

# ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

118 State Street Harrisburg, PA 17101-1024 (717)234-0092

December 2011

Volume 34, Number 12

## The Archangel

*You are welcome here with us*

A RECONCILING IN CHRIST CONGREGATION

### A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR HAWKINS

Dear Friends,

The first Sunday in Advent is November 27<sup>th</sup>. On that day there will be only 28 shopping days until Christmas.

Does that make you nervous? If so you are not alone. For many people the whole rush to the holidays, and all the drama of the holiday season makes these end of the calendar year festivities something to be tolerated and endured, rather than something to be celebrated.

I believe there is an antidote that can cure these holiday's of their hyperactivity and their unnecessary drama. That antidote is a dose of biblical simplicity and generosity.

At St. Michael we will be exploring the biblical principles of simplicity and generosity through a resource offered by the ELCA called, *Make It Simple*.

We will hear about these biblical principles of simplicity and generosity in worship throughout the four Sundays of Advent; and, we will discuss these ideas around table fellowship on Wednesday evenings in Advent.

Here are some excerpts from the "Make It Simple" resource that will shape our proclamation and study during the four weeks of Advent:

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#### Week 1: Following Jesus

Matthew 6:25-33 *Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life...But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Jesus comes to us in the midst of our fears and announces—"Do not worry! God has provided for all of your needs!" What does it mean for us to live in relationship with Jesus? How might our daily discipleship help us to live more simply, trusting in God's abundance?

#### Week 2: Facing the Truth

Mark 4:37-41 *A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the seas, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"*

Why is it so hard to MAKE IT SIMPLE? We face daily a complex world of our own making. We feel pushed and pulled by forces beyond our control. And when things feel like they are out of our control, we often feel afraid. We become like the disciples in the boat with Jesus. We are afraid that we are perishing, tossed about by the "wind and the waves" in our lives.

Look at all that God does in our lives. Where do we focus? On the wind and waves? Can we focus instead on what God provides? And how do our choices matter for what we see?

### Week 3: Acting Together

John 13:34-35 *I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*

Jesus commands us to love one another—he calls us into relationships, he calls us into his community. His command is to love one another “as he has loved us!” In this community we move into relationship with Jesus and one another. This truly is a radical command—in our culture of individualism, none of us has enough. We all are driven to get more. But in this community of Jesus’ disciples, we begin to see that God provides us with more than enough!

### Week 4: Sharing Enough

Philippians 4:11b-13 *I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

If we focus on the scarcity, we never have enough. When we focus on God’s abundant blessings, there is more than we can ever imagine. Recognizing God’s abundant blessings we experience Paul’s message to the Philippians in our own lives. We can be content with what we have because we know that we are blessed and can “do all things through him who strengthens us.”

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This Advent Season I invite you to join us at St. Michael to look at the biblical ideas of simplicity and generosity, and how living these principals can add blessing to our lives. Look for the schedule of events on the web site by following the “Calendar” link on the homepage.

Grace and Peace

*pr. Larry Hawkins*



## THE GIFTS OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON AWAIT YOU AT ST. MICHAEL

*Each time you attend a service, join in a fellowship reception, and volunteer to assist in making the Advent Season of services and events meaningful and special to all, you prepare to celebrate God’s greatest gift of all to His world on Christmas day, His son, Jesus Christ. So mark your calendars and make plans to experience the true meaning of Christmas every time you walk through the doors of St. Michael.*

*Share our welcoming gifts of faith and fellowship. Bring your family. Bring your friends.*

**November 27 – Advent Begins** – Join us this day for the 10:00 Advent Service followed by....

**November 27, December 4, 11, & 18** – The Great O’ Antiphons Services each Sunday at 5:00 p.m. – This marks the fourth year of these historic services. Join your fellow congregants for a time of prayer on these evenings.

**November 30, December 7, 14, & 21** – The Mid Week Advent Lite Suppers, Table Talk Devotions, and Services begin these evenings at 6:00 p.m. – For those who have attended in past years, you will be anxious to be a part of this again. For those who have never attended, plan to make this new worship evening a part of the Advent Season. Each evening at the conclusion of the 6: P.M. service you will feel the meaning and spirit of Christmas enrich your week.



