



THE MIGHTY MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2022

Volume 61, Number 12



He Gets Us™

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

“He Gets Us”

If you watch NFL football as I tend to do on Sunday afternoons, you probably have seen a rather clever ad campaign going on for Jesus called “He Gets Us.” You can learn all about it on their website: <https://hegetsus.com/en>. The page begins by saying “Jesus gets our lives because He was human too.” Apparently, the assumption that the authors of this campaign are making is that many people don’t get it that Jesus gets us. They are assuming that most people have a stained glass image of Jesus in their minds as one who is so divinely perfect that He is out of touch with us and basically incapable of relating to us ordinary humans.

They’ve been faulted by some evangelical Christians for this assumption – that people tend to see Jesus as only God and that they need to be reminded that He is fully human like us too. Certainly if people don’t believe that Jesus is God, it’s no big deal to prove that He’s human – after all, what else would He be? I don’t know what’s the prevailing opinion on the street, but perhaps it is safe to say that even those who do acknowledge Jesus’ humanity still figure that He not only has virgin birth but also virgin ears, and that He is not only holy but “holier than thou.” In other words, perhaps most people assume that Jesus is easily offended and has a condescending disdain for real life people like us, especially those who might feel marginalized, rejected, or despised by His followers.

Over the years, I’ve found that the most controversial portrayals of Jesus have not been as the “King of Kings” or the divine character in “The Greatest Story Ever Told,” but rather the more human portraits, especially those that overdo His humanity to a fault and make Him faulty, such as “Jesus Christ Superstar” or “Godspell.” Thankfully, more recent movies and videos about Jesus seem to get the God/man combination more accurately, and have helped people see Jesus as more like us without compromising His divine character. I’m thinking especially of “The Passion of the Christ” (2004), “The Nativity Story” (2005) and especially the latest streaming series called “The Chosen” (<https://watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen>) that is really quite well done and captivating.

While the Bible surely reveals Jesus to be God, it also makes an emphatic case for His full humanity. In the Gospels, in addition to recording Jesus doing divine things like performing spectacular miracles, Jesus also gets hungry, He gets angry, He gets tired, He cries, He gets heart broken, He bleeds, and He dies – all very human attributes. When St. John tells us to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God,” he goes on to point out that the way we know the Spirit of God is that He will confess that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh”

(1 John 4:1-2). In fact, the writer to the Hebrews helps us see how Jesus’ humanity is essential to our salvation: “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery” (Hebrews 2:14-15).

God becoming fully human is the essence of what we celebrate at Christmas time. It’s the incarnation of the Son of God. The Athanasian Creed puts it like this: *“our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man. He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father before all ages; and He is man, born from the substance of His mother in this age: perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father with respect to His divinity, less than the Father with respect to His humanity. Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ: one, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God.”* That’s the fancy theological way of saying it. The “He Gets Us” campaign puts it far simpler in a way can be quite comforting and compelling. For example: *“Jesus was born to a teenage girl. A girl who was scared and forced to travel far away from her home right before she gave birth. A girl who was at the mercy of a man who could have publicly shamed her or even had her killed, but who instead protected and supported her. A girl who gave birth in a stable because she had nowhere else to go ... Jesus didn’t just appear out of nowhere. His life was not some fairytale – it was very real. His first few minutes in this world looked like anyone else’s, crying in the arms of his mom. His teen mom”* (<https://hegetsus.com/en/what-would-jesus-think-of-teen-moms>).

I’m certainly not blanket endorsing the “He Gets Us” campaign, but it does seem to be a potentially effective message for our world today, a world that surprisingly still seems to have high regard for Jesus even if it’s not so sure about His church. If it helps, remember that Jesus said, “the one who is not against us is for us” (Mark 9:10). So I would say let’s capitalize on whatever good might come out of the “He Gets Us” campaign. As St. Paul put it, “whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice” (Philippians 1:18). I think I get that.



WE ARE CALLED

to make disciples of *Jesus*

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.

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

ST. MICHAEL ENDOWMENT DISTRIBUTION

HELPS STUDENTS WHO MISSED OUT BECAUSE OF COVID

Each year the Endowment Committee has the pleasure of distributing money to various St. Michael ministries from the General Endowment Fund. This is done mainly during the first quarter of the year. This year some money was reserved for later in the year should needs arise.

