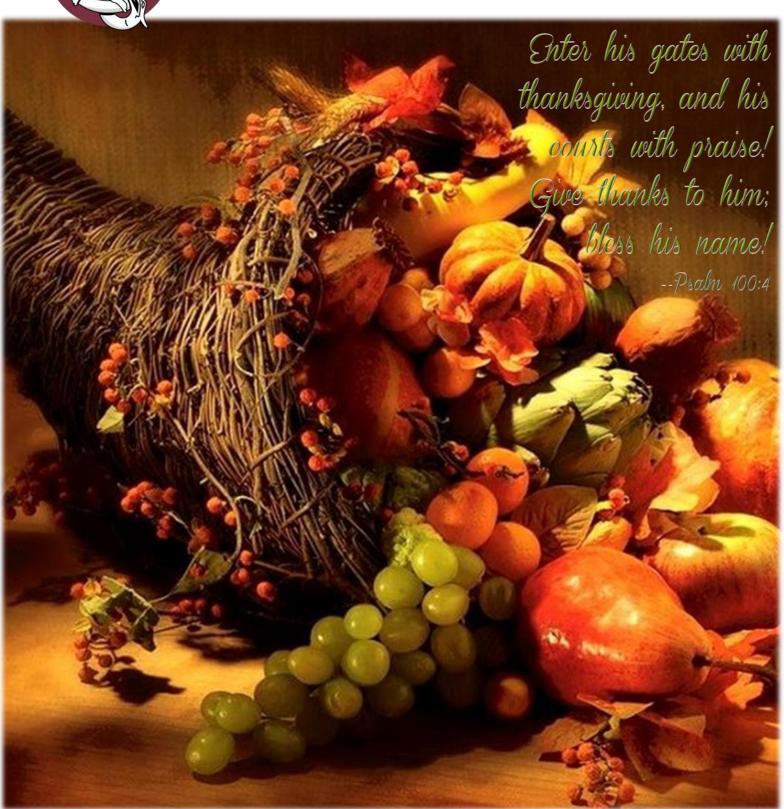


THE MIGHTY MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2022

Volume 61, Number 11



WEARE CALLED to make disciples of Jenus

The vision of St. Michael Lutheran is to be a growing congregation within our local community that is "Making Messengers Mighty 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

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

STAY CONNECTED

Email Updates

Sign up for regular email updates from St. Michael by going to our website: mightymessengers.org. 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

SANCTUARY LIGHTING

At the end of last year, the Voters' Assembly set aside Budget money to Faith church upgrade the sanctuary lighting. There were four primary goals: Increase the level of lighting, focus attention on the chancel / altar area, improve the lighting reliability, and the increase lighting



efficiency. We are now ready to move forward with this project. The incandescent sanctuary globe lights and chancel "stage" lights will be replaced with high-efficiency LED lights with a new lighting control board.

Much of the light from our existing globe lights goes to the ceiling and walls and not to the pews. As a result, the lighting level in the pews is low (about 5 foot-candles). It should be closer to 25 foot-candles. Each globe light has a 300- or 500-watt incandescent bulb. Not only are these lights inefficient, but they also require a lot of maintenance. Each bulb lasts about 750 hours. Three bulbs must be replaced every month. And pews have to be removed to set up a lift each time a light bulb is replaced.

The chancel / altar lighting is much brighter than the sanctuary lighting and each chancel light lasts for 2,000 hours, but these lights are also very inefficient. And there are always several out of service.

The sanctuary and chancel lights will be replaced with LED light fixtures that are very efficient (more lumens per watt). Each light fixture has an expected life of 50,000 hours. With our normal use, they should each last for 40 years. The level and color of each light will be controlled from a panel in the Audio-Visual booth. There will also be a remote control panel for turning on the lights without going into the AV booth. We are looking forward to having these lights installed before the end of this year.



SUNDAY SCHOOL MISSION COLLECTION CONTINUES INTO DECEMBER!!

With the drastic changes of temperatures recently, we are reminded that there are vulnerable groups of people in our community. You can help!

We are collecting SOCKS, HATS & MITTENS

for the neighbors that likely don't have resources to purchase these items and are visitors to the Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries.

