



# THE MIGHTY MESSENGER

January 2024  
Volume 63, Number 1



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

## “HELP THEM SEE THE STAR”

With the beginning of a new month of January and a new year of 2024, we are still within the twelve days of the Christmas season, but by January 6 it will be once again the Day of Epiphany and we will direct our attention to those “wise men from the east” (Matthew 2:1) who have been adorning our nativity displays and Christmas cards for several weeks. We don’t know exactly when these mysterious visitors arrived, or where they were from, or what was their ethnicity and language. But we do know that they were pagan Gentiles (non-Jews) who nonetheless recognized that the “King of the Jews” was worth pursuing, finding and worshipping. God had been directing them for He gave them a celestial sign to follow that brought them to Jerusalem in search of the newborn king. Thanks to the prophecy of Micah 5:2, they eventually came to Bethlehem where “they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him” (Matthew 2:11a).

All along the way of their glorious quest, we read that “they saw the star” and it moved them to rejoicing “exceedingly with great joy” (Matthew 2:10). God provided for them a heavenly messenger who led them to Jesus. How about for you? What or who led you to Christ? It probably was not a dazzling astrological phenomenon, but a parent, a pastor, a Sunday School teacher, a friend. It was someone who spoke the Word of God to you and pointed you to God’s promises fulfilled in Jesus. That person may or may not have been a “rising star” in worldly popularity and corporate prestige. They may have been someone quite humble and unassuming. But Spiritually speaking, they were a bright and shining star whom God used to illuminate the darkness of your sin and unbelief and to bring you into “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 4:6). Now it’s our turn. Jesus said, “Let your light shine before people” (Matthew 5:16).

God encourages all of us who are believers and followers of Jesus to shine into the darkness of this fallen world. He says: “Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation” and

so that we will “shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life” (Philippians 2:14-16a). In fact, God promises that “those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever” (Daniel 12:3). In other words, even if we’re never “a star” of the stage or screen, even if we never achieve the status of worldly stardom, we can nevertheless be like the Star of Bethlehem in the sense that God can use us to lead people who do not know Him (or know where to find Him) to His Son, Jesus Christ, so that they too might believe in Him and join us in worshipping Him.

For all these reasons, the Epiphany season is a missional season. It is a time to emphasize evangelism and our God given mission of telling people who do not know God, the good news of forgiveness and eternal salvation through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We do this locally, but we also do it globally. Jesus said that we would be His witnesses in our own homes and in our own backyard, but He also told us that we are to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 18:19). In addition to sharing our faith locally, we are to go and reach out with the Gospel to the farthest extremities of the earth, seeking to save those who are lost (Luke 19:10 and Acts 1:8).

Beginning January 7, we will offer a special seven week Bible study called “Xplore,” in which we will gain information and inspiration for global missions. Then come February 2-3, our congregation is partnering with other evangelical congregations in our community to put on the “Awakens Mission Conference” (<https://www.awakenconference.org>) that we might discover God’s heart for the nations. You can register online, and any youth from St. Michael who sign up can submit their ticket receipt to us and receive a full refund. So please put this on your calendar, and together let’s shine like stars.



# 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.



Thank you!

As we put another year behind us and look forward to the new year ahead, we give thanks to God for all His goodness and faithfulness to us and to our congregation.

We also want to express our sincere thanks to all those who have remembered us at Christmas with their gifts of love. For those who gave anonymously, we say here to you a big “thank you” and pray God’s blessings upon us all. In Christ, 2024 will be another “year of our Lord,” and a “year of the Lord’s favor.”

*Pastor & Dana Naumann*

The Toman family is grateful for all our Savior’s gifts in 2023, including His provision for our family through the friendship, encouragement, and generous December gifts from our faith family at Saint Michael. We love you and are glad to be here as partners in God’s work. Thanks also for the encouragement and prayers during Serina’s recovery—and for bearing patient with me (Jason) as I had an opportunity to help fill in for Pastor Maske a little this fall.