As the new school year commenced in August, Mr. Johnson and teachers noticed some younger students being woefully behind in reading and other core skills. This has been a trend noticed over the past two years and well reported outcome in the education community with the cause being the COVID pandemic. The breaks in continued education and needing to do remote education set these young students back. To help address this issue, St. Michael School needed to buy additional curriculum, do more frequent testing and hired two additional classroom aides.

The Endowment Committee has allocated the remaining \$1,890 of 2022 distributions to the school to help with these costs. It is with thanksgiving and praise we acknowledge our provider for making the Endowment program at St. Michael available for needs like this.

If interested in learning more, please contact any of the committee members: Julie Vickery, Rick Jacobs, Dave Johnson, Brad Hunter, Jay Koski (*Business & Finance Manager*), or Todd Foster (*Chairperson*) for the Endowment Committee.



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

The Antiphons

Nov. 26-27 Advent 1 - "O Come: Emmanuel"
5 pm / 8:30 am / 11:00 am

Nov. 30 Midweek 1 - "O Come: Wisdom"
6:30 pm

Dec. 3-4 Advent 2 - "O Come: Lord of Might"
5 pm / 8:30 am / 11:00 am

Dec. 7 Midweek 2 - "O Come: Branch of Jesse"
6:30 pm

Dec. 10-11 Advent 3 - "O Come: Key of David"
5 pm / 8:30 am / 11:00 am

Dec. 14 Midweek 3 - "O Come: Dayspring"
6:30 pm Musical Service

Dec. 17-18 Advent 4 - "O Come: Desire of Nations"
5 pm / 8:30 am / 11:00 am

"O come!"

Advent is truly one of the best seasons of the church year. We both anticipate the festival of Christmas as well as look forward to Christ's second coming in glory.

If it's been a while since you've come to worship, why not let Advent be your re-introduction. It's a great time to be the church together! We sing old, familiar carols, hear the wonderful Gospel of God's love for us, and meet together as His family.

Christ comes to His people through His Word by the power of the Holy Spirit... and He has come for you. He loves you so much that He was willing to come all the way down, even to a manger, even to a horrible death on a cross. And if He had to do it all over again, He would in a loving heartbeat.

Jesus loves you! We look forward to worshipping together again this Advent season.

Pastor Maske



MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST

December 4, 2022 – Second Sunday in Advent

PSALM 105:4-8 AND ISAIAH 40:3B; ISAIAH 11:1-10; MATTHEW 3:1-12

“REPENT!” - SERMON TEXT: MATTHEW 3:2 - REV. SHAYNE JONKER

You know it just wouldn't be Advent without this strange preacher of the Judean wilderness, John the Baptist. His message is quite simple and can be summarized in a single word: Repent! And the reason why we should repent is simple as well: the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

December 11, 2022 – Third Sunday in Advent

PSALM 146; ISAIAH 35:1-10; MATTHEW 11:2-15

“CONFUSED ABOUT JESUS?” - SERMON TEXT: MATTHEW 11:2-11

- REV. PAUL SHOEMAKER

During Jesus' life, there was confusion about who He was and what His mission was. Clarity comes from Isaiah's prophecies and from Jesus Himself. Those same words clarify for us the identity and purpose of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

December 18, 2022 – Fourth Sunday in Advent

PSALM 24; ISAIAH 7:10-17; MATTHEW 1:18-25

“A SIGN OF THE TIMES” - SERMON TEXT: ISAIAH 7:10-17

- REV. WILLIAM MUELLER

We are almost to the joyous celebration of Christmas! Isaiah 7:14 gives us one of the most celebrated prophecies about the birth of Jesus – the prophecy of a miraculous virgin birth of our Lord. Jesus is, as Isaiah prophesied, Immanuel – “God with us.” The context of this prophecy gives us even more reasons to rejoice and celebrate!

December 25, 2022 – Christmas (The Nativity of Our Lord)

PSALM 98; TITUS 3:4-7; LUKE 2:15-20

“HOW WILL YOU RETURN?” - SERMON TEXT: LUKE 2:20 - REV. DR.

THOMAS AHLERSMEYER

Want to make Christmas last longer than a day? Consider how the shepherds returned to their everyday lives after seeing the newborn Savior, Jesus Christ, in Bethlehem's manger. How will you return?



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

Monday	1 PM			
Wednesday	5 AM & 10 AM			
Friday	7 AM			
Saturday	6 AM			
Sunday	6 AM	10AM	6PM	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 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

LEAVE A LEGACY OF DISCIPLESHIP

The familiar passage in Deuteronomy 6 tells us to teach our children biblical truth when we are at home, on the road, lying down, and rising up—basically, all the time. While that may sound overwhelming, it's really simple because it boils down to this: tell your kids about God as you live your daily life.

