



THE MIGHTY MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2025 Volume 64, Number 12



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

Applauding God's Handiwork

As we have arrived at the last month of the year, we have not only concluded our forty-day "Giving Challenge" stewardship emphasis, but we are also near to the end of our year-long 66.1 Bible reading challenge, in which we endeavored to read all 66 books (i.e., 1,189 chapters) of the Bible in a year's time. If you've been engaged with these things as many of us have, I know that you have benefited from both of these things and are finding yourself more informed about what's in the Bible than ever, and more resolved not only to be a hearer of the Word but a doer of it as well (James 1:22).

Because the Bible is indeed the inspired, inerrant Word of God, and the source and norm of our Christian faith, sometimes we forget that the Bible is also interesting reading, and rather good literature too. Sadly, because many people in America see the Bible as purely a religious "holy book," and have a mistaken understanding of the relationship between the church and the state, the Bible is not something that is generally read or taught in the public schools, even as literature, and everyone suffers as a result.

As good literature, the Bible uses many literary devices that make it quite colorful and interesting. Hebrew narrative is vivid and down to earth, and Hebrew poetry is loaded with parallelism that is prevalent not only in Psalms and Proverbs, but is also very prominent in the prophetic writings. In the Gospels Jesus tells very compelling parables, and short stories that communicate some difficult Kingdom concepts in a way that we can begin to grasp. The epistles give us insight into both the ancient world and our own world today, and the last book of the Bible (Revelation) is a kind of symbolic literature called apocalyptic, which ironically, in spite of its mystery means "to reveal."

As good literature, the Bible also uses figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, hyperbole, and personification. This latter one, personification, I think is particularly fun and interesting to ponder. It's when inanimate objects like water or wind are spoken of, as if they are people or animals. For example, in Genesis 4 sin is crouching at the door as if to ambush you, or

in Proverbs 9 wisdom is a woman crying out in the streets, or in Psalm 93 flood waters lift up their voice and roar like a lion.

Sometimes these personifications are especially appropriate for a season of the Church year like the one that we are in now, Advent, and ultimately Christmas. We see this as Psalm 98 concludes with: *"Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord, for He comes to judge the earth."* We read something similar in Isaiah 55:12 – *"You will indeed go out with joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands."* I've always enjoyed this picture of the trees clapping their hands (as if they had hands to clap) and in their own way cheering, celebrating, and applauding God's marvelous deeds.

If all of *"creation was subjected to futility"* as a result of the fall into sin, and is in *"bondage to decay,"* and if it is now *"groaning together (with us) in the pains of childbirth until the present time"* (Romans 8:20-22), could it be that the trees of the field are longing for deliverance too? Could it be that they too, along with us, are excited about the coming of Christ as the Redeemer of the world? Look and listen and you'll hear not only the heavens declaring the glory of God (Psalm 19:1), but the trees too.

If ever trees clapped their hands in joy and excitement, giving God a standing ovation and applauding His magnificent saving work through the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, it is at this time of the year when evergreens, and lots of other kinds of trees, are bedazzled with lights and ornaments in a marvelous display of splendor. This Christmas, may you and I once again join with the angels, archangels and all the company of heaven, and yes, also with the trees and all of God's creation, in praising and magnifying His glorious name for the unspeakable gift of His Son sent to be our Savior.



WE ARE CALLED

to make disciples of *Jesus*

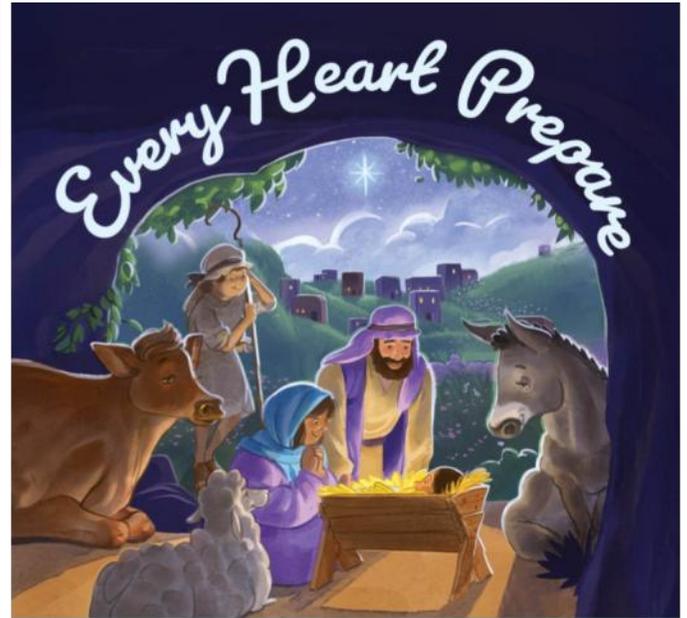
The vision of St. Michael Lutheran is to be a growing congregation within our local community that is "Making Mighty Messengers for Christ" by helping people:

- 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.