*Merry Christmas!!*

Our dear friends at St Michael, My family and I would like to thank you so much for your friendship in the gospel. Thank you also especially for all the support and love you gave my family when I was at Navy chaplain school in Rhode Island. God bless you this Christmas season as we remember our Lord Jesus Christ, coming down to earth to be humbly, conceived and born, to live, die, and be raised for our salvation. Jesus loves YOU.

*Pastor Maske*

Blessings come in different ways, and everything we have in life is given from above to sustain us and to keep us. It is the people we are around and their actions that mean the most to my heart. So many of you have become friends and mentors. *Thank you!* The phone calls, hugs, and gifts are so generous and appreciated. May God continue to bless us in 2024.

*Tammy Songer*

# 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*

## "GOD COMES TO YOU"

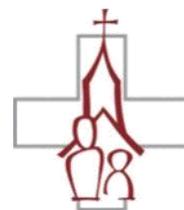
The greatest gift and aspect of Christian worship is how God Himself comes to us. This is made especially clear to us during the season of Advent, as we are fed the Word of God, and reminded once again how God comes close to us.

We should not be surprised that this is how God operates, because this is how He has operated since before the world even began. God spoke the universe into existence, and God continued to act in and through His word in creation from Genesis onward.

This event, especially as we join together and worship, we pray that God would continue to slow us down and help us to listen to his word alone. We have lots of thoughts and lots of plans and lots of things on our plates, and so that is why the gift of God and His word is so very crucial and special and important to us.

God bless you as you listen to his word and served by him.

*Pastor Mashee*



## The 2024 Sanctity of Human Life Sunday will be recognized on January 28th

We will commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> year our nation has observed Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, which began when then-President Ronald Reagan designated time to be set aside to celebrate God's gift of life, commemorate the many lives lost to abortion, and commit to protecting human life at every stage – from conception to natural death.

Our Board of Parish Education has selected this date during our Learning Hour to provide some activities for all ages related to various stages of life.

**Just As ... I AM**

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)

**Charlotte Elliott** wrote the familiar hymn "Just As I Am" in 1834. Born in 1789, a severe illness at age 32 left her unable to care for herself. Charlotte thereafter lived with her younger brother, Henry.

The parish he pastored in the resort town of Brighton, England, decided to hold a bazaar. Its proceeds would fund a school building and scholarships for underprivileged children.

Charlotte felt herself useless because she could not assist with preparations.

This hymn's stanzas embodied her cries in answer to the despair. She then offered it as encouragement in a collection she called *The Invalid's Hymnbook* (1836).

**Just As I Am** ... its beloved lines memorably testify to the sanctity of every human life. Almighty God does "receive, welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve" each member of our race with the heart of a Heavenly Father and the arms of a Gracious Savior. No ages, appearances, or abilities, no impairments or illnesses, not even guilt and grief can exclude from a place in His kingdom and a part in His family. We get to rejoice in our own lives and in our neighbors as gift and privilege. If our Lord's forgiving favor can overcome sinful failures, then His lavish love will more than make up for human limitations.

"Just" has become an especially precious word for Lutherans. Its verb "justify" occupies the heart of the Gospel. The Holy One Himself gives the reason for every existence by declaring humankind righteous for the sake of Jesus Christ. "Just" means "worthy," but it also means "barely."

Any humanity from fertilization to final breath amounts to enough.

God's creating work, redeeming labors, and calling activities never come up short. Persons undergoing surprise pregnancy, experiencing disability, or suffering terminal diagnosis matter as much as you and me. Indeed, they matter as much as the Son of Man, since Jesus incarnates all of our conditions and carries every sorrow. Even when human mouths cannot utter "I am," Lord God lends them His own likeness and proclaims, "I AM!"

**We Lutherans love life because He first loved all.**



Equipping Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life  
lutheransforlife.org • info@lutheransforlife.org 888 364 LIFE (5433) • Item LFL1644B1

### Epiphany Light

January 7, 2024 – Epiphany of Our Lord (Observed)

Rev. William Mueller

The prophecy from the prophet is profound. Light in the darkness. Kings and nobility bear witness to the Light. Rare gifts given from love. This is Epiphany and so much more! Come and worship. Bow down with the Magi and discover, along with a boy named Gunther, Epiphany Light.

