



THE MIGHTY MESSENGER

FEBRUARY 2023

Volume 62, Number 2



“In this is love . . .”

1 John 4:10

“IN THIS IS LOVE”

Love is always in season, but the month of February, with the annual celebration of St. Valentine's Day, tends to be a time when it gets especially accented. The English word “love” is notoriously ambiguous such that we often wish we had more words to choose from than just one. But the reality is that the limitation of our language forces us to say such things as “I love my wife,” “I love golf,” and “I love ice cream” all with the single word “love” when obviously we don't mean quite the same thing in every context of its usage. Many have pointed out, including C.S. Lewis in *The Four Loves* (1960), that in the Bible we have the luxury of several words for “love.” There's a separate word for friendly or family love, and for romantic or sexual love, and for committed covenant love, and for altruistic sacrificial love even for the unlovely. But in English we often have to use some other words than simply “love” in order to be more precise in our meaning. For example, we could sign off a Valentine card simply with the word “love,” but to our spouse or “lover” we might want to say something like “affectionately yours” or “yours forever,” and we probably wouldn't sign off that way to our children or to a friend.

All this being the case, it's not really helpful to say, as many do these days, “love is love.” The fact is, “love” needs definition and context in order to be properly understood. A heterosexual could very appropriately say to a homosexual “I love you” and mean it as a friend, as a brother or sister, and as a Christian striving to love one's neighbor as the Bible directs us to do. That love very well may need to be what we sometimes call “tough love,” that is “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 5:15) to people who may not appreciate it at the time but need to hear it nonetheless because it is in their best interest. It's this kind of love with which loving parents discipline their children, and with which God disciplines us as His children because He loves us (see Proverbs 3:12 and Hebrews 12:6). Certainly God calls us all to love our neighbor as ourselves (Leviticus 19:18, Mark 12:31, etc.), but we love our neighbor within the appropriate and particular parameters that God has given for our love to be expressed. So it's not really a matter of “who you love” as much as it is “how you love.” Loving my neighbor does not mean coveting or committing adultery with my neighbor. Our loving

God out of His love for us wants the “marriage bed” (Hebrews 13:4) honored by all and kept undefiled by devoting our sexual expression to the marriage context and defining marriage as Jesus does (Mark 10:6-9).

Far better than saying “love is love” we should say, as the Bible does, “God is love” (1 John 4:16) and then let God define what love is and how it is to be expressed in the various contexts of this life that He has given us. When we do, it will often surprise us. God demonstrated His great love for us by loving us even while we were yet sinners and His enemies (see Romans 5:8-11). It's been said that Lutherans love Lent, and that's no doubt because we see God's love in the cross of Jesus. “In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). I don't know if you love this Lenten hymn or not, but it says it well: “My song is love unknown, my Savior's love to me; love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be” (Samuel Crossman: 1623-1683). May the Lord bless our Lent, and bless our love for Him and each other in response to His indescribable love for us.



TOWNHALL MEETING COMING SOON!

Sunday, February 12

Between Worship Services in Gym

*Voters' Assembly
on February 26
following Late Service*



At this meeting, the agenda will include Staff Reports, Financial updates, the Long Range Plan, Resolutions and we will be electing a new President of the Congregation, Directors for the ministry boards and several new Lay Ministers. Nominations are still being considered. Look for information packets in the Communication Center or your weekly email announcements.

WE ARE CALLED

to make disciples of *Jesus*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5 POTLUCK DINNER

Some interesting statistics from recent headlines: The cost of a four-year university has almost tripled since 1990. Over 45 million Americans have student debt. Americans owe nearly \$1.75 trillion in student loan debt. The average debt is almost \$40,000. This debt can be overwhelming. The government is considering forgiving some federal student debt and many employers are looking at ways to help employees with their debt.

We would like to help our full-time staff members who are carrying the extra burden of student debt. The Board of Lay Ministry is hosting a potluck fundraiser for this.

Please join us in the gym on Sunday, February 5 for a potluck dinner at 12:30 pm (right after the late worship service). Bring your favorite dish to pass (hot dish or dessert), your family, and your friends. We will be providing plates, cups, utensils, and drinks.