OLIVEWOOD CRAFTS FROM THE HOLY LAND WILL BE AVAILABLE

On the weekend of December 14-15, at the conclusion of all three of our worship services, a Christian family from Bethlehem will be telling us the story of the Christians in the Holy Land, and they will be presenting for sale their olive wood carvings. These carvings include olive wood Nativity sets, crosses, Christmas ornaments, candle holders, angels and many other religious crafts that could make nice Christmas gifts, or for other occasions. The carvings are handmade by Christian families from Bethlehem who rely on it for their daily bread. More than 70% of the Christians in the Holy Land depend upon tourism as their only source of income. Please help support our Christian brothers and sisters in the town of Bethlehem where Christ was born by purchasing their carvings.



Midweek Advent Series

December 3, 10, 17

Join us on Wednesdays at 5PM
for a meal & fellowship
Advent Worship at 6:30PM



SMLS
CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

12/4 @ 1pm & 6pm
Preschool - 3's, 4's, & Young 5's

12/11 @ 1pm & 6:30pm
Kindergarten - 3rd Grade

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

"Chow Is Continuous" – Fed Daily by the Word

In the Marine Corps, there is a saying we hear especially when you're out in the Field: "Chow is continuous." (*St Michael, that means that food is always available—you don't need to wait for a particular mealtime to eat.*) You take nourishment when you can, because the work is demanding and the mission requires strength. No one says, "Well, I ate yesterday, so I should be fine for the week." You eat again today. You'll need to eat again tomorrow.

Out in the field, we hear that line often—and I've come to appreciate the wisdom in it. A Marine who goes without food for too long will start feeling it: energy fades, judgment dulls, and strength weakens.

And so it is also with our souls. God has not designed us to live spiritually on what we heard last month or last year. He feeds us continually. His Word is not a rare banquet served only on special occasions. It is daily bread.

Jesus says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." - Matthew 4:4

Just as the body needs real food, the soul needs real nourishment—the living Word of God, the forgiveness of sins, the promises of Christ, and His Body and Blood given and shed for us.

Yet sometimes we treat God's Word like a once-in-a-while event. We say, "I know God loves me—I learned that years ago." Or, "I remember hearing that Scripture once." Or, "I'll get back to church when things slow down."

But the Lord does not give us His Word as a memory to look back on—He gives it as food to take in today. His mercy is new every morning. Today is the day to be fed. Today is the day to hear and believe.

God gives His Word to His Church so that "chow is continuous." Scripture at home. Prayer in the morning and evening. Hymns that remind us of Christ. The conversation of Christian brothers and sisters. Weekly worship where Christ Himself is present to forgive, restore, and strengthen us.

When you're tired, when you feel empty, when the week has taken more out of you than you thought—remember: God is not stingy with His gifts.

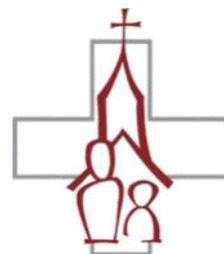
He does not ration forgiveness. He does not limit grace. He feeds His people, continually. So come and eat. Come and hear. Come and be strengthened by the One who gave Himself for you.

Chow is continuous.
So, is Christ's mercy.

In Christ,

Pastor Maske

Semper Fidelis — God is Faithful.



Stirring Things Up

December 7, 2025 – Second Sunday in Advent - Rev. Scott Zeckzer

It is time for decorations and baking. There will be a lot of stirring up. God stirs things up to get us ready for His coming.

Sermon Text: Matthew 3:3

Readings: Psalm 105:4-8; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

Featured Choirs: Zion (Bull Rapids) Lutheran Church Choir, Woodburn, Ind.; Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Antwerp, Ohio; Concordia Lutheran High School A Cappella Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; The Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.

Featured Art and Architecture: Emanuel Lutheran Church, New Haven, Ind.

Lord, Give Us Patience

December 14, 2025 – Third Sunday in Advent - Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

John the Baptist asked Jesus if He was the Messiah because earlier John had preached that the Messiah would come in judgment. John did not see this happening in Jesus' ministry. In response, Jesus indicates that He is indeed the Messiah and that John should be patient. In this account, God also teaches us about patience.

