

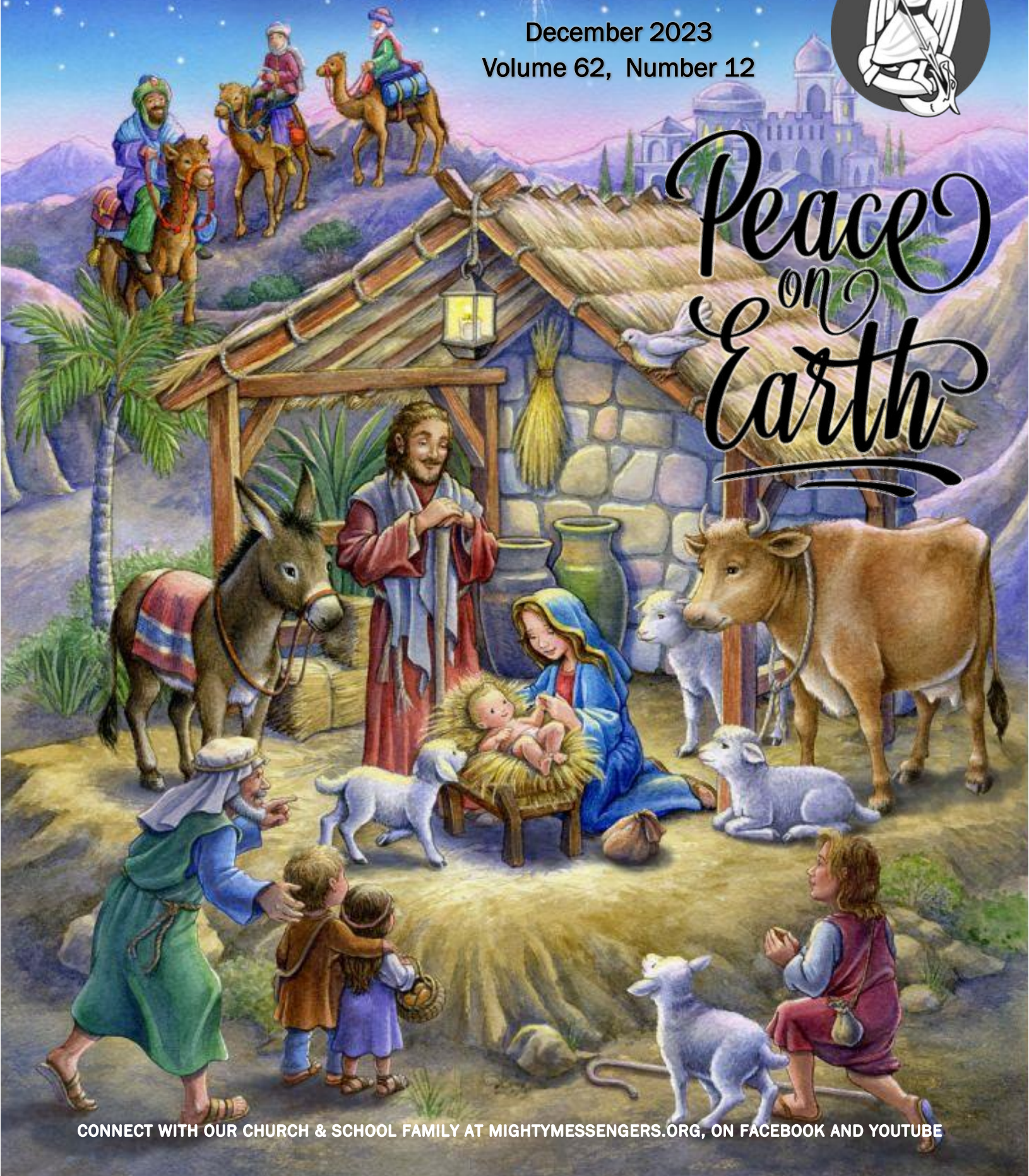
# THE MIGHTY MESSENGER

December 2023

Volume 62, Number 12



Peace  
*on*  
Earth



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



## “ON EARTH PEACE”

As our Lord Jesus was giving us some idea of what to expect in the end times He said, “you will hear of wars and rumors of wars” (Matthew 24:6, Mark 13:7). But then He also said that we should not be too alarmed about this because “the end is not yet” and that it is just “the beginning of the birth pains.” The reality is, there have always been wars and rumors of wars to one degree or another all throughout history. There’s probably never been a time in the history of humankind when there has not been some active perpetration of violence between peoples, and in our day we’re painfully aware of the war in Ukraine, and the war in Israel, and also wars in other places that we don’t hear much about that are going on too (like in Sudan where, as of October of 2023, between 9,000 and 10,000 people have been killed). So the message of the angels on Christmas night was not only applicable then, but it is also applicable now and certainly very welcome news for us today – “Glory to God in the highest, and **on earth peace.**”