The word legacy refers to anything that is handed down from the past. It can be property, money, good looks, talents—even behaviors such as disciplined routines or bad habits. The ones that come before us, are remembered for something that outlasts them.

I suspect many Christian parents feel that we want our kids to know Jesus and walk with Him, living out His Word in faith. So, how do we know we're doing everything we can to leave a legacy of discipleship?

According to the *Nothing Less* study by Lifeway Research, reading the Bible is by far the number one thing parents can do to help their children continue to grow in their faith as adults. While this should be no big surprise, it's important to ask ourselves, “Are we really doing this?”

If we want to leave a legacy of discipleship, we must prioritize God's Word. Bible reading can begin at a very young age when we read Bible stories to children while also showing them the bright and beautiful illustrations. As they grow older, we can read a full text Bible with them, and model how to have a devotion time. They should see us reading our own Bibles, because most of our parenting is “caught” not taught. Instead of having your quiet time hidden away, commit to having it — where your children can see you!

Listening to Christian music also has a positive effect on children and can be used as a discipleship tool. Scripture-filled lyrics rooted in sound doctrine really point back to reading God's Word—it's just singing instead!

At every age and stage of childhood—babies, toddlers, preschoolers, preteens, and teenagers can all learn from us as we point out little things that connect to God. For example, we can tell younger kids that God made the trees they see in the park. We can tell older kids that we serve a creative God when they see the same trees. Tying biblical truth to memorable things helps build foundations that lead to a lasting faith. There are countless examples of how to do this. We only need to ask God to make them obvious to us!

Through Bible reading, prayer, serving, and listening to music together, we can leave a legacy of discipleship. These are the everyday habits and practices that lead to kids growing into spiritually healthy adults where they too will disciple others—repeating the legacy again and again.

– Tammy Songer, *Child Ministry Coordinator*

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST

"Exploring Our Faith"



Contact the Church Office,
to register or assist a friend in
learning more!
269-327-7832
naumann@mightymessengers.org

What does it mean to be a Lutheran? What do Lutherans believe? How is this similar and/or different from the doctrines taught by other denominations and religions? What makes Saint Michael Lutheran Church special? How do we care for one another and how can I get involved in what God is doing among us?

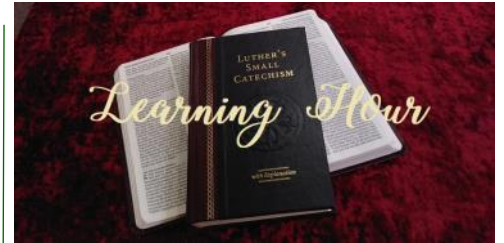
In order to address these questions, we offer this course of instruction entitled: **"Exploring Our Faith."** It is taught on Sunday mornings during the same time as the children's Sunday School and other Adult Bible Classes, at 9:45 am to 10:45 am.

Course Schedule (Winter 2023)

Date	Lesson #	Topic
1/8	Lesson #1:	God and the Bible
1/15	Lesson #2:	The Father & Creation
1/22	Lesson #3:	Sin & the Law
1/29	Lesson #4:	Person & Work of Jesus
2/5	Lesson #5:	The Holy Spirit
2/12	Lesson #6:	Holy Baptism
2/19	Lesson #7:	The Lord's Supper
2/26	Lesson #8:	Lord's Prayer
3/5	Lesson #9:	Office of the Keys

Sunday, March 12 from 9:45am-10:45am

New Member Orientation



Pastor Maske will be doing a class on **"Old Testament Prophecies of Christ"** as a pre-Christmas Bible study in the music room on December 11 & 18.

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 4. You can take plants home after the Christmas Day service. Cost: \$15.00 per plant, send payment to the Church Office, before December 7.

Pray for the **EMPTY CHAIRS!** †❤️😊



By praying over the empty chair we acknowledge that there is always room for one more, and that we want the Lord to bring someone into the group and fill the empty seat.

The empty chair may represent someone who had been a regular attendee who is no longer able to come to gatherings, or it may represent someone new to the area who is looking for a place to belong. It also lets children know that we pray for them even when they are not with us. It may represent someone who has never attended church before at all.

By praying for the empty chair we make it known to all involved that our desire is to invite, welcome and celebrate those that God wants to bring to himself.