**December 11 – the Annual Congregational Meeting and Luncheon** – It is that time of the year when St. Michael members remain after the service to come together to set the business for the coming year. We will choose council members, synod representatives, hear the annual reports from our committees, approve the 2012 budget, address additional agenda items, and then gather again in the Fellowship Hall for one of Lindsay Mills’ and his helpers delicious meals. It will be a perfect combination of business and fellowship.



**December 24 at 9:00 a.m.** – Please keep this date open to decorate the church for the *12 Days of Christmas*. Many hands make the work go faster, so let's help each other prepare our church for the season of Christmas!

**December 24- Our Christmas Eve Night** begins at 6:30 p.m. with St. Michael's traditional musical recital. Services begin at 7:00 p.m. and are followed by a Holiday Appetizer, Champagne and Dessert Reception given by Sue McDonald and Chris Persson. All are welcome. Plan on bringing family and friends!

**December 25 – 10 a.m. Christmas Day Sunday Services** will celebrate the birth of Christ. After the service Pastor Hawkins and his family will host a Fellowship meal. Plan to attend this special service and time of Fellowship.

**December 28 – 6:30 p.m. An evening of Christmas Caroling** is planned. Join in the fun as we go caroling to spread Christmas cheer to members at home. All are welcome as we depart from St. Michael Church this Wednesday. After visiting the homes of some of our members, we will continue the celebration of the Christmas season back at the church with some cookies and hot chocolate! Dan, our Director of Music, will provide the carols, but he promises only the *familiar and, especially, the favorites will be sung!*



## ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS TO BEGIN NEW BIBLE STUDY

**On Sunday, December 4** the adult Sunday school class will begin a new Augsburg Bible Studies course entitled *God Establishes a Faithful People*. This study focuses on God's covenant, promise, protection, and redemption. We will explore God's establishment of a faithful people from the covenant with Abraham through to the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise in Jesus Christ and the church as the heir of the promise to Abraham.

We begin with three sessions on God's initiative in establishing the covenant with Abraham. Abraham is the recipient of God's faithful, caring guiding, and blessing activity. Abraham responds in faith and obedience to God's call, even to the point of willingness to sacrifice that which is most dear to him. God's blessing through Abraham extends to all the nations of the earth.

In all sessions, we consider how God's covenantal promises are given to us and how we respond in faith to God's acts of redemption and liberation from sin. Especially, we focus on justification by grace through faith, God's adoption of us as children, and the indwelling of the Spirit in our lives and in the life of the church today.

Join us each Sunday morning beginning at 8:30 in the downstairs office.

**December 4 – *A Blessing for All Nations, Genesis 12:1-9***

**December 11 – *A Promise to Abram, Genesis 15:1-21***

**December 18 – *The Lord Provides, Genesis 22:1-14***

## “THE CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE”

### A ST. MICHAEL TRADITION TO BE FOUND AGAIN THIS YEAR IN OUR FELLOWSHIP HALL



Susan Wesley, chair of the Ministry to Society (MTS) committee reports: “The year 2011 has been a great year for some, a difficult year for others, and a mixed bag for most others in the middle. However, regardless of where we are in our own personal lives, we can still be grateful for all we've been given. The MTS committee has decided to approach the sharing of our gifts in a different way this Christmas season. From the Director of Disaster Services, American Red Cross, we have been informed of a husband and wife and their family who are living in Royalton. They had to evacuate their home during the recent flooding of the Swatara Creek and Susquehanna River. Through their unimaginable tragedy the couple has lost almost everything they owned, but in spite of that have returned to occupy their home without the benefit of any flood insurance. To make matters worse, the husband has cancer and is receiving chemotherapy treatments.

The faithful members of St. Michael have been called upon numerous times this year to assist in support of a variety of projects and programs. The MTS committee comes to you one last time in 2011 with an invitation and opportunity to help this family.

Because this couple's needs are so extensive, members of MTS we will be meeting with them to gather more information in conjunction with an inventory of what items are most essential to help them in their recovery. More information will be forthcoming in the weekly bulletin.”

## FROM THE ST. MICHAEL TECHNOLOGY GROUP

Beginning in September the St. Michael Technology Group has held a series of five meetings. They noted the successful changeover to another telephone and internet provider, as well as a smooth transition to a new website host and web address in the early fall. Although transparent to most of us, the changes allow for some great potential enhancements in the coming months.