Let’s face it, promises of peace can seem shallow and trite. What does it mean to have peace, really? Is it an objective reality or is it merely a subjective feeling? Is it possible to have peace in the midst of conflict, even deadly conflict? If we devote our attention to this important matter of peace for several weeks, perhaps we will begin to not only understand it but experience it, regardless of the circumstances around us. As we unpack peace over nearly a dozen sermons and services, it will surely be a challenge not to be redundant, but it will also give us an opportunity to let the peace of God take root within our hearts and minds in a way that is truly calming and Spiritually restful.

Even without the holidays, the month of December is naturally going to be unusually busy and stressful. It’s the end of the year and anything that has to be done yet in 2023 has to be done this month. All the reviewing and evaluating that needs to go on at the end of the year is combined with whatever finishing touches still need to be made on the plans for the year ahead. But then, of course, comes the reality of all the shopping and wrapping, decorating and

baking, writing and mailing, cleaning and cooking, inviting and partying that is all part and parcel of Christmas celebrating. It can be fun, but it can be exhausting. And then we inevitably have in the mix the family tensions, the grief over the loved ones not with us, the unresolved conflicts, the financial worries, our ongoing health concerns, and everything else that’s always challenging us in our lives with or without the added stress of the holidays.

We can all relate with the Old Testament prophets who often decried the cries of “peace, peace, when there is no peace” (Jeremiah 6:14). No, we don’t need a Pollyanna peace that is plastic and unfeeling. We need a real peace, a peace that is “not as the world gives” (John 14:27), and a “peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” that will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus, our Savior (Philippians 4:7). It’s a cliché but it’s true: “No Jesus, No Peace; Know Jesus, Know Peace.” Please join us for worship not only on the weekend, but on Wednesday night at 6:30 all throughout the Advent and Christmas season. Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve both fall on a Sunday this year, so be sure to take note of the special service times that you see listed in the table on the next page. May the Lord bless our meditation, our preparation, our celebration, and through it all, grant to each of us His heavenly peace.

- ♦ **LAMPLIGHT** –Saturday, December 23 at 5PM
- ♦ **CHRISTMAS EVE** –Sunday, December 24
  - Communion Service 10AM
  - Carol Service (*family friendly, non-communion*) 4PM
  - Candlelight Service (*non-communion*) 6:30PM
- ♦ **CHRISTMAS DAY** –Monday, December 25
  - Communion Service 10AM
- ♦ **LAMPLIGHT** –Saturday, December 30 at 5PM
- ♦ **NEW YEAR’S EVE** –Sunday, December 31
  - Divine Service 8:30 AM
  - Morning Song Service 11AM
- ♦ *No Services on New Year’s Day*

# WE ARE CALLED

to make disciples of *Jesus*

Dec 3	First Sunday in Advent	<i>Awaited Peace</i>	Isaiah 64:1-9	1 Cor. 1:3-9	Mark 13:24- 37
Dec 6	Advent Midweek 1	<i>Peace of Mind</i>			
Dec. 10	Second Sunday in Advent	<i>Comforting Peace</i>	Isaiah 40:1-11	2 Peter 3:8-14	Mark 1:1-8
Dec 13	Advent Midweek 2	<i>Peace of Heart</i>			
Dec. 17	Third Sunday in Advent	<i>Rejoicing Peace</i>	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	1 Thess. 5:16- 24	John 1:6-8, 19- 28
Dec 20	Advent Midweek 3 (Musical)	<i>Heavenly Peace</i>			
Dec. 24	Fourth Sunday. in Advent (with communion 10:00 am)	<i>Anticipating Peace</i>	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	Romans 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38
Dec. 24	The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Eve - 4:00 pm)	<i>Proclaiming Peace</i>	Isaiah 9:2-7	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14
Dec. 24	The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Eve - 6:30 pm)	<i>Proclaiming Peace</i>	Isaiah 9:2-7	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14
Dec. 25	The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Day)	<i>Peace Has Come</i>	Isaiah 52:7-10	Heb.1:1-6	John 1:1-14
Dec. 31	First Sunday after Christmas (8:30 and 11:00, no New Year's Eve)	<i>Departing Peace</i>	Isaiah 61:10- 62:3	Gal. 4:4-7	Luke 2:22-40

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](http://mightymessengers.org).