Sermon Text: Matthew 11:2-10

Readings: Psalm 146:1-10; James 5:7-11; Matthew 11:2-10

Featured Choirs: St. John Adult Choir, Indianapolis, Ind.; Holy Cross Men's Chorus, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

The Word Became Flesh

December 21, 2025 – Christmas Day (observed) - Rev. Shayne Jonker

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14a ESV). The Son of God came in humility that we might be glorified. He came in poverty that we might be rich. He came to die that we might live. He came to dwell with us that we might dwell with Him, His Father, and the Spirit.

Sermon Text: John 1:14

Readings: Psalm 2; Isaiah 52:7-10; John 1:1-14

Featured Choirs: The Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.; St. Paul Choristers, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Concordia Lutheran High School A Cappella Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Trinity Lutheran Church, Detroit, Mich.

Christmas Can't Be Stolen

December 24, 2025 – Nativity of Our Lord; Christmas Candlelight

Rev. Paul Shoemaker

The Grinch Who Stole Christmas was not successful because he did not realize the true meaning of Christmas was not in things. We know the true meaning of Christmas is to be found in Jesus. This world's Grinch, Satan, still tries to steal Christmas joy from us. Let's focus on Jesus, the Reason for the season.

Sermon Text: Luke 2:1-14

Readings: Psalm 96; Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 2:1-14

Featured Choirs: The Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.; Holy Cross Men's Chorus, Fort Wayne, Ind.; St. Peter's Junior Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; St. Paul Choristers, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Concordia Choir of Concordia University, Irvine, Calif.; Concordia Lutheran High School A Cappella Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; St. Paul Preble Adult Choir, Decatur, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Save the Child!

December 28, 2025 – First Sunday after Christmas - Rev. William Mueller

Aside from the fact that the text tells us about the not-any-older than 2-year-old Jesus, this Gospel reading seems so out of place in the Christmas season. Yet, there is an important truth to be discovered and a searching question to be asked.

Sermon Text: Matthew 2:13-23

Readings: Psalm 111; Isaiah 63:7-14; Matthew 2:13-23

Featured Choirs: The Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.; Holy Cross Treble Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Lutheran Life Villages (North Anthony), Fort Wayne, Ind.



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

Total Christian Television (TCT) network nationwide broadcast is

Sunday 11:30 AM

Battle Creek - WTLJ 54

Grand Rapids - WTLJ-DT 24

Kalamazoo - WJPG-LD 26

Worship Anew is available throughout the country on broadcast stations and worldwide through our website, apps, and streaming on Roku, AppleTV, Google TV, Amazon Firestick, and YouTube.

We remember to pray for Homebound friends:

Jan Goertz Allan, Caroline Barkow, Sally Beck, Judy Chumas, Shirley Cosgrove, Bill Cremer, Ginny Evans, Sylvia German, Audrey Glover, Virgil Harrison, Harold & Carol Karnes, Bernie & Pauline Kubacki, Sandy & Joe Maya, Nancy Miller, Jim & Ardean Monck, Joan Pfister, Wilma Ritchie, 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

EVERY HEART PREPARE

We decorate in preparation for Christmas. In November and December people spend hours putting up lights in their living space and ornaments on their evergreens. Poinsettias are placed on the mantel and presents under the tree, and we “deck the halls with boughs of holly.” These Christmas decorations bring enjoyment and anticipation to the holiday.

Advent is the church’s season of preparation for Christmas, for the coming of the Lord. This Advent season, as part of our preparation, we reflect upon three common Christmas decorations and how they help us see Christ and prepare for His coming: evergreens, lights, and the crèche (i.e., nativity scene). Then on Christmas we will focus on the wrapped presents which point us to the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ.



ADVENT 1 - EVERGREENS

We decorate in preparation for Christmas. Our decoration preparation includes the use of evergreens—from Christmas trees to pine garland. The evergreen decorations also help us prepare for the advent (or coming) of Jesus during Advent—a season of preparation. Today we will consider how evergreens point us to the coming of Christ and the eternal life that He brings.

ADVENT 2 - LIGHTS

We decorate in preparation for Christmas. Our decoration preparation includes the use of lights—from candles to twinkling LEDs. These luminous decorations also help us prepare for the advent (or coming) of Jesus during Advent, a season of preparation. Today we will consider how lights point us to the coming of Christ and the glory He brings.

ADVENT 3 - CRÈCHE

We decorate in preparation for Christmas. Our decoration preparation includes the use of the crèche—the miniature model of the nativity scene. The crèche is a distinctively Christian decoration in that it depicts the characters involved in the nativity of Christ: the Virgin Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the Wise Men, the angels, the stable animals, and—most important of all—the infant Jesus lying in a manger. As we view this manger scene, we recall the timeless truth of God coming to earth as a real human being in order to redeem us from our sins.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD - WRAPPED PRESENTS

We decorate for Christmas. Our decorations include wrapped presents—gifts in colorful boxes and bags that are placed under the Christmas tree. But these gifts all pale in comparison to the gift that started it all at Christmas—the gift of God’s Son, whose birth brings us regeneration, renewal, and eternal life. On Christmas, we consider how the gifts under the tree point us to God’s indescribable gift in Jesus Christ, true God wrapped in human flesh.

