



THE MIGHTY MESSENGER

February 2025

Volume 64, Number 2

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

GOD'S WORD FINDS YOU!

One of the most depressing days of the year for me is when we put our Christmas tree away for another year, carefully wrapping and packing fragile Christmas ornaments and hauling heavy boxes back down the basement. But one bright spot about this task is rediscovering treasured ornaments that have spent weeks near the back of the tree. Some were made by our children years ago, some are ornaments that we inherited from our families growing up. During the sad process of un-Christmas'ing our living room, it's nice to see and hold precious memories one more time.

2 Kings 22 features the prophet Hilkiah and King Josiah rediscovering the lost treasure of the Word of God that had been stored away in a forgotten corner of the temple. However, when this lost gem was found again, joy was not what filled the hearts of the King and his people. Instead, 22:11 tells us, "when the King heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes." King Josiah found that he and his forbears had not been obeying God's Word, and God's righteous wrath had been kindling against them for years now.

In response to this horrible discovery, King Josiah "inquires of the Lord", praying for guidance. He then renews the covenant with the Lord by reading the entire Law out loud to the people. Nationwide cleansing follows this, including the smashing of false idols and temples and the banishment of false prophets. Finally, the Passover is restored and observed once again.

When God's Word comes into our lives, it brings about change. Recognition of our sin and repentance takes place. God's Holy Spirit brings about renewal in our lives and in our hearts, turning our focus back upon His mercy and love. If you've been tracking with our "reading the Bible in a year" plan(s), you may have noticed similar changes in your own life. When confronted by the

Word of God, we come face to face with the fact that we are, indeed, sinners. We daily fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace.

Thanks be to God that He doesn't forget us! May we, like Josiah, continue to read and hear His Word that promises life, forgiveness, and a renewed spirit! If you've missed a few days (or years) reading and resting in God's Word, today is a new day! Be encouraged to know that God doesn't forget you, and He is drawing you back to Himself by His Holy Spirit through His Word. God loves you, and has life and joy waiting for you in His promises in Scripture.

Open up your Bible today, and see once again just how merciful and mighty your Lord is.

Daniel S Maske



TOWNHALL: Sunday, February 9
between the services (9:45AM)
in the Gym

VOTERS' ASSEMBLY: Sunday,
February 23, after the late
service (12:30PM) in the
Sanctuary

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.

Treasure Audio Bibles Mission Focus

During the month of February St. Michael Lutheran School students will be raising money to provide **Treasure** solar-powered audio Bibles to unreached people groups throughout the world through an organization called Unknown Nations.

Unknown Nations’ ministry is focused on the “10/40 window,” which includes North Africa, the Middle East and Asia between 10 and 40 degrees north latitude (also referred to as “The Resistance Belt”). This region houses the world’s largest Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist populations. Studies show that up to 70% of these people are oral learners, who are either illiterate or prefer to learn orally, which is why the **Treasure** is such a powerful tool, especially with its availability in over 6,000 dialects.

In the 2023-24 fiscal year, Unknown Nations distributed 88,525 **Treasures**. Audio Bibles are not limited to individual audiences, but can impact listening groups ranging in numbers, which in turn lead to vast numbers of people accepting Jesus and becoming baptized members of the family of God.

Here's where you come in...

St. Michael Lutheran School students are asking church members and families to prayerfully consider joining them in filling an Unknown Nations *Change Your World* box with loose change and dollars throughout the month of February. Each filled box ideally turns into one **Treasure** audio Bible. (CYW boxes will be available on a display table in the narthex.) The cost of one **Treasure** is \$40, and an additional \$10 delivers it to its destination.

In lieu of a filled CYW box, checks of any amount, made payable to St. Michael Lutheran School, are welcome! Filled CYW boxes, checks and cash may be dropped off in the school office or given to Greg or Wendy Johnson by Sunday, March 2.



***Empty your pockets
and dig deep in your purse!***

Sunday School children will be at the doors before and after worship services to collect your “**NOISY COINS**” to help buy Treasure solar-powered Bibles.



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

THE SHARING OF CHRIST'S PEACE

One of the most meaningful parts of the service is when we *Share the Peace*. It's more than just saying "how are you doing?" or shaking hands (or fist bumps). It's a moment where we intentionally share Jesus' peace with each other, showing that we're united in His love and forgiveness.

