

THE MIGHTY MESSENGER

April 2025 Volume 64, Number 4



IT'S STILL LENT, BUT EASTER IS COMING

As this month of April begins, we're still in the midst of Lent. But even as the weather these days teases us with glimpses of spring, so also as we follow our Savior Jesus Christ to Golgotha, down the way of suffering and sorrows to His crucifixion on Good Friday, we know that Easter is coming (in particular, on April 20).

Rev. S.M. Lockridge famously put it like this:

It's Friday. Jesus is praying. Peter's a sleeping. Judas is betraying. But Sunday's comin'.

It's Friday. Pilate's struggling. The council is conspiring. The crowd is vilifying.

They don't even know that Sunday's comin'.

It's Friday. The disciples are running like sheep without a shepherd.

Mary's crying. Peter is denying. But they don't know that Sunday's a comin'.

It's Friday. The Romans beat my Jesus. They robe Him in scarlet. They crown Him with thorns.

But they don't know that Sunday's comin'.

It's Friday. See Jesus walking to Calvary. His blood dripping. His body stumbling.

And His spirit's burdened.

But... It's Friday. The world's winning. People are sinning. And evil's grinning.

It's Friday. Soldiers nail my Savior's hands to the cross. They nail my Savior's feet to the cross.

And then they raise Him up next to criminals.

It's Friday. But let me tell you something, Sunday's comin'.

It's Friday. The disciples are questioning. What has happened to their King?

And the Pharisees are celebrating that their scheming has been achieved.

But they don't know It's only Friday. Sunday's comin'

It's Friday. He's hanging on the cross. Feeling forsaken by His Father.

Left alone and dying. Can nobody save Him? Ooooh It's Friday. But Sunday's comin'.

It's Friday. The earth trembles. The sky grows dark. My King yields His spirit.

It's Friday. Hope is lost. Death has won. Sin has conquered and Satan's just a laughin'.

It's Friday. Jesus is buried. A soldier stands guard. And a rock is rolled into place.

But it's Friday. It is only Friday. Sunday is a comin'!

Thanks to our Lenten journey and Good Friday observance, when we get to that glorious Easter Sunday morning, we will be ready to celebrate with exuberant joy that Christ is risen, He is risen indeed! Alleluia! We'll be celebrating not only Jesus' victory over Satan, sin, and death, but also our own victory in Christ. As Jesus promised, because He lives we shall also live (see John 14:19)! The life Jesus has in Himself He gives to all who believe in Him, so that they have His life too. St. John put it like this: "God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9).

Life in and through Jesus is a major theme for St. John, and it will be our theme in the seven weeks of the Easter season (April 20 – June 1). John began his gospel by telling us about Jesus that, "In Him was life" (John 1:4), and then John concludes his Gospel by saying that he wrote what he did about Jesus "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). As Jesus Himself put it, "I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness" (John 10:10); for "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

Please join us for this life giving Easter celebration, not only on April 20, but each and every time we gather on the first day of the week in honor and worship of the One who very early on that day was no longer in the tomb for He had returned to life. He is risen from the dead, risen indeed. Alleluia!

Faut foundum

WEARE CALLED to make disciples of Version

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.

Invite your family, friends and neighbors!



April 13 (Palm Sunday)

8:30 am traditional with choir

11:00 am contemporary w/praise team

April 17 (Maundy Thursday)

6:30 pm with Communion

April 18 (Good Friday)

6:30 pm Tenebrae Worship

April 19 (Holy Saturday)

5:00 pm Easter Vigil

April 20 (Easter Sunday) with Communion

7:30 am - Sunrise Worship

9:00 am - Youth provides Breakfast

11:00 am - Morning Song Worship



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 "But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house. I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you." Psalm 5:7

When you and your family come together to worship, what is your mindset? How does it feel to enter God's house? Maybe you've just barely made it time, with the stress from home still ringing in your ears. Maybe you're physically in the pew but mentally miles away, planning that next hard conversation or vacation plans. How does your mindset affect your precious time in worship?

Mindfulness is a difficult thing to do nowadays; it is a task in and of itself. Our days are crammed, and that is not a good or bad thing, it's just the way it is... which makes our time in worship so glaringly different. We enter into this sacred space and dedicated time to rest in God's Word... but sometimes this just doesn't seem possible.

Friends, you are not alone. We all walk (or run) together through this life that so often can seem like a mad dash to the finish line of every day. Slowing down sounds so nice, but it just doesn't seem like it's possible. To be fair, some days do not allow for a slow pace. Being a faithful steward of the day God has given you oftentimes means sacrificing peace of mind for the sake of those God has placed under your care.