**Sermon Text: Isaiah 60:1-6**

*Readings: Psalm 72:1-11; Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12*

### See Greater Things

January 14, 2024 – Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

We SEE GREATER THINGS in daily living and eternity with Jesus in our lives. When Jesus entered a skeptical disciple's life, Nathanael's vision of God greatly increased. He promises and does the same in our lives!

**Sermon Text: John 1:51**

*Readings: Psalm 139:1-10, 1 Samuel 3:1-10, John 1:43-51*

### Proper Perspective

January 21, 2024 – Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

What a life we have! We experience God's blessings and joys. We also have sorrows. The Apostle Paul reminds us to keep this present life in proper perspective. What exactly is that perspective?

**Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31**

*Readings: Psalm 62:1-8; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20*

### Teaching with Authority

January 28, 2024 – Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Rev. Thomas Eggold

The Word of Jesus in synagogue wasn't a new teaching; it was a retelling of a timeless promise from the mouth of God Himself. It is the teaching that man is not capable of keeping God's Law. It is the teaching that Christianity is not about the work of the Christian, but about the work of Christ. My friends, today we have this very same Word of God...and this teaching is astonishing!

**Sermon Text: Mark 1:22**

*Readings: Psalm 111; Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Mark 1:21-28*



*Thank you to all for the wonderful greeting cards, goodies and gifts that were donated to the Homebound Gift Bags!*



*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, Sharon 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.

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*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*

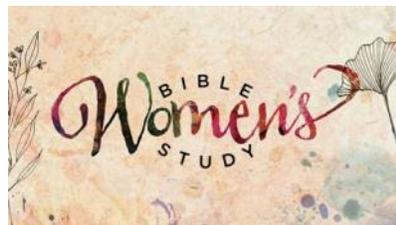
## UNIQUE

A Life Sunday special event provided by Parish Education Board  
Sunday, January 28, in the Gym during the Learning Hour



We are planning to represent several “stages of life” with a variety of hands-on and informational activities for all ages.

*We hope you will join us!*



Come to Bible study in the new year – **6:30 on Tuesday evenings**, beginning January 9. We meet in the library will be studying the book of Romans. Excited to meet and learn what God has for us! *Barbara Schubert* [schubertbrs@gmail.com](mailto:schubertbrs@gmail.com)

### **Praying together strengthens our church and us.**

Jan Chilcott coordinates the group for **Tuesday mornings**. Join them at 9:00 am in the prayer room.

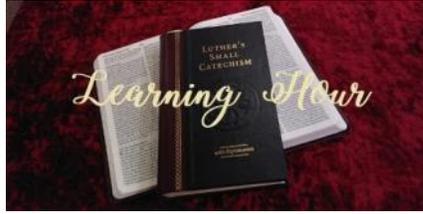
Pray warriors are welcome to join Virginia Hetrick and Barbara Schubert at 5:30pm on **Wednesdays** in the prayer room. We pray for the confirmation class and their families and other requests as given to us. Come when you can, leave when you must, but come.



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**Want to receive prayer requests by email and join the multitudes that faithfully lift up petitions?** Contact the Church Office to be included. Have a prayer concern/request? Contact the Church Office to share a few details, and we will be sure to let the Prayer Team know.

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST



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

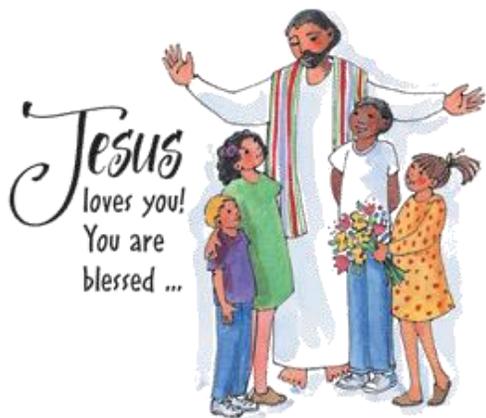
WINTER/SPRING 2024  
LEARNING HOUR CLASSES