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*

HOMEBOUND FOR THE HOLIDAYS

PLEASE REMEMBER THEM WITH A CHRISTMAS CARD
(AND MAYBE A LITTLE TREAT).



In the Communication Center, you'll find gift bags in which you can put your cards & gifts. Please do so by noon on December 18, so that we will have time to deliver them.

ST. MICHAEL CONTINUES TO BLESS THE CHILDREN OF LAC BROCHET, MANITOBA, CANADA

In October, Michelle Stachel (former member of SMLC who now lives in Indiana) told us she made over a hundred Christmas stockings she would like to donate to the children in Lac Brochet. Excitedly we accepted and ordered items to fill the stockings and they were mailed off on November 4 — which means they should arrive in time for the school to distribute them before they go on Christmas break!!!!



Keep the Lac Brochet Community in your Prayers!

This is such a difficult time of the year—it gets darker and darker and colder and colder—depression and alcohol abuse increases. They are very vulnerable at this time of year.

The school has also had an outbreak of COVID so they are even more isolated.



Next Mission Trip to Lac Brochet, Manitoba

- Recruiting will begin in January for the 2023 summer trip to Lac Brochet—probably in early August.
- Due to increased costs for travel, lodging, food and supplies, we are in **desperate need of funds** for the 2023 team trip and continued connection with Lac Brochet throughout the year. **Thank you for your support!**



From your friends at
St. Michael Lutheran Church & School
in Portage, Michigan



Thank you to Michelle Stachel, Jan Jett and John & Aliene Buchtrup who made the stockings, delivered the stockings, ordered the goodies and stuffed the stockings!

Look for LAMP Advent Devotions in the Communication Center



MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST



GIVE LIFE TO YOUR STORY™

November 2022

Dear St. Michaels Lutheran Family,

God has been so good to us! I am especially glad that you are partnering with us so that I can share what He is doing. God is in the process of pruning our club. In the past month, our numbers have been a little lower; however, our time with the teens has been so much richer! God is working in their lives to a point where we are seeing change. They are having more courage to pray out loud and talk to our Father. They are asking deeper questions and wanting to know more what God is saying; their focus is on a whole new level. All glory to God! We are seeing teens who are trying to take their schoolwork serious, and wanting to do better for themselves. Teens that are stepping out of their comfort zones to participate in extracurricular activities at school. My Lord, my Lord!



Sunday, October 30, was yet another day our God showed up! We held an event with five local churches to love on and hang out with the community. We had over 150 residents of Colonial Acres come out and play yard games, trunk or treat, and, most importantly, they heard the Gospel! People were getting prayed for. Parents and kids were blessed because not many of them ever go trick or treating. I was able to connect with current teens in our club, teens who have stopped coming for some reason, and I met new teens and their parents with the opportunity to share what we do on a weekly basis! I cannot thank you enough for your partnership in the work that God is doing in this neighborhood and these teens' lives!

Additional ways you can be praying:

- Praising God for a successful Fall Festival. Over 150 residents came out. Met tons of new families.
- For the new teens we met, that they will come to club on Tuesday nights.
- We have had one young man, named Jacob, join our ministry team! Pray for him as he jumps right in and ministers to these teens.
- Safety for Meghan and Elliana as they travel to North Carolina to visit Meghan's sister and Elliana's new baby cousin.
- For our teens who have accepted Christ as their Lord. Prayers that they have the boldness to proclaim His name even around "the popular kids" and not worry about fitting in with the crowd.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tyler and Meghan".

Tyler and Meghan Gjeltema
City Life Site Director - Colonial Acres

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST

In 1996, Sarah Mally (now Hancock) started a discipleship ministry in her living room with the goal of challenging other young ladies to be strong for the Lord in their youth. We have been excited to see how the Lord has blessed, and now there are about 800 Bright Lights groups that have started around the country and internationally. Bright Lights continues to train leaders, host mother / daughter conferences, and provide discipleship materials for young ladies. Sarah is also the author of *Speak Truth in Your Heart* and *Before You Meet Prince Charming* and co-author of *Making Brothers and Sisters Best Friends*.



We are really excited about the upcoming **Speak Truth in Your Heart Conference** at the Ark Encounter in 2023. This is the only live Bright Lights conference planned for 2023, and we hope many of you are able to join us! *We are also excited to have Ken Ham as a guest speaker at this conference!*

Many girls try to change their wrong *actions*, but never learn to discern the wrong *thinking* behind the actions. As girls replace lies with the truth, they will see how God's Word will transform each area of their lives as the truth sets them free!