There will be a free-will offering at the door with all of the proceeds going to our Student Loan Fund. This is a great opportunity to help support our staff, have a nice Sunday dinner, and enjoy the fellowship of other members of other members of our church.



FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR

We have a standing order with a local florist for two floral arrangements, to be appropriate for the liturgical season, in the chancel for every weekend, except during Lent. Two sponsors per week may select dates on the calendar on a first-come basis. The cost to be a sponsor for one arrangement is \$50. (Two arrangements would be \$100.) Sponsors' checks should be made payable to: St. Michael Lutheran Church, with the funds designated for the Flower Fund. Chancel Flower envelopes can be used for these payments. Look for the Calendar & Envelopes near the Usher's station.

Want to make your reservation today? [Use this link](#) and complete the form, which goes to the church office.

Sponsors of the floral arrangements will be acknowledged in the church's member email announcements preceding the sponsored weekend. Members who have paid for the floral arrangements may take them home after the late service on Sunday. Arrangements that are not sponsored by a member will be repurposed on Monday.

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

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 up-lifting, 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



LENT SCHEDULE 2023

The Way to the Cross

2/22 ASH WEDNESDAY 6:30 PM
(Imposition of Ashes / Communion)

2/25-26 3/1	1 st Sunday of Lent Lent Midweek 1	5:00 PM 6:30 PM	8:30AM Jesus Forced to Carry His Cross (Mark 15:20) (Meal @ 5PM, Confirmation Lesson 5:30PM, Small Group 6PM)	11:00 AM
3/4-5 3/8	2 nd Sunday of Lent Lent Midweek 2	5:00 PM 6:30 PM	8:30AM Jesus' Cross Carried by Simon (Luke 23:26) (Meal @ 5PM, Confirmation Lesson 5:30PM, Small Group 6PM)	11:00 AM
3/11-12 3/15	3 rd Sunday of Lent Lent Midweek 3	5:00 PM 6:30 PM	8:30AM Jesus Wept Over by Women (Luke 23:27-31) (Meal @ 5PM, Confirmation Lesson 5:30PM, Small Group 6PM)	11:00 AM
3/18-19 3/22	4 th Sunday of Lent Lent Midweek 4	5:00 PM 6:30 PM	8:30AM Jesus Stripped of His Garments (Luke 23:33) (Meal @ 5PM, Confirmation Lesson 5:30PM, Small Group 6PM)	11:00 AM
3/25-26 3/29	5 th Sunday of Lent Lent Midweek 5	5:00 PM 6:30 PM	8:30AM Jesus Nailed to the Cross (John 20:24-25) (Meal @ 5PM, Confirmation Lesson 5:30PM, Small Group 6PM)	11:00 AM
4/1-2	Palm Sunday	5:00 PM	8:30AM 11:00 AM	
4/6	Maundy Thursday	6:30 PM	(Communion)	
4/7	Good Friday	6:30 PM		
4/8	Easter Vigil	5:00 PM		
4/9	Easter Sunrise Family Breakfast Morning Song	7:30 AM 9:00 AM 11:00 AM		

SUNDAY SCHOOL

WHERE ARE WE MEETING? 9:45 - 10:45 AM

ROOM

114	Israel's Mission: Becoming A Kingdom of Priests in a Prodigal World
119	4th - 7th grades
122	Preschool-Kindergarten
123	1st - 3rd grades
207	8th - High School - Studying the Scriptures of the week
230	Exploring Our Faith - led by Pastor Naumann
Allan Hall	ECHO: Unbroken Truth Worth Repeating

February 5, 2023 – Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

PSALM 112; 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-9; MATTHEW 5:13-20

“BEYOND OUR IMAGINATION!” -

SERMON TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 2:9 - REV. THOMAS AHLERSMEYER

In a world of self-created “gods,” the Good News of Jesus Christ stands apart as something immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. We are privileged to remember and revisit the Good News of a Savior whose sacrificial love and activity in our lives is Beyond Our Imagination!