Date	Engagement Project Music Room #114	Exploring Our Faith Naumann Room #230	Xplore
1/7/24	The Royal Task 2	God & the Bible	God's Word
1/14/24	Engaging with Grace 1	Father & Creation	God's World
1/21/24	Engaging with Grace 2	Sin & the Law	Praying
1/28/24	-- -- Life Sunday all ages special event provided by Parish Education Board -- --		
2/4/24	Town Hall Meeting	Jesus' Person & Work	Town Hall Meeting
2/11/24	Engaging with Wisdom 1	The Holy Spirit	Sending
2/18/24	Engaging with Wisdom 2	The Lord's Prayer	Welcoming
2/25/24	Engaging with Truth (47 minutes)	Office of the Keys	Going
3/3/24	The Royal Sacrifice 1	The Church	Mobilizing
3/10/24	The Royal Sacrifice 2	Holy Baptism	
3/17/24	The Band of Brothers 1	The Lord's Supper	
3/24/24	The Band of Brothers 2	New Member Orientation	Palm Sunday
3/31/24	-- -- Easter Sunday -- -- Enjoy a family brunch provided by the youth of St. Michael		

**XPLORE** A 7-lesson study that examines the biblical basis of missions, the current state of world evangelization, the major world religions and unreached people groups, and the five habits all believers can adopt to grow in a World Christian lifestyle. You'll journey through God's Word and see His passion for His glory to be enjoyed by all peoples on earth.- You'll focus on how to participate in God's Work by Praying, Sending, Welcoming, Going, and Mobilizing.

**The Engagement Project** - Learn more with these lessons that continue into 2024. Go on a marvelous quest of seeking the face of God and seeing the Crown Jewel in His nature—a quest we hope and pray will deeply transform the Body of Christ. This will lead us to understand where we are in God's Meta-Narrative, and help us grasp the incredible vision that God has entrusted the primary work of the Kingdom to the common, everyday Christian. If God should so bless, and the Body of Christ would simply begin to do what He has asked us to do, it can change our lives, radically transform our families, and by God's grace, turn the world right side up. Learn more with these lessons that continue into 2024.

**Exploring Our Faith** - What does it mean to have Christian faith? What do Lutherans believe? How is this similar and/or different from the doctrines taught by other denominations and religions? You may be asking yourself these questions, especially if you are new to the Lutheran church. What makes Saint Michael Lutheran Church special? How do we care for one another and become involved in what God is doing among us? These and other questions may be yours, if you are thinking about joining our congregation, even by transfer from another LCMS church. Or perhaps you have these questions despite being a long time member! This course will address these questions and, if you are a prospective member, prepare you to join, you will find that our faith is Bible based, and you will get to know some of the existing ministry leaders in our congregation.



## SHEPHERD GROUPS

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



**2024 Theological Conference**  
**February 3, 2024 | Our Savior, Lansing**  
**8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

Sometimes silence is golden. Other times it is a relationship killer. Two people are estranged. Angry. At odds. A friend intervenes with the suggestion, "Well, have you tried talking about it?"

Reconciliation takes conversation, verbal interaction, words. Under the theme *Love Talks: Daring Conversations Toward Reconciliation*, the 2024 Theological Conference is designed especially for laity of all ages. The conference, which will take place on February 3 in Lansing, will equip you to engage in the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18).

The world around us needs us to engage with others in the ministry of reconciliation, both with people and with God. At the very heart of all reconciliation is the Word Himself, the Word made flesh, Jesus.

Let's get started with daring conversations of reconciliation. After all, love talks.

### Keynote Speakers

Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies  
 Rev. Mark Schulz  
 Dcs. Dr. Tiffany Manor  
**FLAME**  
 Rev. David A. Davis - Moderator

**\$30/General**  
**\$20/Student**

Register online at  
[michigandistrict.org/theological24](https://michigandistrict.org/theological24)



In connection with the [2024 Theological Conference](#), FLAME, the Grammy-nominated Christian hip-hop artist known for his powerful and uplifting lyrics, will be performing at St. Luke Lutheran–Christ Campus, Lansing on Saturday, February 3, at 7 p.m.  
 122 S Pennsylvania Ave, Lansing, Mich. [Google Map](#)

WE CAN STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING!!

