



THE MIGHTY MESSENGER

OCTOBER 2026 Volume 65, Number 10



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

WHAT GOOD ARE GOOD WORKS?

Here in southwest Michigan, September can feel a whole lot like summer, and November often brings our first snow fall and feels a whole lot like winter. That means that this month of October is about the only really fall month we get, and we relish the colored leaves, the cider and donuts, the pumpkin carving, and the pumpkin spice everything. The other thing that October brings, especially in the church calendar, is the celebration of the Reformation of the Church that began in Germany in October about 500 years ago. Martin Luther is the leading character of the Reformation, but there were several other significant contributors before him, with him, and after him too. Together they all agreed that the Bible said something quite different than what the Church of their day was teaching.

If we were to sum up what the Reformation was really all about, it would be the rediscovery and return to the biblical message of the pure Gospel without confusing it with the Law. That is to say, the saving truth was restored that we poor sinners are justified before God not by the good works that we do but by God's grace alone, through faith alone in the perfect life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Prior to the Reformation, people knew that Jesus died and rose again for their sins, but they thought they had to merit the merit of Christ, that they had to earn for themselves in the present the forgiveness that Jesus earned for them in the past. The way that they thought they could do this was through the good works that they did. And even good works were themselves distorted so that meritorious works were such things as taking pilgrimages, venerating relics, displays of personal piety, praying for the dead and purchasing of indulgences to get people out of purgatory.

So the Reformation message is certainly salvation by grace through faith without the works of the law. But the Reformation message also needs to include some good biblical teaching on what good works truly are. What people come up with on their own as to what works please God isn't necessarily something God wants from us. The Bible says that what God requires are not outward shows of religious devotion, but for us "to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). In his "Treatise on the Freedom of the Christian" (1520), Martin Luther wrote: "A Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love." To put it another way, God doesn't need our good works but our neighbor does. We're not going to impress God or earn His favor by doing good works, but God wants

us to do good works nonetheless because they are good for other people.

As you know, we are currently in the midst of our stewardship emphasis called "**Stewards Engaged in God's Work.**" In this emphasis we're certainly talking about good works as stewardship emphases always do, that is the good works of serving, witnessing, and giving financially. But these are not man-made good works that we came up with ourselves to try to impress God and earn His favor. No, these are good works that God Himself truly wants done, and that He enables us to do by the power of His indwelling Holy Spirit. St. Paul illustrates this in Ephesians 2:8-10. At first, he makes it clear that we're saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus apart from the works of the law (see vv. 8-9), but then he immediately afterwards says that God works through us as His "workmanship" enabling us to do the good works that He has prepared in advance for us to do (see v. 10).

Our members recently received a mailing that included an annual commitment form we all use as members of St. Michael Lutheran Church to commit ourselves to receiving regularly God's gifts of Word and Sacrament in Worship and Bible study. We also commit to responding to God's gifts with faithful stewardship of our time, talents, and treasure, giving back to God a portion of what He has given us. **Please pray about your commitment and bring the completed form to worship with you at any of our three services the weekend of October 17-18.**

With the same power that God used to create man from dust and later to resurrect His Son from the dead (Ephesians 1:19-20), He uses to raise us out of spiritual death and make us new people—His workmanship, transformed stewards whose works give evidence that we are new creations. As His people living under the power of the Gospel, we desire to honor God and obediently do the good works He has planned for us to do. In fact, because Christ has redeemed us from all wickedness and purified for "*Himself a people for His own possession,*" we are zealous to do good works (Titus 2:14). Yes, we're not saved by good works, but God wants us to do them anyway. In fact, He empowers us to do them and even determined in advance what they will be. God knows what needs to be done, and by His grace He will use us for the good of our neighbor, and for the good of His Kingdom.



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.

"Stewards Engaged in God's Work"



In Our Churches



In Our Homes



In Our Neighborhoods



In Our Places of Work



In Our Communities



In Our World



*Call
Committee*

The Michigan District Office sent us a list of (13) names for us to consider as candidates for our next senior pastor. The list includes some of the nominations made by members of our congregation. Rich Conklin is contacting each of these candidates to see if any of them are unable to consider a call from St. Michael. Once Rich has spoken with each of them, the information on the eligible candidates will be given to the Call Committee for their review.

The Call Committee members will study the information and watch broadcast worship services from each candidate in order to get to know them and their strengths before meeting as a group to discuss them.

And so, we begin the process again, knowing that the Lord will be our guide. Continue to pray with us.

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

FAITH ON A BAD TUESDAY

"I think I was a better Christian in my sleep than I've been today."

I've had days when I could say that. I meant to pray, but the morning got away from me. I was short with someone who didn't deserve it. By bedtime I could remember every little thing I'd done wrong. It was harder to remember much I'd done right.

When that happens, it's tempting to take stock of my faith. How much did I pray? Was I patient? Did I forgive? These are fair questions to ask about how I've spent the day. They are poor questions to ask if I'm trying to find out whether Jesus still wants me.