Jesus Wins, Satan Loses, We Live Forever!

The Book of Revelation Bible Study Begins December 14th

The Book of Revelation can seem mysterious—or even intimidating—at first. Its vivid images of beasts, storms, and cosmic battles may make us wonder, "What is this really about?" Yet, when we listen carefully, we hear a clear and comforting message from God: this book is meant not to confuse or frighten us, but to draw us closer to Jesus Christ, our victorious Savior.

Revelation is God's loving call to repentance, faith, and trust. It reminds us that no matter what trials we face, Christ reigns triumphantly over sin, death, and all the powers of evil. And in the midst of these visions, we are given a promise that cannot fail: through our baptisms, we are sealed as God's own children, forever held in His grace and love.

In this Sunday Morning Bible class with Pastor Maske, we will read and explore how Jesus' Revelation to John encourages us to focus on Jesus above all else. Together, we will:

- Unpack the rich symbols and images, seeing them as God's way of strengthening His people
- Reflect on how the call to repentant faith invites us into deeper trust in His mercy.
- Celebrate the assurance of our baptism, knowing that God has claimed us as His own.
- Discover the hope and comfort that comes from keeping our eyes on Jesus, who has already won the ultimate victory for us.

Whether you are encountering Revelation for the first time, or have read it many times, this class will help you experience it as God intends: a message of hope and victory!

Come with your questions, your curiosity, and your faith. Let's journey together through God's powerful book, hearing His gentle invitation to trust Him completely, rejoice in His triumph, and live confidently as His beloved children.



Reflections of Mary

A Musical Drama Experience

Wendysue, as Mary, brings us back in time with a dramatic re-telling of Jesus' life. Scripture, monologues, and music will help us ponder, participate, and prepare for His coming.

Wednesday, Dec 17 @ 6:30pm

HOMEBOUND FOR THE HOLIDAYS

PLEASE REMEMBER THESE FRIENDS WITH A GREETING CARD
(AND MAYBE A LITTLE TREAT).



In the Welcome Center, you'll find gift bags in which you can put your cards & gifts.
Please do so by noon on December 15, so that we will have time to deliver them.

Isaiah 41:10 ~ Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.



For most people, the Christmas season means togetherness. Gathering with family and friends. Holiday cheer full of decorations, laughter, and gift giving. Social media and marketing certainly portray this picture of how to celebrate the holidays to life and keep it constantly before us.

This vision is not reality for many people, though. About 19 million Americans – that’s 1 in 14 adults – spend Christmas day alone. Many spend much of the holiday season from Thanksgiving to New Year’s mostly by themselves.

There’s nothing wrong with being alone during the holidays. Circumstances like geographic distance, work commitments, or difficult family relationships may require it. Some people choose to be alone during the holidays for their health and well-being. Others prefer solitude to avoid the hustle and bustle of holiday preparations, instead staying home where they feel safe, warm, and calm.

Remember, though, that being alone is different from being lonely. A person can be lonely even if they are married, have a family, and are not alone. Loneliness while with friends at a party is real for many, too. You can also be lonely if your spouse is difficult to connect with or if you get out regularly but come home to an empty house.

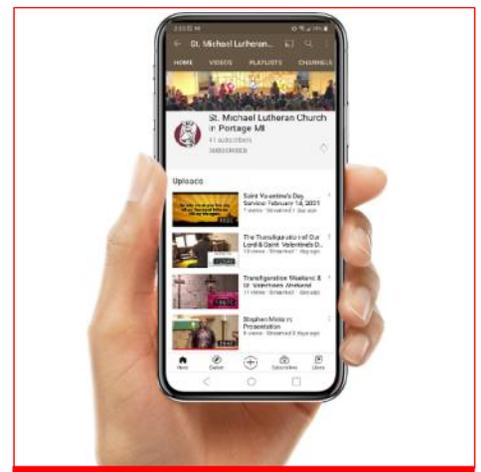
What can you as a friend, neighbor, or caring person do to help brighten the holiday season for someone who is lonely? Notice them. A thoughtful visit can make a lonely person’s day. Just chat or maybe take a special treat with you. A phone call simply to talk or a cheerful text can make a big difference, too. The idea that you took the time to think about them means more than you can imagine.

Want to take it further? Buy a card or a treat and put it in the Christmas bags for shut-ins that the church will have available soon. The people receiving these bags will be thrilled that someone from church thought of them and that they are not forgotten.