February 12, 2023 – Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

PSALM 125; DEUTERONOMY 30:15-20; MATTHEW 5:21-30

“THE CHOICE” -

SERMON TEXT: DEUTERONOMY 30:1-20 - REV. DR. WALTER MAIER III

There is a choice confronting all of humanity. This is the choice Moses set before the Israelites when he told them to choose between “life and good, death and evil.” On our own we could not choose correctly. But thank God, he leads us to make the right choice.

February 19, 2023 – The Transfiguration of Our Lord

PSALM 2:6-12; 2 PETER 1:16-21; MATTHEW 17:1-9

“LISTEN TO HIM” -

SERMON TEXT: MATTHEW 17:5 - REV. THOMAS EGGOLD

The Transfiguration of Jesus was not only an encouragement to Peter, James, and John as they faced the horrible reality of the cross, but it is, in the present, an encouragement to us as we bear our own.

February 26, 2023 – First Sunday in Lent

PSALM 32:1-7; GENESIS 3:1-21; MATTHEW 4:1-11

“TWO TEMPTATIONS” -

SERMON TEXT: GENESIS 3:1B - REV. SHAYNE JONKER

Today is a tale of two temptations: of Adam and of Christ, the first Adam and the second Adam really. The first fell, and with his fall came sin and death for all. The second stood firm, and with His stand comes righteousness and justification for all.



St. Michael's traditional 8:30 AM service is now posted to the Spiritual TV Channel, according to this schedule:
Charter Spectrum Channel 187
9 AM & 9 PM

To all our friends that are homebound for the season or due to illness, we want you to know that we miss you and we pray you remember ...



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

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK WAS A



Young friends shared their favorite storybook characters.

Very Important Person Day filled our classrooms with guests.

A trip to the bowling alley was enjoyed by older students.



Recess in the SNOW!

Sharing in Chapel.

A GLOW-in-the-dark playtime was a really exciting event.



The Power of Stories

Written by Michael James Dowling, Christian author and editor <https://legacycoalition.com>

If you're a grandparent, you naturally want to provide love and support to your grandchildren. And if you're a Christian grandparent, you no doubt have an even higher priority of helping your grandchildren develop a biblical worldview.

But how can you effectively teach a biblical worldview to your grandchildren in today's noisy environment, with its constant bombardment of unbiblical information and images from social media, TV, movies, video games, and the internet?

One answer is through stories. Jesus himself taught using parables. You likewise can use stories to effectively teach biblical truth.

Share your personal journey of faith

One story you certainly will want to tell is the story of your personal journey of faith. Your grandchildren will be eager to hear about how you came to know Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. They will be encouraged to learn how God has faithfully guided, protected, and provided for you as you have walked with him over the years.

Share Bible stories

Of course, you will want to make God's Word the central focus of your story times with your grandchildren. Their faith will be strengthened as you read together the stories of Joseph, Jacob, Moses, Esther, Ruth, Abraham, Paul, and other leading Bible figures. Of utmost importance, you'll want to read the story of Jesus as well as discuss the stories He told.

Share Good Christian Books

Consider augmenting Bible stories by reading together some of the many good Christian children's books that are available. You can also use books that are not overtly Christian to teach biblical truths.

For example, while reading the well-known children's book *Goodnight Moon*, talk with your grandchildren about the vastness of the universe that God has created. Use a concordance to look up relevant Scripture. If you look up the word "stars", for instance, one of several verses highlighted will be Psalm 147:4, which says that God calls each of the stars by name. Looking up the word "heavens" will point you to passages like Psalms 136:1-9, which tells us to give thanks to the Lord, who made the moon and the stars to rule over the night.

Relating Scripture to the stories you read will enlarge your grandchildren's universe beyond a wonderful story to an even more wonderful God.

Lead a Time of Discussion

After reading a story aloud with your grandchildren, ask open-ended questions, such as, "Which characters are most like and unlike you? Why do you think the characters made the choices they did? What would you have done if you had been in their situation? What can we learn from this story?"

Further deepen the learning experience by relating the story to actual life experiences. For example, if the story focuses on perseverance, share about times when you persevered to achieve a goal. If the story is about inappropriate anger or jealousy, point out how each of us has a sin nature, and perhaps discuss the story of Cain and Abel. Invite your grandchildren to share their personal experiences, as well.