*We try to send something mid-day on Fridays 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*

Reprinted from December 2008 Mighty Messenger

## THE SON OF GOD QUIETLY ENTERED HISTORY

Christmas is such a joyous time – a time of family and celebrations and parties and music, laughter and feasting. Joni Eareckson Tada expresses in a short Christmas reflection called “The Stable” that while all the celebrating of distant relatives who had not seen each other in years and were renewing family ties was going on in the inn, just a few yards away in the stable the Son of God quietly entered history.

She goes on to say, “sometimes the best moments of the Christmas season do not happen during the crowded parties or the rush of holiday preparations. They don’t occur in the music and laughter, the camaraderie and feasting.

When I think of special Christmas memories, I think of those quiet moments when God unexpectedly surprised me. **With Himself.** With an overwhelming sense of His nearness and love.

In the midst of so much activity, so much going on, so many days on the calendar filled with appointments or parties, God seeks out the quiet heart – and speaks to us in a still, small voice.

Think of the stable in Bethlehem. Somehow it stands serene. What a contrast to the celebrating going on in that inn. Who would have supposed? Who would have suspected? If someone had only taken the time to peer out a back window toward the stable. If someone had only dropped what he was doing to leave the party and go check on his donkey. If someone had only slipped away from the festivities for a moment to seek a quiet moment outside.

Just think of what they might have witnessed! Perhaps they would have seen the angels. Maybe the shepherds. And yes, even the Son of God.

Take the time this Christmas season to step outside the clamor and excitement. Visit the stable and ask God to speak to you in the quiet and serenity and stillness. He will.

In the midst of the hurry and flurry, fun and excitement of the Christmas season, let us take time to come aside in sweet, sweet communion and fellowship with the One who is the reason for the season. Time to reflect through prayer and the Word, on the priceless “Gift” of immeasurable value and worth – Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Time for overflowing worship, praise and thanksgiving – expressing hearts full of gratitude and love and joy in Christ our King.

Written by Sandy Lentz



### What Are You Waiting For?

December 3, 2023 – First Sunday in Advent

Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

Be it the second coming or your own mortality, Jesus will return! Are you ready? If not, what are you waiting for?

**Sermon Text:** *Matthew 5:1-12*

**Readings:** *Psalm 149; Revelation 7:9-17; Matthew 5:1-12*

### Comfort, Comfort My People

December 10, 2023 – Second Sunday in Advent

Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

We all need comfort for various reasons, which includes our feeling sorrow over our sins. So, be comforted! Even though we are sinners, God shows us abundant grace, and Jesus, our Good Shepherd, carries each of us in his arms. These truths are certain, because they come from God's Word, which stands forever.

**Sermon Text:** *Isaiah 40:1-11*

**Readings:** *Psalm 85:1-9, Isaiah 40:1-11, Mark 1:1-8*

### The Way of the Lord

December 17, 2023 – Third Sunday in Advent

Rev. Thomas Eggold

The message of Advent is not that we should get better or get busy. This is not a time to show God how qualified we are for the kingdom. Instead, Advent calls us to despair of our efforts and let go of our past performance and to die at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ where our burden was carried, our sin was punished, comfort is given, salvation is found, and we receive the righteousness of Christ. And this is the way of the Lord.

**Sermon Text:** *John 1:23*

**Readings:** *Psalm 126; Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; John 1:6-8, 19-28*

### In a Manger

December 24, 2023 – Christmas Day Observed

Rev. Shayne Jonker

The manger in Bethlehem is the first step toward a hilltop called Calvary and Christ's death for the sins of the world. Rather than shy away from that truth, we remember and marvel: the Son of God wills to become a swaddled baby in a Bethlehem barn because He wills to go to the cross for you.

**Sermon Text:** *Luke 2:7*

**Readings:** *Psalm 98; Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 2:1-20*

### At Home with Jesus

December 31, 2023 – First Sunday after Christmas

Rev. Paul Shoemaker

Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple. Simeon and Anna greeted Him with joy. For many, being in church is a source of great joy. Worship Anew seeks to bring that joy to those who are unable to attend church.

