



CONNECTING People To Jesus

St. Michael's of Richville, Michigan

ADVENT: THE SEASON BEFORE THE SEASON

On our cable TV subscription we have a number of music channels with every genre and variety of music imaginable: new country, old country, hip hop, classic rock, oldies, 70's rock, 80's pop, you name it. There is also a channel called "Sounds of the Season," which plays different styles of music depending on the time of year. Around the 4th of July they play patriotic music; at Halloween you can hear "Monster Mash" and "Werewolves of London." Just out of curiosity I turned to Sounds of the Season on November 1st, and sure enough, they were already playing Christmas music! I thought, "Who wants to listen to 'Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer' the day after Halloween?" I suppose some folks do, and that's perfectly fine. But it feels like the Christmas season is pushed on us earlier and earlier.

The season before us is a joyful time! I still laugh at the shenanigans of Ralphie and his buddies in A Christmas Story even though I've seen it a dozen times. The slapstick of Harry and Marv in Home Alone could make the Grinch crack a smile. Classic songs like "White Christmas," "Deck the Halls," and "Winter Wonderland" bring back warm childhood memories. But even as Christmas gets pushed a little too early, sometimes we are in such a rush to get to Christmas that we forget the im-

portant season of Advent. Advent is not meant to be a "mini-Christmas" or simply a time to get ready for December 25th. Advent is its own season, a time of both anticipation and contemplation, a time when we get ready to welcome Jesus Christ into our world and into our hearts.

The word "advent" means coming or arrival. Traditionally the Church has focused on three interrelated themes of Advent:

- 1) Jesus came into our world at Bethlehem, born in human flesh to be our Savior;
- 2) He comes among us each day in Word and Sacrament; and finally
- 3) He will come again at the last day to judge the living and the dead.

Advent is considered a "penitential" season, that is, a time of self-examination and repentance. While not as somber as Lent, nevertheless Advent turns our attention to why we need a Savior in the first place. We need a Savior because we, by nature, are lost in the darkness of sin. (Darkness and light are one of many sub-themes of Advent.) The true joy of Christmas is amplified when we engage in serious contemplation and repentance of our sins and then can truly rejoice that "when the time had fully come God sent His Son, born of a

(Continued on page 2)

December News 2023

(Continued from page 1)

woman, born under the Law to redeem those under the Law." (Galatians 4:4) Just as white looks brighter when you put the color black next to it, the grace and mercy of God shine brighter in our hearts and lives when we see how Christ's forgiveness has blotted out the darkness of sin.

Michigan District President Dave Davis always signs his letters and e-mails with the phrase "eyes on Jesus." As we turn the calendar to December let's do the same. Let's keep our eyes on Jesus as we prepare to celebrate His birth; as we set aside time for Christ Jesus to come to us in Advent devotions, worship, and chapel; and as we look for His return at the last day!

In Christ Jesus,

Pastor Gillaspie

ADVENT

A Season of Preparation



Peace * on * earth

Joyful MERRY & BLESSED



Mark Your Calendars!

There are a number of significant dates coming up at St. Michael's as the holiday season approaches. Make sure that you will be here on:

Sunday, December 3

St. Michael's Christmas Concert
3:00 p.m.

Wednesdays, Dec. 6, Dec. 13

Advent Wednesday Services
7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 20

St. Michael's School Program
7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 24

Christmas Eve Services
9:00 a.m., 4:00 & 7:00 p.m.

Monday, December 25

Christmas Day Service
9:00 a.m.

See you in church!



Notes from the Music Director

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

These are the words of John the Baptist, a rather colorful individual who had a specific role to fulfill. His job, prophesied in the Old Testament, was to prepare the way for the Savior. We will be hearing from him a great deal during the coming season of Advent, a time when we prepare ourselves to meet our coming King. His message rings true still today: “Repent” —that is, turn your hearts in sorrow over sin and seeking forgiveness— “for the kingdom of heaven”—that is, the presence of Jesus himself, who at that time lived on earth and who comes today in that very body and blood in the Lord’s Supper— “is at hand” —the time is now!

We focus on that message, and on the presence of God, as we gather for worship. And, of course, the hymns of Advent help us to do this, as well. Consider LSB 346, a summary of John’s message.