For: Girls ages 11-22+ and Mothers; Ladies of all ages are also encouraged to attend
Conference Pricing: Normal Price (through January 1): \$65 per person
Late Price (through February 1): \$75 per person Registration closes February 1

Session Topics: • How to Replace Lies with Truth; • Exposing Lies about God; • Find Your Identity in Jesus; • Honor Christ with Your Emotions; • Resist Temptations with Truth; • Lies, Guys, and Purity (By Sarah and Andrew Hancock); • Gain Boldness in Witnessing (By Josiah and Grace Moffitt); • Let Your Light Shine (Chalk Drawing Presentation)

Conference Includes: Admission for 1 person to the Speak Truth in Your Heart Conference (sessions and materials); Admission for 1 person to the Ark Encounter (Feb 25th); Meals and parking are not included in registration price.
• Biblical, practical sessions; • Humorous skits to help girls apply truth in every-day life; • A chalk drawing presentation; • Harp music and singing; • Testimonies from Bright Lights staff; • Time to enjoy the Ark Encounter; • Godly examples of young women who are living for Christ

Conference Schedule: Friday, February 24th 9:30AM - 6:00 PM and Saturday, February 25th 9:15AM - 6:00PM Time is reserved on Saturday afternoon to go through the Ark Encounter exhibits.

Conference Location: Answers Center at the Ark Encounter
1 Ark Encounter Drive Williamstown, KY 41097

To register or for more information, click here. Or check out:

<https://tomorrowsforefathers.com/speak-truth-in-your-heart-conference-at-the-ark-encounter/>



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

About a dozen families will attend a celebration dinner on December 7, sponsored by the five churches of the Portage Coalition of Jesus Loves Kalamazoo. They will be taking home a devotion book, that shares the living Gospel of Jesus Christ and a wonderful gift basket from their St. Michael 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. Select an item on this Sign-Up Genius Tree and bring the items to the church, as soon as possible before Dec. 5th.

Don't want to shop? We would be thrilled to have a financial gift to work with. Thank You for taking part in this ministry to help those less fortunate in our community!



FELLOWSHIP

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



YOUTH MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

MEETING MOST SUNDAY EVENINGS 5-7PM



Thank you to everyone who came to our Progressive Dinner. It was a huge success. Especially thank you to the Songer's, the Bigelow's and the Hunter's for opening their homes to us. Many memories were made.



Looking forward:

CHRISTMAS PARTY AT SAKURA RESTAURANT

Sunday, December 11

Grades 5-6-7 from 1:00-3:00 PM

8th-High School from 5:00 7:00 PM

This has become a requested tradition of the youth program.

Please RSVP to Church Office by December 7, for Great Food & Fun!
(Bring a \$5 wrapped gift to exchange and \$10 for meal.)

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

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST



SEVERAL FRIENDS RECENTLY ENJOYED CRAFTING A FAITH RESOURCE FOR THEIR HOME

The history of the Nativity scene

St. Francis of Assisi established the first Nativity scene in 1223 in Greccio, a small town in Italy. As he was preparing for Christmas Eve Mass, St. Francis was trying to think of a way to remind people that Jesus came not as a wealthy king, but as a poor child born among animals. So he wrote to Pope Honorius III and obtained permission to create a living Nativity scene.

In a cave near town, Francis set up an altar. He brought in a manger filled with hay, as well as a live ox and a donkey. He invited the townspeople to come, and he preached about the humble beginnings of the Christ Child.

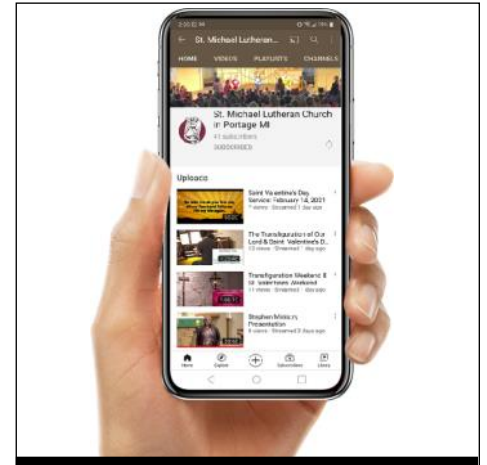
The idea of re-creating Jesus' birth was very popular. Churches in Italy created displays made out of terra cotta. In the middle of the 1500s, families began to put up Nativity scenes in their homes. And living Nativity scenes like the one that St. Francis started centuries ago remain popular to this day.