There's something helpful about the word *faith* itself. We often use it almost like a verb. We talk about living our faith, sharing it, putting it into practice. And we should. Faith does show itself in prayer, praise, forgiveness, and care for other people. Some days those things seem to come freely. Other days we have to drag our feet all the way to "Lord, have mercy."

But before faith is anything we do, it is a gift God gives. "By grace you have been saved through faith," Paul writes, "and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

That sounds simple enough until you've had a bad Tuesday. Then you may catch yourself treating faith as though it were a report card. If the prayers were good and the patience held up, perhaps God is pleased with you. If not, perhaps you're farther from Him than you thought.

Jesus gives us better news than that. He has already gone to the cross for the sins we can name and the ones we'd rather avoid naming. He has risen from the dead. None of that depends on whether we managed to pray before breakfast. When we repent and come to Him, we are coming to a Savior who has promised to receive sinners.

A small child can grip his daddy's hand tightly on the way home, or he can be so tired that his father has to carry him. Either way, he gets home because his father brings him there. I find myself needing that picture sometimes. I still want to walk well. I also need to know whose hands I'm in when I don't.

God has given us places to hear His promise when our own thoughts are noisy. We hear His Word. We remember our Baptism. We come to His table and receive Christ's body and blood. He knows how often we need these gifts, and He keeps giving them.

We pray and forgive and love as best we can by the strength God will provide. When you fail, confess it and begin again. And when faith seems to be limping along, come to Christ with that too. You don't have to make yourself impressive before you come.

He is faithful. Even on
a bad Tuesday.

Pastor Maske



Whose Church Is It, Anyway?

October 4, 2026 – Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

The church belongs to Jesus Christ, not us! He alone builds, sustains, and blesses His church through the saving gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Because we are His people by grace, we are freed and empowered to joyfully serve as Christ's presence in the world.

Sermon Text: Matthew 21:33-46

Readings: Psalm 80:7-19; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46

Featured Choirs: Holy Cross Angelis Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Holy Cross Adult Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Cornerstone Lutheran Church, Indianapolis, Ind.

The Feast Is Ready!

October 11, 2026 – Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Rev. Shayne Jonker

In Holy Baptism, God clothed you in the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness and gave you a seat at His table at the Great Wedding Feast. That table is set with His Word and His Supper. The feast is ready. Come to the table of the Lord and receive the free forgiveness, life, and salvation Christ has won for you.

Sermon Text: Matthew 22:2

Readings: Psalm 23 (KJV); Isaiah 25:6-9; Matthew 22:1-14

Featured Choirs: St. Paul Adult Choir, Decatur, Ind.; Valley Lutheran High School Choir, Saginaw, Mich.

Featured Art and Architecture: Immanuel Lutheran Church (Frankentrost), Saginaw, Mich.

Faith, Love, Hope

October 18, 2026 – Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

Rev. Paul Shoemaker

The life of a Christian can be challenging. The apostle Paul encouraged the Thessalonian Christians with these words, "We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:3 NIV). May Paul's words be an encouragement to us.

Sermon Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Readings: Psalm 96:1-9; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22

Featured Choirs: Holy Cross Junior Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; St. Michael Adult Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Zion Lutheran Church, Holland, Mich.

It's Still about Jesus

October 25, 2026 – Reformation Sunday

Rev. William Mueller

Nine years ago, at the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, this phrase was used to accurately capture the essence of the Reformation: "It's still about Jesus." In the nine years since, this has not changed! Celebrating Reformation Sunday is not an invitation to brag about our heritage or ethnicity; it is a time to hear the clear Word of God and to rejoice. It is still about Jesus!

Sermon Text: Romans 3:19-28

Readings: Psalm 46; Romans 3:19-28; John 8:31-36

Featured Choir: St. Paul Preble Adult Choir, Decatur, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Suburban Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne.



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, Sally Beck, Judy Chumas, Shirley Cosgrove, Bill & Sharon Frailing, Sylvia German, Audrey Glover, Virgil Harrison, Harold & Carol Karnes, Bernie Kubacki, Mick Macholz, Sandy & Joe Maya, Nancy Miller, Jim & Ardean Monck, Joan Pfister, Wilma Ritchie, Marilyn Sible, Ernie & Judi VanOrman, Sharon White

Retirement CELEBRATION

For the Rev. Dr. Paul Naumann
and Dana Naumann

Sunday, January 24
2:00 - 6:00 PM

St. Michael Lutheran Church
7211 Oakland Dr., Portage

*Rite of Service &
Reception with Program*

Details will follow in December



Cinderella Project Dress Drive

Got a dress that doesn't
fit you anymore or is
collecting dust
somewhere in your
room?

DONATE NOW!

And support those who
cannot afford formal
attire.

DONATION BOX AVAILABLE NEAR CHURCH OFFICE

All donations go to the
Cinderella Project.

Oct. 7-
Oct. 19

Donations are deeply
appreciated, but a
priority has been placed
upon **plus-sized
dresses.**

Contact
samana.kotekal@portageps.org or
lily.brown@portageps.org with
questions.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17
9am-1pm

Board of Properties invites your
family to come ready to serve, as
we clean up various areas around
our building. Bring your gloves
and tools that could assist. Dress
for the weather outdoors.