But that makes Sabbath rest (whether it is Sunday or not) all the more precious. Consider this: can God in His power and love for you make worship time a time of peace, calm, and nourishment for you? Does God want you to rest in this time of worship centered in His Word? God thinks so! Jesus says, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28). Jesus knows that we are limited, tired, and oftentimes stretched to the limit. He Himself went off to pray alone at times during His earthly ministry to rest in prayer with His Father.

Remember this: God is with you wherever (and whenever) you go, and He especially calls you to rest in His care and in His Word during worship. The next time you enter into the sanctuary, take a moment to breath, pray, and ask God to calm and collect you to Himself. God cares for you, especially when you feel like your tank is empty. Rest in God's grace and let Him refresh You with His Word and grace.

Pastor Maske

A New Covenant

April 6, 2025 - Fifth Sunday in Lent

Rev. Paul Shoemaker

Jesus tells the parable of the wicked vinedressers to illustrate the unfaithfulness of the children of Israel to the covenant God so graciously made with them. A new Israel, the Christian Church, will emerge as a new covenant is set in place.

Sermon Text: Luke 20:9-20

Readings: Psalm 126; Luke 20:9-20

Palms to Passion April 13, 2025 – Palm Sunday Rev. Shayne Jonker

Holy Week begins on the road to Jerusalem. The King makes His grand entrance into Jerusalem, riding atop a borrowed donkey, as the people greet their Messiah: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" The mood, however, shifts quickly from palms to passion, from triumph to crucifixion. This King, this Messiah, came to lay His life down, to die for His people on the cross.

Sermon Text: John 12:13b

Readings: John 12:12-19; Luke 22:1-23:56

What Does This Mean? April 18, 2025 – Good Friday Rev. Craig Muehler (Guest Pastor)

It is fitting that we take a look at the words of Jesus to the world as He hangs upon the cross in suffering and pain. We ask the question, "What does this mean ... for us ... for the world?"

Sermon Text: John 19:17-30

Readings: Psalm 22; Isaiah 52:13-53:12; John 19:17-30

This program will be released on Good Friday on our digital platforms:

WorshipAnew.org - Mobile App

- TV Streaming on Roku, Apple TV, Google TV, Amazon Firestick

- YouTube - Facebook

Christ is Risen

April 20, 2025 - Easter Sunday

Rev. Thomas Eggold

The empty tomb means that our bodies will rise from the grave! The empty tomb means that we will be reunited with loved ones who have died in the faith. The empty tomb means that we will live forever with God in holiness, innocence, and blessedness. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed everything!

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 15:20

Readings: Psalm 16; 1 Corinthians 15:19-26; Luke 24:1-12

I Believe...

April 27, 2025 - Second Sunday of Easter

Rev. Scott Zeckzer

We confess in the Apostle's Creed that Jesus, on the third day, rose again from the dead, and we believe in the resurrection of the body. Why is it important we believe in the resurrection? Hear why the resurrection of Jesus changes everything for you.

Sermon Text: John 20:28

Readings: Psalm 148; 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31



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 26in Kalamazoo and WTLJ54 in Battle Creek.

We remember to pray for Homebound friends:

Pastor Ken & Jan Allan,
Caroline Barkow, Sally Beck,
Thomas Boelcke, Judy
Chumas, Shirley Cosgrove,
Ginny Evans, Audrey Glover,
Virgil Harrison, Joel & Cheryl
Johnson, Bernie & Pauline
Kubacki, Sandy Lentz, Carrol
McCarty*, Nancy Miller, Jim &
Dean Monck, Joan Pfister,
Wilma Ritchie, Vic Schroeder,
Marilyn Sible, 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)



9:45-10:45 AM + Sunday Mornings

Pastor Maske is leading sessions on the **Minor Prophets**. What makes them minor? Simply, they are the shorter books of the Old Testament. Come explore God's Word and hear what He has to say from Hosea through Malachi. You may be surprised how familiar some of these books and passages are, including many direct prophecies about Jesus. Join us for a good time of God's Word and fellowship together.

Questions and Answers on Prayer with Virginia Hetrick & Barbara Schubert

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different Kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

The same can be said for prayers. There are different kinds but the same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God is listening.

Engaging in discussions about prayer can offer valuable insights and perspective from different individuals. By exploring some discussion questions, we can deepen our understanding of prayer's significance in our lives and potential for personal growth.



TALKING ABOUT PRAYER

"Pray without ceasing" – Thessalonians 5:17

We have an Adult Sunday School class that is talking about prayer for a couple more weeks. The Bible has so much to teach us about prayer, including the types of prayer, the postures of prayer and the role that faith plays in prayer.

