



CONNECTING

People To Jesus

St. Michael's of Richville, Michigan

Calling an administrative/senior/ head/lead/associate/assistant pastor.

The title of this article is probably a bit confusing. That's because different churches describe the work of their pastors in different ways. I'd like to use this article to provide some clarity on what God's Word says about the Office of the Public Ministry or "pastor" as we commonly say.

First of all, the office of pastor is established by God. Ephesians 4:11 says, *"It was He (God) who gave some to be prophets, some to be apostles, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service."* Acts 20:28 describes how St. Paul addressed the elders (pastors) in the church at Ephesus saying, *"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God which He bought with His own blood."* This doesn't mean that pastors are "super-Christians" or that they are holier than everyone else. Rather, it means that pastors must meet the qualifications described in I Timothy chapter 3, have proper training, and are called to carry out the public ministry in a congregation or in another setting, like serving as a chaplain.

You may have noticed the Bible never uses the words "administrative pastor," "senior pastor," "associate pastor," or "assistant pastor." God's Word makes no such distinctions or divisions

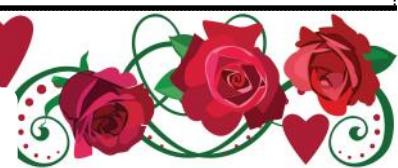
within the pastoral office. Our own Lutheran Confessions state, *"All bishops (pastors) are equal in office."* (Smalcald Articles, Article IV, paragraph 9) A Summary of Christian Doctrine, a textbook used in our Lutheran colleges and seminaries, states *"The very nature of the ministerial office shows that by divine right no minister holds a higher rank or possesses greater power and authority than the other."* The Bible says there is one pastoral office in each congregation, yet this office may be filled by more than one person. A large church may have multiple pastors, and yet all of them have an equal part of the pastoral ministry. A congregation has the freedom to divide up the duties and responsibilities of the pastoral office by calling one pastor to be senior or administrative, others to be associate or assistant. Different men have different gifts. One may be better at organizing and overseeing the work of the church, another may be better at visitation, another may be better at teaching children, yet another may be better at preaching. While most pastors perform all of these and many other duties, it can be helpful to make distinctions and thus divide up the work of the ministry.

Unfortunately these different titles and descrip-

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February News 2026



tions are sometimes misunderstood. Parishioners may think that the senior pastor is the “real pastor” of the church and an associate or assistant does “pastor things” but is not fully a pastor. Regardless of the title, pastors spend the vast majority of their time doing the same things: preaching, teaching, leading worship, visitation, and providing pastoral care at funerals and in many other situations. We need to focus less on titles like “administrative,” “senior,” “associate,” or “assistant” and turn instead to what the Scriptures teach all pastors to do: *“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”* (II Timothy 4:2) When Lutheran pastors are installed in a church we promise to *“faithfully instruct both young and old...minister to the sick and dying...and demonstrate a constant and ready ministry.”* As we prepare to call another pastor let’s keep those important things in mind. May the people of St. Michael’s seek our Lord’s blessings and guidance through our prayers, deliberations, and the study of His Word!

In Christ Jesus,

Pastor Gillaspie



Blood Drive at the Park Hall on
Tuesday, February 10th
from 1 to 6 p.m.

Making appointments is
appreciated by calling
1-866-642-5663.

We hope to see YOU there,
giving the gift of life.

Attention!

Cemetery Committee is accepting
bids for the 2026 mowing season.

Please contact Jason Bierlein
(989)529-5733
by 2/23/2026
If interested.



Lutherans Laymen's League

Meeting

February 16th, 2026
Church Overflow Room
7 p.m.

Noelle Byerley
Will be our guest speaker.



Noelle Byerley joined the Frankenmuth Police Department as Administrative Assistant in May 2022. She brings a wealth of diverse experience to the role, having previously worked in the legal field and spending over 16 years with the Michigan Soybean Commodity. Recognizing a growing need for public safety education, she now leads discussions on fraud prevention. Her presentations focus on identifying current scam trends, practical protection strategies, and the essential steps for reporting financial crimes.

BE AWARE of Frauds & SCAMS

FPD Admin Noelle Byerley



President Wayne Bierlein will bring refreshments for all who attend.
Everyone is welcome!

To God Be the Glory For 175 Years!

This is the motto for the celebration for St. Michael's 175 th anniversary year. The 175 th Anniversary Committee is putting plans together to celebrate this milestone event throughout the 2026 year, culminating with a grand celebration on September 27, 2026, St. Michael's Anniversary. There will be a guest pastor each month leading up to September 27 th .