Sharing the peace of God with each other has deep roots in Scripture. In John 14:27, Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." This isn't just about avoiding arguments -- it's the peace that comes from being right with God and each other. Jesus also says in Matthew 5:23-24, that if we're offering a gift at the altar but remember we have something against someone, we should go and make peace first. It shows how important reconciling with one another is to God, especially when we come to worship Him.

When we share the peace, we're not just saying "hi." We're remembering the peace that Jesus brought us through His death and resurrection. The peace we give each other is a sign of the peace we've already received from God. It's also a reminder that, as the church, we're all united in Christ, no matter where we come from or what we've been through.

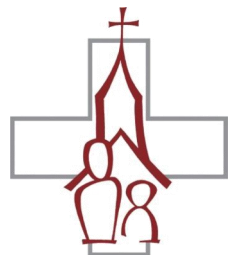
The *Sharing of the Peace* is also an opportunity to reflect and check ourselves. It's a time to think about any unresolved issues we have with others. When we offer peace to someone, it's not just a polite gesture—it's a chance to live out the forgiveness and grace God has given us. It challenges us to show that peace in our everyday relationships too, not just on Sunday.

Sharing the peace with one another is a blessing to us as a church family together. It's a reminder that we're not just individuals who happen to be in the same place. We're the body of Christ, united. When we share peace, we're saying, "I'm here for you, I want to live in love and harmony with you," even when we don't always see eye to eye.

The *Sharing of the Peace* is more than just a pleasant moment together. It's a powerful part of worship that reminds us of the peace Jesus gives us. It gives us a chance to reflect on our relationships with God and others, to ask for forgiveness if we need to, and to commit to living in peace. It's a reminder of God's grace and helps build a deeper sense of community in the church.

Peace be with you, Mighty Messengers!

Pastor Maske



Live in the Light

**February 2, 2025 – The Purification of Mary and
Presentation of Our Lord**

Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

The forces of light and darkness have clashed since the creation of the world. Jesus brings light into every corner of creation. Do we suppress His light through ignorance and neglect? Or do we *live in the light*?

Sermon Text: Luke 2:32

Readings: Psalm 84; Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-32

Holy, Holy, Holy

February 9, 2025 – Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

We know all too well that God is holy, and we human beings are not. Isaiah also knew this, and each one of us joins with him in crying out, “Woe is me!” But Christ became sin for us, and that means for us a blessed reality here on earth and in the life to come when we will be holy!

Sermon Text: Isaiah 6:1-8

Readings: Psalm 99; Isaiah 6:1-8; Luke 5:1-11

Blessed Are You

February 16, 2025 – Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

Rev. Thomas Eggold

The term “blessed” is one of the most misunderstood and misused words in our cultural vocabulary. Today we find this word “blessed” coming straight from the mouth of Jesus, but the way He uses the word stands in blatant contrast to the way it’s used in the world. Everything about today’s Gospel lesson challenges our natural and cultural understanding of what it means to be “blessed.”

Sermon Text: Luke 6:22

Readings: Psalm 1; Jeremiah 17:5-8; Luke 6:17-26

The Baptized Life

February 23, 2025 – Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

Rev. Shayne Jonker

Our Lord Jesus Christ had mercy on us though we did not deserve it. Our ingratitude should be punished, but instead He forgave it and gave us even more. Our wickedness should be judged as worthy of hell, but He gave His own Son hell, and gave us heaven instead. Living in and under the love, grace, and mercy of God in His Son, Jesus Christ, life looks different, sinners look different, enemies look different, and love and mercy is not only possible, but natural.

Sermon Text: Luke 6:27-28

Readings: Psalm 103:1-13; Genesis 45:3-15; Luke 6:27-38



**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 link [Audio files](#)
- ◆ Total Christian Television (TCT) network nationwide broadcast. Locally, you should find it at 11:30 am ET on WJPG-LD 26 in Kalamazoo and WTLJ54 in Battle Creek.

**We remember to pray for
Homebound friends:**

Caroline Barkow, Sally Beck,
Judy Chumas, Shirley
Cosgrove, Ginny Evans,
Audrey Glover, Virgil Harrison,
Joel & Cheryl Johnson, Bernie
& Pauline Kubacki, Carrol
McCarty*, Nancy Miller, Jim &
Dean Monck, Joan Pfister,
Wilma Ritchie, Vic Schroeder,
Marilyn Sible, Darlene Surch,
Ernie & Judi VanOrman,
Sharon White

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)

WANGERIN ON PRAYER

Simply put, prayer is communication.