The Bible lists at least nine main types of prayer: prayer of faith (James 5:15), prayer of agreement (also known as corporate prayer) (Acts 2:42), prayer of request (also known as petition or supplication) (Philippians 4:6), prayer of thanksgiving (Psalm 95:2-3), prayer of worship (Acts 13:2-3), prayer of consecration (also known as dedication) (Matthew 26:39), prayer of intercession (1 Timothy 2:1), prayer of imprecation (Psalms 69), and praying in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:14-15).

Also:

Although prayer can (and should) be done from any bodily position, the Bible lists five specific postures: Sitting (2 Sam 7:18), standing (Mark 11:25), kneeling (Daniel 6:10; Luke 22:41; Ephesians 3:14), with one's face to the ground (Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:35), and with hands lifted up (1 Timothy 2:8).



Preschool - 2nd Room #123

Adults Invited to Join Us!

3rd - 7th Grade Room #122

8th Grade & High School Students in Allan Hall for Bible Study with Deaconess Caitlin We won't discover all there is to prayer this side of heaven. Fortunately, there are only a couple of facts that we need to remember as we continually discover more about prayer. One is that it needs to be done daily, like taking medication to



keep your body healthy, we need to pray to keep our soul in touch with God. The second is sincerity. Talk to God as if your soul depended on it and listen to Him because it does.

"Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?"

Corrie TenBoom

Blessings,

Virginia Hetrick - Prayer Coordinator



Speaker: Rev. Vincent Igbal

APRIL 12, 2025

St. Paul Lutheran Church
349 Capital Avenue NE
BATTLE CREEK



- 1) The ingathering will be Alternatives of Battle Creek. Any size diapers and any gently used clothes for children or maternity clothes will be welcome.
- 2) Bring your Bibles. There will be 3 interactive devotions.
- 3) Our Delegate to National Convention this summer needs to know what YOU want her to vote on. The proposed mission grants are here: Mission Grant Ballot-COMPILED 1-47 FINAL 2025-03-03.pdf

Send your 5 most desired choices to (save paper) Myra at: myragorentz@yahoo.com or call/text 2698328047

The SMLS PTL is so excited to share a new project we are working on! The PTL is raising funds to bring an Inchy Bookworm Vending Machine to our school. This innovative tool rewards students with books, while encouraging positive behavior and academic achievement.

We are looking into several opportunities in the near future to not only help purchase the vending machine but also create a fund specifically meant to help with the purchase of future books.

The first opportunity we are exploring is reaching out to local companies and sponsors to ask for their support. With a minimum donation of \$500, sponsors will be added to the custom vinyl wrapping on the machine with either a logo or a design of their choice. We will also feature the sponsor on our social media outlets and in-house communication to our school families (unless they'd like to remain anonymous).

We are asking if any of our church or school families have a relationship with a potential sponsor to please share our information with them. There is a special letter and flyer in the front office ready to be handed to a decision maker within a local company or a potential sponsor.

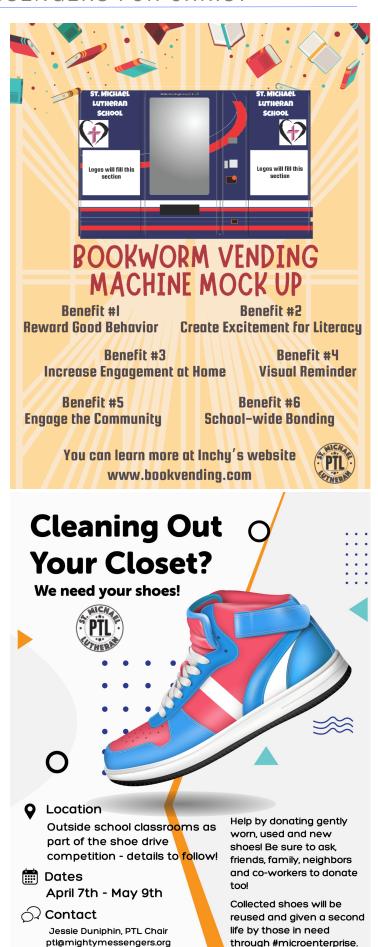
We thank you for your support of this exciting new adventure for our school that is sure to be a great new addition to the halls of St. Michael Lutheran School.

To learn more about the book vending machine, the following links are a great resource:

https://bookvending.com/fundraising/ptos-and-ptaswww.bookvending.com

Please direct any questions to Jessie Duniphin, SMLS PTL Chair, or via email to ptl@mightymessengers.com







We are excited to share that our Christ for Kids summer theme for 2025 is "Level Up: Journey to the Promised Land." This journey will encourage kids to grow spiritually through a variety of activities and lessons over seven weeks. We will learn important lessons about God protecting us, trusting and obeying Him, listening to His guidance, and dedicating our lives to serving Him.

In addition to our study of God's word, students will enjoy

a wide range of fun and engaging activities. Here's a glimpse of what we have planned:

Mondays: Chapel outside in our outdoor worship area. Tuesdays and Thursdays: Water Day!