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Once again we will have a big truck in
our parking lot in October. We are the
site to which the area churches bring
their quilts, baby kits, health care kits,
school bags, and sewing kits.

We will need volunteers on Saturday
the 10th from 9 to noon to help load
the boxes that are brought to us. If you
can be there that morning for any
length of time, please come! Likewise,
the St. Michael Youth and families
have traditionally loaded the truck for
guests on Sunday the 12th from 1-
3pm. **All that are available for this
would be appreciated!**



School Trunk or Treat

St. Michael family event!

Saturday, October 24
5pm - 7:30pm

Starts after Lamplight Service

a merry not scary night of fun

The PTL is planning a trunk or treat event! If you're able to host a trunk OR bring in a bag of candy to the collection bins to help students reach our goal. Students will sing at Lamplight services that evening and then the party begins!



Our Board of Evangelism and our Board of Lay Ministry are hosting a special luncheon to raise funds to help our church and school staff members with their student loan payments. The luncheon will be held on **Sunday, November 8, 2026 at 12:30 pm** (right after our late service).

You do not need reservations, but we do have a sign-up sheet in the church Communication Center, so we know what you will want to eat! There is no cost for the luncheon (Thrivent Financial is covering the cost for the food), so all of the offerings will go directly to our staff members.

Be sure to mark this date on your calendars and let us know that you will be joining us by putting your entre choices on the sign-up sheet. This luncheon is open for all St. Michael church and school families.

TOWNHALL MEETING
COMING SOON!
Sunday, October 11
Between Worship Services in Gym

VOTERS' ASSEMBLY
October 25
following Late Service
In the Sanctuary




Perhaps you have been considering how your might serve the Lord... We have some key leadership positions where you can help. There are others that are more behind the scenes, too! *Express your interests to the Church Office and get connected today.*

BOARD OF PARISH EDUCATION
Vacant, Director
Vacant, Assistant Director

BOARD OF SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
Vacant, Director
Vacant, Assistant Director

BOARD OF YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT
Vacant, Director

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY COMMITTEE
Vacant, Chairman

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

Introducing LIT!



The Lutheran Institute of Theology (LIT) is an online platform dedicated to delivering high-quality, confessional Lutheran courses. Because the church is facing unprecedented challenges, clarity about what we believe and why we believe it is crucial. The mission of LIT is to revolutionize how Lutheran theology is communicated globally by offering clear, engaging, and faithful teaching. The platform features a growing library of courses, including biblical interpretation, Church History, literature, theology, and practical insights for daily Christian living targeted at pastors, church and lay leaders, families, and any individual looking to deepen their understanding of Lutheran beliefs.

The Board of Parish Education has purchased a subscription to LIT with the plan to offer courses periodically during the Learning Hour. The first course we plan to offer, **starting November 1**, will be **Ethics and the Christian Life, by Dr. Joel Biermann**. In this seven-week course, we will explore key ethical frameworks, the Lutheran approach to law and gospel, the importance of creation and vocation, and the Spirit's work of sanctification. Through this course, we will be reminded that ethics is not a burden but a joyful calling – the shape of faith active in love!

**As an added benefit, this subscription allows any of our church members to create an account and access the materials. If you are interested in creating an account, follow the instructions below. We ask that you not share this code with those outside our congregation, so that access remains available for those it is intended to serve.

Go to <https://lutheraninstitute.org/#/register>

- Fill out the username, email, and password fields with your information.
- In the "Enter code" box, enter our congregation's code: **StMichael 61** - If done correctly it should not ask for a credit card.
- Click the "Create Account" button; your membership will be active immediately.

A screenshot of the LIT "Create Account" form. The form is dark blue with white text. At the top, the LIT logo is displayed. Below it, the text "Create Account" is followed by "Start your learning journey today". The form contains several input fields: "Username", "Email Address", "Password", and "Confirm Password", each with a corresponding icon (person, envelope, and padlocks). Below these fields is a section titled "Have a church code?" with an "Enter code (optional)" field. At the bottom of the form is a large "Create Account" button.



9:45 AM-10:45 AM

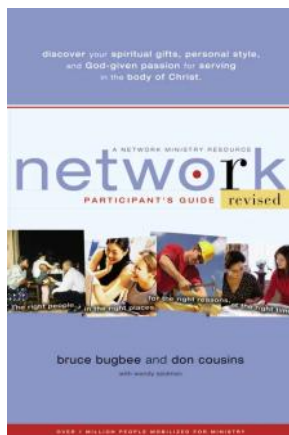
Your opportunity to spend 1 hour with others, hearing and discerning God's Word!

Why a Learning Hour?

Christ called His followers to know the truth that would set them free, and the Bible repeatedly warns us not to fall prey to teaching that which is attractive, but empty. The Learning Hour feeds our minds and hearts on goodness and truth, helping us to better understand our faith and better resist the many things that would pull us away from the Gospel. Spending time together in God's Word is also a great way to develop deeper friendships.