We talk with God, not just to him. God talks with us too, causing a circle to be whole and closed between us.

Complexly, the complete prayer is made up of four acts, four discrete parts, two of which are ours, two of which are God's. The parts may seem separated one from another by time or by the different nature of the acts; yet often all four acts occur in such swift succession that the complete prayer is revealed as a single, unbroken event. And so it is communication:

First, we speak.

while second, God listens

Third, God speaks,

while fourth, we listen

If we initiate the first act, God will respond with the second. That is sure and certain. So is the third act absolutely certain to follow the first two, because God's love promises to speak to us by a Word.

But if we have never learned the fourth, if we are too impatient to perform the fourth act, too demanding and unsubmissive to watch and to wait upon the Lord, then we will never know that the second and the third acts have been accomplished. Without our truly listening, prayer will seem to have failed because communication, remaining incomplete, did in fact fail. The circle stayed broken, and love was left unknown.

Learn the circle. Trust in God to listen and to speak, and our own listening will follow as easily as the eyes of a child follow their father – in whom is all their good.

Walter Wangerin, Jr was a writer and Lutheran Minister. This article can be found in our Stephen Ministry workbook.

Please pray for the caring, Christian people who are taking the Stephen Ministry classes.

They will learn how to be closer to God in order to serve people in need.

Blessings,

Virginia Hetrick – Prayer Coordinator





**Youth Group Serving
5:00-6:30 pm in the Gym**

**Entertainment For All Ages
In The Sanctuary Following
FREEWILL OFFERING ACCEPTED
FOR YOUTH PROGRAM SUPPORT**



January Youth Lock-in was a great time for all to worship, learn, praise and have a great time with Christian friends!

February Calendar of Events:

Saturday, Feb. 1

5pm Sub Sales at Lamplight

Sunday, Feb. 2

8am Sub Sales at Divine Service

9:45 Coffee Club

11am Sub Sales at Morning Song

5pm 8-12 Youth Group

Saturday, Feb. 8

9am Sub Sandwich Making

Sunday, Feb. 9

9:45 Bible Study

Sub Sandwich Pick-up

No evening youth group

Sunday, Feb. 16

9:45 Bible Study

5pm 8-12 Youth Group –
Airborne Jump Park

Sunday, Feb. 23

9:45 Bible Study

Youth Group Joint event with Zion
Youth – National Gathering
Participants



OUR BIBLE STORIES

YOU DON'T HAVE TO READ THE BIBLE 50 TIMES IN 2025 (*but finishing it once would be great*)

A 96-year-old pastor in Georgia has read the entire Bible more than 1,000 times, according to a story featured in December on the television program The 700 Club.

Pastor Shelby Summerland says he was inspired many years ago by 19th century evangelist George Müller's 200 readings of the Bible. Summerland surpassed Müller in only four years – and kept going. Reading at least two hours daily, he says he can finish the Bible every six days, or 50 times a year.

Summerland's pace is six times faster than the average Bible reader, who needs 65 to 75 hours to read all of God's Word. Nevertheless, compared to him, taking a year to read the Bible feels almost leisurely. It requires 12 minutes each day. (Summerland advises reading three chapters daily and seven chapters on Sundays.)

Here at St. Michael, we would like you to open your Bible more often – ideally as a daily habit in 2025. Our special emphasis is called 66:1, because we also want to encourage you to read through the entire Bible (all 66 books) in a single year. Even though it's already February, it's never too late to begin.

How you do it is entirely up to you. Find a time of day that fits your schedule. Use a reading plan that we provide or choose one that you like better. Skip reading and instead listen using audio Bible apps, websites, or other media players.

What's most important is to be intentional about taking in God's Word every day. The Scriptures themselves extol their value and power

(see [2 Timothy 3:16](#), [Romans 15:4](#), [Mark 13:31](#), and [Matthew 4:4](#)). Inherent in them is the Holy Spirit, whose power will strengthen your faith and reshape your heart.

Martin Luther wanted everyone to read the Bible – including children, a radical idea for his time. We too think that no one is too young to participate in Bible reading. In November you should have been mailed two reading plans especially for children. They contain either three verses per day (Level 1) or ten verses each day (Level 2) that can be shared with your family. More copies are available in the church office should you need them.