*When all the world was cursed By Moses’ condemnation,
Saint John the Baptist came With words of consolation.
With true forerunner’s zeal The greater One he named,
And Him, as yet unknown, as Savior he proclaimed.*

Moses brought the law to God’s people, and that law still today shows us of our need for forgiveness. John pointed to the One who would win that forgiveness for us by His death on the cross.

*Before he yet was born, He leaped in joyful meeting,
Confessing Him as Lord Whose mother he was greeting.*

*By Jordan’s rolling stream, A new Elijah bold,
He testified of Him Of whom the prophets told:*

In the last verses of the Old Testament, the prophet Malachi describes the prophet to come as a new “Elijah”. John fills this role, and in doing so, points everyone to Christ.

*Behold, the Lamb of God That bears the world’s transgression,
Whose sacrifice removes The devil’s dread oppression.
Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away our sin,
Who for our peace and joy Will full atonement win.*

We repeat John’s words every time we receive the Lord’s Supper. We cry out to the Lamb, “Have mercy upon us”, and, finally, “Grant us peace” (see the “Agnus Dei, LSB p. 163). We summarize that prayer in the last stanza of the hymn.

*O grant, dear Lord of love, That we receive, rejoicing
The Word proclaimed by John, Our true repentance voicing,
That gladly we may walk Upon our Savior’s way
Until we live with Him In His eternal day.*

May God bless our Advent journey!



Gifts and Memorials

In Memory

Ed Roedel

Home Purpose—\$468.00
Park Hall—\$1,500.00
Electronic Church Sign—\$1,500.00
School—\$50.00
Church Technology—\$1,010.00
Endowment Fund—\$25.00
Hot Lunch—\$265.00
Church Music—\$1,205.00
Martin Hecht Scholarship Fund—\$405.00
St. Johns Frankenmuth—\$50.00
St. Lorenz Frankenmuth—\$25.00
Immanuel Frankenmuth—\$75.00

Betty Huber

Electronic Sign—\$100.00

Marion Reinbold

Home Purpose—\$45.00

JoLinda Manus

Park Hall—\$140.00

Dian Little

Home Purpose—\$90.00

Erna Trombley

School—\$2,895.00
Missions—\$10.00

Howard Bierlein's 100th Birthday, Oct. 24th

- a donation was made to Home Purpose by his family.

Verna Kischicks Birthday, Oct. 24th

-a donation was made by Mike and Sally Sahr

In Honor

Willie Wirth's 90th Birthday

-a donation was made to Park Hall

Jay and Linda Trombley's 70th Birthdays

-a donation was made to the Park Hall



The Joy of Sharing

This year our St. Michael's Christmas project will once again be a "Giving Tree". There will be a tree in the church foyer that has tags with gift requests for you to choose from.

There are a variety of items to purchase in a range of prices and the names will be kept confidential. If you know of a needy person or family, contact *Pam (Jeff) Mossner*. You can also leave requests in a sealed envelope in the church office. Please consider taking a request tag to help people in our congregation and the surrounding area.

Gifts, gift cards or money must be turned in to the church office or to Pam (Jeff) Mossner by December 22nd. Thank you for sharing and caring.

Endowment Committee

HOT OFF THE PRESSES!

A new St. Michael's Endowment Fund brochure is available. They are available on the desk in the lobby below the bulletin board. The Endowment Fund is a great way to give a gift that keeps on giving! St. Michael's members have done a great job supporting the fund over the years. Also, if you feel called to help coordinate this ministry, we are looking to replace Ed Roedel. Please call the church office if you feel led to help with this ministry, and someone will return your call. It does not require a large time commitment, only a heart to serve.

AS FOR ME
AND MY
family,
WE WILL SERVE
THE
Lord

JOSHUA 24:15, NLT

Stewardship Minute

The Measure of Our Generosity

If you open up the Small Catechism, you'll find a shortened version of the Third Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." But if you look up the list of the Ten Commandments in Exodus, you'll find the full version:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex. 20:8-11)

Why did Luther shorten this commandment for the Small Catechism? Was it so that the kids wouldn't have so much to memorize? No, it was because Luther knew that all the details of the Third Commandment were part of the "shadow" of the Old Testament (Col. 2:16). Or as St. Paul puts it, there is "letter" in the Old Testament law and "spirit" (2 Cor. 3:6). The details of not working on Saturday were fulfilled by Christ. That part of the Sabbath regulation no longer applies. But the spirit of the law does remain: We need to dedicate sufficient time each week to hearing God's Word and giving it honor and respect. Or as Luther sums it up in the

Small Catechism's explanation to the Third Commandment: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it."