Michigan District President David Davis will be the guest Pastor on January 25 th . Retired Pastor Elmer Schiefer, a son of St. Michael's, who turns 100 years old in January, will speak at the late service on January 25 th . Pastor Mark Brandt, retired Pastor from St. Lorenz, will be the guest Pastor on February 22. Pastor Bruce Kishnick is scheduled on June 21 and Pastor Steve Hess is scheduled for August 16. They are both confirmands of the class of 1968 at St. Michael's. Former St. Michael's Pastor Rob Gadeken has agreed to come back to St. Michael's on date to be determined. Other potential guest Pastors have been communicated with and hopefully a full schedule will be announced soon. The committee is also working on a special German Service with Pastor Loest from Frankentrost agreeing to officiate this service. Final details are forthcoming with this.

Each month leading up to September will have a theme. The theme of the month will be illustrated with a short video presentation on the Church screens and the glass showcase in the foyer will have artifacts emphasizing the theme of the month. The themes of the month are as follows:



- January – THE BEGINNING;
- February – FAITHFUL GENERATIONS;
- March – THROUGH EVERY SEASON;
- April – A PLACE TO BELONG;
- May – MOMENTS THAT MATTER;
- June – SERVING OUR COMMUNITY;
- July – CHANGED LIVES;
- August – STANDING ON GOD'S PROMISES;
- September – TO GOD BE THE GLORY.



The committee is working on banner displays, commemorative memorabilia such as bookmarks, T-Shirts, Christmas ornament, and other details. This year is the 25 th anniversary of the Passion Drama that began during the 150 th celebration in 2001. The two day passion drama in the Church will be on Good Friday, April 3 and also on April 4. There are also plans to designate a Sunday where we will recognize the original settlers and former Pastors grave sites in the cemetery. The committee is also in discussions with the school on how we can involve the school children in our celebration.

The grand celebration will be held on September 27, 2026. St. Michael's will be holding one service that day and further details will be announced. After the celebration service, the festivities will continue at the park with a Pig Roast and other activities.

We have an excellent committee in the planning of the 175 th celebration. Committee members include Chairman Al Rodammer, Co-Chairman Scott Wenzel, Secretary Ann Gillaspie, Mallorie Rodgers, Wayne Hecht, Lavonne Richards, D.J. Weiss, Jean Rodammer, Pam Mossner, Charlie Zwerk, Pat Roedel, Don Weber, Dave Janson, Renee Marsrow, Earl Palmueter, and Pastor Gillaspie.

Stay updated on events on St. Michael's Facebook page and continuing updates will be announced as they develop. Let every member of St. Michael's join in the celebration throughout the year.

175 th St. Michael's Anniversary Committee





ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN SCHOOL CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

School Theme: "You're a Piece of God's Plan" Jeremiah 29:11



Kindergarten –Mrs. Hoeppner and Mrs. Jammer

Kindergarten is busy learning new things in January! We are learning about short and long vowel sounds, what the animals do in winter (hibernation, migration, and adaptation), and our numbers to 31. We will also learn about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and celebrate Lutheran Schools Week.

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1st Grade - Mrs. Janson and Mrs. VanDeVeer- We are continuing to work hard in 1st grade, particularly with our reading and writing skills. We learned about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and we wrote about the dreams we have for America; some of which included "That everyone would listen to God" and "That people would be nicer." We are also working on a penguin book study this month. Thank you for your continued prayers for a healthy and successful school year!

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2nd Grade - Mrs. Doan: In Religion we learned about the Wise Men's Visit, The boy Jesus in the Temple, The Baptism of Jesus, The Temptation of Jesus, how Jesus gathered his disciples and the first miracle of Jesus. We are getting better at our reading skills, and are doing double digit addition and subtraction. In Social Studies we did a unit on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights movement. We will also be learning about Rosa Parks and Ruby Bridges.

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3rd Grade - Mrs. Bierlein In third grade we have started a new unit in science. We have moved from life science to physical science. We have been talking about forces and motion. In math, we have started the introduction to division and how it relates to multiplication.

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4th Grade - Mrs. Knea The fourth grade has started some new skills. We're excited to start a new unit in reading where all of our selections talk about how we can be friends to people who are new in an area. We have begun multiplication in math. We are finding out how important it is to know our multiplication facts. We're exploring energy with many different experiments in Science.