Who was there?

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke describe Jesus' birth. Mary, Jesus' mother, and Joseph came to Bethlehem together with their donkey right before Jesus was born. When there was no room at any of the inns for them to stay, they ended up in a stable where animals were kept. So the Nativity scene includes Mary, Joseph, Jesus and the animals in a stable, as well as a manger, or trough, where Baby Jesus slept.

In Luke, we learn about the angel who brought the shepherds "good news of great joy" (Luke 2:10), when Jesus was born, so we include the shepherds and the angel in our Nativity scene.

And in Matthew, Chapter 2, we read about the Wise Men, or Magi, who came to visit Jesus, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. So we add the Wise Men to our Nativity scene as well.



STAY CONNECTED

YouTube

On the St. Michael 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

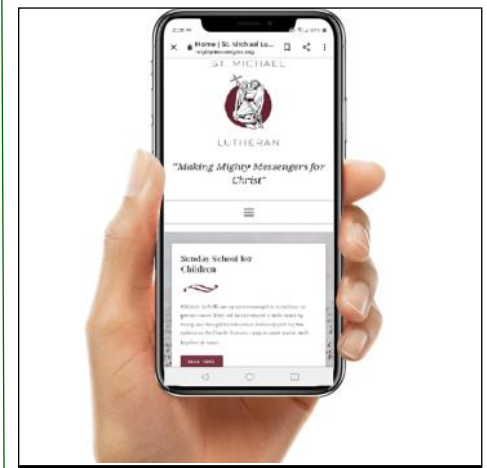
Facebook

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



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*



FAMILY & CHILDREN
SERVICES A SOURCE OF HOPE

Respect Integrity Service Empowerment
fcsource.org

October 27, 2022

St Michael Lutheran Church
Quilters
7211 Oakland Dr.
Portage, MI 49024

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Family & Children Services, staff, clients and especially the children, thank you most sincerely for the wonderful gifts of Quilts and Pillowcases for our Pantry.

We feel very fortunate to be the recipient of your generosity – and we are most appreciative.

Each of the items you gifted will make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children and families served by the Agency.

Thank you, again, for partnering with Family & Children Services to change lives one child, one family at a time.

Sincerely,

Sherry Thomas-Cloud
Sherry Thomas-Cloud
Chief Executive Officer

Courtenay VanderMolen
Courtenay VanderMolen
Director of Resource Development

*Thank you for
this wonderful
gift!*

No goods or services were provided in consideration, in whole or in part, for this contribution.
Gifts to Family & Children Services, Inc. are deductible for income tax purposes.
The agency has been designated by the Internal Revenue Service as a nonprofit organization that meets the qualifications of
Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue code.
Please keep this official letter for your records.



1608 Lake Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49001 • 269.344.0202 • fax 269.344.0285 778 W. Columbia Avenue, Battle Creek, MI 49015 • 269.965.3247 • fax 69.966.4135



SUNDAY SCHOOL MISSION COLLECTION CONTINUES INTO DECEMBER!!

Sunday School students will be sorting
and counting the items on 18th.

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.

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/>

OCTOBER FINANCIALS

End of FY2022

11/1/2021-10/31/2022

Church Revenue	\$ 807,213
School Revenue	\$ <u>1,218,304</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 2,025,518
Total Expenses	\$ <u>2,009,470</u>
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$ 16,048
Expense Budget	\$ 2,013,846
Under/(Over) Budget	\$ 11,672
Working Cash Balance	\$ 36,888
Mortgage Balance	\$ 709,134

Designated Fund Balances

Endowment Fund	\$533,624
Building Contingency	\$ 23,633
Parking Lot Fund	\$ 15,000
Technology Refresh	\$ 13,530
Sunday School	\$ 900
Youth Donations	\$ 16,358
Youth Accounts	\$ 5,936
Good Samaritan	\$ 3,310
Memorials	\$ 8,044
L.A.M.P. Mission Trip	\$ 3,417
Quilting	\$ 1,142
Church Worker Scholarship	\$ 485
School Improvements	\$ 38,357
Tuition Assistance	\$ 57,882
School Music	\$ 270
Flower Fund	\$ 3,739
CFK Mission Expansion	\$ 90,000
Women's Fellowship/LWML	\$ 2,292
Faith Budget	\$ 43,593

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Sept. Avg.	271
Oct. Avg.	296
Nov. Avg.	289

Annual Avg. 2019	347
Annual Avg. 2020	197
(+ uncounted online viewers)	
Annual Avg. 2021	265
Annual Avg. 2022	285

HAVE YOU SEEN THE **PAPER GATOR** IN THE PARKING LOT?