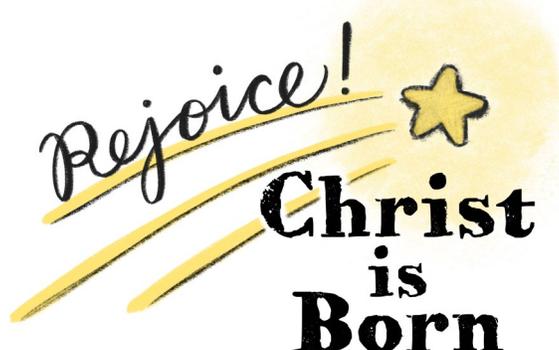
The same sort of analysis applies to our giving. In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to give a tenth of their income to the Levites so that those men could dedicate their lives to serving in God's house, teaching the people, conducting worship, etc. In the New Testament, there is a rigid requirement listed about handing in your tax forms to church to make sure you've given enough. But the mandate to have a full-time ministry, which is the spirit of that law concerning tithing to the Levites, is right there in 1 Corinthians 9:14: "The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel."

The New Testament church's job is significantly larger than the job of Old Testament Israel. We are commanded to preach the Gospel to all nations. There was only the temple to maintain in the Old Testament, but we have churches, schools, universities and seminaries, plus missionaries everywhere. So you tell me: Can we really undertake the work of the ministry if our giving doesn't even measure up to Old Testament levels of generosity?

Planning For Peace Of Mind UPDATE

Mark Your Calendars!!

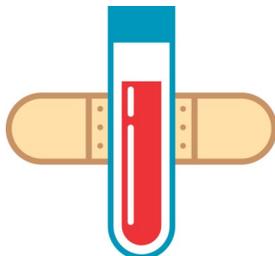
We plan to have it on **Sunday, January 7th**, directly after late service in the overflow room. Pizza and beverage will be provided. All at NO COST!





Have eyeglasses and/or sunglasses you don't use anymore? Donate them to be sent to Ann Arbor where they will grind new lenses and make use of the frames. These are then used by groups going on eye glass Mission Trips. Also, donations of travel shampoos and soaps are greatly appreciated. There is a box for donation items in the foyer of the church.

Thank You!



BLOOD DRIVE

Blood Drive at church on Tuesday, December 12th from 1 to 6 p.m. We will have pizza and T-shirts available. Making appointments is appreciated by calling 1-866-642-5663 or Nancy Schluckbier. We hope to see YOU there, giving the gift of life.

Gift Card Fundraising

With the holidays fast approaching, RaiseRight (Scrip) is an answer to your gift giving needs. It provides all the conveniences of gift giving while raising money for St. Michaels. Don't know what to get a loved one...earn money by buying gift cards for everyday purchases from various retailers, including local restaurants and businesses. They, in return, offer refunds of 2-20% to be given back to St. Michael's to the fund of your choosing. (ie: school tuition, hot lunch, child care, or church home purpose.) All earnings are tracked and distributed annually.

There is a supply of gift cards for purchase at the school office during office hours. Orders may also be made with forms available in the church foyer, or you may place your order online at RaiseRight.com to see hundreds of retailers that are currently participating. You may also email gift cards to the recipient of your choice. The school enrollment code is required when placing your own orders online.

We will once again be available in church for gift card sales between services November 19th-December 17th. We are always looking for volunteers to help with the sales on those given Sundays. Call Cheryl (989)882-5621 or Lavonne (989)863-0081 if you would like to assist or if you have any questions. Thank you to those of you who have participated in this program.



Puzzle!