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5th Grade -Mrs. Krause- The 5th graders continue to work on learning new things with google including google slides and how to properly cite in a presentation and paper. We also dissected our owl pellets and found mostly mole and rat skeletons but it was still cool to tear it apart and recreate the skeletons. In social studies we are hard at work learning about our new country now that the colonies won the American Revolution and all the documents that go along with it. We are excited to celebrate Lutheran Schools Week and the fun activities that go with it!

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6th Grade - Mrs. Woodward 8th grade Science continues to study basic Chemistry as we are starting a unit on solutions and chemical reactions. 7th grade Science has been studying the earth's crust and plate tectonics, including earthquakes, sea floor spreading and mountain formation. 6th grade Science has been studying the Human Body including the circulatory system, digestive system and immune system.

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7th Grade - Mrs. Lamb - We are cruising! 6th Social Studies finished up a unit on the USA today. In Literature we loved the novel "Where the Red Fern Grows" and have read some poetry. Math has continued work with fractions and mixed numbers and keeps practicing difficult multiplication and division. 7th Graders hosted our first chapel service of the year last Wednesday. We were all nervous but it went very well!! I'm proud of them for getting in front of their peers and reading! It's not easy!! In Social Studies finished up Ancient India. In English they have been interviewing staff members and are going to write a "newspaper" article about that person. Pre-Algebra has just finished up with proportions and similar figures. We've introduced the coordinate plane and are learning to graph linear equations with slope and a point. All classes are working hard and I'm proud of their progress. Have a great rest of the week.

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8th Grade - Mrs. Heinlein- I am excited to be a part of the St. Michaels's team! The week of January 19th will be spent finishing up the marking period. This week we will create social contracts that establish behavior expectations for our class. I will be sending home a class syllabus that includes a brief introduction to my class, class schedules, grading, late work policy and more. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns as the class transitions to a new

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teacher.

Resource Room - Mrs. Newton—All of the students I am seeing are working hard to become better readers! Now that we have completed the first semester, I am busy doing updated reading screenings on all the students in K-4. The results of these screenings will help me know who needs extra help in the second half of the year.

Media Center/Upcoming Events - Mrs. Brown—The younger students have been listening to stories about being humble and snow day fun in the Media Center. The grades 1-8 will be starting the National A.R Challenge starting January 26 ending March 6. The class with the most points will be treated to pizza and bowling in the private room at Stardust Event Center.

The top 3 readers in each class will also be rewarded. We are getting ready for Winterfest! Final ticket sales for the event will be on Friday, February 13. Reminder that the cost for tickets are \$35 and \$275 for a reserved table of 10. If you have donations for the auction please bring them to the Media Center as soon as you have them ready. Any perishable items can be dropped off on Friday the 20th or starting at 10 a.m on the 21st. Remember to wear soft sole shoes in the gym and it is an adult only event. Hope to see you there!!

AD-Athletics—A basketball is currently underway. Both teams are doing well in games and tournaments. Our boys A were tournament champs in the Valley Crossover Tournament. C basketball for 4th and 5th graders is also taking place and we are excited to watch as they grow in their skills. Go Raiders!!!

Grant Applications

for St. Michael's Endowment Non-Designated Fund are now available on our website or in the church office.

To locate the application on the website, go to About/Endowment and then scroll down to grant application. These applications may be turned in to the church office. The applications are due **March 30**.

If you have any questions, you may contact
Pam Bierlein
at 989-971-3340



Good News and Bad News

"I have good news and bad news," said the wife. "Well, what's the good news," said her husband. "The good news is that our new car's airbags worked fine!"

With the good news of Christmas still fresh in our minds, I wonder if you ever considered all the bad news that is part of the Christmas story. For instance, it was bad news when Joseph learned that his wife-to-be was pregnant. Yet it was good news when he learned from the angel that Mary would give birth to the Savior.

It was indeed good news that Joseph agreed to God's plan and took Mary home as his wife and prepared their home in Nazareth for the birth of Jesus. However, bad news came when he learned that he would have to take Mary, who was "great with child," and travel seventy miles to Bethlehem to be registered for tax purposes.

After Jesus was born, and the wise men had brought their gifts, it was good news that an angel warned Joseph to go to Egypt with Mary and Jesus to escape Herod's murderous intentions. However, it was bad news that Herod's soldiers went ahead and executed all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under.

It was good news for the whole world that God kept his promise and sent a Savior to free the human race from the curse of sin. It was bad news that Mary's child would one day have to suffer and die on the cross to pay the price for that freedom. Then the best news ever was that Jesus overcame death and the grave when he rose again on the third day!