If you are a person who is alone and want some company, consider calling someone else who might be lonely. Accept invitations to church or dinner or even to look at Christmas lights. Maybe do the inviting. Sometimes the key to being noticed is noticing others.

Blessed Holy Season

Virginia Hetrick – Prayer Coordinator



STAY CONNECTED

YouTube  **YouTube**

On the St. Michael page, You can find sermon videos, Bible classes, guest speakers, children’s devotions and Vacation Bible School lessons. Find us at: st. Michael Lutheran Church in Portage MI

Facebook

Find devotions, special event announcements and more:



@StMichaelLutheranChurchPortageMI

Office Contacts:

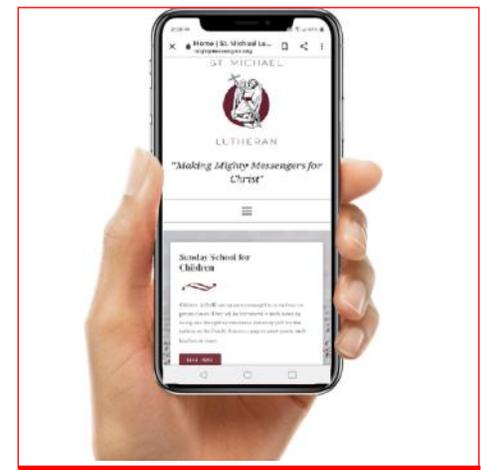
Church + 269-327-7832

School + 269-327-0512

Christ For Kids + 269-327-4889

mightymessengers.org

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



**N
O
V
E
M
B
E
R** **ACTIVITIES**

Sunday morning Bible study



Game night



Mission project



Enjoying the new Youth Room



Community service - showing Jesus' love through acts of service



UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Saturday, Dec 6 10am - Set up Nativity
- Dec 7th 9:45am - Coffee Club
- Dec 7th 1-3pm 6-7th grade Christmas Lunch
- 5pm 8-12 grade Christmas Dinner
- Dec 14th 9:45am - Join Revelation Bible Study
- 5pm Youth Group
- Dec. 21st 9:45am Bible Study - Advent/Christmas
- No youth group
- Dec. 28th Christmas Break
- Jan 4th Coffee Club & Youth Group



LAMPLIGHT



Colossians 1:13-20

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

This was not a race, but a goal. On Reformation Day I completed the 66:1 challenge, beginning with Luke in Dec 2024. Luke is 24 chapters, so reading one chapter a day it can be completed by Christmas Day.

Many of you may know I chose to read the KJB Bible by having it read to me by Alexander Scourby (on YouTube). He recorded the Bible for the Blind. Monday – Friday every morning I would listen to him read five chapters. We began with Genesis – Revelations. By having it read to me, I was able to absorb more of what the Lord was trying to tell me. Sometimes I'd be listening and I'd have to stop and repeat. Always the Lord showed how he cares for us and is there for us.

Some books I did read by opening my Bible – Luke, Ephesians and the Letters to James. And some I want to re-read (Job, Luke & Joshua).

I give thank for Pastor Toman for starting this challenge with the Parish Education Board, and for Lynda Rea for the ongoing encouragement.

And now, I encourage you as you finish or begin this challenge. It is so worth it to read the Good Book!

Linda Fry

SILENT DISCO DANCE WAS ENJOYED BY SEVERAL FRIENDS



ADULTS



KIDS



Special Call Committee. We have passed several important milestones in the process of preparing a list of candidates for our next senior pastor. Since the first Call Committee meeting in late August, we have completed a SWOT analysis of St. Michael, met twice with our facilitator from the Michigan District office, had interviews with church and school staff members, conducted a congregational survey, reviewed the results of the survey, developed a Pastor Profile to guide our selection, reviewed the constitutional duties of the Pastoral Office, and gathered nominations from members of St. Michael. Along the way, the committee has been providing the congregation with weekly updates on its progress.

Although a lot of work has been completed, there is still a lot of work left to do. The Michigan District Office is currently working on a list of candidates who meet the Pastor Profile that we prepared. While this work is going on, the Call Committee is preparing questions for the candidates and drafting how the duties of the pastoral office might best be allocated among our called workers.

We hope to receive a list of candidates in early January along with biographical information on each one of them. After reviewing the information on the candidates, the Call Committee will meet (via video conference) with each candidate and then begin the process of deliberation, where we try to discern the will of the Lord for our next senior pastor.

Our goal has been to bring a list of candidates to the Voters' Assembly meeting in February, but we know that a candidate for senior pastor would likely be too busy during the Lenten and Easter seasons to be considering a call. We are not expecting to have a response before May.