Wednesdays: Bike/Scooter Day. Please bring a bike or scooter (no electric ones) and a helmet each Wednesday.

Fridays: Most Fridays will feature a surprise special event or visitor. We look forward to a fun-filled summer!

An important note about summer here at Christ for Kids:

During the summer, we will be having some construction going on. We are expanding our infant room, as

well as, building a new preschool room. Due to these projects, the program will need to be closed from August 4 through September 1. The construction company is needing at least two weeks for renovations, and due to the location of the work, we are unable to operate during this time. We made efforts to secure other rooms in the building for use during this period, unfortunately, this was not an allowable option through licensing. We have also planned for an additional two weeks to secure permits and set up the rooms again, as construction timelines can be unpredictable. If everything goes smoothly and the renovations progress faster than we anticipate, we will open as soon as possible. We sincerely apologize for this inconvenience appreciate understanding. Please note that you will not be charged during our closure.

We kindly ask for your prayers during this time that everything will go according to plan and that the permits will be processed promptly so we can reopen as soon as possible.

MOM to MOM SALE

St. Michael Lutheran School & Preschool 7211 Oakland Drive Portage, MI

April 12th 9:00am - 1:00pm

\$25 per space registration & payment due by 4/4

Set up Friday, 4/11 5-8pm with early access shopping for sellers & volunteers

School Program Tours & Information available during the event!



April Calendar of Events:

Sunday, April 6

9:45 am Coffee Club 5:00 pm 8th-12th Youth Group

Sunday, April 13

9:45 am Bible Study No Youth Group - Palm Sunday

Saturday, April 19

9am-1pm Easter Breakfast Prep

Sunday, April 20

Serving Easter Breakfast No Youth Group

Sunday, April 27

9:45 am Bible Study 5:00 pm 8th-12th Youth Group

- Community Service

Thank You for the Pancake Supper



The Pancake Supper was a huge success this year. Thank you to everyone who came out to join us for the evening.

The youth group raised \$1,450 to help us get to the LCMS National Youth Gathering this summer. We are so blessed to have your support to get us to this wonderful event!



This spring the Youth Group will also be doing yard work as a fundraiser. If you would be interested in hiring the Youth Group, or for more information please contact Deaconess Caitlin Ramirez at worden.cait@gmail.com or 313.914.9187





NASCAR Driver and former student, Carson Hocevar stopped by to visit St. Michael Lutheran School recently.

Mrs. Lauterbach said, "It's hard to believe he was my student here 11 years ago!"







SATURDAY, APRIL 26 Faith Lutheran Church

12534 Holly Road • Grand Blanc, MI 48439

7:00 p.m.	Friday, April 25 Opening Worship Service
	Saturday, April 26
9:00 a.m.	Registration opens
9:30 a.m.	Convention begins
4:00 p.m.	Convention concludes

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

\$10 per person; \$5 for each additional family member Includes Lunch



Register at Ihm.org/mi-III or scan the QR code with your mobile device!

Registration Deadline: April 18, 2025

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE



KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Jeff Craig-Meyer
Global Chief Constituency Officer,
Lutheran Hour Ministries

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS
Michigan LWML District Greetings
Michigan LCMS District Greetings
Explore Patient Urgency Study

Learn how you can CONNECT to people ...



GLOBALLY

More than 3 BILLION people have yet to hear the saving message of Jesus Christ!



DIGITALLY

Every month, the question of "Who is Jesus?" is Googled 2.7 MILLION times!



LOCALLY

Imagine the impact of MILLIONS of Christians around the world loving their neighbors!

For more information: Dennis Engelhard, MI LLL District President • (989) 670-8028 • dennisengelhard59@gmail.com





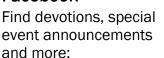
STAY CONNECTED

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





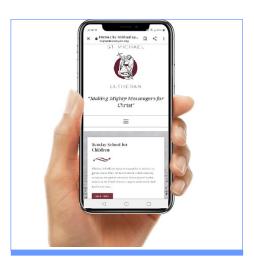
@StMichaelLutheranChurchPortageMI

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.





USE THIS "LIFE HACK" TO HELP YOU READ YOUR BIBLE EVERY DAY

Reading your Bible every day might become easier with habit stacking, a popular "life hack" that ties a new habit to a pre-existing daily task that

you already accomplish easily. Mornings and evenings are usually best for habit stacking because of familiar routines.

Pastor Jonathan Conner of Zion Lutheran Church in Manning, Iowa, suggests inserting the Bible into your mornings before turning on the TV, checking email or picking up your phone.

"Our waking time is a critical moment of our day," Conner says. "It is a directional moment, a trajectory moment, a framing moment for our day. What does that moment in your day look like?"

