

July 2021

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For you were foreigners...

by Pastor Ali Ferin

Dear St. Michael's Family,
With how devastating this past year has been for our community and country, it's tempting to keep our focus inward, neglecting the cries of the global community. "There is enough to deal with at home," we might tell ourselves when we see a news story of migrants desperately trying to cross the border, or wars breaking out on the other side of the world.

The heart of the Gospel calls us out of our inward focus to serve our neighbors. Christ draws near to those who are suffering, and we are taught in Matthew 25 that "Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me." Additionally, what if the remedy for our own anguishing is the care and compassion for those yearning for a place to call home?

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"The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God." - Leviticus 19:34



The haunting poem, "Home" by Warsan Shire, illuminates the painful realities of those seeking refuge. A portion of the poem reads:

*no one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well
your neighbors running faster than you...*

*you have to understand,
that no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land
no one burns their palms
under trains
beneath carriages
no one spends days and nights in the
stomach of a truck
feeding on newspaper
unless the miles travelled
means something more than journey.
no one crawls under fences
no one wants to be beaten
pitied*

*no one chooses refugee camps
or strip searches where your
body is left aching
or prison,
because prison is safer
than a city of fire...*

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Since last January, a team of St. Michael's members has been discerning if our congregation is being called into accompaniment of a refugee family being resettled in the Twin Cities. Last year, the Minnesota Council of Churches contacted our church, asking if we could consider refugee co-sponsorship, a four-to-six month commitment to accompany and support a refugee family that has newly arrived to the area. At the June Council meeting, the Social Ministry committee brought this hope of official co-sponsorship to the leadership team and they voted in favor of becoming a co-sponsoring congregation.

What does this mean?

Over the course of the summer, we will be building a team of 8-10 people to prepare our congregation for when a family might arrive. We will prepare volunteers to help with transportation, meals, community integration, education, etc. and deepen our education and awareness on refugee resettlement. We anticipate that much of our outreach ministry will intersect with this work, such as our many collection drives and relationships with community partners such as Bridging and Keystone. But it will also be an opportunity for us to expand our ministry of welcome and hospitality, to truly embody our values of "Expansive Welcome" and "Generous Hospitality".

We will not know where the family will be coming from, or when they will be coming here until one to four weeks before their arrival, so it is important that we prepare now so we can respond when the call comes. Celebrating and welcoming these new friends at the airport is but one small piece of this important work that will span their first months as community members!

How can I help?

There will be many ways to support our refugee resettlement. We are still in need of members to join the leadership team to help organize volunteers and needs communicated by the Minnesota Council of Churches. If you are down-sizing or doing some summer cleaning of furniture/home goods, consider hanging onto those items until this fall! If you know already that you want to provide a warm meal for their first night in the United States, let Pastor Ali know!

Some basics on refugee resettlement from the Minnesota Council of Churches

Commitment to Co-sponsor...

- ▶ 4-6 month commitment
- ▶ No financial obligation
- ▶ Collaborative model with on-going communication and support
- ▶ Core group of 8-10 people, organized into teams, recruiting help from other volunteers.



Social Ministry

Social Ministry calendar

Panera Bread Ministry Daily

July 5 Rezek House Meal

July 11 Sandwich Making for Union Gospel Mission

July 13 Mobile Food Distribution

July 19 Loaves and Fishes



Rezek House yard clean-up —what a way to spend a steamy, Sunday afternoon!

Thank you to those who volunteered in June for the Rezek shelter yard clean up date! The weeding, mulching, and caring for the outdoor space is much appreciated by the youth and staff at Rezek House Youth Shelter.



On Sunday, June 13, a group of hearty St. Michael's volunteers (including Shirley Friberg, Dan, Seth, Lucas, and Ian Grewe; Ron LaFond; and Joe and Mary Nosek) spent a warm afternoon digging weeds, trimming plants, and spreading mulch on the grounds at Rezek House. Rezek, located in the St. Paul Midway area, is a Lutheran Social Service facility for youth experiencing homelessness.



Like to cook? Make a meal for Rezek House residents

Looking for a great reason to use your new church cookbook? Consider making a meal for the 15 residents of Rezek House, a youth homeless shelter in the Midway neighborhood of St. Paul. The first Monday of each month we provide a meal for the residents so they can enjoy a family style meal together. Information and sign-ups are listed at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c084aaba72fa6fd0-20202> or contact Pastor Ali to sign up and learn more.