# AN AFTERNOON OF AWARENESS

“Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.” Psalm 82:4

**JANUARY 27, 2024**

**12:30-4:00 P.M.**

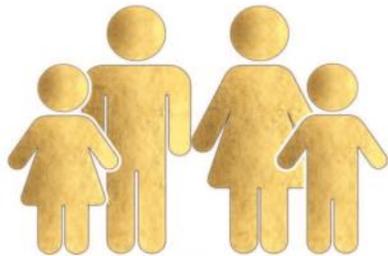
**ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
7211 OAKLAND, DR., PORTAGE, MI**

## Guest Speakers:

Michelle Chappel: WAR (Women at Risk) International

Rita G. O'Brien, LLMSW: Kalamazoo Area Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition

*Cost: Free Will Offering*



**Support WAR, International**

warchestboutique.com

**Pop-up store  
for continued Awareness**

Men, Women and Children over 12 are Welcome

**Hosted by: St. Michael Women's Fellowship  
LWML Battle Creek Zone**

A certificate for qualified state mandate training is available



*Women At Risk*  
INTERNATIONAL



**Sign Up**



**ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN SCHOOL**  
**Annual Update**  
**January 2024**

St. Michael Lutheran School and Christ for Kids Childcare Center are outreach ministries of St. Michael Lutheran Church, sharing the Good News of Jesus with students, their families, and the greater community, as well as providing a superior educational experience. At St. Michael, we believe that all children can learn and succeed, and therefore welcome any student that our resources and training enable us to educate. This is accomplished through a caring staff of certified teachers and a commitment to continuous professional growth and improvement. We believe in teaching the whole child - spiritually, socially, emotionally and cognitively. The goal at St. Michael is to provide a level of education that is more in-depth, broader in scope, and higher in quality than other educational options in the area.

**Enrollment**

School ministry enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year includes:

preschool (55), K-8 (145), and childcare (80)

*Since 2001, 261 individuals have become members of the St. Michael Lutheran Church congregation through the school ministry.*

**Tuition Assistance**

This year a total of **\$52,770** of tuition assistance has been awarded to 21 qualifying families. This assistance benefits 33 children or about 23% of students enrolled in the K-8 program. *Since 2005, \$539,134 in tuition assistance has been awarded to qualifying families.* Most of this funding comes from the annual golf outing, the Gerri Wheeler Scholarship Fund, and many generous donations. This fund is always in need of donations, so please consider a tax-deductible gift.

**Staffing**

SMLS and CFK together employ **34** staff – 13 in the school and 21 in the preschool/childcare. There are a number of individuals, including tutors, school psychologists, speech and occupational therapists, who frequent the school to meet the needs of the students. Portage Public Schools provides certified teachers for Spanish, art, band, gym, and technology instruction in a no-cost partnership known as Shared Time.

**Tuition Income**

Based upon 2024 budget projections, the school will generate approximately 51% of the total anticipated income for the school ministry, while the childcare/preschool will generate approximately 49% with a small fraction of uncollected income remaining at year's end. Tuition is collected electronically through an automatic payment deduction program.

**Ministry Projects**

The school participates in a number of ministry projects throughout the course of the year. The following organizations will benefit from the efforts of SMLS students this year: Camp Concordia; Camp Luther Haven; the Michigan District's *Hearts for Jesus* initiative; the SMLC Trunk or Treat; and the American Heart Association. Additionally, our students regularly send cards and letters to St. Michael Lutheran Church homebound members and sing for residents of local assisted-living facilities in the area.

# MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST

## Programs

The school continues to offer a strong academic program. Kindergarten students arrive in 1<sup>st</sup> grade as eager readers. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills standardized test scores continue to be above the national average and fall at the top of Lutheran schools in the Michigan District-LCMS that administer this assessment.

The curriculum meets or exceeds state standards. SMLS also offers a variety of enrichment classes in a program known as *After the Bell*.

The school has an excellent working relationship with Portage Public Schools. Bus service for our students is provided and our school is a transfer point for PPS buses. PPS also provides limited special education services for qualifying students.