This journey will be a little longer than originally planned. *But this gives us more time for prayers.*



Weekend Worship

Saturdays

Lamplight Worship – 5PM

Sundays

Divine Worship – 8:30AM

Morning Song – 11:00AM

Christmas Eve – Wednesday, December 24

Carol Service 4PM

Candlelight Service 6:30PM

Christmas Day – Thursday, December 25

Communion Service 10AM

New Year's Eve – Wednesday, December 31

Communion Service 6:30PM



ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN

CHURCH & SCHOOL

ENDOWMENT FUND

We in the Endowment Committee hope you are taking advantage of the 40-Day Giving Challenge emphasis at St. Michael. It is an excellent program. The author Zach Zehnder says the goal is to help us “fully give your heart to God” (p. 11). His focus is on finances, but this goal is true with all God has given us: our time, skills, abilities, money, possessions and knowledge as examples.

The Endowment program exists at St. Michael to allow you to give back to God financially for a ministry that is in your heart — meaning, something you are passionate about. Families have set up endowments for school tuition, teachers’ salaries and sanctuary alter adornment (i.e., flower fund). Endowments usually mean the principal money stays intact for eternity while a yearly dividend of around 4% is taken to help fund the ministry.

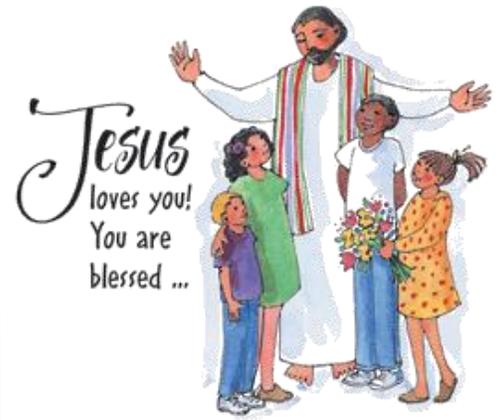
Various endowments have been arranged when families are either overly blessed by God during our earthly life, or as part of estate planning and put in place when the person(s) went to their heavenly home.

Zach Zehnder shared interesting facts like if you make \$60,000 a year you are in the top 1% of wage earners globally (p 28). And that Christians in the US do not give much more to charity than non-Christians – 2.5% vs 2.1% (p. 10). We wouldn’t even mention the sad storage facility figures (p.24, if you are interested).

The money God has provided to you should first be used for the operation of St. Michael Lutheran Church and School. Many needs exist. God might have provided even more to you, such that one of the ministries that is on your heart could benefit from a donation to an already established endowment or starting a new designated endowment. Or, if you have not yet done it, maybe you should place the endowment for St. Michael in your estate planning. This estate planning may be one of the goals you want to start working on during or shortly after the 40-Day Giving Challenge.

During this Giving Challenge focus or beyond, if you have any questions about endowments, please contact one of the committee members.

Todd Foster (Chair)
Rick Jacobs, Dave Johnson, Julie Vickery or Rob Kuhlman



SHEPHERD GROUPS

Lay Minister	Family Names Start with	Family Names & include
Kerry Batten 269-491-8128	A	Boelman
Harold DeFouw 269-569-6869	Bohren	Chenevare
Rich Conklin 616-889-0201	Chilcott	D
Jeff Lauterbach 269-578-6415	E	Franzen
Dave Drzewiecki 616-560-2175	Frommann	G
Dave Johnson 269-599-2195	H	H
Bill Schinzer 269-366-5594	I	J
Ryan Bigelow 269-838-6062	K	Lapekas
Mark Kahle 402-730-1914	Lausman	McNees
Howard McNees 269-720-3857	Messing	Nelson
Jeff Burnett 269-491-3700	Neumann	P
Andy Allan 269-370-7052	Q	Shook
Greg Wedel 312-961-4636	Shuler	Stolsky
Matt Heintz 269-290-8507	Sullivan	T
Arlan Wendzel 269-816-5632	U	Z

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



These Advent devotions were prepared by the LAMP family and missionaries. Our prayer is that it will help you focus on Jesus Christ, God's Son born in Bethlehem's manger.

You can subscribe to a daily message (<https://lampministryadvent.wordpress.com/>), or pick up a paper copy in our Communication Center.



How Can you Help? Check out: JESUSLOVESKZOO.ORG
Sign up to donate a gift. St. Michael will be a drop off location.
Volunteer to work at Event on Dec 20 9:30a-4p
or help Set Up Dec 19
Donate Money for Volunteers to shop for needed items.

**WELCOMING NEW
MEMBERS TO OUR
ST. MICHAEL FAMILY**

Please Join Us!