Life is full of good news and bad news. We live with the constant threat of illness, and we always hope to hear that there is a cure. One day though, if we are fortunate, we will hear that we have a terminal illness for which there is no cure. I say "fortunate" because we will have been given the gift of time — time to prepare.

It's bad news, of course, to learn that one is terminally ill. Yet, it is good news to know that there is help and support from hospice. With hospice, there is medical, emotional and spiritual support for the family as well as the patient.

It's good news that I was installed on December 28, 2025 as your assistant pastor for outreach to Wellspring Lutheran Services. The bad news (for Pastor Gillaspie) is that all of my available time (when I'm not doing grandpa duty) is consumed in my role as hospice chaplain at Wellspring. Please keep this vital ministry in your prayers! If you have questions or would like to be a hospice volunteer or provide other support, feel free to call the church office or call me directly at (989) 280-4720.

Pastor Mark Auernhamer

**St. Michael's Lutheran Church
Board of Outreach – Report for Mid-
November through December, 2025
Chairperson: Pam Mossner**

Food/Supplies/Other Ministry Purchases

- Sent food to Donna in Flint.
- Sent food to Chrissy.
- Donated \$250 of snacks to St. Michael's ECC.
- Donated 12 cases of diapers to St. Michael's ECC.
- Bought 24 colorful doodle-board tablets for use by children during services at St. Michael's.
- Sent Brittany (recently lost her husband due to an accident) \$250 of groceries for Thanksgiving.
- Purchased a Thanksgiving dinner from Bavarian Inn for Chrissy and her family.
- Purchased \$500 in groceries for someone in Saginaw.
- Paid \$400 for someone's propane in Birch Run.
- Paid \$200 for tuition at St. Michael's School.
- Paid off hot lunches for three children at St. Michael's School.
- Delivered a gift card on 12/5/25 for gas in the amount of \$25.
- Delivered a gift card to Meijers on 12/5/25 in the amount of \$100.
- A baby gift was delivered to Kristen Hecht by Connie Mossner and Roxanne Mossner.
- Sent food to Jean in the amount of \$500.
- Paid \$2000 for someone's rent.
- Sent food to a family in Flint.
- Sent food to a family in Birch Run.
- Bought Christmas gifts for Brittany's family.
- Sent food to a family in Saginaw (used funds from 2 Thrivent cards).

Angel Tree

This year's Angel Tree raised \$1,860: \$1210 for School hot lunches; \$100 to School tuition; and \$550 for gift cards. We are truly grateful to everyone who gave so generously and helped make a difference through this program.

Items Purchased from Thrivent Grants in 2025 (Non-Inclusive)

- NICU Parent Baskets.
- Hygiene Kits for Women's Shelter.
- Christmas gifts for kids in need.
- Cleaning products for the Mustard Seed Women's Shelter.
- Supplies for Summer Carnival for kids in need.
- Toys for Infant Room at St. Michael's Daycare.
- Hygiene Items for the Mustard Seed Women's Shelter.
- Socks for those in need.
- Blankets for the Traverse City Women's Resource Center.
- Toys for kids in need.
- Gifts for Family at Christmas.
- Hygiene Kits for those in need.

- Christmas snacks for "I Support the 1%" Veteran Food Pantry.
- 18 Twin Blankets for local shelter.
- Toys for Kelly Loves Christmas 4 Kids Event.
- Hygiene items for upcoming Guatemala Mission Trip (2 grants).

Miscellaneous

- The new storage building is in place.
- The Board of Outreach is pleased to welcome Brenda MacKay as its newest member.
- Sent 25 Christmas cards out to St. Michael's shut-ins from Board of Outreach.

Donations and Thanks

- With grateful hearts, we offer a very special thank you to Lynn and Vic DiBerardino for supporting St. Michael's Outreach. Your generosity helps make this program the outstanding ministry it is.
"Let all that you do be done in love." — 1 Corinthians 16:14
- Thanks to Pam and Mark Mossner for leading the storage shed project and ensuring every detail was followed through to completion.
- Thanks to Ann Zwerk and Brenda MacKay for beautifully decorating the altar area in preparation for Thanksgiving food donation effort.
- Thanks to Dave and Lisa Rupprecht for donations to two families at Christmas.

Gifts and Memorials
In Memory Of

Robert Zwerk

New Doors—\$50.00

Ron & Sue Zwerk

New Doors—\$50.00

Norman Petzold

Home Purpose—\$985.00

New Doors—\$450.00

In Honor Of

Pauline Scherzer's 95th Birthday—Oct. 29th

- a gift was given to Home Purpose by Wayne & Pam Bierlein

Marvel Bekemeier's 90th Birthday

- gifts were given to the Endowment— Cemetery Perpetual Fund

Shirly Weber's 90th Birthday

- gifts were given to Home Purpose and Music Fund.