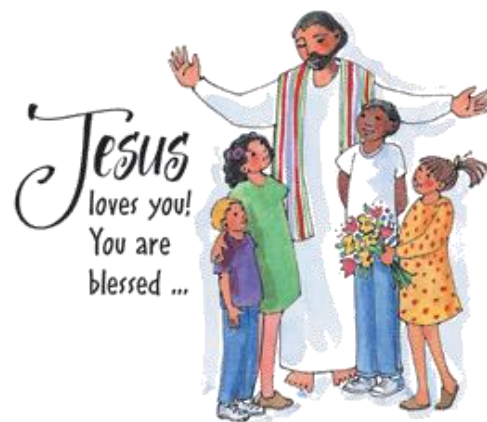
NEW COURSE COMING SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

**THE RIGHT PEOPLE, IN THE RIGHT PLACES,
FOR THE RIGHT REASONS, AT THE RIGHT TIME**
God's thumbprint is on each of us from the time we are born. Through the power of our own personal stories, we will go on a wonderful journey in discovering our spiritual gifts, personal style, and God-given passion for serving in the body of Christ. Believers will discover the spiritual gifts God has given them. They will have a better understanding of God's will for their lives, because of gaining a better understanding of who God created them to be. Many testify to the fact that learning and claiming your unique identity in Christ is transformational. Join Jan Jett for this discovery, meeting in Allan Hall beginning October 18th.



UPCOMING Events

- 4** Youth group 2:30-4:30 PM Life Chain Prayer Event
- Fri 9th** Middle School LWR Service & Pizza 3 PM
- 11** LWR Truck Service Event 1-3PM
- Sat 17th** Fall Cleanup Service Event 9AM-1PM
- 18** Youth Group 5PM
- Sat 24th** Trunk or Treat 4-8PM
- 25** Youth Group at 5PM - Pumpkin Carving Contest



SHEPHERD GROUPS

Lay Minister	Family Names Start with	Family Names & include
Kerry Batten 269-491-8128	A	Boelman
Harold DeFouw 269-569-6869	Boulis	Chadderdon
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
Perry Norman 269-816-1500	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



CHRIST FOR KIDS CHILDCARE

Education with Christ at the Heart



Making
Mighty
Messengers
for Christ

These one-piece coveralls keep little ones dry and clean from hood to toes. They let them climb, crawl, and splash enjoy learning on the Christ for Kids playground in a variety of weather situations.

muddy buddies



Christ for Kids is looking for new team members to join our team. We can be flexible with schedules and work around school schedules for both high school and college students. You must be 16 years old. Please reach out if you are interested or share with someone who you think may be interested.

Contact our Christ for Kids Director at eritchie@mightymessengers.org

Thank you!

SERVING THE LORD IN

LIMA, PERÚ

NEWS FROM GERALD AND HEIDI PAUL



SEPTEMBER 2026

gerald.paul@lcms.org



Gerald as liturgist one Matins. Rev Dr Larry Rast delivered the sermon.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Every missionary family is invited to attend the annual conference every August.
- This year it was in Wittenberg, Germany.
- Martin Luther began the Reformation while he was a monk and professor at the university in Wittenberg.



Scan the QR code to take you to our website.
Find us on Facebook



To be added to or removed from this mailing list, send an email message to gerald.paul@lcms.org with the word ADD or REMOVE in the subject line.

Mission Conference, Wittenberg



Missionaries and their families in St Mary's, Wittenberg, Germany.

Continuing 125th Celebrations

In lieu of the region's 125th anniversary celebrations, last year's conference was held in the "Lutherland" of St Louis, MO, instead of the usual Punta Cana, DR. Many of us heard the synod's history and visited the historical sites for the first time.

Converging on Lutherland

This year the theme continued in the original Lutherland – in Wittenberg, Germany! What a great honor to not only see St Mary's church where more than 500 years ago Martin Luther had preached

more than 2,000 times, but also to hear God's Word preached from the same pulpit every morning during Matins.

Steeped in Reformation History

Who better than historian Rev Dr Larry Rast to share with us his vast knowledge for four glorious days? He also took us on a walking tour every afternoon to make historical facts come alive with masterful and humor-filled storytelling at the various Luther sites.

The Old Latin School is an historical building renovated and run by the LCMS.



St Mary's Church (left), Old Latin School (middle), tower of Castle Church (right in the distance).



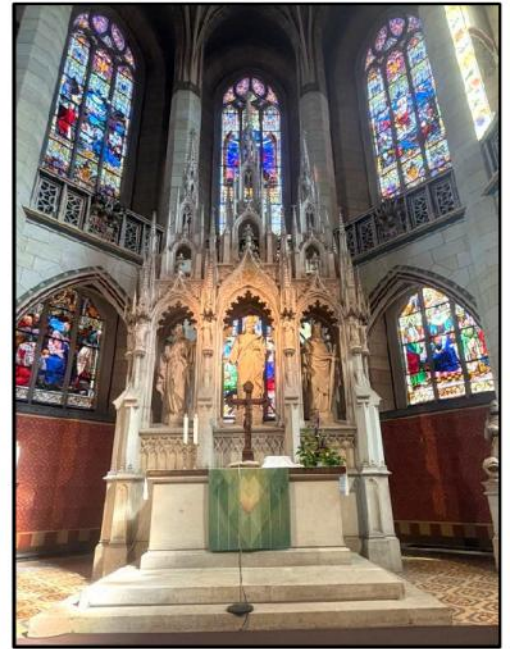
The door to which Martin Luther had famously nailed the 95 theses.