The other success so far has been the use of Skype as a means of bringing our Sunday Service to our members unable to attend in real time. Coupled with the special ministry of those who are delivering home Communion, participants on Skype can see the Communion elements departing the altar for delivery to our shut-ins. This combination of the high tech with the spiritual truly exceeds the expectations of those involved in making this combination a reality.

Members may have noticed that we are now archiving on line past issues of both *The Archangel* and the Sunday bulletins for later use. See <http://stmikehbg.com/archives.html>. Thanks to our Web Mistress, Janine Laurent, for making this progress a reality, not to mention her faithful service over the years in establishing our internet presence on the Website.

Expect to see further enhancements to the content of our current web site with a long term goal of a total web site upgrade, now in the planning stages. And those with an interest or aptitude for technology and communications are welcome to participate in this open membership group.

## FROM THE THANK YOU CORNER OF THE NEWSLETTER

### FALL 2011 WORKDAY SUCCESSES

On three beautiful November days, fourteen members of St. Michael generously gave of their time and personal talents to do yard work and repairs at the homes of Tom and Diana Pate and Ken and Pat Harm. Needless to say these church members were so very appreciative.

Not to brag, but things looked really spruced up when our workers were finished. Sorry there are no photos to share with everyone at St. Michael. Guess you'll just have to wait until the next time we have a workday so you can see for yourselves.

Again, we send many thanks to those who pitched in to help.

### TWO FUNDRAISER "IMPRESSIVE" DOLLARS TO REPORT

- Freewill offerings from the *October 30th Reformation Sunday Pork and Sauerkraut Lunch* totaled \$330. These offerings were given to Downtown Daily Bread.
- The *November 8th Election Day Soup and Bake Sale* made over \$800. Susquehanna Harbor Safe Haven was the beneficiary of 10% of these fundraising dollars. In addition candy sales totaled \$50 on this day. Many thanks to all who helped make this a success!

## BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES CELEBRATED IN DECEMBER

Martin Luther purportedly began each day reminding himself, "I have been baptized!" By water and the Spirit, each of us who are members of the Church has been called to faithfully live as the Body of Christ in the World. We rejoice with the following members of St. Michael Church who celebrate the anniversary of their Baptism during the month of December:

Guy Kehler

December 1

Michael Winegar

December 6

Karl Hawkins

December 25



## COUNCIL ACTIONS—NOVEMBER 14TH MEETING

- Approved the 2012 Budget presented to the council by the Financial Resources Committee with an income of \$244,065 and expenses of \$181,792 to be submitted to the congregation for approval at the December 11, 2011 Annual Congregational Meeting
- In response to recommendations by the various St. Michael fundraising groups directed the percentages of monies raised and offering designations of five year end fundraisers to the following:
  - Baskets & Bagels – Helping Hands Ministries (10%)
  - Election Day Soup & Bake Sale – Susquehanna Harbor Safe Haven (10%)
  - Advent Envelope Giving – Family Promise (100%)
  - Christmas Candy – Helping Hands Ministries (10%)
  - Christmas Wreaths – Loaves of Love (10%)
- Allowed Helping Hands Ministries to post a Wish List in the Fellowship Hall to solicit for items needed for their program participants (The list would include disinfectant wipes, Clorox, Lysol spray, coffee creamer, etc.)
- Accepted the Nominating Committee’s slate of members to be candidates for church council election at the 2011 Annual Congregational Meeting. The list includes candidates for council: Leslie Van Dam, Susan Will, Guy Kehler, and Mike Ennis – Representatives to the 2012 Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly: Norma Ickes and Lennie Whitcomb – 2012 Nominating Committee: Leslie Van Dam, Wayne Noss, and Norma Ickes
- Approved to recommend for approval to the congregation at the December 12 Annual Meeting to renew St. Michael’s Family Promise Hosting Commitment
- Approved a Building Use Request from member Elizabeth Parker for December 3, 2011

### TREASURER’S REPORT: OCTOBER 2011

October Income	\$12,571.91	YTD Income	\$113,069.35
October Expense	(\$12,313.41)	YTD Expense	(\$139,248.22)
Difference	\$258.50	Difference	(\$26,178.87)

### STEWARDSHIP STEW

December is a month of giving and receiving. It all started with God’s greatest gift of sending his Son on that first Christmas to be our Savior and Lord. John 3:16 (NRSV) says it so clearly: **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”** In the first letter of John it states: **“See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.”** (1 John 3:1 NRSV)