"INCREASED THANKSGIVING"

What's your favorite Bible passage? Some will find that question easy to answer, while others will find it very difficult to narrow it down to just one. If I had to choose just one passage (albeit a whole chapter) I would pick 2 Corinthians 4. I went to this chapter again when I had opportunity at the end of last month to participate in the laying on of hands during the installation of a new pastor in our Circuit at Christ Lutheran in Marshall. These words of St. Paul apply to all Christians, but are especially apt to a pastor. . .

What we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. (2 Corinthians 4:5-7)

These words are also fitting for the way we ended October with our "GLOW with God" fall festival on the 29th. The combination of a wonderful Lamplight service with our St. Michael Lutheran School kids singing, followed by pizza, donuts, and games in the gym, and then hundreds from the community streaming through our Trunk or Treat hospitality was truly exhilarating, for through it all we did our best to shine the light of Christ into people's hearts.

While we tried not to make our Halloween event spooky, the truly scary and menacing specter of death is stalking at the election on November 8 with what's called Proposition 3. We continue to pray that common sense will prevail and that this confusing and extreme amendment to Michigan's constitution would be defeated. Thank you to everyone who has worked so tirelessly and sacrificially to get the word out, sometimes in the face of hostile resistance. With St. Paul we can say.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live

are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. (2 Corinthians 4:8-12).

Life is indeed at work in us, even in the face of death. As is our tradition, November begins in celebration of all the saints who have gone before us and a commemoration of our faithful departed at all our weekend worship services. While these saints are absent from our sight, we know that they are nonetheless alive and well in the blissful presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is our sure and certain hope and so we join with St. Paul in saying. . .

Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 4:13-15)

St. Paul's concluding note of thanksgiving is, of course, the same way we conclude our month of November with our national day of Thanksgiving (and our Thanksgiving Eve worship service at 6:30 on the 23rd). Notice how the extension of God's grace to more and more people results in increased thanksgiving. As we count our blessings again this year, let's put right at the top the way that God's Kingdom is growing through our ministry at St. Michael, and that by His grace, people coming to receive "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). This month marks the beginning of a new fiscal year, another year of grace, in which we can shine the light of Jesus into this dark world. May God bless our ongoing cooperative efforts toward making mighty messengers for Christ, and may it result in Jesus' greater glory and in much thanksgiving to Him.

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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

DISCIPLESHIP

"Follow me!" Jesus said to His first disciples. The disciples followed, and Jesus led... sometimes to joyful experiences like weddings, miracles, and feasts, and sometimes to



hunger, cold, and pain. But Jesus led His disciples in all circumstances, and always continued to share the grace and truth of our Heavenly Father.

"Follow me!" Jesus said to you in your baptism. If you were baptized as a baby, you most likely don't remember the moment when God claimed you as His own through water and His Word. But that is when God gave You His gift of faith, and that was when God made You His disciple. Even to His infant disciples, Jesus says "deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me".

Jesus leads, and we follow – that's what Christian discipleship ultimately means. He leads us today the same way He led His disciples during His three-year ministry: by His Word. Jesus speaks to us through Holy Scripture, and we follow His word. Sometimes we read words of encouragement! Sometimes we hear hard words that challenge our own thoughts and plans... but all the Word of God is good, and so we trust in it and in Him.

"Follow me!"... is what Jesus' disciples say to one another. As we walk together, following our Lord, we do so hand in hand. One reason we use the word "Synod" to denote our own church body is because that word means "walking together" in Greek. We walk together, because we follow the same Lord by hearing and obeying His same Word in Scripture.

Disciples of Jesus, let's walk together joyfully as we hear God's Word in worship, at Bible Class, and at home. Let's walk hand in hand as His disciples, whether in happy times or in tough challenges. Jesus leads, and we follow together!



November 6, 2022 - All Saints Day

PSALM 149; DANIEL 1:1-4; 17-21; MATTHEW 5:1-12 "CONVERSATIONAL WITNESSES" - SERMON TEXT: DANIEL 1:17-20 - REV. MICHAEL ZEIGLER

How do we share our faith in everyday life? Learn from three Old Testament saints how competence in our callings. contextualizing our conversations, and care for our conversation partners reflect Christ's own compassion.

November 13, 2022 - Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

PSALM 98; MALACHI 4:1-6; LUKE 21:5-28

"REDEMPTION DRAWS NEAR" - SERMON TEXT: LUKE 21:5-28 - REV. SHAYNE JONKER

Just when things are at their worst and you are left with literally nothing in this world, precisely then, "straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption draws near." Jesus is near now, in Word and Supper, and soon in visible glory, and with Him there is redemption, forgiveness of sin, and eternal life.