**Sermon Text:** *Luke 2:22-40*

**Readings:** *Psalm 111; Galatians; Luke 2:22-40*



*We remember to pray for  
Homebound friends:*

Caroline Barkow, Sally Beck,  
Judy Chumas, Shirley  
Cosgrove, Ginny Evans,  
Dorothy Ferguson, Audrey  
Glover, Maxine June, Bernie  
& Pauline Kubacki, Phyllis  
Kurlowicz, Carol Leipzig, Beth  
Lowman, Carrol McCarty\*,  
Nancy Miller, Dean Monck,  
Wilma Ritchie, Vic Schroeder,  
Marilyn Sible, Joyce Stafford,  
Darlene Surch, Carol Truhn,  
Ernie & Judi VanOrman,  
Shaorn White

**TV MINISTRY YOU CAN  
TRUST!**

[Access for Kalamazoo and Portage](#)

**Tuesday, Thursday & Sunday  
6 AM & 10 AM**

**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

### Where else can I find these programs?

- ◆ Download the Hope-Full Living app on your phone



- ◆ Listen to Audio Only files at this [worshipanew.org](http://worshipanew.org) link  
[Audio files](#)



# 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*



**SUNDAY MORNINGS  
9:45-10:45 AM**

## **"The Coming King of the Jews"**

Advent Bible Class - December 3, 10, 17  
Room 230 with Pastors

### CONTINUING COURSES:

**Good Sense** with Jay Koski in Allan Hall

**The Engagement Project** with Jesse Hogue in Room 114

**CHRISTMAS IS THE TIME WHEN AN UNCHURCHED PERSON IS MOST LIKELY TO GO TO A CHURCH SERVICE.**

But their chances of attending are far greater, if a friend or family member invites them.

Who do you know that you could invite to worship with us? Please pray about this and pick up a postcard invitation or brochure from our Welcome Center to give them.



**8 WEEK INTERACTIVE COURSE**

**REGISTER TODAY!**

**BIBLICAL CITIZENSHIP**

IN MODERN AMERICA

**Free Class**

Class time  
6:30-8:30pm  
Doors open  
@ 6:15

Providing the Biblical, Historical, and Constitutional instruction we need at such a time as this!

(Where) 3911 12th st. Kzoo,49009. (When) 12/4-12/18/23 & 1/8-2/5/24  
TO REGISTER, Goto Patriot academy.com, Select "Biblical Citizenship"  
Select "FIND A CLASS" then Search KALAMAZOO > register for class.

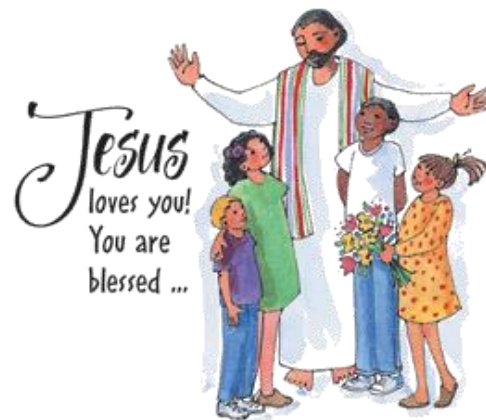


Christmas presents, tree trimming, Christmas parties, Christmas caroling, baking cookies...that's what we do at Christmas, *right*? These things and more have become our Christmas traditions. But sometimes we get so caught up in doing these things that we forget about focusing on Christ and helping our family to have a Christ-centered Christmas.

If you want your family's focus during Christmas to be on the birth of Jesus, which is the whole reason why we celebrate Christmas, here are some family activities to do this Christmas:

1. **Celebrate Advent** - Advent is a Christian season where we wait and anticipate and prepare our hearts for the birth of the Messiah. Advent means "coming", and we are waiting for the coming of the King.
2. **Help Decorate the Church for Advent/Christmas** - Volunteer to help as a family. Decorating the church can be a fun family activity! *Saturday, December 9 at 9:00 AM*
3. **Set up a Nativity in your home** - Put one in each room if you can.
4. **Hide & Seek with Baby Jesus** - Take the baby Jesus from one of your Nativity scenes and hide Him each day. Have your kids find Him every morning.
5. **Family Devotion and Prayer Time** - A great time to do this is around the dinner table.
6. **A Stocking for Jesus** - Hang a stocking in your home with Jesus' name on it. Fill it with notes of prayers to Him.
7. **Family Craft or Baking Night** - Search for a fun nativity craft you could make together.
8. **Visit a Live Nativity** - This is a great experience for your kids to see the Nativity story come to life!
9. **Take a Census of your Family** - This is an opportunity to map out your family tree. Then open your Bible to Matthew 1 and show your kids the family tree of Jesus.
10. **Watch a Charlie Brown Christmas** - If your kids are able, help them memorize and recite the meaning of Christmas that Linus says in the movie: Luke 2: 8-14.
11. **Give 3 Gifts to Jesus** - On three sheets of paper, have each family member write down one thing per sheet that they want to give to Jesus or what they want to do for Jesus this year.
12. **Bake a Birthday Cake for Jesus** - Bake a Jesus birthday cake. Sing Happy Birthday and eat the cake!