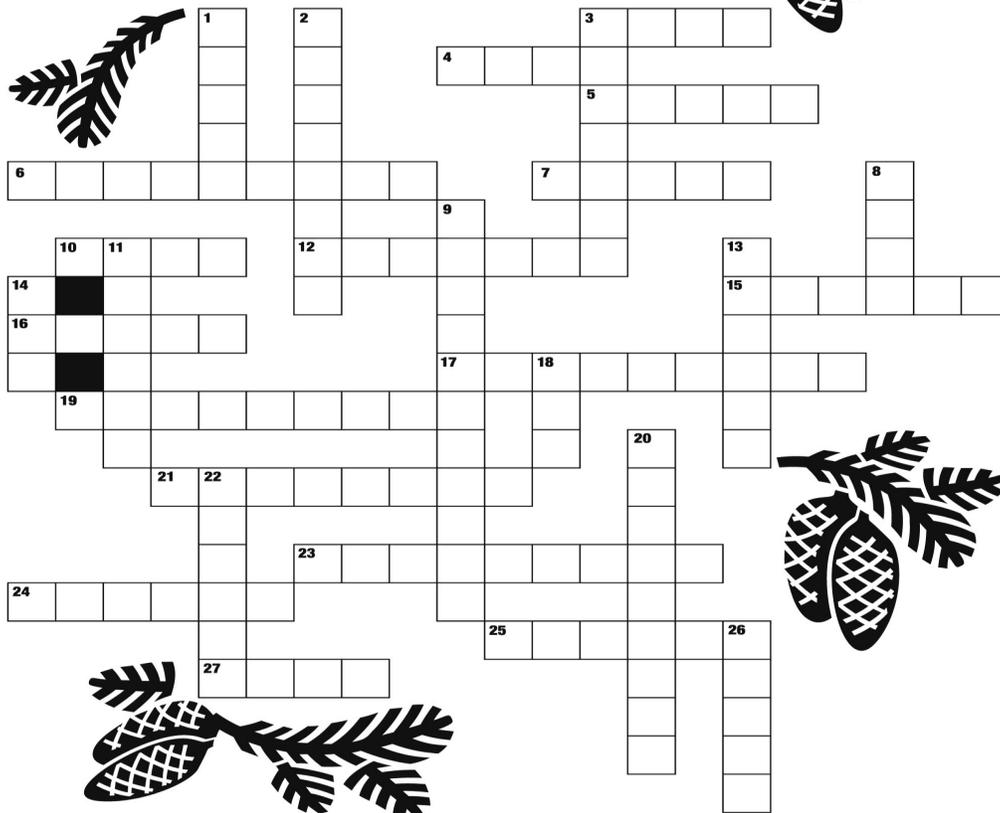
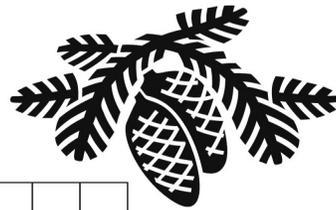
Take a break from Christmas preparations to complete this seasonal crossword.

DOWN

1. song
2. keeper of sheep
3. Anointed One
8. a gift of the magi
9. red plants
11. coming
13. Jesus _____
14. 12th month (abbrev.)
18. B&B
20. a form of holly
22. heavenly messengers
26. he ordered the slaughter of the innocents

ACROSS

3. wise men
4. author of the most famous Christmas account
5. red-suited gift-giver
6. of Ephrathah
7. presents
10. Gabriel came to her
12. has a red nose
15. "Messiah" composer
16. northern little helpers
17. patron saint of children
19. made flesh
21. home for Mary
23. tree decorations
24. crib
25. he was a carpenter
27. a nova



Answer: DOWN 1. carol, 2. shepherd, 3. Messiah, 8. gold, 9. poinsettias, 11. Advent, 13. Christ, 14. dec, 18. inn, 20. mistletoe, 22. angels, 26. Herod, ACROSS 3. magi, 4. Luke, 5. Santa, 6. Bethlehem, 7. gifts, 10. Mary, 12. Rudolph, 15. Handel, 16. elves, 17. Saint Nick, 19. incarnate, 21. Nazareth, 23. ornaments, 24. manger, 25. Joseph, 27. star

St. Michael's Lutheran Church
3455 S. Van Buren Road
Reese, MI 48757