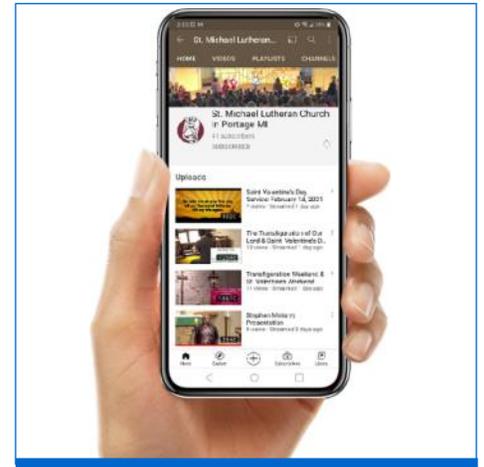
## Sports

The school participates in an association of Kalamazoo area private schools for sports. SMLS offers fall co-ed soccer, co-ed cross-country, girls' volleyball and basketball, and boys' basketball. We continue to offer *Girls' On the Run*, as well as our community basketball camp each August.

St. Michael Lutheran School is accredited by National Lutheran Schools Accreditation. We engage in intentional and continuous improvement to prepare students with an education for real-world success. We continue to build our STEM lab and provide STEM education to our students.

**This ministry would not be possible without the support and prayers from the St. Michael Lutheran Church congregation.** Please continue to pray for the school ministry, as we share the Gospel and strive to develop successful students who grow into contributing members of society.

*Gregory Johnson*, Principal



## STAY CONNECTED

### YouTube 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

### Office Contacts:

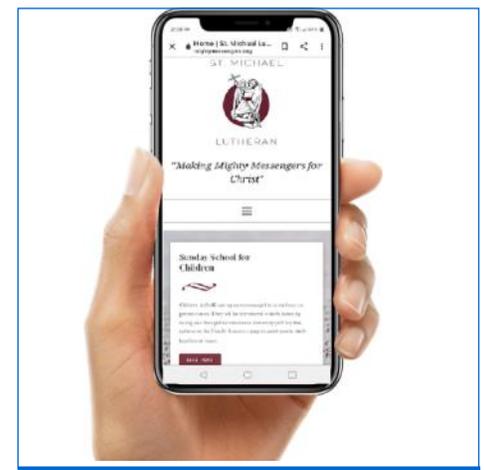
Church + 269-327-7832

School + 269-327-0512

Christ For Kids + 269-327-4889

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



## JLK 365 CHRISTMAS EVENT AT AGAPE CHURCH



The JLK 365 team is a community of Kingdom-minded volunteers who are committed to growing seeds planted during Catalyst Week. No matter where people are on their faith journey, we walk alongside them on the path of discipleship.

<https://jesusloveskzoo.org/jlk365/#>

**JESUS  
LOVES KZOO**



## CHRISTMAS IN LAC BROCHET

We were pleased and honored when the principal of the community's school asked us to suggest a Christmas program the children could put on and they found one to perform! Then, as we reported last month, we also prepared and shipped Christmas stockings filled with goodies and it looks like Santa himself distributed them! Praise God they had some Christmas fun, and best of all, shared and received the good news of Jesus.



FEB 02-03 2024  
FRIDAY 7P-9P  
SATURDAY 9A-4:30P  
\$25 ADULTS  
\$15 STUDENTS



**AWAKEN**  
MISSIONS CONFERENCE

A MULTI-CHURCH  
CONFERENCE TAKING  
PLACE AT KFIRST  
5550 OAKLAND DR  
PORTAGE, MI 49024

LEEPER AWAKE ○ SLEEPER AWAKE ○ SLEEPER SLEEPER AWAKE ○ SLE

DISCOVER GOD'S  
**HEART**  
FOR THE NATIONS



W/ KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
DR. TODD AHREND

- 1 INVITING ALL JESUS FOLLOWERS TO LABOR WITH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO SHARE THE GOSPEL
- 2 MOBILIZING BELIEVERS IN EVERY CHURCH TO THEIR CALLING IN THE GREAT COMMISSION AND ACTIVATING EACH INDIVIDUAL TO PRAY, SEND, GO, AND WELCOME THE NATIONS

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# FELLOWSHIP

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



**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

*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*



Youth enjoyed a holiday celebration dinner at Sakura Hibachi restaurant.