Refugee Resettlement Team forming

Are you interested in serving on the leadership team for our refugee resettlement efforts? Contact Pastor Ali to get involved. The team will begin meeting this summer in preparation for welcoming a family to the area this fall. (See Pastor Ali's letter on pages 1 and 2 of this *Messenger* for more.)

Help out at Loaves and Fishes in July

Volunteers are needed to help with this month's Loaves and Fishes meal on July 19. Learn more and sign up at the link below and click, "Volunteer Opportunities" <https://www.stmichaelselca.com/local.html>



More ways to serve

Habitat for Humanity 2021 build update:

This year we will be working on a renovation of an existing home in White Bear Lake. This house was acquired by Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity through purchase on the open market. The project will be mainly interior work including renovating the kitchen, gutting the basement, and adding a bathroom in the basement. There will also be some exterior site work.



Learn more and sign up at

<https://www.stmichaelselca.com/habitat-for-humanity.html>



Habitat build at a glance:

- Overall project dates: June 28-August 20
- St. Michael's focus week: August 9-13
- Women only week: July 12-15
- Work-day time: 8:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. Volunteers are asked to show up on time and stay the entire work-day. Split shifts are not allowed
- Location: 2431 Elm Dr., White Bear Lake

Looking for ways to serve your own congregation?

With church activities coming to life again and in-person worship back both in the sanctuary and outdoors, St. Michael's offers many ways for volunteers to get involved in congregational life.

Visit Sign-up Genius to see the opportunities awaiting you. The quickest way to get there is to visit St. Michael's website: stmichaelselca.com and click on the *Volunteer Sign-up* icon.

Life of the congregation updates

Our prayers of joy surround:

- Eimy Sofia Rodriquez Solis on her baptism on May 22
- Waylon Monte Marquis on his baptism on June 6
- Kaarina Maki and Tony Salazar Mejia on their marriage June 5



News about St. Michael's staff

Farewell for Jon Bates

As Jon Bates, Director of Children, Youth, & Family Ministries, continues to plan for nursing school, his end date at St. Michael's has been moved to July 30. We will celebrate his ministry on July 25 and July 26 in worship and a special time of fellowship following worship.



St. Michael's Church Administrator update--"Officially" welcoming Lisa Koland

Over the last five months Lisa Koland and Mary Nosek have stepped in to serve St. Michael's in the role of office administration on a temporary basis. We give great thanks to both of them for serving so faithfully after Mary Gail Hadley's retirement in January.

We also are now pleased to announce that Lisa Koland will be stepping into the role of church administrator permanently. We look forward to taking time to thank Mary and Lisa later this summer, and celebrating with Lisa as she moves into the position of church administrator on a full-time basis beginning in July.



CYF hiring update

In May, a team of Education and Youth Committee members served on the search team that interviewed first round of interviews with candidates applying for the Children, Youth and Families (CYF) Director position.

At the time of this publication, we are preparing for a smaller number of candidates to interview with staff and personnel. We are hopeful to provide an update on this process at the end of July.

As we continue to hold Jon in prayer during his transition into nursing school, we also hold CYF Committee and the children and youth of our church in prayer as they anticipate welcoming a new leader!

Hiring for audio visual/ communications assistant

Over the past six weeks, we have interviewed candidates to serve as Communications Associate. We are finalizing steps now in the process of hiring a final candidate.

ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY MINISTRIES
 2020-2021 PROGRAM YEAR

Update on Jon Bates' Resignation from St. Michael's
 St. Michael's Church Community!

This past March I had informed the congregation that my role as the Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries would be coming to an end this August. After having an initial day of orientation for nursing school, I realized that I had to change my resignation date. Through additional discernment and a conversation with Pastor Ali, I came to the decision of ending my role at St. Michael's on Friday, July 30. This new date will give me some time to breathe between my role at St. Michael's and as I transition to beginning nursing school this fall.

With this new transition, the ministries that we have planned through August will remain the same as we have phenomenal people continuing the momentum with even hopes that there can be overlap between myself and the next person.

If you have any questions about anything within the next month or so, please do not hesitate to reach out! I'm a text, call, email, or coffee away!