***We earn money when you
recycle paper in our bin...***

The paper will be shredded and processed into hydro seeding mulch, lawn establishment products, lawn repair products, Fresh News® Cat Litter, dog litter, Fresh News® Small Animal Bedding, Fresh News® Small Animal Litter or recycled at paper mills, cellulose insulation manufacturers or other recycling facilities.

WHAT CANNOT GO IN THE BIN?

• Plastic • Metal • Trash • Glass • Cardboard

WHAT CAN GO IN THE BIN?

- Newsprint
- Catalogs/Magazines
- Junk Mail • Phone Books
- Office/School paper
- Hard and soft cover books
- Paperboard (Grocery Item boxes)
- Standard staples & paperclips are ok
- Shredded paper



Church Extension Fund

Bill.burmeister@mi-cef.org

800-242-3944

UNBRIDLED JOY

What is there about grandchildren that brings such unbridled joy when they come to visit? My young granddaughter is full of so much energy, spunk, and definitive ideas, it is amazing to watch. I love spending time with her.

She may want to read a book, watch a specific show, or ask you to play, “house” with her. If you dare to let your attention wander, she will walk up to you, grab your cheeks in her hands, look deeply into your eyes and say, “I want you to play with me.” And she doesn’t mean casually. She wants you fully engaged.

Even if you have other things you hope to accomplish, she wants to spend time with me. It’s that passion that I relish. I look forward to that time with her.

And isn’t that the same thing that our Heavenly Father wants? He desires to spend time with us. Not a passing, quick prayer, or an obligatory visit to church on Sunday morning. But as Philippians 4:4 says: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” The dictionary definition of rejoice is to feel or show great joy or delight. Does that match our actions, our emotions?

How can I be so excited to spend time with my granddaughter and at the same time not as passionate to be in prayer or Bible study, spending time with my Heavenly Father, who longs for my attention?

Psalms 44:8 says: “In God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise your name forever.”

We are quick to pull out our cell phones or picture albums to brag on our grandkids, but how often do we extol the miracles we experience, the love God shows us and the best gift ever, eternal life? We don’t earn it, but He still loves and forgives us. As it says in the well-known poem, Footprints; “my precious child, I love you and will never leave you. During your trials and suffering, when you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.” How often do we joyfully shout that from the rooftops?

We invite you to partner with CEF to Build the Kingdom. Let’s share that unbridled joy, together, with the world.

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST



This is the time of year when the members have the opportunity to order or review subscriptions of The Lutheran Witness (LW), the official periodical of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Each issue of LW includes the Michigan In Touch supplement for those subscribing through this district office order process for only \$12. The subscription year is March 2023 through February 2024. Yearly subscriptions ordered directly through Concordia Publishing House would be \$19.99. So don't miss this great opportunity by letting the Church Office know of your interest no later than Monday, December 12, to be included and avoid cancellation.



Lutherans For Life
*Equipping Lutherans and their neighbors
to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life*

LFL at the March
January 19-21, 2023
Washington, D.C.
*Conference and March
Open to All Adults*



lutheransforlife.org/event/lfl-at-the-march-in-washington-d-c

Y4Life in Washington, D.C. | January 19-21, 2023

[Find more details here!](#)

**More Resources are available, and you can sign up for a weekly e-digest from LUTHERANS FOR LIFE
at <https://lutheransforlife.org>**

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

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

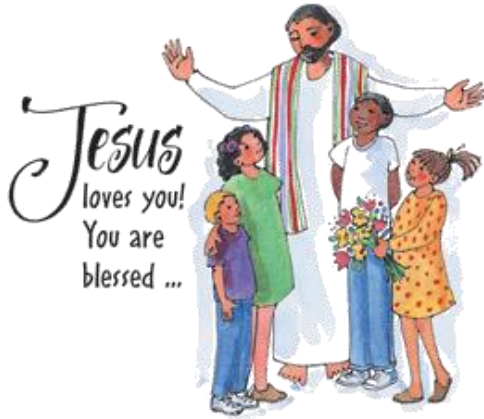


**Year-end gifts
should be
received in the
church office
prior to
December 31,
to be considered
tax-deductible
for 2022.**

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

- 1) 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.