Conner, a regular guest on the Lutheran Public Radio show Issues, Etc., offered his insights Feb. 19, 2024, as part of his long running "Kids Have Questions" series. His advice is particularly relevant during our 66:1 Bible reading emphasis here at St. Michael. We are inviting everyone to be intentional about reading God's Word every day in 2025.

Rather than setting lofty goals related to Bible reading – such as "having" to read for 30 minutes – Conner prefers instead to celebrate the act of reading the Bible, perhaps only a little at a time, but doing so consistently and with great joy.

"We need to hear it and rehear the Word many times in our lifetime," Conner says. "This habitual act will change us and shape us in amazing and positive ways." Conner tells students in his confirmation classes to remember a simple phrase — "the Word before the world" — when considering who or what is going to influence their waking moments each day. Turning first to TikTok, Facebook or other social media platforms invites them to "catechize" us instead of God's Word, he says.

"Habits are not neutral," Conner observed. "Our habits betray us. Our hearts will follow our habits. ... We want to be intentional about our habits."

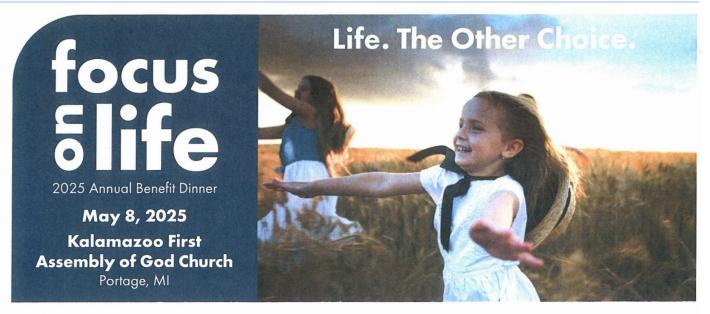
Best-sellers about habit formation, such as "Atomic Habits" by James Clear, have popularized techniques such as habit stacking to boost productivity. Habit stacking leverages those effortless daily habits – making coffee, putting on shoes, getting out of bed – to help us build new habits. Plan to read your Bible immediately before or after any activities like these, and you are more likely to remember to do it and to stick with it.

What habits do you perform at the same time every day? Where could you devote 12 minutes, before or after, to reading your Bible? It takes just 12 minutes a day to read the Bible in a year, which is another goal of the 66:1 Bible reading campaign here at St. Michael.

Here is an easy <u>reference sheet</u> for tallying how many Bible chapters that you have read. You can report your numbers to us by using the Google forms found with these QR Codes, or the index card system on the bulletin board in our Communication Center.







May 8, 2025

Doors Open at 5:30 p.m. Dinner & Program at 6:30 p.m.

Kalamazoo First Assembly of God Church

5550 Oakland Dr Portage, MI 49024

Mailing Address

Kalamazoo Right to Life PO Box 2366, Kalamazoo, MI 49003

More Information

Rob Karrer | (269) 599-4954 rckarrer@sbcglobal.net Or contact website at admin@kazoortl.org



Amber Roseboom

special guest speaker

Amber Roseboom currently serves as President of Right to Life of Michigan. She transitioned to this role after serving as Vice President of Operations under then-president

Barbara Listing from July 2022 – December 2023. Amber is a strategic management and crisis communications professional with more than 25 years of experience leading high-stakes, high-prolife initiatives in a variety of different sectors, including two Presidential Administrations, private industry, and non-profit advocacy organizations. Her interest in the political arena was rooted in defending the right to life for the most vulnerable. She began her career serving at Right to Life of Michigan in the late 90s. She has been featured on Fox News and has been quoted by CNN, CBS, The Washington Post, and the National Catholic Reporter to name a few. Amber is married to Tim Roseboom, her husband of 29 years.



Please Reserve My Place

Please return the completed form with payment by May 2. Or scan the QR code to register online.



Reservations

__ \$25 Student/Disabled

\$50 Individual

\$400 Table of 8

Donation

I am unable to attend. Enclosed is my contribution of \$_____.

Information

E-mail ____

Name ________Address ______

City _____ State ___ Zip ____ Phone

Table Captain (if applicable)

Kalamazoo Right to Life

Like us on Facebook!

All checks payable to Kalamazoo Right to Life (not tax-deductible).

EVANGELISM

Reaching out with the saving Gospel and proclaiming His truth to all people.

Wê 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. (1cts 1:8)

"All Nations Celebration"

Our Mission District of the LCMS put on a unique "All Nations Celebration" on March 15 at St. Luke in Haslett, MI that they describes as "a foretaste of heaven," as it included worship and feasting with people from a variety of ethic backgrounds. This very special gathering of people from all over the world highlighted in particular those congregations in our District, like St.