Godspeed,



Jon Bates

Here's what's happening in July

Service Weekends - 6th-12th Graders

Saturday, July 10 and Sunday, July 11 - Calvary Lutheran Church and Bahá'í Center of Minneapolis
 Saturday, August 13, and Sunday, August 14 - Valley Fair and St. Paul.

Middle school and high school students will be serving alongside organizations both this month and next month. We will be meeting together in spots across the Twin Cities Metro.



It's not too late to sign-up, but please do so as soon as possible to ensure that you have a spot! Contact Jon Bates at youth@stmichaelselca.com for more information.

Friday Flock - Nursery - 5th graders

Friday, July 9 ; Friday, August 12
 6:00-8:30pm

Children of the congregation are invited for an evening of fun, faith formation, and a dinner at the church. The summer's theme will be *In our Neighborhood*, with some help from our friend, Mr. Rogers. Our K-5th graders will be outdoors, and three-and-four year-olds will be indoors for Friday Flock .

Children, Youth, and Family Ministries, Continued

Wait, there's more...

Camp Amnicon - 6-12th grade camping & canoeing trip

Sunday, July 25 - Friday, July 30

This July, we have a group of students heading up to Camp Amnicon in Superior to be in community and canoe down the Flambeau River. The group will arrive at camp on Sunday, July 25. Keep the group in your prayers as they float down the river, enjoy God's creation, and are guided by the Camp Amnicon Staff.

Save the Dates:



Follow us on
Instagram and
Facebook!

Save these dates!

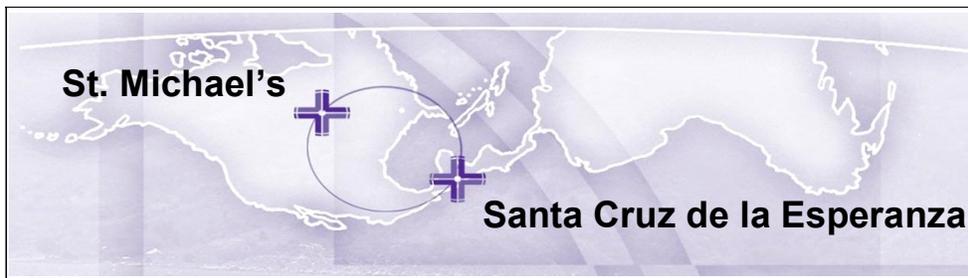
- Wednesday, August 16, from 7-8:00 p.m. - CYF volunteer training
- Sunday, September 12, from 10-10:50 a.m. - Rally Day
- Sunday, September 19 from 10-10:50 a.m. - First day of Sunday School (In-person and indoors!)

Watch out for more information as we return to the building for Sunday School and opportunities for all ages. If you're interested in being a volunteer for our CYF Ministries this upcoming year, please reach out to Jon Bates (youth@stmichaelselca.com).

To learn more about all activities listed on these pages, visit:

stmichaelselca.com/cyf or

E-mail Jon Bates at youth@stmichelselca.com



Our Guatemala Partnership

Who is my family?

By Sandra Eliason

The Gospel reading on June 6 said that Jesus' mother and brothers came to find him at the temple. The crowd around Jesus said, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, asking for you."

Jesus replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" He looked at the people sitting around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." [Mark 3 vs. 31-35]

Jesus recognized that family is larger than those related to us by blood. Family is also those who are doing the will of God.

We recalled these verses at the Guatemala Task Force meeting, reminding ourselves of our brothers and sisters in Guatemala and our attachment to them, those doing the will of God against insurmountable odds of poverty, pandemic and food insecurity. Those trying to reclaim traditions lost in a generation in immigrant camps in Mexico, those losing their children to cities and to the desperate trek to the border.

Our current vice president recently travelled to Guatemala to see how our nation can help improve conditions there to reduce the forces that drive emigrating to the border. Improving life conditions is the key.

We hear about the crisis at the border, about children making the difficult journey alone, about some of those same children in cages.

It is hard for me to believe that anyone would chose that dangerous journey without desperation to escape, a sense of hopelessness about the future, the aspiration to make a brighter future.