This type of personal interaction will enrich learning and create fond memories.





Do you do daily devotions? If not, would you like to learn how? This article has some ideas for the how, where, and when of doing daily devotions along with why they are so important. I've also included some examples of getting started and making them a regular part of your routine.

Daily Spiritual Exercise is as Important as Physical Exercise

Just as physical exercise increases our strength and endurance as well as promotes overall health, so does spiritual exercise. When we intentionally give our attention to God and take time away from our other activities to spend time with him, our souls become stronger as they are rooted in God's promises. We are then ready to take on anything that comes our way throughout the rest of the day. You may not see a difference after just one day of devotional time, but just like exercise, you'll see the impact over the long run.

Devotions are a Form of Worship

Daily devotions are worship. When you take time to sit with just God and intentionally get to know Him through His word and your conversation with Him, you are honoring him with your worship. When you take time every day to "Be still, and know that I am God" ([Psalm 46:10](#)), you worship Him, and your daily devotions will grow deeper and more meaningful since relationship – knowing someone well – helps your love for them to increase.

Devotions Pay Off in Times of Need

Daily devotionals are a direct way to "store up treasures in heaven" ([Matthew 6:19-20](#)). When your heart starts absorbing eternal truths that point you to heaven, you are prepared for anything life hands you ([Ephesians 6:10-17](#))!

When the devil tries to lie to you, you'll catch on more quickly because you have daily stored up God's truth in your heart ([John 8:32](#)).

Daily devotions lead to trusting God more and experiencing more of His peace. He holds the whole world in His hands, and He gives peace that passes understanding ([Psalm 46](#); [Philippians 4:7](#)).

If you struggle with anxiety that keeps you up at night, doing your Bible reading right before bed will help you sleep soundly. As you are reminded that God loves you, you'll experience freedom from anxiety ([John 8:32](#)).

Flexible Options for Daily Devotions

Devotional time doesn't have to be using a devotional article or book. It could be just you and your Bible and maybe worship music playing softly in the background. It can be any combination of many things.

- A devotional book to guide you each day
- One verse a day and *think* about (meditate on)
- Committing a verse to memory
- Journaling about a verse

You don't have to do the same thing every day, either. Maybe one day of devotional time will simply be worship and prayer and another will be going through a daily Bible reading plan like the many offered on the [You Version Bible App](#). Whatever you choose, be intentional about doing it daily.

If you miss a day, don't guilt-trip yourself! Satan loves to make us feel condemned and guilty. Refuse to let him do that. If you struggle with consistently spending time with the Lord, ask another believer to keep you accountable. And remember, sticking with something for at least 21 days usually turns it into a habit.

Ideas and Suggestions

For the next several months, this article will present ideas for how to establish regular spiritual exercise in your life. I'll offer some suggestions that work well for other people as well as some you could do with your spouse to bring you closer to each other and God.

To begin, I will explain how I practice scripture writing. Every morning around 10:00, I follow a list prepared by

Sweet Blessings ([swtblessings.com](http://swt blessings.com)), though you can find your own elsewhere on the Internet. This list gives me a monthly topic that all the scripture for that month relate to. For example, January's topic is "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law" ([Psalm 119:18](#)). (If anyone is interested, I can provide a copy of a year's worth of topics and verses.)

There is a different set of verses to write and think about every day, all pertaining to the topic for the month. I follow my scripture writing with a daily devotion from "Wisdom for Each Day" by Billy Graham. Most days, it takes me 20 minutes to complete my devotions and scripture writing. If I miss a day, I catch up within the next couple of days; if I'm on vacation, I may adjust my schedule so I can complete them in private.

If you have a Bible study or devotional routine you'd like to share, please send it to me. Want to learn more about any area of developing a habit of doing daily devotions? Contact me at virbhtr@gmail.com or in any way that is convenient for you.