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



LCMS Foundation
 TODAY | TOMORROW | FOREVER

Julie Burgess
 Julie.burgess@lfnd.org
 713-822-5284

Sharon was sitting in her pastor's office with tears streaming down her face. Her husband had just been diagnosed with Alzheimer's and Sharon was at a loss on how to handle all the responsibilities of the household that now rested on her shoulders. Her pastor asked her if their estate plan was in place. She hesitated and then said, "We always said we were going to get that done. But now his mental capacity makes it difficult to handle." The pastor shared God's Word with her and they prayed. But both realized the challenging road that lay ahead.

It is faithful stewardship of God's resources to be intentional about putting our estate plans in place. Parents with young children should have a minor's trust and appoint a guardian in case something should happen. Throughout the years, the estate plans need to be updated to accommodate changes in family composition and life situations. When retirement comes along and investments change, it is time for another review. Those pivotal moments of life should act as a catalyst to move us to intentional action.

Many things can consume our attention. Certainly, the holidays will do so this month as we celebrate God's gift of Jesus to us. Yet a month like this, as we cherish family and Church, is a great time to pray to the Lord for resolve to get busy after the first of the year to quit putting things off. No matter how much we fear talking about what may seem to be uncomfortable planning, the gift of faith given to us, linked to eternity, gives us the confidence to plan. In faith, we can be joyful about planning the blessings of our estate plans to bless the family we love and the ministries we care about. Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor can help.

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, Matt Heintz, Barbara Schubert, Jan Jett, or Pastor Naumann.

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
Mark Hough 269-567-0705	Frommann	G
Pastors 269-327-7832	H	June
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	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



Merry Christmas!

Staff

Maralyse Worm
Beverly Baker
Chelsea Ritchie
Morgan Rusch
Alex Luthila
Laura Tuinstra
Jessica Long
Dawn Hill
Amy Noble
Tara
Kathy Rader
From the
Emily Ritchie
Callie Warner
Alyz Johnson
Lara Lam
Laura Martin
Julie Prentice
Cheyl Julian
Chaff Jaden
Emily Kuchuk
Everett D. Nolle
Stacy Power
Taylor Clark
Sara
Emily Rauterbach
Brian Chapman
Brenda Krenz
Kelly Das
Mindy Burdick
John Hecht
Aimee DeBlesster
Dan Meske
Meggie Carter
Rebecca Hall
Alicia Kernath
Annie Hecht
Melissa Taylor
Joy Kosh
Barbara Schaubert
Becky Hoyer
Shawn Robinson
Tammy Senger

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

Brian Chapman
Matthew Wright

VOLUNTEERS:

PRESIDENT

Jack Spenner

VICE PRESIDENT

Rob Kuhlmann

RECORDING SECRETARY

Tammy Songer

TREASURER

Jan Jett

BOARD OF CHURCH PROPERTIES

Steve Bell, Director
Mark Vickery, Assistant Director

BOARD OF EARLY CHILDHOOD & SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Mike Grotelueschen, Director
Matt Colby, Assistant Director

BOARD OF SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Angie Heimlich, Director
Lindsey Luma, Assistant Director

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

Vacant, Director

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Dar Swift

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Lisa Robert

BOARD OF YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT

Heather Bigelow, Director
Chad Doubblestein, Assistant Director

YOUTH GROUP LEADERS

Jerry Kuss, Jeff Burnett,
Ryan & Heather Bigelow

BOARD OF LAY MINISTRY

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, Virginia Hetrick
Heather Crampton, Lynda Rea, Karen Shuler

STEPHEN MINISTERS

Lane Bertrand, Mandi Cerqua,
Jackie Michels, Peter Robert,
Bill Semrau, Kathy Zakarias

BOARD OF EVANGELISM & MISSIONS

Valerian Kwigizile, Director
Kathie Seufert, Assistant Director

GREETERS

Arlene Groll, Mark & Jan Chilcott

BOARD OF PARISH EDUCATION

David Groll, Director
Kristin Shook, Assistant Director

ADULT EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Jesse Hogue

CRADLE ROLL

Peggy Makowski

BOARD OF PARISH FELLOWSHIP

Vacant, Director
Judy Schroeder, Assistant Director

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

June Kucks

LWML

Sandy Maya

SOFTBALL

Shannon Miskovich

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Todd Foster, Dave Johnson, Julie Vickery,
Brad Hunter, Rick Jacobs