



# CONNECTING People To Jesus

St. Michael's of Richville, Michigan



## When Critical Theory and Anti-Semitism Meet



Back in June of 2023 I wrote an article entitled "Critical Theory: The Method Behind the Madness." Critical Theory is a Marxist world-view that sees history, business, politics, education, foreign policy, and much of human relations in terms of oppressed vs. oppressor. White, male, heterosexuals of European ancestry are vilified as oppressors, while women, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ, etc, are the oppressed. Critical Theory has become a favored world-view among much of the media, in colleges and universities, in American and international business, and among progressive politicians. It is behind much of the anti-American sentiment within our own borders. It's not hard to find university professors, politicians, and far-left activists who denounce the United States as an evil, racist nation founded on stolen land by exploitive capitalists and white supremacists. Yes, the U.S. has things in our past of which we cannot be proud. To our credit, however, we have ended many (if not most) of these abuses. Critical Theorists downplay the amazing advances made by Western Civilization. They ignore our systems of government and business that made this nation a 20th century economic and military superpower. Critical Theorists also have a selective memory, forgetting that conquest and subjugation have been part of world history ever since man first walked this planet. Alexander the Great did it 300 years before Christ. The followers of Muhammed conquered the Middle East and parts of Europe and Africa in the 8th and

9th centuries. Genghis Khan killed millions as part of his conquest in Asia during the Middle Ages.

On October 7th the terrorist group Hamas brutally attacked Israeli civilians, killing over 1,000 and taking hundreds as captives. If you watch or read the news, you no doubt heard how they viciously raped, beheaded, and burned victims alive. Israel has had to defend itself against numerous attacks by terrorists and neighboring nations ever since its founding in 1948. It responded to this latest attack by invading the Gaza strip to root out and destroy Hamas.

Considering how Critical Theory has infiltrated our institutions of higher education and left-leaning political circles, the result was sadly predictable. Israelis - mistakenly identified as white, European oppressors - were denounced and vilified, while the terrorists were hailed as "freedom fighters" and heroes of Palestinian resistance. In the mind of the Critical Theorist, everything is evaluated in terms of oppressed vs. oppressor. What is more troubling, even disgusting, is the virulent anti-Semitism which has emerged. "From the river to the sea" is a call for the annihilation of Israel and the Jews. On college campuses Jewish students were threatened and taunted with shouts of "Zionist pigs." Protestors gathered in the streets saying that the Jews had it coming since they are colonizers and oppressors. One protestor, interviewed on TV, denied that Hamas had killed any-

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one, claiming that it was "Jewish propaganda." In December the university presidents from Harvard, Penn, and MIT were called before a congressional committee. Instead of giving a clear condemnation of anti-Semitism on their campuses, they gave vague, ambiguous answers like, "Well, it sort of depends on the context..."

Even more disturbing is the hypocrisy and double standard shown by these political and educational leaders. In colleges and businesses you can be called before a disciplinary board for simply using the wrong pronoun or saying there are two biological genders. The same people who demand "safe spaces" and "trigger warnings" for anything that might upset them turn around and call for the death of Jews. It is trendy to say things like "hate has no home here" or "everyone is welcome here." Unless, of course, you're Jewish or some other group that is labeled as an oppressor.

In December the Washington Examiner newspaper had a well-written editorial. In part it said, "*One reason the (university) presidents are so confused or duplicitous about the boundaries between protected speech and unprotected, baleful conduct is that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion regimes insist that what matters is not the actual words or actions but the group identity of the speaker. Rather than applying neutral principles to everyone, which is what the Constitution, laws, Supreme Court decisions, and common decency demand, DEI categorizes people as either oppressors or the oppressed.*"

As followers of Jesus Christ we see the world according to God's acts of creation and redemption. God's Law teaches that "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" The Gospel tells us that "*there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus.*" Neo-Marxists instead see the world in terms of identity. Your skin color, gender, ethnicity, and lifestyle determines whether you are an oppressor or an oppressed victim. Guilt or innocence is based not on a person's actions but rather by what group they belong to. The horrible actions of a group like Hamas are excused because, in the neo-Marxist mind, the oppressed have a right to lash out and destroy their oppressors.