Ione Weber's 90th Birthday

- gifts were given to Home Purpose, Capital Improvement, and the School.

Pastor Gillaspie to be new Administrative Pastor

It is with gratitude to St. Michael's and thankfulness to God that I accept the position to be administrative pastor. It has been a joy and a blessing to serve this congregation for over 30 years, and I pray for God's guidance on our ministry in the years to come.

Permit me to give a little historical reflection. I was called here in January of 1995 as associate pastor. It was a good experience to work with Pastor Hakes, and since I was new here I learned a lot from him. When he retired the congregation asked me if I would like to move to administrative pastor. At that time we were planning a major building project (Share the Vision) with a new gymnasium, cafeteria, kindergarten room and other classrooms. We were also going to start a Child Care. With two young sons still at home and the demands of parenthood, I felt that was not the right time. So the congregation called Pastor Gadeken, and that proved to be a wise choice. Pastor Gadeken served St. Michael's faithfully until his retirement in 2020.

The question came up again about the position of administrative pastor. After prayerful consideration I thought the best approach would be to call a younger, experienced man who could serve our congregation perhaps for several decades. Sadly, that did not work out as planned. As we were going through the call process the committee found how difficult it was to find someone to fill the role of administrative pastor. Not only were many of our calls declined; we also found that many of the pastors on our call lists (we went through several) were not even open to considering a call. A number of them said they needed to stay where they were; others said they were in the middle of a building project or dealing with some other issue and that this was not a good time for them to leave.

With that in mind I gladly accept this position, and now a new Call Committee can turn their attention to calling an associate pastor. St. Michael's can call a man who is currently serving a church, or we could call a seminary graduate. We have a number of options. Ultimately that is the decision of the Voters. With God's grace and guidance I hope that we will find it easier to find an associate pastor.

While this is a new title and position, in way it is not really new. Practically speaking, I served as acting administrative pastor for two and a half years after Interim Pastor Larry Courson left in 2021.

As I told the Elders, Council, and Voters, I saw how Pastor Gadeken did things differently from Pastor Hakes. I'm sure Pastor Hakes did things differently from Pastor Spiekerman, and it's safe to say that I will do things differently as well. Nevertheless I will do my best to serve our Lord and His Church faithfully. In the meantime I ask for your prayers and your patience. I will be "flying solo," so to speak, for some time to come. May all of us be "*servants of the Gospel by the grace of God*" given to you and me, "*through the working of His power!*" (Ephesians 3:7)

In Christ Jesus,

Pastor Gillaspie

Financial Report as of			12/31/25
MISSIONS			
Missions Collected YTD	Goal \$50,000	\$ 29,588.01	
Non Budget Missions Collected YTD		\$ 1,551.00	
HOME PURPOSE			
Home Purpose Balance as of	07/01/25	MTD	YTD
Home Purpose Income		\$ 202,234.76	\$ 828,695.97
Home Purpose Expenses		\$ 151,843.29	\$ 877,149.89
Thrivent Choice in-H.P. \$ 2,859.00		\$ 50,391.47	\$ (48,453.92)
School Income		\$ 3,253.88	\$ 41,851.93
School Expenses		\$ 1,134.40	\$ 55,741.51
		\$ 2,119.48	\$ (13,889.58)
Child Care/Preschool Income		\$ 56,624.61	\$ 365,902.13
Child Care/Preschool Expenses		\$ 61,365.21	\$ 390,821.72
Thrivent Choice in Childcare \$ 63.00		\$ (4,740.60)	\$ (24,919.59)
Home Purpose Balance (includes Child Care/Preschool/School)			\$ (158,860.18)
New Construction Balance as of	07/01/25	MTD	
Income	Goal \$25,000	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 9,637.00
Expenses		\$ -	\$ 20.35
New Construction Fund Balance		\$ 1,100.00	\$ 22,307.53
Franklin Ave Mission	Goal \$5,000	\$ 295.00	\$ 3,815.00
Capital Improvement Balance as of	07/01/25	MTD	\$ 144,257.67
Collected	Goal \$80,000	\$ 7,845.50	\$ 30,273.00
Expenses		\$ 19,876.89	\$ 27,125.45
Capital Improvement Balance		\$ (12,031.39)	\$ 147,405.22

St. Michael's Lutheran Church
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