15. They did lots of planning and preparation in the classes leading up to the night.



Children in grades 3-5 are invited on Wednesday evenings to meet with Mrs. Mary Wright to learn valuable skills and enjoy some great projects. The class runs from 5:30-7:00 PM. To register send your child's name, grade, parent name and contact info., and any allergy or medical concerns to mary.wright65@gmail.com. If anyone would like to help, or any high school students are looking for community service hours, please contact Mary.

LCMSFoundation

TODAY | TOMORROW | FOREVER

WHO WILL BE BEST BLEST BY GIFTS FROM MY ESTATE SOMEDAY?

Have you ever been asked to participate in a Christmas gift collection drive, to give gifts to a cause that someone else will distribute? Chances are, you will never directly meet the people receiving the gift. While there is no arguing with the value of these gifts, it can feel like something is missing. The giving can become more of a transaction or a checkmark rather than heart-felt, warm giving of God's good things. If you are participating in one of these collections this year, go on websites, read literature, volunteer, striving to become heart-connected to the giving.

Estate gifts given without heart-connection rob the giver of the joy God means for us to enjoy in the giving. Instead of leaving estate gifts to family to be discovered when the will is read someday, gather your family together and openly share with them the blessings you hope these future gifts will bring.

Think also of the gifts you plan to give to ministry. Don't wait for the ministry to find out about the gift until your will is read. Set up a meeting to discuss your gift with the pastor or executive leader and talk about what you hope the gift will accomplish in ministry. Ask for that ministry leader to pray with you about this gift.

With some work and careful planning and communication, you can bring the joy of giving into your life as you disperse God's gifts to the family you love and the ministries you care about the most. Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor can help you discover this godly joy. Contact...

Julie Burgess, Gift Planning Counselor

Church Extension Fund 1863 Hunters Creek Dr, Superior Twp, MI 48198 713-822-5284

If you wish to hold meetings, classes, celebrations, gatherings, etc. within the building in the new year, please send your intended schedule to the Church Office to verify that you are on the 2022 Calendar, for the space and timing you prefer. *Thank You!*

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.

NOVEMBER FINANCIALS

Fiscal Year-End

11/1/2021-11/31/2022

Church Revenue	\$ 61,658
School Revenue	\$ <u>90,082</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 151,740
Total Expenses	\$ <u>151,507</u>
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$ 233
Expense Budget	\$ 152,640
Under/(Over) Budget	\$ (720)
Working Cash Balance	\$ 106,054
Mortgage Balance	\$ 759,648

Designated Fund Balances

Endowment Fund	\$ 588,062
Building Contingency	\$ 44,096
Technology Refresh	\$ 8,053
Sunday School	\$ 298
Youth Donations	\$ 14,088
Youth Accounts	\$ 10,325
Good Samaritan	\$ 10,186
Memorials	\$ 7,315
L.A.M.P. Mission Trip	\$ 9,414
Quilting	\$ 336
Church Worker Scholarship	\$ 435
School Improvements	\$ 24,285
Tuition Assistance	\$ 51,699
School Music	\$ 121
Flower Fund	\$ 1,204
CFK Grant Fund	\$ 0
Women's Fellowship/LWML	\$ 3,772



Interested in being a Prayer Partner for a Confirmation student? Contact Prayer

Coordinator Virginia Hetrick at:

virbhtr@gmail.com.

GENERAL INFORMATION

SHEPHERD GROUPS

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

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

September Avg	276
October Avg.	274
November Avg	293
December Avg	497
Annual Avg. 2019	347
Annual Avg. 2020	197
(+ uncounted online viewers)	
Annual Avg. 2021	262

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.

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.

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/>

Celebration & Prayer for Life Rally

Come be part of this prayer event with Christians from the city of Kalamazoo.

*In unity, we are **Seeking God's blessing on all human life and protection for the unborn.***

This is not a political event.

This is an opportunity to pray in public for the sanctity of all human life.

Guest Speaker: Physician - Dr. Robin Pierucci

Neonatologist and Chair of American Academy of Pediatrician's ProLife Committee

Please bring diapers & wipes to be donated to Alternatives & Caring Network

Pray With Participants From...

Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo
Reformed Church in America
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo
Kalamazoo For Life
Kalamazoo Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition
Lutherans For Life of Michigan
Youth For Christ
Destiny Rescue
Bethany Christian Services
Kalamazoo House of Prayer

Assemblies of God
Alternatives of Kalamazoo
Kalamazoo Right to Life
Kalamazoo United
Jesus Loves Kalamazoo
Holy Family Healthcare
40 Days for Life
Life Chain
Kalamazoo Gospel Mission
....and more!

JANUARY 23, 2022 | 3PM
Kalamazoo Christian High School

Outdoor Event - 2121 Stadium Drive
Grass Area (corner of Howard / Stadium)

In the event of inclement weather, we will relocate to the K Christian gymnasium.



THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY...

The comments below were a journal entry from my late wife, Sherry, written about four years ago, after the death of her father and her own metastatic cancer diagnosis.

As I reflected on these words, they struck me as something each of us could strive to live out, to make a difference in the world we inhabit.

"Three days ago, we buried my dad. He lived 96 years and people loved him. He was a kind, cheerful and loving dad.

In thinking of what I want people to say, I was reminded that would require something on my end. How do I need to live so that I leave the lasting impression I want?

I want people to see Jesus in me. How is this achieved?

I need to walk the walk. I need to trust Jesus totally with this diagnosis. I need to not live in fear. I need to remember that He is in control. Also, I need to put other's needs in front of my own. If I want people to see Jesus in me, people need to know they matter. Phone calls, lunch dates, and texts go a long way. I need to spend time with people that need a friend, not necessarily who bring me joy.

I want my family to feel loved, supported and encouraged by me. I want them to know without a doubt that they are prayed for, loved and that they can count on me. How?

I need to pray for them individually. I need to ask for specific prayer requests from them. I need to love unconditionally and not give advice when it isn't wanted.

I want to be the best friend anyone could ask for. How?

I want to be reliable, dependable and there for them under any circumstance. I want to pray for them and follow up on things they have shared, to show them I care.

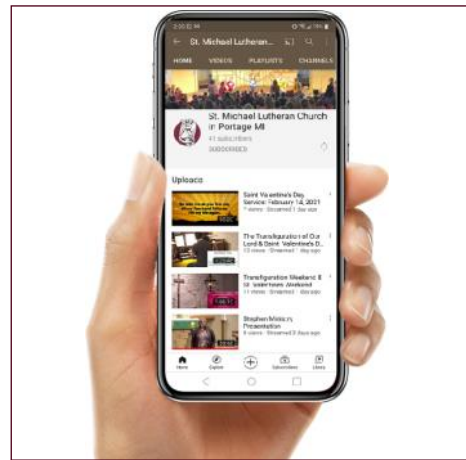
I want to love myself better? I want to honor God by taking care of my body better! I need to exercise, eat well and not be hard on myself on days when I need to rest. I need to be less critical of myself and not worry about things I can't control!

I want to die gracefully. I want to accept what God has planned for me. I want to be thankful and content in all circumstances."

As you make your list of 2022 goals, make a friend, make a difference, share the Good News of Christ and join with Church Extension Fund, Building the Kingdom.




Church Extension Fund



STAY CONNECTED

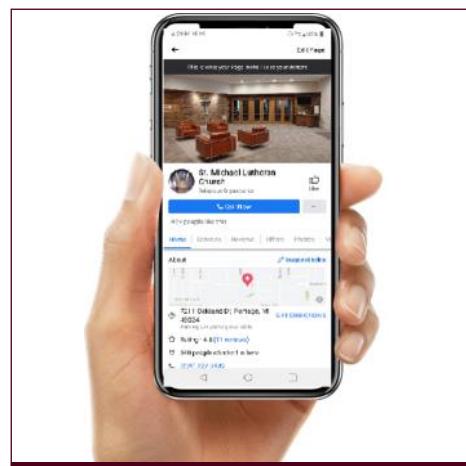
YouTube

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



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
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CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT AND CHILD MINISTRY COORDINATOR

Tammy Songer
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Greg Johnson
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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

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Jack Spenner

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Jesse Hogue - Late Service

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Heather Crampton, Lynda Rae, Virginia Hetrick

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ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

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