As God's people we believe that we are "*pilgrims and strangers on earth.*" At the same time we are to be light and salt while we are in this world. These are troubled times in our nation. Radical activists have used the "oppressor vs. oppressed" dichotomy to divide us, create unrest, and turn people against each other. We need to be aware of threats to our freedoms and preserve the liberties handed down to us by our nation's forefathers.

In Christ Jesus,

Pastor Gillaspie



## **Winterfest Auction**

The Winterfest Auction to benefit the school's Media Center will be held on Saturday, February 17th.  
Doors will be open at 5:00 p.m.

Ticket Prices are \$30.00/ticket. Ticket Sakes will be between church services on Sunday, January 21st and 28th. Tickets can also be purchased at the school starting January 19th.

Donation letters will be put in church mailboxes soon and will be going home with students. Any questions contact Leslie Brown.



## *Gifts and Memorials*

### In Memory

#### ***Ed Roedel***

Home Purpose—\$145.00  
Missions— \$10.00  
Cemetery Fund— \$25.00

#### ***Helen Beckrow***

Park Hall—\$15.00

#### ***Marion Gugel***

Hot Lunch—\$95.00  
Missions— \$10.00

#### ***Alvin Severin***

Missions—\$10.00  
School—\$10.00

#### ***Dian Little***

Missions—\$10.00

#### ***Ron Schury***

Athletic Dept. Events—\$40.00

#### ***Loretta Doenxer***

Choir— \$325.00  
Park Hall— \$20.00  
Home Purpose— \$195.00  
Missions— \$10.00

#### ***Francis Doud***

Missions— \$10.00  
Home Purpose— \$25.00  
Church Technology— \$10.00  
Hot Lunch— \$20.00  
Electronic Sign— \$905.00

#### ***Marian Weiss***

- a donation was made to the Endowment Fund by Gary & Janice Weiss

### In Honor

#### ***Willie Wirth's 90th Birthday***

- a donation was made to Home Purpose by Denise & Fred Hecht

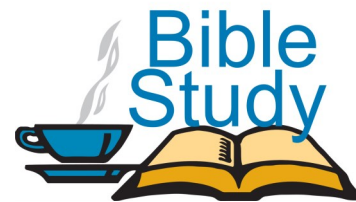


## **Lutherans Laymen's League**

### MEETING

Monday, January 15th  
Church Overflow Room  
7 P.M.

Everyone is invited to join our meeting where **Pastor Auernhamer** will lead a Bible study and our LLL Treasurer, **Tom Daenzer**, will bring refreshments. We look forward to seeing you there.



**PASSION  
DRAMA  
SIGN UP ON  
PG. 7!**

## 2024 Church News

2024 Envelope Boxes are in members church mailboxes or on the table in the foyer. Please do not use these envelopes until January 1st, 2024.

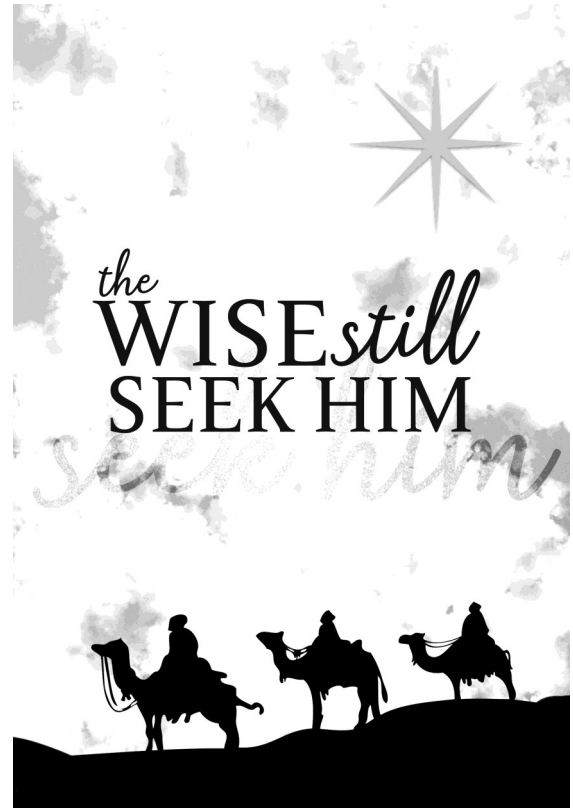
Offering Record Sheets are available for 2024.