*If you need more resources, chat with Mrs. Songer in the Church Office 269-327-7832 !*



## SHEPHERD GROUPS

Lay Minister	Family Names Start with	Family Names & include
<b>Zachary Button</b> 810-844-6870	A	Boelman
<b>Harold DeFouw</b> 269-569-6869	Bohren	Chadderdon
<b>Dan Bryer</b> 269-323-7416	Chilcott	D
<b>Mel Schroeder</b> 734-646-9652	E	Franzen
<b>Dave Drzewiecki</b> 616-560-2175	Frommann	G
<b>Dave Johnson</b> 269-599-2195	H	H
<b>Bill Schinzer</b> 269-366-5594	I	J
<b>Ryan Bigelow</b> 269-838-6062	Kahle	Lapekas
<b>Mark Kahle</b> 402-730-1914	Lausman	McNees
<b>Howard McNees</b> 269-720-3857	Messing	Nelson
<b>Jeff Burnett</b> 269-491-3700	Neumann	P
<b>Andy Allan</b> 269-370-7052	Q	Shook
<b>Greg Wedel</b> 312-961-4636	Shuler	Stolsky
<b>Matt Heintz</b> 269-290-8507	Sullivan	T
<b>Arlan Wendzel</b> 269-816-5632	U	Z





## Thanks once again for your generous support of Operation Christmas Child!

On Thursday, Nov 16, 89 shoeboxes filled with gifts, prayers and love were taken to the local collection site. There the boxes were packed into cartons, loaded on a semi trailer and by Saturday, November 18, were sent on their way. First stop is a warehouse in Chicago where all shoeboxes are inspected to be sure items that won't make it through customs aren't included (toothpaste, war related toys, candy etc.). All allowable items are placed back in the shoebox they came from. After this, shoeboxes are on their way to their final destination. Often the final delivery is accomplished by donkeys, small boats, bicycles or motorcycles.

It truly is an amazing journey, accomplished by amazing people willing to share their finances, time and abilities. *Thank you!* May the joy you've given these children be a constant reminder of the joy we have in Christ. Have a blessed Christmas Season!



They call it “telephone befriending.” Wanting to combat an epidemic of loneliness in England, the charity Age UK has been successful in matching lonely seniors with friendly volunteers who agree to call them once a week. “Sometimes it’s just nice to talk,” its website states.

Making a simple phone call can go a long way to overcoming loneliness this holiday season. Although loneliness has been subsiding from its pandemic highs, 17 percent of U.S. adults report they felt loneliness “a lot of the day yesterday,” according to a February 2023 Gallup poll. That represents an estimated 44 American adults who are experiencing significant loneliness. Surprisingly, young adults under the age of 30 (24%) are nearly twice as likely as their older counterparts – aged 65 and older (13%) – to report feeling lonely, according to the Gallup poll.

Taking a cue from the telephone friendship service described above, the Stephen Ministry at St. Michael especially wants to connect with people who need companionship this Christmas season. The ministry team would welcome the opportunity to chat – over the phone or in person – with anyone who has suffered a loss or is going through a difficult time. A Stephen Minister will listen, care, encourage, pray with and for you, and support you through the holidays or if your need persists.

If you or someone you know is hurting, find out more about Stephen Ministry by talking with one of our Stephen Leaders, such as such as Dana Naumann at (269) 808-7832. Our Stephen Ministers are there to care!