Luther Rose detail on the ceiling (above),
Luther's grave below the Castle Church's
pulpit (below).



The Castle Church, Wittenberg



The Castle Church with its distinctive crown-shaped tower (left), Castle Church's chancel (right).

The Castle Church

The elector's "royal chapel" in medieval Electoral Saxony – the primary seat of his power. He was the most powerful political figure in the empire, second only to the emperor. Elector Frederic the Wise, and after him John the Steadfast, strong Luther supporters, used this power to protect him from being assassinated for his faith. For this reason, Luther could never stray out of the elector's jurisdiction where his power and influence would have no reach.

Remember how in 1521 Luther was "kidnapped" by Frederic's men and brought to safety at the Wartburg Castle? And in 1530 when he stayed in Coburg just within Saxony's borders while Melancthon and others went to Augsburg to read to the emperor what we now know as the Augsburg Confession? Fascinating history!

Martin Luther is buried at the foot of the pulpit in the Castle Church. Melancthon is buried opposite Luther on the left side of the church.



Receiving Christ's very Body and Blood in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar



Rev Airton Schroeder, a vice-president of the IELB (Evangelical Lutheran Church Brazil) did the installation.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Alliance missionaries are pastors of the IELB working alongside LCMS missionaries, in accordance with an agreement between the two church bodies – hence the name Alliance Missionaries.
- The aim for the IELB is to eventually be able to send out their missionaries independently.

Installation of new missionary



Team Peru: Rev Milagres, Rev Paul and Rev Caitano (left), Schuambach-Caitano family: wife Bruna, Pastor Tiago, Stafanie and Bernardo (right).

Last vacancy is filled

Members of the Lutheran Church in La Victoria are overjoyed at having their own pastor! Rev Tiago Caitano, an Alliance Missionary of Brazil, arrived the night of Aug 24 with his family and was promptly installed August 26!

The sanctuary was packed for the event, and one could tell that the children of the school Castillo Fuerte had rehearsed the liturgy and hymns as they sang them with gusto! The joy-filled celebration continued with fellowship and snacks.

The children of Castillo Fuerte presented

each pastor with a Luther Rose they had crafted for this occasion.

Team Peru!

Thanks be to God, each of the three Lutheran congregations in Lima now has its own pastor:

San Borja: Rev Gerald Paul

Los Olivos: Rev Rafael Milagres

La Victoria: Rev Tiago Caitano

May God bless the pastors and their parishioners.



Pastors and officials from Brazil, USA, Kenya, the Dominican Republic and Romania who convened in Lima for their annual meeting about the alliance missionary project also attended the installation.



Having her pic taken in Comas at the celebration of "Día del Niño", a national holiday.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Pastor Tiago and family.
- The new children's ministry in Comas and its future.
- The three congregations in Lima, that each may thrive.
- More be drawn to the Church to hear the saving Gospel.
- That we continue figuring out life in Lima – it'll take time...
- Vacancy pastors to serve Safe Harbour and for the Lord to send another faithful pastor to shepherd the flock at Safe Harbour.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- Every little daily blessing!
- The faithful few that regularly attend the Divine Services.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The many congregations and individuals who support us with prayer, encouragement and their generosity.

Congregational Life in Lima



The youth group of all three congregations met in San Borja for a bible study.

Kids' Ministry, Comas

In June the mercy mission Castillo Fuerte took over a children's lunch program in Comas, one of Lima's poorest neighborhoods, providing five cooked lunches a week for 28 children.

In August, these children (aged 4-13) had their first encounter with the Lutheran church with songs, a devotion, prayer, games and lunch. Each received "A Child's Garden of Bible Stories". Once grants are received, the aim is to expand this to an intentional Gospel and educational focused program, similar to the one in La Victoria.

Youth Bible Study

The youth met again in San Borja. They sang and contemplated the words of a hymn, then continued with a study on "Purity – according to God's Word".

Much to be thankful for!
Soli Deo Gloria.



"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered". Ps:32:1-2

- Thanking you for your continuous financial support and prayers,

Your partners in mission,
Gerald and Heidi Paul



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

Prayerfully consider partnering with the LCMS to support the work of Gerald Paul. Make checks payable to:

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

OR
Mission Central
40718 Highway E 16
Mapleton, IA 51034

On the memo line include *Gerald Paul – Cayman Islands*

Give securely from any device: lcms.org/givnow/gerald.paul
Call a donor care representative: 800-930-4438

SERVING THE LORD IN

Belize

NEWS FROM GROTH FAMILY



August 2026



Birthdays Apart

August was a difficult month for our family, as we were separated for the entire month while Emily and Martha were in the United States receiving medical care. That meant Emily and Esther celebrated their birthdays apart from the rest of the family. Even though we could not celebrate together, we still gave thanks for the Lord's gift of each of them and the blessing they are to our family. Being separated made us especially grateful for the ordinary joy of simply being together. We thank God for the wife and daughters He has given us and for the many ways He continues to bless our family, even in difficult seasons.