LOVE IN THE GLOVE -

Keeping Marriage Alive in Michigan through Lutheran Marriage Encounter

As we begin a new year, it is not too soon to make a commitment to your marriage and each other. Please consider attending one of the following upcoming weekends:



March 10-12, 2023

September 28-October 1, 2023

Birch Run

Battle Creek (tentative)

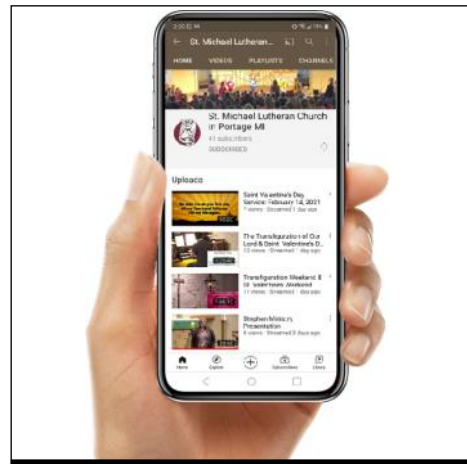
Register at www.GodLovesMarriage

Questions: contact Mark or Jan Chilcott 269-615-7870 or 269-998-6147 mchilcottME@gmail.com

A recent testimony to the on-going success of participation in Marriage Encounter is the enduring commitment of the nineteen couples who attended the Veterans Renewal at The Shack in Jugville, Michigan on November 4-6, 2022. The theme was God's Perfect Plan for Marriage, and as one participant reminds us, "The one most important thing for your marriage is including Jesus into the team."

All prior Lutheran Marriage Encounter graduates should consider attending the Veterans Renewal this year from November 3-5, 2023, at The Shack. Make your reservations now at 231-924-6683.

Lynne & Arlan Wendzel



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

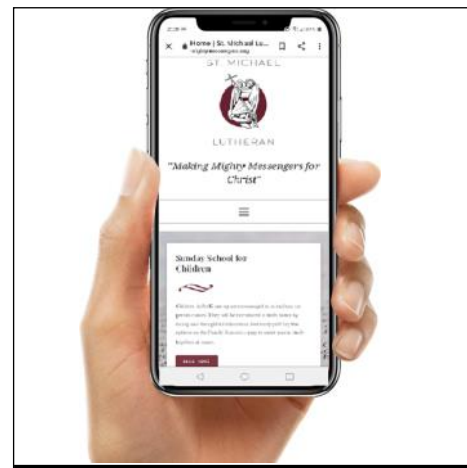
Find devotions, special event announcements and more:



@StMichaelLutheranChurchPortageMI

mightymessengers.org

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



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*



WANT TO GO W-A-A-A-Y UP NORTH?

When you live in Michigan, there are always debates as to what is really "Up North." Here in Kalamazoo county, we don't see ourselves as up north but we are for those in Indiana. Cadillac, Michigan is seen by many as the gate way to the north, but people in the UP would beg to differ. Well, when you're in Lac Brochet, Manitoba, Canada, even the upper peninsula of Michigan is way down south! Lac Brochet is in the upper northwestern recesses of Manitoba about the same latitude as Juneau, Alaska and about 1,700 miles north of us in southwest Michigan. We usually fly from Kalamazoo to Minneapolis to Winnipeg to Thompson to Lac Brochet, each leg in separate airplanes that get progressively smaller. We stay in the church parsonage, visit with adults and play with children, put on a week long Bible school for young kids, and conduct some Bible studies in the evening for men, for women, and for teens. We usually eat our meals together in the parsonage and are often treated to local fresh fish and perhaps caribou. We do a some hiking and exploring, maybe a little fishing, and have even seen bears and the northern lights. It's a unique adventure can be rather exhausting but always very gratifying, especially as we share the love of Jesus with the Dene First Nations people and receive it back from them too. Does this sound like something you would like to do, or to support? Right now we are activity seeking those who would join the travel team as well as the financial contributions that make it possible for anyone to go whom the Lord is leading into this special mission experience. Please pray about it and talk to Dana Naumann for more information (dana.naumann@gmail.com – 269-808-7832).

PROPOSED RESOLUTION: AFGHAN REFUGEE MINISTRY

The following information is presented for prayer and discussion at the upcoming Town Hall meeting (2/12), and consideration at the Voters' Assembly (2/26).