November 20, 2022 - Sunday of the Fulfillment

PSALM 46; COLOSSIANS 1:13-20; LUKE 23:27-43

"THE GREAT TRIUMPH" - SERMON TEXT: COLOSSIANS 1:13-20 - REV. PAUL SHOEMAKER

Sometimes all seems lost. That is how it appeared to people who saw Jesus on the cross. This was not a defeat but the road to the greatest triumph over all; over sin, death, and the grave.

November 27, 2022 - First Sunday in Advent

PSALM 122: ISAIAH 2:1-5: MATTHEW 24:36-44 "CAUGHT IN THE FLOW" - SERMON TEXT: ISAIAH 2:1-5 - REV. WILLIAM MUELLER

A new church year begins with the First Sunday in Advent. We hear the prophecy from Isaiah about swords beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. How is this accomplished? And how can we be caught in the flow to the mountain of the house of the Lord?





Great news!

St. Michael's traditional 8:30 AM service will now

be posted to the Spiritual TV Channel, according to this schedule.

Charter Spectrum Channel 187 9 AM & 9 PM

TV MINISTRY YOU CAN TRUST!

Access for Kalamazoo and Portage

10AM

6PM

Monday **1 PM**

Wednesday 5 AM & 10 AM

Friday 7 AM Saturday 6 AM

Sunday

6 AM

NEW CHANNEL & TIMES!!

10 PM

Spiritual Channel 187

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

DISCIPLESHIP

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

ADVENT FAMILY WORKSHOP

Planned for Thanksgiving Weekend:

NATIVITY SCENE STARTER

Create your own family



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27 DURING THE LEARNING HOUR IN ALLAN HALL

This event is for all ages and is sponsored by the Board of Parish Education

As a family or individual add your creative touch to this 11piece unfinished wood set. Pieces are wide enough to selfstand. Take them home to continue the project with paint, glitter and more. Then arrange them to enjoy for the season.

One of the key ways children grow in faith is by participating in faith moments with their parents and other significant adults. We want to help provide such moments during this busy season by giving you an opportunity to make a Nativity Scene - a faith resource for your home!

Limited space and kits.

Please RSVP to church office to join us!

This event will be in place of the normal Sunday School Class.



ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Picture This! BOOK FAIR

NOVEMBER 17 - 22, 2022

IN THE LIBRARY

Our vendor: Lowry's Books and More, Three Rivers

Quality, family-friendly books, including choices from CPH and other Christian publishers

Plan to visit!

- Before school: 7:30-8:30 am Nov. 17-18 and 21-22
- After school: 3:00-4:00 pm Nov. 17-18 and 3:00-7:00 pm Nov. 21-22
- Over the weekend: 6:00-7:00 pm Nov. 19 (after Lamplight), 9:30-11:00 am
 Nov. 20 (between services), 12:00-1:00 pm Nov. 20 (after second service)

Don't forget to buy a book for a teacher & help build classroom libraries

This year's theme is "Picture This: You with a Book"
Take a selfie with our fun photo props

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR THIS EVENT
IF INTERESTED PLEASE EMAIL LIBRARY@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 COMPTOMISE. Acts 1:8



Operation Christmas Child is in full swing! Pick up a shoebox in the Communication Center between services and fill it with love for a child. Instructions are included inside every shoebox. Filled shoeboxes are due back to church by November 13th. Shoeboxes from St. Michael will then be

taken over to a local collection site where they will be put into shipping boxes and sent on their way. From there the boxes travel to regional collection sites (Chicago is the closest to us) and are prepared to be shipped throughout the world. It truly is an amazing journey! Not only the actual journey the boxes take to get to their final destinations, but the journey the children begin when they receive a box. There's the excitement of the gifts, but that continues with their personal journey of learning about Jesus. Lives are changed, families are changed. And all because YOU cared enough to pack a shoebox. *Thank you!!*

THE LIVING-GIVING TREE FOR COLONIAL ACRES FAMILIES

Deciding when and where to lend your support can feel like a daunting task in these times of so much need. However, we invite you to consider supporting some low-income families, living in the Colonial Acres Community.

The five churches in Portage making up the Jesus Loves
Kalamazoo (JLK) Coalition, will again join together and make
Christmas a little brighter by providing families a celebration event
to be held at Renovation Church.