To be added to or removed from this mailing list, send an email message to Jason.groth@lcms.org with the word ADD or REMOVE in the subject line.

jason.groth@lcms.org

Making (some) Things New



Work at Camp Concordia continued throughout August as we began rebuilding the old laundry facility. The previous building served the camp for 39 years, but moisture and pests eventually took their toll. We are rebuilding it with those challenges in mind and hope the new structure will hold up much better in Belize's tropical climate.

We also replaced two windows in the camp kitchen after someone broke in and stole a few old, rather dull kitchen knives. The new windows are much more secure and should help protect the camp in the future. There is always something to repair or improve at Camp Concordia, but we are thankful for the opportunity to care for this property and prepare it for continued use in the Lord's work.

All Thing Made Holy By the Word and Prayer

One of the blessings this month has been watching our new Men's Prayer Group in Santa Elena continue to meet and pray together. We gather wherever we can, sometimes in someone's home and sometimes in the public park. We pray for our families, our neighbors, and our community, which has been shaken by several violent murders in recent days.

The violence in Santa Elena and neighboring San Ignacio has been especially concerning this year, with several people losing their lives to violence. The community has felt the weight of these events, and there is a real need for peace and safety. We pray especially for those who have lost loved ones and for the Lord to bring an end to the violence that has troubled our community.

In the midst of fear and uncertainty, it is a blessing to gather together, bring our concerns before the Lord, and encourage one another in Christ. We give thanks to God for this growing group of men and pray that He would continue to strengthen us through His Word and prayer.



A Season of Waiting

This month, we had to miss the annual LCMS missionary conference while we wait for our residency paperwork to be completed. We were disappointed to miss the opportunity to gather with our fellow missionaries and enjoy the mutual conversation and consolation that comes from being together with our brothers

and sisters in Christ. We are thankful, though, for a fellow missionary who brought our conference T-shirts back to Belize for us. We may not have been able to attend the conference this year, but at least we can still look like we were there!

POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT & CHRISTIAN WITNESS

“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God” Romans 13:1

As Lutherans, we look at this political mess and understand that God works in the world in two different ways: through the church (the “kingdom of the right hand”) and through the state (the “kingdom of the left hand”).

In the church, He works through the proclamation of the Word of God and the administration of the Sacraments to bring about the salvation of sinners. In the state, He works through the laws and the sword to curb wickedness and enable us to live in peace. As Christians, we live in both kingdoms, submitting in love to Christ and in obedience to the government, insofar as we are not commanded to violate our Lord’s teaching (Rom. 13:1–7; Acts 5:29).

As we consider government and those God has placed in leadership roles, prayer becomes a fundamental action we can take. The Bible urges us to pray for our leaders, regardless of our personal feelings about them. Through prayer, we lift them up to God, seeking guidance and wisdom for their decisions. When we engage in prayer, we participate in God’s plan for governance and acknowledge His power over all authorities. By doing so, we encourage unity and transformation within our communities and governments.

Almighty God, Your wisdom created and upholds all things in heaven and on earth. You have placed me as a citizen in this nation, in which I am also given a vote and voice concerning its government. Give me discernment that I may exercise this civic duty as best I can for the benefit of our people now and in the future and in accordance with Your Word. Give wisdom not only to me and all other voters, but especially to the leaders who will be elected, that all foolish or wicked plans may come to no success, and that noble, fair and beneficial counsels be heeded and put into effect for the good of the country they serve. Spare us from harm, grant peace and security and let Your Gospel be preached unhindered in this nation, since You desire all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Perhaps you feel, like I do, that your one vote won’t make a difference. Then I hope that you feel, also like I do, that prayer can make all the difference.

(Excerpts from an article by LCMS President Matthew Harrison)

Blessings, *Virginia Hetrick* – Prayer-Coordinator



School is in session, days are getting shorter, so it’s time to prepare for OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD! As you anticipate Fall Festivals and Thanksgiving celebrations, plan also to fill a shoebox with gifts for a child who needs to know the love of Christ. New to this ministry? It’s headed up by Franklin Graham and Samaritan’s Purse and is a world-wide operation. It’s a fun and easy outreach to share the love of Christ while teaching children the joy of giving to others. Those who receive a shoebox are also given the greater gift of being introduced to Jesus and the love He has for them. And that’s THE BEST GIFT EVER!

Shoeboxes will be available for you November 1 – November 15. The last day to return them is November 22. Boxes can be picked up/ returned at the display in the Communication Center. Every box will have instructions inside with suggestions on items to include. But remember – the most important thing you can include is your love and prayers.



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



Enjoying sweet treats at the new French bakery TOUS les JOURS



October is National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month. This month is set aside to honor and remember babies lost to miscarriage, stillbirth, SIDS, or in infancy, and to support grieving families. Again this year, St. Michael Lutheran Church (SMLC) will be holding a memorial service to recognize National Pregnancy and Infant Loss awareness month.