Luther so valued Bible reading that he himself translated it into German and distributed it widely. When everyone began reading the Bible, it changed the world! It started the Protestant Reformation. So, imagine how Bible reading might revolutionize your own life.

And you don't have to read like Shelby Summerland for it to change you and shape you in amazing and positive ways. Let's gather around God's Word in 2025 – encouraging each other to read it, celebrating making it a habit, and finding joy in what we discover.



Please tell us how much you are reading the Bible!

Reading the Bible will be a group effort at St. Michael this year. Alone, your journey through Scripture might feel like "baby steps," but together, we can scale a mountain! What will you contribute to our combined goal of reading **60,000 Bible chapters** in 2025?

Read the entire New Testament and add 260 chapters to the tally. Savor the Psalms and score 150 chapters. If 50 people complete the Bible this

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST

year, we will easily reach our goal.

Haven't you already started counting? It's time to share how many Bible chapters you read in January. There are two ways you can submit that data to the church. Choose a method that works best for you and your family – and please stick with the same means all year.

METHOD #1: The index card system

For those who prefer using pencil and paper, visit the Communications Center to share your Bible reading data. Outside the newly installed door for our soon-to-be relocating church office, you will find a display of wall pocket charts with index cards.

Here's what to do:

Bring the index card mailed to you in November or chose one from a wall pocket.

If using a new card, write your name on the blank (unlined) side.

On the first line of the reverse side, write down the date and the total number of Bible chapters you have read.

Place the index card in a wall pocket with your name visible (facing outward).

As often as you would like, but at least once a month, return to the wall pockets to update your index card.

Record that day's date and the number of Bible chapters you read *since the last time* you visited the wall pockets.

You might find it easiest to maintain two identical index cards. Keep one at home and switch them out whenever you visit the Communications Center.

When you fill up an index card, start another by repeating steps 1 to 4. Keep all your index cards in the same pocket.

If you have any questions or problems, call the church office or email to:

Biblereading@mightymessengers.org

At the end of every month, Bible chapters will be tallied and a new total reported to the congregation.

METHOD #2: The online form

If you prefer communicating online, a Google form is available at the following link: <https://forms.gle/VX7Jt9YSzdbmJ7FD9>

You will need to input your name and an email address.

There will be a drop-down menu for you to select the number of Bible chapters you have read *since the last time* you filled out the form.

You can visit the form as often as you like, but please submit your data at least once a month.

If you have any questions or problems, call the church office or email to:

Biblereading@mightymessengers.org

At the end of every month, Bible chapters will be calculated and a new total reported to the congregation.

It is so important to let us know how you are doing on your Bible reading journey! Every time you share your progress, we hope it will be a small triumph that motivates you to keep reading.



Look for the opportunity to pick up a Magnetic Bookmark or a marathon reader's Sticker!

Share what your children are reading, too!

You can use options similar to those described above to report how many Bible verses your children are reading. Our goal is for St. Michael's children to read a combined total of **26,000 Bible verses** by using the Elementary Bible reading plans mailed in November. Paper copies are available still, in the Communication Center.

METHOD #1: In the display area, please write each child's name on a bright-colored index card and follow the same instructions as outlined for adults.

METHOD #2: If you prefer online convenience, a separate Google form for submitting their data is available here: <https://forms.gle/7tUFmVNEqQmwzSJG7>

When kid's reading is posted, Mrs. Songer has a Rewards Treasure Chest to choose from. ☺

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)

LAMP TEAM TO LAC BROCHET, MANITOBA PLANNING FOR THE SUMMER OF 2025

Introducing
the 2025
Team Leader:

Zach Button



Zach traveled to Lac Brochet with the 2024 team. He is a Stephen Minister and served on the Board of Lay Ministry at St. Michael. He has developed a project plan for the 2025 St. Michael LAMP Team and will have the support of former LAMP Team members.



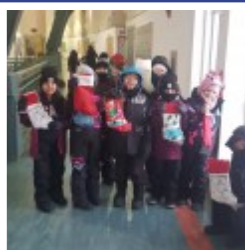
Zach will be setting a date for a LAMP information meeting which would be open to anyone who is interested in hearing more about the LAMP Trip.