Michael, who have a ministry to and with immigrants and refugees from other countries. Our Afghan refugee family was represented and Amanullah Ahmadzai gave his testimony from the podium about how he came to faith in Christ, came to Kalamazoo, and ultimately came to St. Michael Lutheran Church.







Chances are you have met, or at least seen, Deaconess Caitlin Ramirez worshiping with us and working with our High School Youth Ministry. We are very grateful to have her serving the Lord with us in this way since last fall. Among other things, she is helping our congregation send a large group of teens to the LCMS National Youth Gathering in New Orleans this summer. You might have gathered from her uniform that she is a certified and rostered Deaconess with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. What you might not know, however, is that she also works for the LCMS Office of International Missions and had been serving in Peru for years. You can see here in her newsletter something of what she does as her "day job" with the LCMS in addition to working with our youth.



April 2025

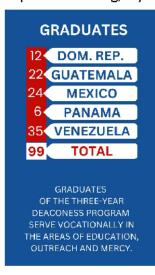
Misericordia Activa

An Active Mercy

The love of Christ at work in the streets of Latin America

News from the Ramirez Family serving the Lord in Latin America.

Over the last few months Deaconess Caitlin has been focusing on the seminary's deaconess training program, specifically in the areas of curriculum development and revision. In our first cycle of deaconess students, it was a learning process both for the students and for the seminary. What level of theological education do deaconesses in Latin America need? What is the best way to teach them, online, in-person intensives, weekly mentorship, videos, books? How can we make the logistics work of teaching so many women in so many different countries? There were so many questions and as is often the case in missions we had to pick something, try and then learn from the experience.







When we began teaching our second cycle of deaconess students, it was clear that we had some areas where we needed to review and adjust our program based on what we learned the first time around. One area was our New Testament course, the second our deaconess practicum experience, and finally the need for an online learning platform. These revisions, edits and gaps in the Latin America deaconess training program have set the agenda for the future work to continue our proclamation of the Gospel and formation of church leaders in Latin America.

Join us in prayer to the Lord this month:

For the local Church leaders in Peru, Pastors Milagros, Abraham and Elvis. For Yepci the director of Castillo Fuerte. And for the lay leaders fo the congregations in La Victoria, San Borja and Los Olivos.

For the deaconess students in Peru: Yepci, Oriana, Laura, Teo, Angela, Vicky, Violeta, and Lucia. That the Lord might strengthen them in their studies and encourage them in their final year of the program.

For the Deaconess Team as we continue the review and adjustments to our curriculm for Latin America.

In thanksgiving that His Word is being proclaimed and received throughout Latin America. May every knee bow in the world to His Holy name and Word.

Luke-Act Deaconess Course

During the fall and winter Deaconess Caitlin dedicated herself to a re-write of our New Testament course for the deaconess program in Latin America. The new course, includes a 200 page manual and a series of 8 videos which looks at the books of Luke and Acts. Through these two books, we study the narrative of the work of Jesus, his message of salvation for all who believe in him. A message which is then carried out by his disciples and the church to the ends of the earth. The books of Luke Acts also served as type for the whole New Testament, allowing us to study key doctrines found throughout the New Testament. The final piece of the course was a section on Biblical Interpretation where we taught the ladies

the steps to complete an exegetical study. We learned key biblical interpretation practices, such as scripture interprets scripture, doctrinal analysis and application of law and gospel. With these skills, the deaconesses in Latin America will be able to open up any part of scripture and faithfully interpret it, and share it with others. In February the seminary began teaching this course to women in 9 countries. It will continue until the end of April 2025.



Revision is always best when done in a collaborative fashion. We are grateful to have team of 7 missionary deaconesses working together in Latin America, as well as wonderful local pastors and laity to collaborate in the formation of our programs.





Deaconesses in Latin America are leading the work of the church

In Latin America, the US winter months mean summer and VBS! Throughout Latin America we saw our Deaconesses (former students) and current deaconess students leading these efforts of evangelism in our congregations and communities. The women who have studied the Bible through the seminary have been empowered and are taking what they learned into their communities to share this good news of Jesus with others. In Venezuela, Panama, and Peru Bible camps, VBS and Youth Retreats were held, all with deaconesses

working hard to make it happen.

Deaconess & Students teaching VBS in Panama



It is amazing to see how the Lord works to exponentially increase the proclamation of the Gospel which we can do as His church. When I teach a class, write a course manual and proclaim the gospel as a missionary, I reach my small classroom, but each of these women goes back to her community and shares what she has learned about Jesus, and they go forth and share with others and so on. The ripple effect causes the numbers to become astronomical. Praise the Lord for inspiring these women to share His good news.