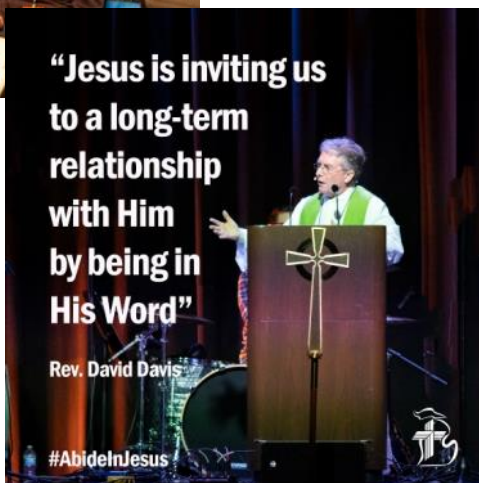




STAFF RECENTLY ATTENDED  
THE ALL PROFESSIONAL  
CHURCH WORKERS CONFERENCE



*"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:4-5 ESV).*



*You're  
Invited...*

**TUESDAY  
DECEMBER 12 @  
1PM & 6:30 PM**

Concert for  
3rd & 4th Grades,  
Worship Team and  
both Bands

**TUESDAY  
DECEMBER 19 @  
1PM & 6:30 PM**

Concert for  
4s/5s Preschool,  
Kindergarten,  
1st & 2nd Grades



# 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*



Santa's little helpers (Jan Wells, left and Ailene Buchtrup,) joyfully at work preparing Christmas goodies to send to the children of Lac Brochet

With Lac Brochet, Manitoba being so far up north, you would think that the North Pole is not far from it and thus a short trip for Santa to make. But in reality, it is a very isolated community that is bitter cold and often dark in the winter months, and therefore it can be a lonely and depressing place to live. The young people especially get to feeling lonely and bored, which can lead to risky and even deadly behavior. They're much in need of encouragement and a sense of being remembered and loved, especially by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our LAMP team brings that good news message to them when they travel to this Dene community in the summer to put on a Bible School and several Bible Studies, but it's especially nice when we can bless them in some way during the long winter.

Special thanks to Ailene Buchtrup, a long time LAMP team veteran, for putting together some beautiful Christmas stocking care packages, complete with little toys, candy, and kid-friendly devotional and evangelistic literature. As these packages speed their way to the far north, be sure to remember this community in your prayers and ask the Lord to give them a sense of His presence with them to meet their needs of body and soul. After all, He is Immanuel ("God with Us"), indeed, God with *all* of us, no matter how far apart we might live from each other.

*The people in Lac Brochet still need us... Lord willing we will be planning to return to Lac Brochet next summer. Consider serving on the 2024 team.*

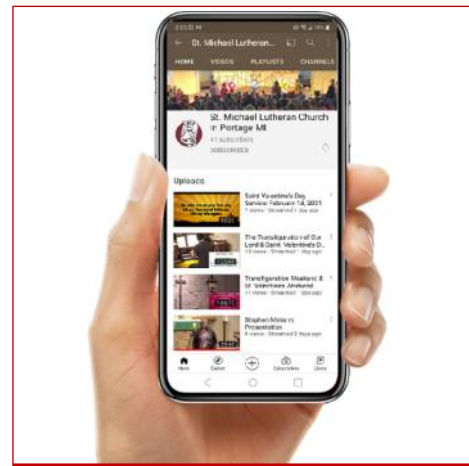


## HOMEBOUND FOR THE HOLIDAYS

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 17, so that we will have time to deliver them.



## 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

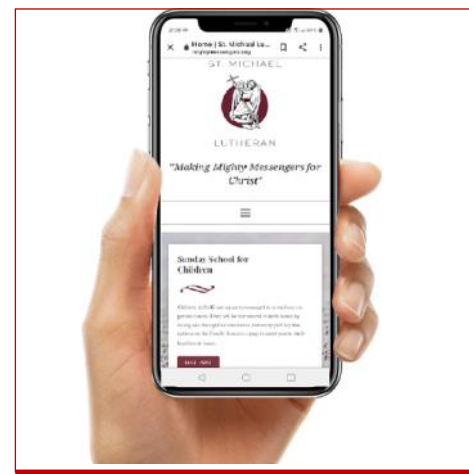
Find devotions, special event announcements and more:



@StMichaelLutheranChurchPortageMI

### [mightymessengers.org](http://mightymessengers.org)

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



# 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*



The Progressive Dinner was enjoyed by a number of students recently!

Thank you to the households that opened their home to host.

**SUNDAY MORNINGS**  
8th - High School Bible Study  
9:45-10:45AM Youth Room

**SUNDAY EVENINGS**  
A variety of fun together!  
5:00-7PM Youth Room





## MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST



Students preparing a meal for a family in need.