Again this year, St. Michael's role will be to provide the families with a basket of personal hygiene items, paper products, cleaning items and a family faith talk resource sharing the living Gospel of Jesus Christ..

Like shopping? Don't want to shop? We have options!!

In the coming weeks, a holiday giving tree will be set up

with ways for you to take part in this ministry

to help those less fortunate in our community.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS FROM ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Come and join St. Michael Lutheran School as we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus with three different Christmas programs. St. Michael students began working on these annual Christmas programs back in early September. Students in grades 2 -8 have been working on a Christmas drama called, A Christmas Yarn. All of their hard will culminate work presentations scheduled for Thursday, December 8 with shows at 1:00 pm and 6:30 pm. In addition, the early childhood Christmas program, featuring preschool, kindergarten and first grade students, will be held the following week on Thursday, December 15 with shows at 1:00 pm and 6:30 pm. Both Beginning and Concert Bands will hold their Christmas program on Tuesday, December 20 at 7:00 pm. All Christmas programs will be in the church sanctuary, and I would love to see many St. Michael church members attend one or all of these programs in support of these students.

Greg Johnson, Principal



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

"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY"

What do you expect with this request?

Prayer can be supplication or intercession. Prayer can be spoken or silent. Prayers can be read from a book or spontaneously uttered. Prayer can be seconds long – arrows shot heavenward – or hours long – praying through your prayer list. Hymns are prayers. Dance can be done in prayer. Some pray through crafts and artistry – and we pray in thanksgiving and praise to give glory to our awesome God.

Do you pray using the five-finger prayer method, the ACTS formula or by praying Scripture? Some pray alone. Some pray with a prayer partner or a prayer chain. While some write their prayers in a book, others go on prayer walks. Some spend quiet time, sitting alone with God and some pray while they are driving. Some journal to record answers to prayers, while others do not. We pray before and after meals, but we also can pray and fast. Some pray throughout the day, while others have a set time for prayer – and many pray in each of these ways, depending on the time and situation. How do you pray?

Is one of these methods right – or more right – than others? A child once asked if God cared if something was misspelled. While God gave us the perfect example of prayer when His disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray," He doesn't count bad grammar or misspeaking against us. He knows we are imperfect and, even when words fail us "and we do not know what to pray for as we ought, the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." (Romans 8:26).

The important thing is to pray – to be in communication with God – and to listen to Him as He continues to teach us to pray. Prayer is not something mysterious or secret; prayer is simply talking to God. And God wants you to talk to Him! He loves you, and He has promised to hear you when you pray.

Prayer is possible because Jesus Christ removed the barrier between God and us, a barrier caused by our sins. Sin separates us from God, and because of that, we have no right to come to Him in prayer. But Jesus removed that barrier when He died on the cross for us. When we commit our lives to Christ, God gives us the privilege of approaching the "throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:16.

If you find prayer awkward or intimidating, remember this: God promises to hear you – and He cannot lie. Trust that promise and learn to bring every concern to Him in prayer.

Blessings,

Virginia Hetrich - Prayer Co-Coordinator
(Portions of this article were borrowed from the Lutheran Woman's Quarterly)

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST

LEARNING HOUR CLASSES SUNDAYS 9:45 - 10:45 AM

ROOM

114 The Path to the Cross: Embracing **Obedience & Sacrifice**

230 Exploring Our Faith

- led by Pastor Naumann



119 4th - 7th grades

122 Preschool-Kindergarten

1st - 3rd grades 123

207 8th - High School - Studying the

Scriptures of the week

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.



LCMSFoundation Julie Burgess Julie.burgess@lfnd.org TODAY | TOMORROW | FOREVER

Julie Burgess 713-822-5284

Walter and Laura married 50 years ago, when they were both 20 years old. They have been farmers, raising grain and livestock. It was hard work, but they have really enjoyed this lifestyle. They never had any children and have no other family who would like to take over the farm. In their best year, they reported \$50,000 of income. They lived a very frugal life. But now, age has caught up with them and they are worried that they won't be able to retire or have enough income.