# 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*

*Hi Church Family,*

I've grown up at St. Michael, starting CFK preschool at 2 ½ years of age, confirmed in 2016, graduated from the largest 8<sup>th</sup> grade class in 2016 and worked at CFK over the past several months as a teacher's aide. This church community is like family to me.

Graduating high school in 2020, I was planning on going to KVCC, but God had other plans! I was told by a friend about Youth with a Mission, also known as YWAM. I decided to attend YWAM's University of the Nations located in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. I had no idea what I was getting into, but God knew!

For those who have not heard, YWAM is a Christian mission organization formed in 1960 by Loren & Darlene Cunningham. YWAM teaches and trains all ages, with emphasis on the youth, to go into the nation's different cultures to share the Gospel. Since joining YWAM, I have graduated from four different programs, traveled on a 2-month mission trip in 2021 to Texas, traveled on a 1-month Europe mission in 2022, plus several mini mission trips to other Hawaiian Islands and even shared the Gospel around the Big Island.

Around 2014, I started developing a dream about visiting Brazil someday. I didn't know much about the country at the time, but knew one day I was going to go there. During my high school years, the dream faded away until I rarely ever thought of going to Brazil.

During one of my YWAM schoolings near the end of 2020, our teacher directed the class to take a few minutes and ask God for a nation to be put on our hearts. As I was praying, I instantly heard the nation “Brazil”. Then again in 2022, God spoke clearly to me about moving to Brazil as a long-term missionary.

During June of 2023, I had the opportunity to visit Brazil. It was an amazing trip! While I was there, God opened a door for me to move to Brazil in January 2024! After much prayer, I felt like this was the direction God was leading me. I am moving to a YWAM base in Brazil called Monte das Aguas on January 2, initially for a 2-year commitment. I am beyond excited for this opportunity and this experience!

It is cool to see that from an early age, God was already planting seeds in my heart for the people of Brazil. Now he has called me to go to this nation. Looks like SMLC and SMLS raised a Mighty Messenger for Christ.

I want to thank everyone who has supported me with prayer and donations to my mission fund. I am certain that I will need continued prayer and your financial support. I will keep you updated about my Brazil mission adventure and my financial needs.

With love and blessings, *Mariah Kaitlin Chilcott*



# 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

11/1/2023 - 11/30/2023

Church Revenue	\$ 54,216
School Revenue	\$ <u>107,278</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 161,494
Total Expenses	\$ <u>154,074</u>
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$ 7,420
Expense Budget	\$ 168,057
Under/(Over) Budget	\$ (6,562)
Working Cash Balance	\$ 68,744
Mortgage Balance	\$ 653,017

### Designated Fund Balances

Endowment Fund	\$ 633,719
Building Contingency	\$ 13,356
Parking Lot Fund	\$ 15,000
Technology Refresh	\$ 11,051
Sunday School	\$ 676
Youth Donations	\$ 20,226
Youth Accounts	\$ 4,525
Good Samaritan	\$ 6,874
Memorials	\$ 12,970
L.A.M.P. Mission Trip	\$ 9,653
Quilting	\$ 298
POBLO South Asian Ministry	\$ 3,596
Church Worker Scholarship	\$ 585
School Improvements	\$ 30,010
Tuition Assistance	\$ 51,703
School Music	\$ 759
School Sports	\$ (17)
Flower Fund	\$ 3,585
CFK Mission Expansion	\$ 88,613
Women's Fellowship/LWML	\$ 2,828
Faith Budget	\$ 371

## WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

October '23 Avg. . . . .	327
November '23 Avg. . . . .	298
December '23 Avg. . . . .	374
Annual Avg. 2021 . . . . .	265
Annual Avg. 2022 . . . . .	295
Annual Avg. 2023 . . . . .	327

## *St. Michael Endowment Fund News . . .*

### **THE KUHLMAN SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT FUND – A NEW ENDOWMENT FUND ESTABLISHED**

It is with great gratitude and joy that we announce the establishment of the Kuhlman School Scholarship Endowment Fund. The fund will generate scholarship money to be used as tuition assistance for St. Michael Lutheran School students. It is being established to honor Fred and Erma Kuhlman, and Willis and Sussie Kuhlman.