*Serving & Sharing in Jesus' name!*



Church Extension Fund

Proven, Dedicated, Focused

Church Extension Fund has proven investment products with measurable results. Since 1901, through dedicated Christian financial management, CEF is focused on funding the needs of Michigan District congregations. For more information, contact (Dave Johnson 269-599-2195) or call 800-242-3944.



**Blood Drive**  
**St. Michael Lutheran Church & School**

7211 Oakland Drive, Portage

**Tuesday, January 2, 2024**  
**11:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.**

For an appointment visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter sponsor code: SMLKZOO, or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).



# 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



*Lots of loving  
fellowship  
was enjoyed!*



Bags & Tags for the  
holiday treasures



Greeting Cards



Snowman Soup

Nativity Ornaments

Holiday Snack Mix



**THANK YOU FOR  
LOVING THY NEIGHBORS:  
BY BRINGING A NON-PERISHABLE  
FOOD DONATION FOR THE  
LOAVES & FISHES PANTRY**

**1,899 LBS  
DONATED THIS YEAR**







## LOOKING FOR COOKIE BAKERS!!



### We are reviving the ANNUAL CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE SATURDAY/SUNDAY, December 9 & 10

We need homemade baked cookies for our Cookie Sale. If you would like to donate cookies, please bring a large batch of any kind of cookie to the Allan Hall kitchen by Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> before 1pm. You may also drop them off Thursday /Friday in Church Office. *Mark your batch FOR COOKIE SALE to prevent them from being prematurely enjoyed!*

We also need people to help us package the cookies on Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> starting at 2pm in Allan Hall.

All monies donated will go to help defray the expense of purchasing new Easter banners for the Sanctuary.



## Join us for an... Advent by Candlelight Celebration



3-5 PM  
Sunday,  
December 3<sup>rd</sup>

All St. Michael Ladies are cordially invited to attend this special time to come and celebrate the Advent season together.

Encourage a friend, a neighbor, a family member to join you!

- ◆ Bring a wrapped gift (\$10 *maximum value*) to join in the fun of a lively exchange.
- ◆ All the holiday goodies will be furnished.
- ◆ After fellowship, we will enter the Sanctuary to prepare our hearts with a devotion time.

May your Advent and Christmas seasons be filled with a spirit of peace and joy with gratitude for God's precious gift to us. *Our Savior, Christ Jesus.*

**HAVE IDEAS FOR MORE WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES  
AND EVENTS, LET US KNOW!**

## MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST

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Property Board members recently did some improvements to the gym exits.

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*If your family made an Advent Wreath in our family workshop two years ago, and you are in need of new candles, please contact the Church Office. They are a size that is hard to purchase in a local store, but Mrs. Songer has some replacements in storage.*



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## LCMSFoundation

TODAY | TOMORROW | FOREVER

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

Learning to acknowledge the abundance of God's blessings to us is the beginning step of putting together the gift plan within our overall estate plans. "Did you have a good Christmas?" Beginning December 26<sup>th</sup>, you will probably hear that expression a lot. Most answer with a litany of the gifts they received, or the parties or gatherings they attended.

Sam was asked that same question by his good friend Daniel. At first, Sam felt awkward, finding it difficult to formulate an answer. But then he remembered something very unique about this Christmas. He and his wife had been working with their LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor to put together an estate plan, that would certainly include inheritance for family but would also include a bold commitment of financial support to their favorite ministry and a missionary halfway around the world. Through regular communication, they had pictures of people who had been baptized and come

to faith through that mission activity. They kept all those pictures on their refrigerator. This year, they purposely planned to share their estate plans with their kids. They began by telling them about inheritance. Then they spread out all those pictures from the refrigerator all over the kitchen table where they were sitting, talking about their intended gift for ministry. To their shock and joy, their children didn't even ask questions about inheritance but asked their parents to tell the stories of these who are now part of Jesus' Kingdom. "That time of sharing with our kids was the highlight of my Christmas holiday," Sam said. "Now my kids are asking how they can be part of supporting the same missionary." Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor will encourage you throughout the process, to bless your family beyond inheritance, by including them in the privilege and joy of financially supporting the Lord's work, resulting in the salvation of many.





FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN.  
UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN.