As the Holy Spirit helps us to grow each day as the children of God, we also grow in our loving and giving, because loving and giving are two important characteristics of our God. Just like children imitate their parents, so we also are to imitate God. God delights in loving and giving. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments give overwhelming evidence of this truth. **“In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”** (Acts 20:35 NRSV)

Where do you find yourself this December as it relates to loving and giving? Many Christians experience how true these words of Jesus really are. In this season of giving and receiving where do you find your greater joy? Is it in giving or in receiving? Are you among those people who get more joy and excitement from searching for and finding the right gifts for the special people in their lives? Many Christians really do enjoy giving more than receiving.

During this season of giving and receiving take some time to reflect on the words of Jesus that **“it is more blessed to give than to receive”** and pray for the Holy Spirit’s power to grow in the grace of giving. And may that giving be more than just selecting gifts for those you love. May that giving extend to supporting the work of the Lord through our church and other charitable organizations as you give generously of your time, abilities, and financial resources to bring the love of Jesus into the lives of others.

Blessed Christmas and may this Christmas be a time of joy as you reflect on the greatest gift of all—God’s only Son, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. And in appreciation of and response to that best gift of all may you also experience the truth that it is really more blessed to give than to receive.

# FEEDING THE BODY: LIVING ABUNDANTLY

Saturday - March 17, 2012

St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
Hanover, PA



David Lose  
Keynote presenter

Nourishing the body for Christian living with a menu for mission through worship, conversation and learning opportunities.

- Faith Formation
- Evangelism/Leadership
- Family, Youth, and Children's Ministry
- Global Mission
- Stewardship
- Social Outreach
- Worship and Music

*Workshop presenters are exemplary leaders in their field from the territory of this synod and beyond, including:*

**David Lose (keynoter and workshop presenter)** is the Director of the Center for Biblical Preaching at Luther Seminary where he also teaches with amazing students and colleagues. Author of the popular books [Making Sense of Scripture](#) and [Making Sense of the Christian Faith](#), David speaks throughout the U.S. and abroad on preaching, leadership, Christian faith in a postmodern world and biblical interpretation.

**Mark Mummert (workshop presenter and worship leader)** is Director of Worship at Christ the King Evangelical Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas. In addition, he serves as organist for the Bach Society of Houston, a ministry of Christ the King. Prior to his call to Houston, he was Seminary Musician at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Mark is a composer of the first setting of Holy Communion in the core worship resource of the ELCA, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. To learn more, visit <http://www.markmummert.com/>

**Linda Staats (workshop presenter)** is a passionate speaker and national workshop leader for passing on faith through the church-home connection, cross-generational and milestones ministry. Staats believes storybook Bibles are the best Bibles for people of all ages to learn and live the biblical narrative. She serves on the Book of Faith Advocate Leadership team, the staff of the Rocky Mountain Synod and was a course dean and narrator for the video "Equipping Households of Faith." Staats holds a M.S. degree in human development and the family.

*A pre-event blog will be launched in January!*



## DECEMBER READINGS AND PRAYERS

### December 4—Second Sunday of Advent

*Readings:* Isaiah 40:1–11      Psalm 85:1–2, 8–13      2 Peter 3:8–15a      Mark 1:1–8

**Prayer of the Day:** Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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### December 11—Third Sunday of Advent

*Readings:* Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11      Psalm 126      1 Thessalonians 5:16–24      John 1:6–8, 19–28

**Prayer of the Day:** Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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### December 18—Fourth Sunday of Advent

*Readings:* 2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16      Luke 1:46b–55      Romans 16:25–27      Luke 1:26–38

**Prayer of the Day:** Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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### December 24—Nativity of Our Lord/Christmas Eve

*Readings:* Isaiah 9:2–7      Psalm 96      Titus 2:11–14      Luke 2:1–14 [15–20]

**Prayer of the Day:** Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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### December 25—Nativity of Our Lord/Christmas Day

*Readings:* Isaiah 62:6–12      Psalm 97      Titus 3:4–7      Luke 2:[1–7] 8–20

**Prayer of the Day:** All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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### December 26—Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

*Readings:* 2 Chronicles 24:17–22      Psalm 17:1–9, 15      Acts 6:8—7:2a; 7:51–60      Matthew 23:34–39