If you would like more information about the 2025 LAMP Trip you can call/text or email Zach: 810-844-6860 or Zacharymbutton@gmail.com



I thank God for bringing Zach to St. Michael. He has been marvelous addition to our St. Michael family and is very conscientious and thorough in everything we have worked together in, with LAMP and Stephen Ministry. He also has a wonderful sense of humor. I am thankful for his desire to continue our ministry to Lac Brochet by serving as the 2025 LAMP Team Leader. *Dana Naumann*

We got these pictures from Linda English the vice-principal. Unfortunately the children got their gifts late due to the Canadian Postal strike. They loved the stockings!



SERVING THE LORD IN

Belize

NEWS FROM GROTH FAMILY



December 2024



Working Towards Peace

Belize has reported fewer than 90 murders in 2024 for the second consecutive year, marking significant progress since 2005. While gang-related violence decreased following a mid-year State of Emergency, there was an increase in murders linked to personal disputes and domestic violence. Commissioner of Police Chester Williams commends this improvement but emphasizes the need for justice for grieving families. As we prepare to serve in Belize, we pray for peace and healing for this nation and those affected by violence.


jason.groth@lcms.org
lcms.org/Groth

December to Remember: Our Last Steps Stateside



Saying goodbye to Mrs. Carol, our good friend from Seminary.

December has been a month full of bittersweet moments as we've said goodbye to dear friends and family. These goodbyes are hard, but they're also filled with gratitude for the love, support, and encouragement we've received throughout this journey. Each hug, conversation, and farewell meal reminds us of the community holding us in prayer as we prepare to leave.

In addition to these heartfelt goodbyes, we've continued our mission of spreading the Gospel by visiting congregations in Colorado, Illinois, and Michigan. Sharing the vision and work ahead in Belize has been a joy, and we are thankful for the opportunity to connect with so many faithful supporters. December has also been a time of reflection and preparation—packing our belongings, finalizing travel plans, and spending quiet moments together as a family. As we savor these final days in the U.S., we carry with us the relationships and memories that will sustain us on this new chapter, trusting in God's provision and grace as we look forward with hope and faith.

Kids Corner

“We begin the next year in the Dominican Republic where we will learn Spanish; how do you feel about that?”

Gideon:

“This will be my first time out of the country. I’m both nervous and excited about that. My brain will probably hurt from learning Spanish.”

Esther:

“It is a great opportunity to meet new people! I think I will like it.”

Martha:

“Cool.” (She says dispassionately)

Joanna:

“Ooo another country! Learning Spanish? Sure, I want to.”



The Groth family was able to briefly visit family in the last week of December.



Advent

We were able to catch a few Advent services this December. We always enjoy services at Resurrection in Sappington, MO. We want to give a special thank you to the members of Resurrection that have been especially gracious to us during our pre-deployment phase of Missionary Service. I was also able to attend a special Christmas luncheon with the circuit pastors. I was encouraged to share a meal with them and hear about the ministries in the South County area of St. Louis.



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- **Final Preparations:** *That the logistics of packing, goodbyes, and travel go smoothly, and that we are emotionally and spiritually prepared for this new chapter.*
- **Language Learning:** *For focus, patience, and rapid progress as we immerse ourselves in Spanish to communicate effectively in ministry.*
- **Orientation in the DR:** *That our time in the Dominican Republic equips us with the tools and relationships necessary for the work ahead in Belize.*
- **Family Transition:** *For peace, unity, and resilience as we adjust to life away from home.*

Family Update



Please scan the QR code with your phone and fill out the form to be added to the monthly newsletter list.

As December comes to a close, we stand at the threshold of a new chapter, filled with excitement and

anticipation for our January departure to the Dominican Republic. This month has been a whirlwind of farewells, presentations, and logistical preparations. The children continue their homeschooling, and Jason and Emily are sharpening their Spanish for the work ahead. While the goodbyes have been emotional, they've reminded us of the love and prayers surrounding us. Thank you for your steadfast support as we step forward in faith!

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...

-Ecclesiastes 3:1

December has been a season of transition, marked by bittersweet goodbyes and hopeful preparation. This verse reminds us that God ordains every season of life, giving purpose and meaning to both the farewells and the anticipation as we move into the work He has called us to.