Who is my brother and sister, my mother? For me it is the Guatemalan woman in a one room house with a dirt floor who has 12 children without hope of education. I met her on my trip there. With the meager income her husband makes from farming the unfertile ground, there is not money to send children to school. The boys will leave to look for work in the city, and the girls will get married at 15 or younger to repeat the same cycle. Their hope resides in leaving.

How ILAG is involved

But wait—there is ILAG, the *Iglesia Lutherana Augustina de Guatemala*, delivering hope in the form of food aid, gardening help, education, lap tops, and needed infrastructure such as latrines and stoves. ILAG is an organization that delivers on promises it makes for the future again and again, even during a pandemic. I know I can make a difference by living my partnership through ILAG.

As family in God's name we recognize the divine in each other, we acknowledge our humanity, our interconnectedness, and our mutual dependance on God's creation. We listen to the stories of our brothers, the desires of our sisters, and the sorrow of our mothers. We are called to bring all of God's children into the light of justice and equality. With St, Michael's partnership with ILAG, I can say, "I hear you, my brother. I

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see you, my sister. I will not forget you, my mother.”

Our partners have also claimed us as their brothers and sisters, their family in Christ. They hear our worries and hold our dreams in their hearts too. Together, we are living in faith and doing the will of God.

How you can help

The recent Guatemala Gala successfully raised money for education and hope for our Guatemalan family; and yet we know there are more challenges. There is still time to help ILAG in their mission to better lives through education. If you wish to make a contribution, you can send it to the church, marking Guatemala in the memo line.

Some things we think you'd like to know...

It's a great time to try YogaDevotion

YogaDevotion will continue with the next series on Wednesday evenings from July 14 through September 1. Classes will be via Zoom with 6:30 p.m. start time.

The cost is \$72. To register, go to yogadevotion.com. Click on the “Classes” heading at the top of the home page. That will open a calendar; navigate to July 14, and click on the St. Michael's link.

You can pay by logging on to the link. Or, you can sign up by mailing a check to St. Michael's. (Please note YogaDevotion in the memo line.)

When you register you will receive a ticket with a Zoom invitation. That Zoom invitation will be your entry for each class.

Beginners are always welcome! If you would like to try a free class to learn more about yoga, please contact Mary Drache for the zoom link and join us.

Contact Mary Drache: mthomdra119@gmail.com with any questions.

Men's Bible and Brew takes a brief break

Men's Bible and Brew will be taking a break in July. Watch for information about a gathering in August.



Pick up your copy of our cookbook *Recipes for Disaster*

St. Michael's new COVID-era cookbooks called *Recipes for disaster* are available at church. Pick one up! There is no cost, but we encourage all who can to make a \$10 donation.



The donations will offset the cost of printing, and donations above the cost of printing will be equally donated to: COVID relief efforts in Guatemala, the Dorcas Star Mission and its hospital and COVID work in Uganda, and COVID relief in India through the ELCA.

Thanks to everyone who submitted recipes and volunteered to work on the book. It's been a great opportunity to share ideas, learning, and our love of food.

Church Council Corner

The church continues its incredible ministry as we move through summer. Here are some Council highlights.

- The Council approved additional global COVID-19 relief efforts with \$1,000 going to the Dorcas Star Mission in Uganda and \$1,000 to efforts in Central America and Guatemala
- It approved next steps in audio visual work so the church can continue online worship services, which will be recorded on Sunday mornings.
- The Council will be participating in the Deep Listening Series led by Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota and City House.
- It also approved becoming a co-sponsor in the Refugee Resettlement Program spearheaded by the Minnesota Council of Churches.

Not getting your *Friday Flyer*?

Are you having a problem with our weekly e-newsletter, the *Friday Flyer* not showing up in your primary inbox? First check your other inbox folders—it often shows up in a spot called the *Promotions* folder. Or it could be in your *Spam* folder. If a search of those yields nothing, then contact Lisa Koland at office @stmichaelselca.com, and we'll find a way to make sure the newsletter gets to you!

Notes about the *Messenger*

Got something for the August *Messenger*?

The August *Messenger* submission deadline is Friday, July 16.

Making the *Messenger* Green

If you prefer to read your upcoming issues of St. Michael's monthly *Messenger* newsletter on our church website instead of having a paper copy mailed to you, please notify the church office. Another option is to receive the *Messenger* via e-mail. Just let the church office know your preference.



St. Michael's Staff Directory

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St Michael's

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