The Kuhlman family believes very much in a Christian sponsored education for youth. St. Michael Lutheran School is an excellent school providing Christ-centered education to the youth in the Kalamazoo and Portage area. This family wishes to make sure that students who may need additional financial assistance to attend St. Michael Lutheran School can receive such assistance.

For the 2023-2024 school year, \$50,610 of tuition assistance was awarded to qualifying families. This is the largest amount given during a school year since the school was formed. It is such a financial blessing to have generous yearly donations from members along with our school scholarship endowment funds to meet this need. Since 2005, St. Michael has given \$539,135 dollars in tuition assistance. As of October 1, 2023 the various endowment funds to support the school total \$348,000. If you are interested in learning more about how your family estate planning can help the mission of St. Michael, please contact any of the Endowment Committee members.

Thank you again to the Kuhlman family for their generous donation of the blessings God has provided.

*Todd Foster* for the Endowment Committee: Julie Vickery, Brad Hunter, Rick Jacobs and Dave Johnson

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**LCMS**Foundation  
TODAY | TOMORROW | FOREVER

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

### **BRINGING ORDER AND SIMPLICITY IS A GOAL OF ALL ESTATE PLANNING**

Louis and Brett were having coffee, the day after Christmas. Both were sharing with each other about how much their families have changed. Children are talking about retirement. Grandchildren are out of college and advancing in their careers. Brett said to Louis, “When Sally and I put our estate plan together 25 years ago, we felt a great responsibility to provide for our family, as they seemed to have so many needs. But now it seems to have changed somewhat. Even my youngest grandchild is better off financially than I am. But I do have a grandchild with special needs, and we are wondering what we should do for her. We also think a lot about our Church and its future as times are changing. We are also stirred by the LCMS missionary who talked about the impact of the Gospel on families over in Kenya. We know we

need to update our plan, but it seems so complex and chaotic. We just don’t know where to start.”

Brett’s predicament is not uncommon. Most people find that their life situations and the tug of the Gospel urge them to update their gift plans. We certainly do not live in a static world. It is therefore a good practice to review the gift plan within one’s estate plan every so often, whenever you feel life has changed. That look may certainly bring some effort. But that is just good stewardship of God’s things. We want to do well with God’s gifts, to make sure our families see Jesus through our care for them, and the world sees Jesus through our support of ministry.

In a bigger project, having some help always makes it easier. Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor can help you create a roadmap for working through this process. In the end, you will have peace of mind knowing you are doing the Lord’s will.



## ENDOWMENT FUND ENCOURAGES CFK STAFF

In August the *CHRIST FOR KIDS* staff gathered together at Emily's house on Crooked Lake and spent the day together. We swam in the lake, went for a boat ride, ate, and had many laughs together.

We used a 2023 endowment fund grant to supply food for this day. Everyone enjoyed a taco bar and many good snacks and desserts. Flowers and Amazon gift cards were given to the staff to thank them for all their hard work. Working in Christ for Kids is a very challenging job with long hours and pay that isn't all that great.

Thank you St. Michael family for allowing us to bless the CFK staff with gifts and a fun offsite team building event!

Emily Ritchie, *Christ for Kids Program Director*

"Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him." – Proverbs 30:5



## REQUEST FOR ENDOWMENT FUND DISTRIBUTIONS DURING 2024

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 Christ for Kids, just to name a few.

If you are interested in applying for some portion of this money for a 2024 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*

# 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  
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### **ASSISTANT PASTOR**

Rev. Jason Toman  
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### **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

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Matt Colby, Assistant Director

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

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Vacant, Director

### **VOLUNTEER MINISTRY COMMITTEE**

Dar Swift

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Lisa Robert

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Cindy Hunter, Assistant Director

### **YOUTH GROUP LEADERS**

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Heather Bigelow

## **BOARD OF LAY MINISTRY**

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### **ALTAR GUILD**

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### **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**

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Zachary Button, Peter Robert,  
Bill Semrau, Kathy Zakarias

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Judy Schroeder, Assistant Director

### **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP / LWML**

Arla Mayhew

### **SOFTBALL**

Shannon Miskovich

## **ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE**

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