**Prayer of the Day:** We give you thanks, O Lord of glory, for the example of Stephen the first martyr, who looked to heaven and prayed for his persecutors. Grant that we also may pray for our enemies and seek forgiveness for those who hurt us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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### December 27—John, Apostle and Evangelist

*Readings:* 2 Chronicles 24:17–22      Psalm 17:1–9, 15      Acts 6:8—7:2a; 7:51–60      Matthew 23:34–39

**Prayer of the Day:** Merciful God, through John the apostle and evangelist you have revealed the mysteries of your Word made flesh. Let the brightness of your light shine on your church, so that all your people, instructed in the holy gospel, may walk in the light of your truth and attain eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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### December 28—The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

*Readings:* Jeremiah 31:15–17      Psalm 124      1 Peter 4:12–19      Matthew 2:13–18

**Prayer of the Day:** We remember today, O God, the slaughter of the innocent children of Bethlehem by order of King Herod. Receive into the arms of your mercy all innocent victims. By your great might frustrate the designs of evil tyrants and establish your rule of justice, love, and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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### December 31—New Years Eve

*Readings:* Ecclesiastes 3:1–13      Psalm 8      Revelation 21:1–6a      Matthew 25:31–46

**Prayer of the Day:** Eternal God, you have placed us in a world of space and time, and through the events of our lives you bless us with your love. Grant that in the new year we may know your presence, see your love at work, and live in the light of the event that gives us joy forever—the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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## LEGEND OF THE ADVENT TREE

“Oh, how lovely,” exclaimed Marie Pfuhl Froelich, “it’s an Advent Tree! We must take this idea home for St. Michael’s.”

Marie was the daughter of Pastor Johann Georg Pfuhl, who had come to serve St. Michael’s in 1876. Now she was visiting Germany, the land of her ancestors, and was captivated by what she saw. It was a tiny living tree which had been brought into the church, representing the living Christ. Hung on the branches were red apples, a reminder of salvation history and the story of Adam and Eve.

Each day, she learned, an additional candle was lighted until the tree shone with brightness as Advent gave way to Christmas.

After Christmas, the tree was planted outside the church to remind all who passed that Christ is alive—and that we must declare this to all people in all places.

When Marie returned to St. Michael’s—this all took place sometime before 1911, when her father died—she carefully described the Advent Tree. It was soon adopted and continues to this day in the nave of St. Michael Church.

*The Advent Tree is sponsored in memory of mother, Beverly McIntosh by Tim and Tina Morgan.*



A complete list of those members and friends of St. Michael who sponsored Christmas Wreaths, Poinsettias, Roping and the Christmas Tree will be published in the January 2012 issue of the newsletter. Thank you.

ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN CHURCH—118 STATE STREET—HARRISBURG PA 17101

### Sunday Schedule

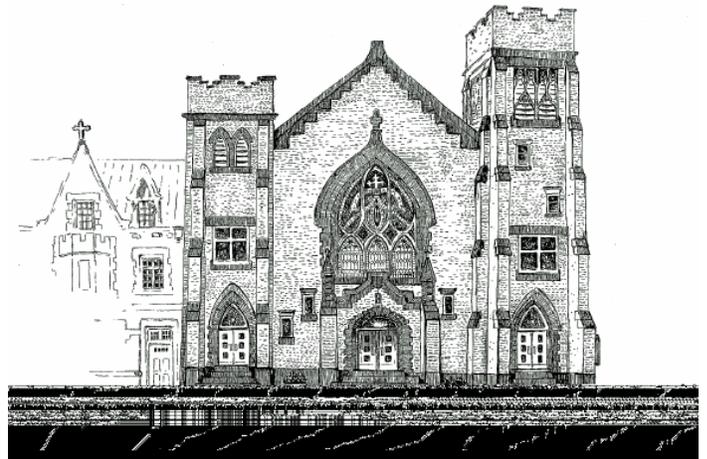
8:30 a.m. Sunday School  
10:00 a.m. Service of Word and Sacrament  
11:15 a.m. Fellowship

### The Staff

The Reverend Lawrence Hawkins, Pastor  
Cecilia F. Price, Secretary  
Daniel W. Deitzel III, Director of Music  
Fran Zalek, Custodian

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Office Hours Monday and Friday 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



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God's work. Our hands.