If you or anyone you know have experienced the loss of a baby please join us on Thursday, October 29th at 6:30pm, (SMLC, 7211 Oakland Drive, Portage, MI) for a celebration and remembrance of these lives gone too soon. This event is open to non-members and members alike.

Pastor Daniel Maske will lead us in a worship service followed by a time of refreshments, fellowship and support for one another. If you have any questions please contact Kathy Zakarias, Women's fellowship director at SMLC at 815-519-2181 or k5zakarias17@gmail.com.

MAKING MIGHTY MESSENGERS FOR CHRIST



Church Picnic



GENESIS STUDY FOR LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

Early in May, a consultant assigned to St. Michael by the LCMS Office of School Ministry visited and spent two days interviewing, studying demographic reports, and touring the greater Kalamazoo area. This visit was part of a Genesis Study which is designed to determine the feasibility of a Lutheran high school serving the greater Kalamazoo area. The recently received report from the LCMS School Ministry office proves to be slightly ambiguous and does not necessarily endorse pursuing a high school, nor does it fully dismiss that possibility either. Two important considerations were included in that report that I believe are important to share:

- 1). St. Michael Lutheran Church would not have the capability of being the sole supporting entity in such an endeavor. Rather, it would require multiple area LCMS churches to come together and pool efforts and resources through a high school association.
- 2). Funding would prove to be the greatest challenge with needs of \$5 - \$8 million dollars as start-up funds.

There is a long shot third option that could potentially bring a Lutheran high school closer to the area through the relocation of West Michigan Lutheran High School that presently resides in Wyoming, Michigan. A partnership with the Grand Rapids LCMS churches that currently support WMLHS in collaboration with Kalamazoo area LCMS churches could potentially support a Lutheran high school located somewhere between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids thus allowing access to a Lutheran high school serving both metro areas. I have reached out to the principal of WMLHS, the Michigan District Superintendent of Lutheran Schools, and the Board of Directors of WMLHS to start a process of brainstorming to determine if such an idea has support and could become a reality. Such a partnership would certainly help breathe life back into WMLHS, which has been struggling for a number of years and it could also provide a Lutheran high school in close proximity to the greater Kalamazoo area. I will share additional information as it becomes available over the coming months. This is certainly a topic for prayer over the weeks and months ahead.



Greg Johnson Principal

The flyer has a brown, textured background. At the top left, a paper airplane is shown in flight. The main title "JOIN US FOR HOPE TAKES FLIGHT" is in large, bold, black capital letters. Below it, "A FUNDRAISING DINNER FOR KALAMAZOO GOSPEL MINISTRIES" is in smaller, bold, black capital letters. The date and time "THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2026 5:30 PM" are in bold, black capital letters. In the center, there's a dark brown cloud shape containing the text "AIR ZOO" in large, bold, white capital letters, and "6151 PORTAGE RD, PORTAGE, MI 49002" in smaller, bold, white capital letters. To the right of the cloud, a white cloud shape contains the text "\$50 TICKETS" in bold, black capital letters. Below the clouds, the text "LIFT OFF FOR IMPACT" is in bold, black capital letters, with "FUEL CHANGE, FUND HOPE" in smaller, black capital letters below it. At the bottom right, the text "FOR TICKETS AND SPONSORSHIPS" is in bold, black capital letters, with the website "KZOOGOSPEL.ORG/HTF2026" below it. A QR code is located at the bottom right, and the Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries logo is in the bottom right corner. A silhouette of an airplane is shown in the bottom left corner.

SAVE THE DATE!

Happy Holidays

MARKET

NOVEMBER 7th
9am – 2pm

RSVP YOUR SPOT TO SELL TODAY!
ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN SCHOOL
7211 OAKLAND DRIVE
PORTAGE, MI

STAY CONNECTED

YouTube



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

Facebook

Find devotions, special event announcements and more:

@StMichaelLutheranChurchPortageMI



Office Contacts:

Church + 269-327-7832

School + 269-327-0512

Christ For Kids + 269-327-4889

mightymessengers.org

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

HAVE YOU SEEN THE



IN THE PARKING LOT?

We earn money when you recycle paper in our bin...

The paper will be shredded and processed into hydro seeding mulch, lawn establishment products, lawn repair products, Fresh News® Cat Litter, dog litter, Fresh News® Small Animal Bedding, Fresh News® Small Animal Litter or recycled at paper mills, cellulose insulation manufacturers or other recycling facilities.

WHAT CANNOT GO IN THE BIN?

· Plastic · Metal · Trash · Glass · Cardboard

WHAT CAN GO IN THE BIN?

- Newsprint
- Catalogs/Magazines
- Junk Mail · Phone Books
- Office/School paper
- Hard and soft cover books
- Paperboard (Grocery Item boxes)
- Standard staples & paperclips are ok
- Shredded paper



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*

WHAT IS THE ALTAR GUILD?

The Altar Guild is a quiet, faithful, and vital ministry that prepares our worship space each week. Members set up the altar, care for communion vessels and linens, change seasonal paraments, and help ensure our chancel is welcoming and reverent for every service.