To support our work financially, send a tax-deductible gift marked "Ramirez Family" to:

Mission Central 40718 Highway E16 Mapleton, IA 50134 Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod PO Box 66861 St. Louis, MO 63166 You can also give online www.lcms.org/ramirez



SERVING THE LORD IN

Belize (in the Dominican Republic until May 2025)

NEWS FROM GROTH FAMILY

FEBRUARY 2025



February in the Dominican Republic

February in the DR is full of national holidays and festivals. It includes their version of the 4th of July. their independence day. This is celebrated on February 27th

It is also a month dominated by Carnival. This is a huge deal, with lots of parades and festivals. Each Sunday is filled with music, dancing, and costumes

The children put on an Independence Day skit portraying the events surrounding how the DR obtained its independence.



To be added to or removed from this mailing list, send an email message to [firstname.lastname@lcmsintl.org] with the word ADD or REMOVE in the subject ia son.groth@lcms.org

Becoming a Latin American Pastor



Christian catechism on the shelf next to the black book of witchcraft

Seek first to understand:

February was an incredible busy month. Our goal remains the same here in the Dominican Republic, we seek to understand what it means to be a pastor, to be the church, to be God's people, in Latin America. In Spanish class we learn how to speak the language of the people, that's a large part of our training. Another part is understanding the culture and perspective of people from Latin America.

This is a difficult task. The people of Latin America are very diverse. The history of each region has affected how people think and understand their place in the world. It affects their outlook on life, either more pessimistic or optimistic.

Like people everywhere the people of Latin America want peace and prosperity. They want to be loved and to find success. They want their children to be healthy and for there to be enough food on the table each day. In America people fear love and trust their wealth to protect them from harm, danger, and evil. In Latin America, people sometimes trust in good luck charms, blessings from a variety of entities, and even use Jesus as source of good luck and temporal blessing.

Learning to navigate these realities will be a lifelong journey.



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Language Learning: As we continue our Spanish studies, pray for patience, perseverance, and the ability to communicate the Gospel clearly.
- Partnerships in Ministry: Pray for the relationships we are building with fellow missionaries, pastors, and church leaders throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. May these connections strengthen our shared mission and help us work together to bring the Gospel to more people.
- Ministry Preparation: As we prepare for the transition to Belize, pray for wisdom, clarity, and the Lord's guidance in planning and equipping for the work ahead.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- New Friendships: We are grateful for the relationships we've formed with fellow missionaries and their families, strengthening our community and shared mission.
- Missionary Care: We give thanks for the incredible support we've received from Missionary Care, both in the Dominican Republic and through the Synod and Office of International Missions. Their encouragement and assistance have been a great thessing
- Spanish Teachers: We appreciate our excellent Spanish teachers, whose patience and guidance are helping us grow in our ability to communicate and serve effectively.

Family Update



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

Question: "What has been your favorite activity since getting to the Dominican Republic?"

Gideon: "playing with the other missionary kids and the times we have church in English."

Esther: "Learning Spanish and making new friends."

Martha: "Going to the other missionary kids houses and learning piano and learning Spanish and going on field trips with our Spanish teachers.

Joanna: "Playing with the other missionary kids."

Lord, in Your mercy, open our hearts, minds, and lips to proclaim Your praises with clarity and love. Grant us wisdom to speak Your truth in a way that all may hear and understand, that they may know the hope and salvation found in Christ alone. Amen.

Señor, en Tu misericordia, abre nuestros corazones, mentes y labios para proclamar Tus alabanzas con claridad y amor. Danos sabiduria para proclamar tu verdad, para que todos escuchen y comprendan, para que conozcan la esperanza y la salvación que solo se encuentran en Cristo. Amén.

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 Icm s.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities.

Prayerfully consider partnering with the LCMS to support the work of [your first name(s) and last name]. Make checks payable to:

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

On the memo line include Groth-Belizel

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

Mission Central 40718 Highway E 16 Mapleton, IA 51034

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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. <u>Deadline is the 20th of each month</u>, 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/

FEBUARY FINANCIALS 4 Months

11/1/2024 - 2/28/2025

Church Revenue	\$ 308,113
School Revenue	\$ <u>413,288</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 721,401
Total Expenses	\$ <u>677,186</u>
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$ 44,215
Expense Budget	\$ 708,381
Under/(Over) Budget	\$ 13,020
Working Cash Balance	\$ 68,224
Mortgage Balance	\$ 576,431