December 7, 2025

**Coffee & Donut Reception
Between the 8:30am and
11:00am Worship Services**

**Hosted by the Board of
Evangelism & Outreach**



WOW! The outpouring of support for Operation Christmas Child was overwhelming! What a joy to see those boxes piled up high. This year 125 shoeboxes were taken in, a 52% increase over last year (82).

Prairie Edge Church on Oakland Drive was the drop off location for the area. They have loaded the trucks and sent the shoeboxes on the next part of their journey.

Please continue to pray for the children who will be receiving these gifts - that they will also receive the gift of salvation through Jesus. May God be glorified!

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE SATURDAY/SUNDAY, December 13 & 14



Women's Fellowship is happy to again sponsor a cookie sale. We need your help to have homemade cookies for enjoyment. If you would like to donate cookies, please bring a large batch of any kind of cookie to the Allan Hall kitchen by Saturday, December 13th before 1pm. You may also drop them off Thursday /Friday in Church Office.

Mark your batch "FOR COOKIE SALE" to prevent them from being prematurely enjoyed!

**THANK YOU FOR
SUPPORTING THE
SUPER READER
BOOK FAIR!**



SPORTS

BOYS BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

12/1 @ 4pm - HOME vs Gagie

12/8 @ 4pm - HOME vs Calhoun
Christian School

12/11 @ 4pm - HOME vs
Kalamazoo Cougars

12/15 @ 4:30pm - AWAY at
Howardsville Christian School

12/16 @ 4:30pm - AWAY at Trinity
Lutheran vs Christ Stevensville Lutheran

Girls Basketball - 1st Practice

12/19 3:30pm - 4:30pm

\$2 Admission to Home Games



JOIN US FOR A HOLIDAY
**Christmas
Cookie
Decorating**
DECEMBER 18TH
6:00PM - 7:30PM
Cookie Decorating Kits
\$35

Help us raise funds for our book vending machine, while also having a great time getting into the holiday spirit!

Hot Cocoa Bar & Christmas Music included during the event!

You can choose to join the event with other SMLS families or pick up your kit to complete at home. Choose your preference during sign-up.

Registration and payment due by 12/12

Each kit contains the following: 9 Christmas themed cookies, 3 bags of icing, variety of sprinkles



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP BRUNCH

It was a Great Morning! On Saturday, November 8th, twenty members of St. Michael gathered at Marks Diner for devotion, fellowship and breakfast.

Kathy Zakarias led a thoughtful message on the holidays and how to slow day and enjoy the meaning of the season. Each participant came with baby items to be donated to Alternatives of Kalamazoo.

After gathering strength from a wonderful breakfast most headed over to St. Michael to enjoy the Holiday Market sponsored by the SMLS PTL.



YOUR INVITED!

Join us on the third Friday of every month during the school year for Chapel at 9 AM followed by coffee, light snacks, and fellowship in the Welcome Center. Enjoy this time for church members and school parents to mingle.

ADVENT MEALS

Join us on Wednesday night during Advent for dinner in the **Gym** at **5PM**, before heading to the Advent Service. This Advent season our Lay Ministers, Life Skills and Fellowship groups will be sponsoring our meals on December 3rd, 10th and 17th respectively.



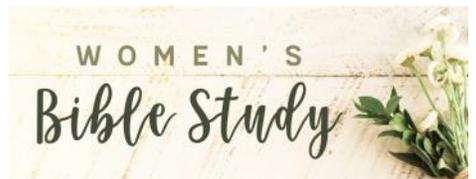
Sunday, December 7

5PM in Allan Hall

Women of St. Michael - You are invited to SMLC&S annual Advent by Candlelight on, Sunday, December 7th at 5pm in Allan Hall. The theme this year is Silent Night. Join your fellow Christian women in food, songs, fellowship and a gift exchange. Table service, dinner, dessert and beverages will be provided. Please bring a gift to exchange (\$10 value limit, store bought or homemade).

Please RSVP to the church office, on the sign up sheet in the communication center, or to reach out to Kathy Zakarias 815-519-2181 or k5zakarias17@gmail.com.

If you are interested in hosting and decorating a table with your favorite Christmas dishes (6 place settings) and decor, please let Kathy Zakarias know as soon as possible (we need 8 volunteers). Help for this event is also needed in the kitchen (4) and to make a dessert (4). Laura Bell and Judy Schroeder are the point people for the event if you have questions.



As the calendar is rolling into the new year, perhaps it is time to set yourself a goal of joining other women in study of the Lord's precious gift of the Bible. Several groups meet regularly and would welcome another friend.

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*



We hope all of you enjoyed the colorful display from the quilt group endeavors this year. With thanks to the generous financial support of the Endowment Committee and various members, 76 quilts were given by St Michael! Of these, 56 were sent to Lutheran World Relief, 10 were given to the Veterans Administration and 10 delivered to Sleep in Heavenly Peace, along with matching pillowcases. Additional, The Dream Center in Kalamazoo received 50 pillowcases.