(Artwork credit: www.fullofeyes.com)

—Rev. Jason Groth



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

Prayerfully consider partnering with the LCMS to support the work of Jason and Emily Groth. Make checks payable to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

OR

Mission Central
40718 Highway E 16
Mapleton, IA 51034

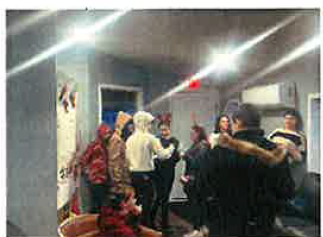
On the memo line include **Groth - Belize**

Give securely from any device: lcms.org/givenow/Groth
Call a donor care representative: 888-930-4438



TYLER GJELTEMA

Colonial Acres City Life Director



Dear St. Michaels Lutheran Family,
January 2025

I am so grateful for God's faithfulness over this ministry and the partners He has paired us with to do His work in Colonial Acres together! It has been a tough year; we are in a spiritual battle for the teens, fighting weekly against things of this world that draw our teens away from us. Our numbers fluctuate, but one thing that draws them in is food and parties. This past month, we had our Christmas party, and everyone came! It was a blessing to my heart, and I was so grateful, but I knew my time was limited. We sat down to eat, and I took advantage of the time to share the Gospel. We talked about how God created them and loved them so much; we talked about how sin separates us from God. We ended with the beautiful gift of Jesus God gave us through Jesus' birth, death and resurrection. It was silent and their hearts were attentive – you knew God was working on their hearts. I am so grateful for the opportunity to share, and I look forward to watching God continue to work in their lives. I am trusting He is up to something great in that neighborhood.

Last month we also had two amazing partners provide Christmas meals to all our families as well as a Christmas basket of household goods. I was dropping off the Christmas baskets to a family and the mother just cried; she was so grateful, as it allowed her to use their finances differently to spend on Christmas. This mom also proceeded to tell me how much her son loves coming to club. This is cool because her son is a new middle schooler who started coming when we split the middle and high school clubs. This young man has been wanting a place to belong and he has been diving all in! Pray for this young man and his family to grow in Christ!

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Tyler Gjeltrema.

Learn More



Give Today

Prayer Requests and Praises

- Praying for a fresh new year for our teens, that Jesus will speak into their lives and that they will be willing to make changes.
- Pray for strength for our leaders as they pour into our teens.
- Praising God for amazing partners, financially, prayerfully, and physically, and all that they do for this ministry!
- Pray for Brandon -- drugs have a hold on his life, and he is dealing with anger issues. He refuses to do anything in life, and countless runaways are part of his life.
- Pray for JJ, that she will see who God made her to be and find her identity in God and not in this world; pray she has the desire to stay away from alcohol and drugs.

**St. Michael Lutheran Church
presents**

**TAYLOR
MASON**



MARCH 4 | 7:00 PM

**7211 Oakland Drive
Portage, MI**

Taylor presents a positive, unforgettable program that connects people through those things that bond us: laughter, music, magic and the shared experience of something special, something original and something unforgettable. Get ready for a fun, special and truly unique evening of entertainment.

The night starts at 6:00 pm with a special musical performance by the St. Michael Lutheran School children.

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)*

SMLC FY25 FEBRUARY ELECTED DIRECTOR & LAY MINISTER BALLOT

Position	Name
President	Mark Ruesch
Treasurer	
Lay Ministry	Mark Kahle
Parish Fellowship	Diane Gibson
Evangelism	
Parish Education	
Church Properties	Ryan Nelson
Early Childhood & School	Mike Grotelueschen
Small Groups	
Youth & Young Adults	Heather Bigelow
Stewardship	Dan Marshall
Endowment Committee	Rick Jacobs
Endowment Committee	Dave Johnson

Position	Name
Lay Minister #1	Andy Allan
Lay Minister #2	Arlan Wendzel
Lay Minister #3	Dave Johnson
Lay Minister #4	Harold DeFouw
Lay Minister #5	Howard McNees
Lay Minister #6	Dave Drzewiecki
Lay Minister #7	Matt Heintz
Lay Minister #8	
Lay Minister #9	

Candidates are still being sought to fill some of these very important positions. If you might be interested in learning more about serving, please reach out to Nominating Chairman, Mark Ruesch 330-730-9099 or Vice President, Rob Kuhlman 269-720-3261

Considering distributions from your estate that will directly support ministries of the Church may present competing priorities that have existed in you throughout your life.