Installation of Newly Elected and Appointed Officers will be December 31st, 2023.

### 2024 Church Directory

A form has been placed in members mailboxes to be completed and returned to Lois M. Bickel's mailbox or email (2024CDRichvile@gmail.com). Forms are available in the church office or table in the foyer.

Should your information ever change, please send an update to the church office. Thank you for your cooperation!



✠ Financial Report as of		11/30/23	
<b>MISSIONS</b>			
Missions Collected YTD	Goal \$50,000	\$	22,986.89
Non Budget Missions Collected YTD		\$	573.00
<b>HOME PURPOSE</b>			
		<b>MTD</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Home Purpose Balance as of	07/01/23		\$ (112,077.61)
Home Purpose Income		\$ 122,201.02	\$ 528,573.02
Home Purpose Expenses		\$ 176,459.76	\$ 633,956.93
Thrivent Choice in-H.P. \$	260.00	\$ (54,258.74)	\$ (105,383.91)
School Income		\$ 3,215.57	\$ 71,391.91
School Expenses		\$ 8,784.57	\$ 51,763.26
		\$ (5,569.00)	\$ 19,628.65
Child Care/Preschool Income		\$ 45,516.30	\$ 242,690.75
Child Care/Preschool Expenses		\$ 60,692.46	\$ 229,856.01
Thrivent Choice in Childcare \$	12.00	\$ (15,176.16)	\$ 12,834.74
Home Purpose Balance (includes Child Care/Preschool/School)			\$ (184,998.13)
New Construction Balance as of	07/01/23	<b>MTD</b>	\$ (46,394.50)
Income	Goal \$200,000	\$ 6,365.00	\$ 27,600.04
Expenses		\$ -	\$ 48,121.85
New Construction Fund Balance		\$ 6,365.00	\$ (66,916.31)
Franklin Ave Mission	Goal \$5,000	\$ 120.00	\$ 1,000.00
Capital Improvement Balance as of	07/01/23	<b>MTD</b>	\$ 197,377.30
Collected	Goal \$80,000	\$ 4,820.00	\$ 44,679.00
Expenses		\$ -	\$ 77,318.33
Capital Improvement Balance		\$ 4,820.00	\$ 164,737.97





## *Notes from the Music Director*



*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
because He has anointed Me to proclaim the good news to the poor.  
He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim  
the year of the Lord's favor."  
(Luke 4:18-19)*

In Luke's gospel, this quote from Isaiah is the first public statement made by Jesus. Here Isaiah briefly gives a job description for the coming Messiah:

- (1) Proclaim good news;
- (2) Give liberty to the captives (including those captive to sin);
- (3) Give sight to the blind;
- (4) Proclaim the year of the Lord.

During the season of Epiphany, we will hear and learn about how Jesus went about doing these things. Of course, we will also be singing about these things! Most of the hymns in the Epiphany section refer to several different bible stories. As you sing these hymns, challenge yourself to find the story or stories that you are singing. (Hint: our hymnal contains bible references at the end of each hymn; look these up when you get home!)

One hymn that summarizes this job description is LSB 398. How many connections between this hymn and the Isaiah passage above can you locate?



*Hail to the Lord's anointed, Great David's greater Son!  
Hail in the time appointed, His reign on earth begun!  
He comes to break oppression, To set the captive free,  
To take away transgression And rule in equity.*



*He comes with rescue speedy To those who suffer wrong,  
To help the poor and needy And bid the weak be strong;  
To give them songs for sighing, Their darkness turn to light,  
Whose souls, condemned and dying, Were precious in His sight.*

The remaining verses of this hymn describe the coming of the Magi, the establishment and growth of the kingdom of God, and the eternal nature of the kingdom. Jesus accomplished the fulfillment of all of these prophecies during His lifetime, and we recall this fulfillment during Epiphany.

As you come to church during this Epiphany season, expect to hear about prophecies fulfilled. Jesus is the promised Messiah, and His deeds and His words all demonstrate this fact.

May God bless us all as we worship Him during this season!