Designated Fund Balances

PoolBriatoa i arra Pararroo	_	
Endowment Fund	\$7	762,925
Building Contingency	\$	26,834
Parking Lot Fund	\$	30,000
HVAC	\$	853
Technology Refresh	\$	5,159
Sunday School	\$	1,352
Youth Donations	\$	9,826
Youth Accounts	\$	7,575
Good Samaritan	\$	490
Memorials	\$	14,411
Fellowship	\$	1,041
Champion Church Network	\$	381
L.A.M.P. Mission Trip	\$	8,469
Quilting	\$	545
POBLO South Asia Ministry	\$	19,596
Student Debt Fund	\$	3,585
Church Worker Scholarship	\$	655
Luth Medical Emergency Fund	\$	250
School Improvements	\$	38,251
Tuition Assistance	\$	27,660
School Music	\$	5,694
School Sports	\$	210
Flower Fund	\$	5,805
Building Utilization	\$	24,225
LWML	\$	2,851
Women's Fellowship	\$	1,045
Faith Budget	\$	-

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Annual Avg. 2024 3	51
December '24 Avg	512
January '25 Avg	330
February '25 Avg	. 322
March '25 Avg	. 341

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; Our recent gifts to the children that visit at Bronson Hospital...



As continue to think about the tensions involved in Christian estate planning, this month we focus on how differences in opinion among family can create enough roadblocks to keep a plan from moving forward.

Imagine a husband and wife who have children, who have wandered into difficulties in their lves. Dad is the softy, just wanting to make their children's lives easier. Mom is stricter, demanding the children take responsibility for their behaviors. At times, this difference has created strain on their marital relationship.

Now imagine this same couple trying to jointly decide on a solid Christian estate plan. Dad wants to evenly divide the estate as lump sum inheritance between their three children. Mom wants to spread inheritance over time. She also believes that her children will waste resources given to them, so she is motivated to support gifts for ministry. You can imagine that the typical response to this tension is avoidance. As a result, their last estate documents are forty years old, created before their children were born.

For this couple, the key will be to have open, prayerful discussion about their goals, looking to create a consensus about what is the Lord's will for use of His things.

Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor can assist in a situation like this. While they aren't a marriage counselor, they can safely ask some questions that the couple has been avoiding. They can remind about the safe place we have in the grace of God. To get started in this faith journey, Contact...



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

SHEPHERDS OF THE CONGREGATION



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

We value **fellowship** and want a friendly church that is like a loving family that actively cares for one another in times of need. When inevitable conflicts arise among us, we desire to be reconciled to one another, to communicate honestly and lovingly with each other, and to worship, work, and play together in peace and harmony. Acts 2:42-47



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF



mid-March several enjoyed Coffee, Donuts and Fellowship with others who were putting their faith into action making LWR School Kits.

Each School Kit you made will be cherished by the person who receives it.









It's amazing how much good can be accomplished between Sunday services! On March 16th, volunteers gathered in the Gym between services to construct school kits for Lutheran World Relief. Fueled by donuts, coffee and determination, 180 kits were constructed to be distributed for those in need. Thanks to the volunteers, some child in this world is better situated to learn. A special shout out to Michelle Ryan for coordinating this effort and her 20+ years in being committed to this cause.



Church Extension Fund Proven, Dedicated, Focused

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













LENTEN MEALS HAVE BEEN WONDERFUL!

Wednesday night Lenten service provides you with an opportunity to feed both your soul and your stomach! Special thanks to Jan Chilcott's Bible Study class, the Lay Ministers, the Quilters, the Tuesday Women's Bible Study group and the Parish Fellowship Board for providing the meals each week. Dinners start at 5:00 pm, with worship service starting at 6:30 pm. Come and enjoy the Fellowship, meals and a chance to honor our Lord.

FUNERAL LUNCHEON COORDINATOR

The Fellowship Board is seeking a new Funeral Luncheon Coordinator. Are you that person? This role comes with a wonderful group of volunteers that help to support in providing a light meal following the funeral service. This person would help to purchase and coordinate the food in addition to overseeing the event. Providing this service helps to take the burden off of the grieving families, while we support our fellow members. Please give this vital role consideration. Contact the church office or Diane Gibson at 925-989-5059 with any questions or your interest.

NEW BABY MEAL TRAIN

Caring Connections has taken over the Meal Train for new parents. This is a perfect fit for Caring Connections in their efforts to provide various short term assistance to our members in need. Please contact Kathy Taylor at 269-271-0328 with any "new additions" to the family!

LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

We are happy to announce Kathy Zakarias has volunteered to become our new LWML Director. This is in addition to Kathy being our current Women's Fellowship Director. The positions go hand in hand, as women of the church seek to honor our Lord though friendship, mission service and education. This is a perfect tie in for involvement not only in our immediate community but, also allowing for greater involvement on the regional and national level. Thank you Kathy for stepping up in this important role!



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 <u>electronic giving form</u> 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 dmaske@mightymessengers.org

BUSINESS & FINANCE MANAGER

Jay Koski jkoski@mightymessengers.org

CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT CHILD MINISTRY COORDINATOR AND 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

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