Greg and Deb sat down after Christmas to have a serious conversation about their future goals for the distributions of their estate, especially those that will go to ministry. For the last twenty years, Deb has been involved in an afterschool outreach effort through a local urban congregation that has opportunity to provide tutoring and intentional sharing of Jesus with young children. Greg is a trustee at their own congregation and is known as the guy who fixes everything. In their conversation, Greg expressed his desire to make a gift to their congregation's endowment fund, specifically for long-term care of the building. Not surprisingly, Deb desires to support the local congregation involved in the children's ministry. At first, they were getting into a bit of an argument, as both were passionate about their feelings. Finally, Deb said, "I think we need to ask someone to help us work through this. Maybe it doesn't need to be an either-or proposition."

Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor can be the one to talk and pray with you, as you discern God's will. Contact...

LCMSFoundation
TODAY | TOMORROW | FOREVER

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

FAITH FORMATION

CHILDREN - Sunday Morning Classes are available during the 9:45 AM Learning Hour. Mondays 3:15-4:30 PM Kid's Knitting Group. Wednesdays 5:15-6:30 PM Life Skills Class.

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 5:30 PM; Youth Group meets on Sunday evenings at 5:00-7:00 PM 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, unless holidays fall within the last week of the 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

11/1/2024 - 12/31/2025

Church Revenue	\$	153,811
School Revenue	\$	<u>190,352</u>
Total Revenue	\$	344,163
Total Expenses	\$	<u>346,508</u>
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$	(2,345)
Expense Budget	\$	368,665
Under/(Over) Budget	\$	(24,502)
Working Cash Balance	\$	21,664
Mortgage Balance	\$	584,188

Designated Fund Balances

Endowment Fund	\$	766,867
Building Contingency	\$	19,784
Parking Lot Fund	\$	30,000
HVAC	\$	853
Technology Refresh	\$	5,258
Sunday School	\$	489
Youth Donations	\$	23,718
Youth Accounts	\$	5,013
Good Samaritan	\$	3,595
Memorials	\$	14,889
Fellowship	\$	941
Champion Church Network	\$	831
L.A.M.P. Mission Trip	\$	8,119
Quilting	\$	970
POBLO South Asia Ministry	\$	21,296
Student Debt Fund	\$	-
Church Worker Scholarship	\$	655
Luth Medical Emergency Fund	\$	250
School Improvements	\$	44,882
Tuition Assistance	\$	29,446
School Music	\$	6,392
School Sports	\$	578
Flower Fund	\$	3,043
Building Utilization	\$	(595)
LWML	\$	2,660
Women's Fellowship	\$	878
Faith Budget	\$	-

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Annual Avg. 2024 351

Oct. '24 Avg. 352

November '24 Avg. 341

December '24 Avg. 512

January '25 Avg. **330**

FELLOWSHIP

Reconciled through Christ, actively

loving and



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)

Bronson Fleece Collection

Please help the children at Bronson Hospital by contributing to their fleece blanket program. Any child in need of comfort is provided a blanket for their overnight stay that they can take home upon discharge. Three yards or two coordinating 1.5 yards of fleece are needed to complete each blanket. Donations of fleece can be put into the fabric basket in the communications center during the months of January and February. If you would rather that Parish Fellowship do the shopping, monetary donations can be placed in mailbox #353 (Kathy Taylor) Checks should be made out to St. Michael, with a memo for parish fellowship - fleece. For those of you who have a Thrivent grant available, please consider donating it to Parish Fellowship for the purchase of fabric for this community project.

If you would like to help with the construction of these blankets, please mark February 26th on your calendar. Between the hours of 6-8pm, we will be making blankets in the gym. No sewing is required, but make sure to bring your scissors. We will teach you a new skill that you can use to make blankets for your kids and grand-kids! It will be fun. Come and join us!

Women's Fellowship Survey

Attention women of St. Michael. We want to hear from you. Please check your email in the coming weeks for a survey about what events you want to see Women's Fellowship put on in the coming year. If you have an email address on file with the church office the link for the survey will come directly to you from Kathy Zakarias, Director of Women's Fellowship. If you are bursting with ideas already, please email Kathy directly at k5zakarias17@gmail.com.

LWML - Lutheran Women's Missionary League

The Fellowship Board is seeking a leader to head up our Lutheran Women in Mission group. For those of you that are unfamiliar with LWML it is the women's auxiliary of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. You may have heard of our Mite boxes. LWML's focus is on growing each woman's relationship with Christ. This is done through education, supporting missions, and social events to inspire women to serve Christ and others. As the leader, you would partner with both the regional and national organization and sometimes partner with Women's Fellowship to build and encourage the relationship each woman has with Christ through various events. . . Serve the Lord with gladness (Psalm 100:2)





Attention: Married Couples!!