WHEREAS St. Michael Lutheran Church has been identified by People of the Book Lutheran Outreach (POBLO) and the Michigan District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as well suited to partner with them in ministering to refugees from Afghanistan, many of whom have already become Christians and have now settled into the Kalamazoo area, and

WHEREAS POBLO is a mission society of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and has vast experience and success in partnering with congregations and deploying ethnic missionaries from many different cultures and backgrounds to work with immigrant and refugee populations, especially from south Asia, and

WHEREAS similar partnerships between POBLO and local congregations in reaching out to immigrant and refugees populations has proven to be a blessing to those congregations by adding new faces to worship, Sunday School, Bible class, and church membership, and by greatly enhancing the congregation's knowledge, skills, and relationships, and

WHEREAS POBLO has identified and agreed to train, catechize, and closely monitor a local Afghan Christian man named Amanullah Ahmed Zai who has expressed a strong desire to become a Lutheran pastor and to serve the Afghan refugees in our area, and

WHEREAS POBLO has promised to partner with us in providing Amanullah Ahmed Zai with on-site field training and supervision, including with Rev. Vincent Iqbal serving as his local pastoral supervisor/mentor, and also to pay his Amanullah's monthly salary and benefits, and

WHEREAS the Michigan District assures us that they will stand with and between POBLO and St. Michael Lutheran Church to help communicate the mission to other congregations in order to encourage their financial and material support of this mission, and will themselves provide at least \$20,000 of the \$28,000 of annual program costs, now therefore be it

RESOLVED that we agree to work with POBLO, Amanullah Ahmed Zai, and the Michigan District in developing a ministry plan that includes measurable goals for monthly evaluation and respectful use of our facilities for this ministry within our policies and guidelines for appropriate property utilization, and be it further

RESOLVED that St. Michael Lutheran Church enter into this Afghan mission partnership with POBLO and with their local missionary-in-training (Amanullah Ahmed Zai), providing Spiritual support for him in his work, and praying for him and his family, and be it finally

RESOLVED that St. Michael Lutheran Church establish a designated fund (administered by our Board of Evangelism and Missions) from which we will provide \$5,000 of the \$28,000 annual program cost with the understanding that in addition to the contribution from the Michigan District other congregations will also provide at least \$3,000 toward the costs of the program.



Mark Your 2023 Calendar!!

**VACATION BIBLE
SCHOOL WEEK IS**

JULY 23-29

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

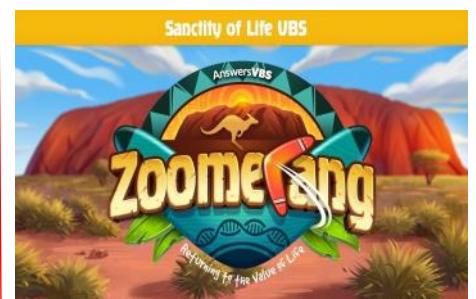
StoryTelling,
Registration,
Crew Leader,
Decorations,
Music,
Crafts,
Snacks,
Media...

**Many
Volunteers
Will Be Needed**



Already know what you want 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

We are the Body of Christ!



We are so thankful to the teams of volunteers that show up each week to make our worship services special!

1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you all are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

You are not the most important person. Hopefully your parents/guardians taught you this very important lesson, and, by God's grace, you are still able to put this truth into practice. Jesus loves you! You are a precious creature of God. And yet, nonetheless, you are not the most important person.

This truth (believe it or not) flies in the face of what we are told every single day of our lives. We are sold this lie: you are THE MOST IMPORTANT person, and whatever you want, you can and should get, no matter the cost and no matter who else is harmed in the process. If someone in your life is being "toxic", get rid of them. If someone in your family is hurting you, disown them. If you are being slowed down or hindered in any way, do what you must to achieve your ambitions.

This is not the way of Christ. Jesus is better than you in every single way. Jesus IS better than you and me, and could easily demand us to either shape up or ship out. Yet that is not the way of Christ. In love, Jesus humbled Himself. Jesus did not insist upon His own way, but chose to serve, to listen, to become weak, and to die for us.