Altar Guild Brunch

We are looking for new volunteers to join this meaningful behind-the-scenes work. No experience is needed—training is provided, and scheduling is flexible. If you enjoy peaceful, hands-on service that supports the whole congregation, this is a wonderful way to offer your gifts.

If you're interested in learning more, please consider attending our upcoming brunch on Saturday, October 17, 10am in Allan Hall. RSVP Kristi Rudowske, kspitz2001@yahoo.com, [269-532-5043](tel:269-532-5043). Your help truly makes a difference.

**LWML BATTLE CREEK ZONE
FALL RALLY**

EMBRYO ADOPTION

"But God will redeem my life from the grave" ~ Psalm 49:15

Speaker: Pastor Trenton Wollberg
will share what God is doing to
redeem "leftover" embryos from
I.V.F. and restore life.

5:00 pm - Light Supper
5:30 pm - Business Mtg
6:45 pm - Speaker

Resurrection Bags (from
Liberia) will be available to
shop from Becky Grossman

ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN
7211 OAKLAND DR.
PORTAGE, MI 49024

Sunday, October 4
5 - 8 pm

Ingathering: Diapers for Alternatives of Kalamazoo
(All Sizes)

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/>

AUGUST FINANCIALS

10 Months

11/1/2025 - 8/31/2026

Church Revenue	\$ 747,925
School Revenue	<u>\$1,076,005</u>
Total Revenue	\$1,823,930
Total Expenses	<u>\$1,891,604</u>
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$ (67,674)
Expense Budget	\$1,839,919
Under/(Over) Budget	\$ (15,989)
Working Cash Balance	\$ (39,549)
Mortgage Balance	\$ 647,819

Designated Fund Balances

Endowment Fund	\$847,109
Building Contingency	\$ 10,927
Parking Lot Fund	\$ 45,000
HVAC	\$ 15,853
Technology Refresh	\$ 3,243
Sunday School	\$ 5,872
Youth Donations	\$ 14,795
Youth Accounts	\$ 5,273
Good Samaritan	\$ 10,943
Memorials	\$ 16,441
Fellowship	\$ 5,412
Champion Church Network	\$ 401
L.A.M.P. Mission Trip	\$ 9,547
Quilting	\$ 1,604
POBLO South Asia Ministry	\$ 1,596
Student Debt Fund	\$ 143
Church Worker Scholarship	\$ 400
Luth Medical Emergency Fund	\$ 250
School Improvements	\$ 9,079
Tuition Assistance	\$ 17,655
School Music	\$ 1,615
School Sports	\$ 3,761
Flower Fund	\$ 646
Building Utilization	\$ -
LWML	\$ 3,371
Women's Fellowship	\$ 1,195
Faith Budget	\$ -

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Annual Avg. 2025 389

July '26 Avg. 310

August '26 Avg. 343

September '26 Avg. 389

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 VACANT

CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT **CHILD MINISTRY COORDINATOR AND** **RECORDING SECRETARY**

Tammy Songer
tsonger@mightymessengers.org

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Greg Johnson
gjohnson@mightymessengers.org

SCHOOL SECRETARY

Jessie Duniphin

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

Arrianna Cole

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

Various Musicians

MORNING SONG DIRECTOR

Jane Connon

VOLUNTEERS:

PRESIDENT

Mark Ruesch

VICE PRESIDENT

Rob Kuhlmann

TREASURER

Jeff Lauterbach

BOARD OF CHURCH PROPERTIES

Dennis Cole, Director
Mark Vickery, Assistant Director

FACILITY MANAGER

Ryan Nelson

BOARD OF EARLY CHILDHOOD & SCHOOL MINISTRIES

Mike Grotelueschen, Director
Matt Colby, Assistant Director

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Vacant, Director
Vacant, Assistant Director

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Dan Marshall, Director
Kristi Rudowski, Assistant Director

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Vacant, Chairman

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Kristi Rudowski, Chairman

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Vacant, Director
Jerry Kuss, Jeff Burnett, Heather Bigelow

YOUTH GROUP LEADER

Deaconess Caitlin Ramirez

BOARD OF LAY MINISTRY

Mark Kahle, Director
Greg Wedel, Assistant Director

ALTAR GUILD

Kristi Rudowski

LECTORS

Virginia Hetrick, Jan Chilcott

PRAYER MINISTRY COORDINATORS

Barbara Schubert, Virginia Hetrick
Jan Chilcott, Jan Jett

USHERS

Mike Minger - Early Service
Jesse Hogue - Late Service

STEPHEN MINISTRY LEADERS

Pastor & Dana Naumann
Lynda Rea, Kathy Zakarias

STEPHEN MINISTERS

Lane Bertrand, Pam Sward, Karen Taylor
Zachary Button, Ann Olson
Bill Semrau, Tami White, Jeannette Marshall

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Vacant, Assistant Director

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Arlene Groll, Mark & Jan Chilcott

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WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP / LWML

Kathy Zakarias

CARING CONNECTIONS

Kathy Taylor

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Julie Vickery, Rob Kuhlman