Opportunity is available for a new and improved wedded relationship, while building on the marriage you already enjoy.

Please consider an enhancement to your marriage in the form of a Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend. Couples gather from Friday night to Sunday afternoon to learn and practice new communication techniques taught by Presenter Couples who share their own marriage experiences in inspiring and relatable talks.

Opportunity awaits at the scheduled event happening:

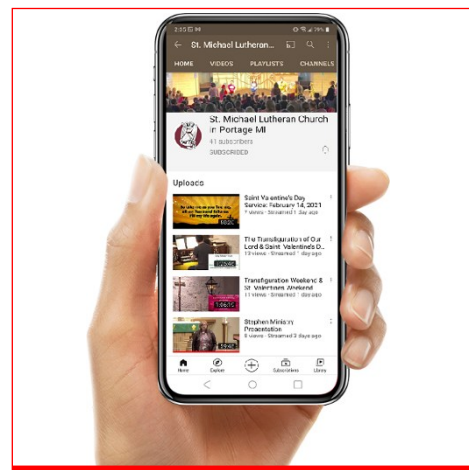
March 21-23, 2025 at The Springs Retreat Center, Gladwin, MI
 (\$100 application/couple with donation opportunity on the weekend to cover room & board)

Apply online now at GodLovesMarriage.org.

Questions? Mark & Jan Chilcott at 269-998-6147 or mchilcottME@gmail.com

Another opportunity for all married couples is to celebrate World Marriage Day on **FEBRUARY 9, 2025** by doing something special together and thanking GOD and each other for the love in our lives and homes. Let's make every day special!

Happy Valentine's Day from *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



Office Contacts:

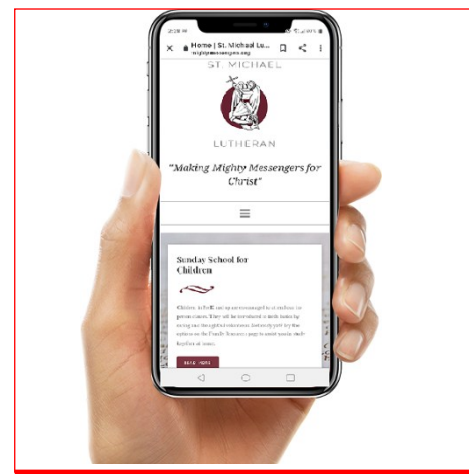
Church + 269-327-7832

School + 269-327-0512

Christ For Kids + 269-327-4889

mightymessengers.org

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



DIFFERENT WAYS TO DONATE TO ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL:

- 1) mightymessengers.org/donate
- 2) Mail or bring your donation envelopes to the church.
- 3) Fill out this [electronic giving form](#) and bring it into the church office.
- 4) Download the VANCO FAITH App from the Google Play or Apple Store.
- 5) Text to give 269-338-8196 with the amount of your donation.



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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BUSINESS & FINANCE MANAGER

Jay Koski
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CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT CHILD MINISTRY COORDINATOR AND RECORDING SECRETARY

Tammy Songer
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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

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
Vacant, Assistant Director

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Dan Marshall, Director

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Vacant, Chairman

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Vacant, Chairman

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Jerry Kuss, Jeff Burnett, Heather Bigelow

YOUTH GROUP LEADER

Deaconess Caitlin Ramirez

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, Pam Besser,
Zachary Button, Peter Robert,
Bill Semrau, Kathy Zakarias

BOARD OF EVANGELISM & MISSIONS

Valerian Kwigizile, Director
Kathie Seufert, Assistant Director

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Arlene Groll, Mark & Jan Chilcott

BOARD OF PARISH EDUCATION

Kristen Shook, Director
Nonie Knight, Assistant Director

ADULT EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Jesse Hogue

CRADLE ROLL

Jan Jett

LIFE SKILLS CLASSES

Mary Wright

BOARD OF PARISH FELLOWSHIP

Diane Gibson, Director
Judy Schroeder, Assistant Director

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP / LWML

Kathy Zakarias

SPORTS MINISTRY

Shannon Miskovich

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Todd Foster, Dave Johnson,
Julie Vickery, Rick Jacobs, Rob Kuhlman