Now that you belong to Christ, you serve God and your neighbors. You have given away your own desires and even needs in order to serve others. *One awesome example of this is our life as a congregation together.* When we gather as Christians on the weekend, how can you serve better and more faithfully for the good of your fellow members? When you come to Confirmation class, how can you better learn and respect your fellow classmates and teachers? When you head home... how can you better love your own family?

God loves you. He chose you even before you had any inkling to serve Him. And now that you do belong to Him, you and I can act like it. Love and serve! Volunteer, even for those events that don't particularly interest you, or that might seem "inconvenient".

God bless us as we live together as His body, as His people, under His humble leadership and gentle love.

Pastor Maske





Marty Miller in Concert

February 21, 2023 at 6:30pm

Saint Michael Lutheran Church

7211 Oakland D, Portage, MI
(269) 327-7832

Pancake Supper in gym (5 to 7pm)
Concert in sanctuary at 6:30pm
Bring Friends and Family



YOUTH MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

God continues to bless our youth and their families here at St. Michael! Our usual meeting time is Sunday evening from 5-7 p.m., and unless we have a special event planned, we meet in the youth room for a devotion and fellowship.

We do have a few upcoming events in March:

- March 12 ice skating (specific location TBA)
- March 26 game night

Our Michigan district is also holding a gathering for junior high and senior high. More information will be sent to families in the near future.

As a youth group, we would like to thank our congregation for all of your prayers - you are our family, and we are blessed to be your youth group!



*We look forward to serving
at the pancake dinner, a
family event that we have
held at St. Michael for a
number of years.*

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 in the Life Skills Class worked to unpackage and count items for use in the Lutheran World Relief Kits.



Sunday School Offerings have purchased all the bars of Soap that will be needed for more than 200 Health and Baby Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief. Thank you to those that give so generously!



REQUEST FOR ENDOWMENT FUND DISTRIBUTIONS DURING 2023

Hello church members. The Endowment Committee is seeking requests for use of the annual General Endowment Fund distributions. We will have approximately \$9000 to distribute. In past years, money has been used for Lutheran World Relief, Quilting material, Youth for Christ/Colonial Acres, library, and bathroom improvements just to name a few. If you are interested in applying for some portion of this money for a 2023 ministry, 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 normal budget and apply. Or, if there is a worthwhile community or global ministry, you can apply for money for that.

Please complete a Grant Request form and submit to the Endowment Committee by February 15th (electronic or hard copy). These forms are available in the church office.

You will be notified of the outcome by mid-March.

Please contact any of the Endowment Committee members, if you have questions. (Rick Jacobs, Julie Vickery, Dave Johnson, Brad Hunter or Todd Foster)

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/>

DECEMBER FINANCIALS

2 Months

11/1/2021-12/31/2022

Church Revenue	\$ 134,300
School Revenue	\$ 0
Total Revenue	\$ 134,300
Total Expenses	\$ 344,461
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$ (210,161)
Expense Budget	\$ 347,726
Under/(Over) Budget	\$ (213,427)
Working Cash Balance	\$ 25,164
Mortgage Balance	\$ 705,425

Designated Fund Balances

Endowment Fund	\$531,188
Building Contingency	\$ 28,920
Parking Lot Fund	\$ 15,000
Technology Refresh	\$ 13,926
Sunday School	\$ 1,690
Youth Donations	\$ 15,545
Youth Accounts	\$ 5,936
Good Samaritan	\$ 989
Memorials	\$ 8,117
L.A.M.P. Mission Trip	\$ 3,525
Quilting	\$ 341
POBLO Afghan Support	\$ 1,000
Church Worker Scholarship	\$ 585
School Improvements	\$ 38,045
Tuition Assistance	\$ 56,626
School Music	\$ 273
Flower Fund	\$ 3,547
CFK Mission Expansion	\$ 90,000
Women's Fellowship/LWML	\$ 2,073
Faith Budget	\$ 6,640

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Oct. Avg.	296
Nov. Avg.	289
Dec. Avg.	351

Annual Avg. 2020	197
(+ uncounted online viewers)	
Annual Avg. 2021	265
Annual Avg. 2022	295
Annual Avg. 2023	XXX

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