We also continue to support Alternatives of Kalamazoo with monthly deliveries of receiving blankets, burp cloths and strip blankets. All of this from a small group of 10 women who are covered by prayer! Please come and join us on Friday mornings, 9:30 -2 in the Naumann room. If you can sew a straight line you can sew a quilt! This year we were especially blessed with two large donations of quality cotton fabric, a fabulous sewing machine and yards of flannel. God is so good. Please continue to uphold this ministry in your prayers.



Are you looking to spread some holiday cheer to kids and their families in the hospital within our own community?

Hope Away from Home is a holiday gift drive for the patients and families at Bronson Children's Hospital to help fulfill their wish list as times look hard. We would be so grateful if you would consider donating. Any contribution, big or small, is greatly appreciated! Feel free to drop off gifts outside the library through Wednesday, December 10th. Please contact Ruth with any questions.

ruthheacox812@gmail.com

*-PCHS High School Students: Ruth Heacox (SMLC Member)
Sarah Packard, Aurora Knowlton, and Scarlett Riggelman*



The women of St. Michael came through in a big way for **Alternatives of Kalamazoo** last month. Attendees to the November women's fellowship event were asked to bring in a donation of wipes, diapers and pull-ups. The women came through with **114 pull-ups, 708 diapers, and 3,832 wipes**. When I delivered the items to Alternatives the woman at the front desk said, "The things were desperately need always come through at just the right time." Other staff who saw the pile of supplies as I brought them in were very appreciative as well. Thank you ladies! You are amazing! *Kathy Zakarias*

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.

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/>

OCTOBER FINANCIALS

12 Months

11/1/2024 - 10/31/2025

Church Revenue	\$ 810,012
School Revenue	\$ <u>1,256,599</u>
Total Revenue	\$2,066,610
Total Expenses	\$ <u>2,075,839</u>
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$ (9,229)
Expense Budget	\$2,112,046
Under/(Over) Budget	\$ (45,436)
Working Cash Balance	\$ 14,780
Mortgage Balance	\$ 734,391

Designated Fund Balances

Endowment Fund	\$835,933
Building Contingency	\$ 46,168
Parking Lot Fund	\$ 30,000
HVAC	\$ 853
Technology Refresh	\$ 1,160
Sunday School	\$ 1,017
Youth Donations	\$ 8,638
Youth Accounts	\$ 4,468
Good Samaritan	\$ 1,948
Memorials	\$ 14,884
Fellowship	\$ 4,126
Champion Church Network	\$ 381
L.A.M.P. Mission Trip	\$ 7,621
Quilting	\$ 841
POBLO South Asia Ministry	\$ 11,596
Student Debt Fund	\$ -
Church Worker Scholarship	\$ 400
Luth Medical Emergency Fund	\$ 250
School Improvements	\$ 14,314
Tuition Assistance	\$ 30,543
School Music	\$ 2,122
School Sports	\$ 1,954
Flower Fund	\$ 392
Building Utilization	\$(52,785)
LWML	\$ 2,593
Women's Fellowship	\$ 1,476
Faith Budget	\$ -

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Annual Avg. 2024 351

August '25 Avg.	277
Sept. '25 Avg.	346
October '25 Avg.	366
November '25 Avg.	338

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
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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

Megan Cummins

SIXTH GRADE TEACHER

Emily Lauterbach

SEVENTH GRADE TEACHER

Julie Prentice

EIGHTH GRADE TEACHER

Lisa Lam

CHRIST FOR KIDS CHILDCARE DIRECTOR

Emily Ritchie
eritchie@mightymessengers.org

PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

Cheryl Julian
Alicia Keinath
Becky Mohler

WORSHIP MEDIA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Chris Rudowski

WORSHIP MEDIA SPECIALIST

Lorraine Dudash

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Carolyn Bertrand

ORGANIST

Keith Eiser

MORNING SONG DIRECTOR

Jane Connon

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Mark Ruesch

VICE PRESIDENT

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TREASURER

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Vacant, Director
Vacant, Assistant Director

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Dan Marshall, Director

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Vacant, Chairman

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Vacant, Chairman

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Vacant, Director
Jerry Kuss, Jeff Burnett

YOUTH GROUP LEADER

Deaconess Caitlin Ramirez

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Greg Wedel, Assistant Director

ALTAR GUILD

Kristi Rudowski

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
Lynda Rea, Karen Shuler

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Zachary Button, Peter Robert, Ann Olson
Bill Semrau, Kathy Zakarias

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SPORTS MINISTRY

Shannon Miskovich

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