Recently they talked to their LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor. They had discussion about the value of their farm. It is 700 acres. along with buildings and equipment. Based on local cost of farmland, the estimated value of their farm is over \$4 Million! They learned that they could gift the farm into a charitable remainder trust, avoiding the lump sum taxation they would experience if they were to sell the farm themselves. That charitable remainder trust would dispense 5% of its value each year to them for the rest of their lives. That would be \$200,000 per year. The best part for them was that when the Lord calls them home someday, there will be a gift to ministry roughly equal to that \$4 Million. They will divide half of that ministry gift to their home congregation and the other half to provide support for the education of future Lutheran school teachers. Humbled, they cried.



STAY CONNECTED

YouTube

On the St. Michael page, You can find sermon videos, Bible classes, guest speakers, children's YouTube devotions and

Vacation Bible

School lessons. Find us at:

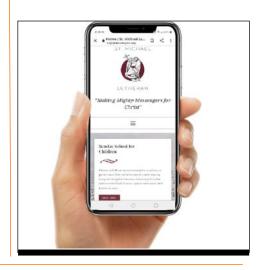
St. Michael Lutheran Church in Portage MI

Facebook

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

mightymessengers.org

St. Michael's website is full of helpful information.



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

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF GATHERING IS A SUCCESS!

Our annual Lutheran World Relief collection resulted in a total of 576 boxes from at least 15 various churches in Southwest Michigan.

Thanks to receiving a number of grants from Thrivent Financial, St. Michael Church and School was able to donate Baby Care Kits, School Bags, Hygiene Kits, and Quilts. These were in 190 of the boxes on the truck. The totals received from all the churches were:

Quilts: 182 boxes
School Bags: 163 boxes
Hygiene Kits: 146 boxes
Baby Care Kits: 80 boxes
Sewing Kits: 5 boxes

I want to extend sincere thanks to all of the year-long efforts of Michele Ryan in collecting, storing, organizing, and assembly of the donations.

Also, thank you to all of those wonderful volunteers who helped in some way to sew, knit, assemble, package, load, and deliver all of the boxes. We couldn't do this without all of you!

Jan Jett



GENERAL INFORMATION

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/

SEPTEMBER FINANCIALS 11 Months

11/1/2021-9/30/2022

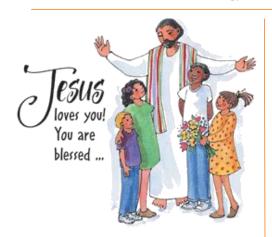
Church Revenue	\$ 727,563
School Revenue	\$ <u>1,111,192</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 1,838,755
Total Expenses	\$ <u>1,827,416</u>
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$ 11,340
Expense Budget	\$ 1,832,867
Under/(Over) Budget	\$ 5,889
Working Cash Balance	\$ 35,652
Mortgage Balance	\$ 716,986

Designated Fund Balances

Endowment Fund	\$5	567,880
Building Contingency	\$	20,133
Parking Lot Fund	\$	15,000
Technology Refresh	\$	7,492
Sunday School	\$	794
Youth Donations	\$	16,425
Youth Accounts	\$	6,036
Good Samaritan	\$	2,375
Memorials	\$	7,534
L.A.M.P. Mission Trip	\$	2,811
Quilting	\$	1,092
Church Worker Scholarship	\$	235
School Improvements	\$	38,507
Tuition Assistance	\$	62,898
School Music	\$	318
Flower Fund	\$	4,139
CFK Mission Expansion	\$	90,000
Women's Fellowship/LWML	\$	2,010
Faith Budget	\$	54,151

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Aug. Avg. 249 Sept. Avg. 271 Oct. Avg. 296
Annual Avg. 2019 347 Annual Avg. 2020 197
(+ uncounted online viewers) Annual Avg. 2021 265
Annual Avg. 2022 286



SHEPHERD GROUPS

Lay Minister	Family Names Start with	Family Names
Geoff Bohren 231-679-4927	Α	Boelman
Rich Conklin 616-889-0201	Bohren	Chenevare
Dan Bryer 269-323-7416	Chilcott	D
Mel Schroeder 734-646-9652	Е	Franzen
Mark Hough 269-567-0705	Frommann	G
Pastors	June	Н
269-327-7832	Julio	
Cory Luma 269-365-8281	Jung	Lapekas
Mark Kahle 402-730-1914	Lausman	McNees
Mark Ruesch 330-730-9099	Messing	Nelson
Jeff Burnett 269-491-3700	Nieto	Р
Andy Allan 269-370-7052	Q	Shook
Greg Wedel 312-961-4636	Sible	Stolsky
Matt Heintz 269-290-8507	Sullivan	Т
Arlan Wendzel 269-816-5632	U	Z



CONDITIONED HEARING

Two old friends were walking along a path when one of them pulled up and said, "Wait, I think I hear something." Bending down he

lifted a stone, freeing a cricket that had been trapped. Asked how he was aware of the sound, he said people only hear what they want or are conditioned to hear. To prove his point, as they were walking on a crowded street, he dropped a half dollar on the sidewalk. Many people stopped, looking around to see what had fallen.