Lydia Kest. Dawn Heid Pastor Vaumann  
Jennifer Humbarger Callie Warner  
Maralyse Worm Lisa A. Lam

Everett Noble Sonja Smith Laura Tvinstra Alex Burdick  
Cheyl Julian  
Anner van Aast Alicia Keloth Julie Prentice  
Mindy Burdick Amie Hecht  
Chelsea Denaway Jessica Long Mariah Chilcott

Emile Fackelbach Sally Noble Sonia J Iqbal  
Merry Christmas  
Becky Mohler Brenda Steinberg  
Emily Ritchie

from the Staff  
Sarah Harmelinik  
Jason D. Tom Daniel S Maske  
Brenda Barker  
Jenny Johnson  
Tammy Songer

# 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*

## Save the Date - January 27, 2024 "An Afternoon of Awareness"

Guest speakers from WAR International (Women at Risk) and the Kalamazoo Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition.

Join us and **"Be Made Aware"!**

More details to follow.

"Rescue the weak and needy, deliver them from the hand of the wicked" -- Psalm 82:4.

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



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

- 1) [mightymessengers.org/donate](https://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.





# 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

### 12 Months

11/1/2022 - 10/31/2023

Church Revenue	\$ 827,313
School Revenue	\$ <u>1,220,138</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 2,047,451
Total Expenses	\$ <u>2,015,598</u>
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$ 31,853
Expense Budget	\$ 2,015,884
Under/(Over) Budget	\$ 31,567
Working Cash Balance	\$ 61,324
Mortgage Balance	\$ 658,388

### Designated Fund Balances

Endowment Fund	\$ 633,719
Building Contingency	\$ 18,077
Parking Lot Fund	\$ 15,000
Technology Refresh	\$ 13,425
Sunday School	\$ 137
Youth Donations	\$ 20,061
Youth Accounts	\$ 4,525
Good Samaritan	\$ 6,769
Memorials	\$ 12,814
L.A.M.P. Mission Trip	\$ 9,467
Quilting	\$ 1,428
POBLO South Asian Ministry	\$ 3,596
Church Worker Scholarship	\$ 585
School Improvements	\$ 35,969
Tuition Assistance	\$ 54,921
School Music	\$ 759
Flower Fund	\$ 3,905
CFK Mission Expansion	\$ 88,613
Women's Fellowship/LWML	\$ 2,813
Faith Budget	\$ 371

## WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Sept '23 Avg. .... 287  
October '23 Avg. .... 327  
November '23 Avg. .... **298**

Annual Avg. 2021 ..... 265  
Annual Avg. 2022 ..... 295  
Annual Avg. 2023 ..... **305**

# 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**

### **RECORDING SECRETARY**

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**

Jennifer Humbarger

### **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      Alicia Keinath

## **WORSHIP MEDIA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

Chris Rudowske

## **WORSHIP MEDIA SPECIALIST**

Lorraine Dudash

## **CHOIR DIRECTOR**

Carolyn Bertrand

## **ORGANIST**

Keith Eiser

## **MORNING SONG DIRECTOR**

Jane Connon

## **SEXTONS**

Brian Chapman  
Matthew Wright

## **VOLUNTEERS:**

### **PRESIDENT**

Mark Ruesch

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

Rob Kuhlmann

### **TREASURER**

Kristi Rudowske

### **BOARD OF CHURCH PROPERTIES**

Ryan Nelson, Director  
Mark Vickery, Assistant Director

### **BOARD OF EARLY CHILDHOOD & SCHOOL MINISTRIES**

Mike Grotelueschen, Director  
Matt Colby, Assistant Director

### **BOARD OF SMALL GROUP MINISTRY**

Angie Heimlich, Director  
Lindsey Luma, Assistant Director

### **BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP**

Vacant, Director

### **VOLUNTEER MINISTRY COMMITTEE**

Dar Swift

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Lisa Robert

### **BOARD OF YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT**

Heather Bigelow, Director  
Cindy Hunter, Assistant Director

### **YOUTH GROUP LEADERS**

Jerry Kuss, Jeff Burnett,  
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, Bob & Pam Besser,  
Zachary Button, 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**

Kristen Shook, Director  
Deb Hackett, Assistant Director

### **ADULT EDUCATION COORDINATOR**

Jesse Hogue

### **CRADLE ROLL**

Jan Jett

## **BOARD OF PARISH FELLOWSHIP**

Vacant, Director  
Judy Schroeder, Assistant Director

### **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

Arla Mayhew

### **LWML**

Sandy Maya

### **SOFTBALL**

Shannon Miskovich

## **ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE**

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