-Dr. Jon Eifert

# Stewardship Minute

## WHERE ARE YOU STORING YOUR TREASURES?

Jesus spent more time talking about money and possessions than about heaven and hell combined! In fact, 15% of everything Christ said relates to this topic.

Our approach to money and possessions is central to our spiritual lives. Consider Luke 3 vs. 11-14 where John the Baptist (a forerunner to Jesus) spoke to the people about producing fruit in keeping with repentance. He provided three exhortations :

- 1) share food and clothing with those in need
- 2) to the tax collectors he said, don't collect more money than required
- 3) to the soldiers he said, Don't extort money or accuse people falsely, and be content with your pay.

Consider many of Jesus' parables such as the widow with two small coins, or Zacchaeus's new approach to money proving that his heart had been transformed, or the rich man who spent all his wealth on himself who Jesus called a fool, who was rich on himself but not rich toward God, or the young rich man who's money was his idol and not willing to give significantly to the poor, in order to have greater lasting treasure in heaven. Jesus, of course is our #1 Eternal Treasure!

Remember this: You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead. According to Jesus, storing up earthly treasures isn't simply wrong. It's just plain stupid. Of course, there are many things good things God wants us to do with our money and possessions, like providing for our own family's basic and essential needs.

Remember this :Serve God by serving others. It's in the giving, that we find lasting success. Pray for wisdom on how to best serve Him with your time, talents and treasure so you may surely store up treasure in heaven.

-Board of Stewardship

## *Planning For Peace Of Mind*

ESTATE PLANNING WORKSHOP

SUNDAY 1/7/2024

NOON

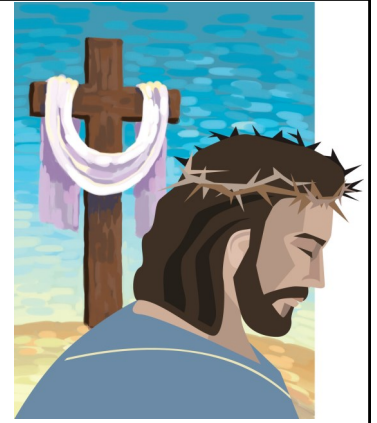
The Board of Stewardship is hosting a workshop for all adults age 18 and older. It will be held in the overflow room starting with a pizza buffet lunch. It is financially supported by Thrivent Action Team funds.

There is no charge for you to attend! A workbook will be provided and facilitated for you. You'll be able to complete a Will, Healthcare Power of Attorney, and other important documents. This is a huge cost savings for a basic estate plan. It should only take about 90 minutes.

You must be registered to attend. There is a signup sheet in the foyer and you need to do it by **1/5/2024**. Any questions-call Dave Janson, the Stewardship Board Chairman at (989)550-2156.



# Passion Drama



Dear St. Michael's Congregation,

We are once again making plans for this year's Passion Drama. This year's drama will be on **March 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>** with Easter being March 31st.

We are asking for volunteers to start the sign-up process so we can make sure we fill all the needed roles. This event is a great way to reach out to others in the community, to welcome them into our church family, and show them how great our God is. It takes a large part of our church to put the drama on. We have lots of different positions open for volunteering, but the biggest need is cast members. Don't be afraid to take the leap into signing up for a cast member position, you will be amazed at how easy and rewarding it is. We can use people of all ages, so go ahead and sign your whole family up.

Also, this is not restricted to just members of our church, invite your friends and family from other churches as well. We will also need lots of cookies to pass out after the shows. We are including the sign-up sheets so you can start signing up early. You can fill these out and put the slips in Joshua Douds mailbox at church or email us at our new email address [stmichaelspassiondrama@gmail.com](mailto:stmichaelspassiondrama@gmail.com), or call Josh at (989)325-2059.

Have a blessed New Year and we look forward to hearing from you.

In Christ,

Joshua Doud

**Passion Drama Sign-up sheets for March 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 2024.** These can be returned to Joshua Doud's Mailbox at church or emailed to [stmichaelspassiondrama@gmail.com](mailto:stmichaelspassiondrama@gmail.com), or you can call **989-325-2059** to sign up. Please write names of volunteers in the box under your desired task(s)

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Cast	Set up	Tear down	Cookies	Greeters	Kitchen
-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-

St. Michael's Lutheran Church  
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