Have you ever been accused by your spouse of "selective hearing"? Have you been so intent on what you were doing, those things going on around you were ignored? It's amazing how a parent can pick out the cry of their child in a crowded room. What have you conditioned yourself to hear?

Ezekiel 33:7-9 says, You, son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to the wicked, you wicked person, you will surely die, and you don't speak out to dissuade them from their ways, that wicked person will die for their sin and I will hold you accountable for their blood. But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved.

What are we doing in our time? Jesus says in Matthew 28, "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". How can we make disciples if we don't even know their names? Do we know our neighbors, our coworkers, or the person at the store?

A pastor told the story of a nursing school class where the professor gave a Pop Quiz. The students felt good about answers to all the questions but the last one. What is the name of the person that cleans the building? You see them every day. He explained that all people desire our care! Whatever your profession, just be someone with a smile, a hello or a caring question. We all have the opportunity to bring the saving message of the Gospel. But it helps to know their name.

At lunch, ask the server their name and if there is anything you could include for them in your meal prayer. You might be surprised by the impact it can have on a person's day.

A simple meal prayer, a caring question or lending a hand to a neighbor can all help change a person's day as we become the hands, feet and voice of Christ.

I invite you to join forces with Church Extension Fund to Build the Kingdom, one person at a time.

What kind of shoes will you choose today?

You can tell a lot about a person's plans for the day by looking at their feet. Work boots or wing tips? High heels or high tops? Sneakers or loafers? Cleats or Crocs? Your goals and purposes and pathways and intentions are revealed in the shoes that you choose.

Paul says something profound about what a Christian's shoes are supposed to look like as part of his description of the armor of God in Ephesians 6. He describes them as having feet that are "shod" or "fitted" or "strapped" with readiness for the gospel.

I can't help but wonder which shoes in my closet best represent Paul's picture of Gospel shoes.

You may quickly think of your "Christian" shoes as your "church" shoes: formal and fancy, your dressiest, shiniest, most upscale "Sunday Best." But that's not the picture Paul paints in Ephesians 6.

The shoes he describes are supposed to give us traction and support to stand firm and press forward. Gospel shoes are shoes that are meant for running along narrow trails and climbing up steep hills. Gospel shoes are more like army boots, or something you might use for CrossFit. I can't help but wonder if my daily shoes are really fit for the use of the cross.

Many of us prefer shoes that are stylish, or easy to slip on and off. I tend to opt for comfort and coziness. If I am honest, my feet are more comfortable when they are propped up at home on the coffee table than they are out on the busy streets and bumpy paths that lead me to interact with people who are far from God.

But Gospel shoes aren't meant to be propped up. They are supposed to be *worn in* because they're meant to be

worn... out. Out in parks, and out on streets, and out at soccer games, and out at taco trucks, and out at repair shops, and out at hair salons, and out in offices, and out at coffee houses.

Gospel shoes are



designed for bringing messages on mountaintops (Isaiah 52:7), and for trudging through hard valleys (Psalm 23:4). They help us to walk in the light (1 John 1:7) and keep us from stumbling (Jude 1:24). They are for crossing riverbeds (Joshua 3:15), and ocean floors (Exodus 14:22), and crushing the heads of serpents (Genesis 3:15).

In 1 Corinthians 11:1 Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ." Gospel shoes are meant to make an impression. They are made to leave marks. They are a means of imprinting tracks that those who come behind you can find and follow. And isn't that what we are called to do? As you put your feet on the ground tomorrow, and every day that follows, be mindful to carefully choose the shoes you will use. May you and I both be laced-up in thick-treaded boots that enable us to take active and ready steps to seek, search, and engage those who are far from God, walking with Him and beside them to lead distant ones to Jesus.

Chuck Peters, FamilyMinistry.com



élcome:

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.



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