



Mike's Missal



December 2024

St. Michael's Episcopal Church

P.O. Box 720326

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Sunday Services are at 9:00 and 11:00 A.M.

Live on YOUTUBE at 11:00

From Father Joseph Farber Agapé

Agapé, the perfect love that Jesus embodied and to which Christians aspire is not a feeling. It is a disposition, a state of consciousness empties us of self-concern, fills us with concern for the good of others and, indeed, concern for the greater good of all. The Cross itself is the supreme symbol of this love taken to its extreme, a willingness to surrender everything in order to reconcile humankind to God, whom we proclaim to be *Agapé*, Love.

Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. It should not surprise us that the most noble virtues humans possess are, in some measure, hard-wired into us. The natural love of a parent for its child is the easiest example. A mother, even a mother momentarily furious with her child, would surprise no one by throwing herself in the path of an oncoming car to save it. That is an example of what *Agapé* looks like. *Agapé* is the secret of all successful marriages. What God wants to in-spire in humanity is the same sense of urgency for one another's well-being as the mother has for the child, the same compelling compassion Jesus had for us when he accepted the chalice placed before him. *Agapé* is not and could not be absent from the world, else humanity would never survive childhood. But *agapé* must fail when selfish fears or desires take hold.

Paul cites Jesus as the example of this love, telling the Philippians to imitate him: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." (Phil 2:4-6).

That is also the mind we must possess to be able to receive Christ ... whether we are receiving him in history at Bethlehem, at the end of time, and in our own hearts right now. Advent, while not a season of penitence like Lent, is a season of preparation. Outwardly, it's about preparing for Christmas. Inwardly, it is about receiving the greatest gift of all, Christ in us. To receive that gift, we need to prepare a place for it, even a very humble place, in the stable of our hearts.

Prepare a place for Christ in your heart by allowing the same mind be in you that was in Christ, "who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross."

Agapé *is* the Christian truth. God is *agapé*. It is our beginning and our end, our Alpha and our Omega. It is what God poured out of Godself into Jesus to redeem us. Advent, the season of preparation, is the time to ask ourselves: What in my life does not align with my truth? What in my life is not aligned with the path of love?

Be assured, if in the end all you can come up with in all your preparation is a tiny trough in a dark corner in the barn of your heart as a place to receive him, that is enough. Such is the vastness of God's grace and mercy. Worship the king, and ...

Thanks be to God!

From Senior Warden, David Zittel

Thank you to all who have indicated a pledge amount or returned a pledge sheet for the coming year. Currently, we are about \$10,000 below last year's pledge amount of about \$189,000 but we have lost members who have moved away and some who have passed on. Realistically, we need between \$220,000 and \$240,000 to maintain our current level of activity both within the church and for outreach. Some of this shortfall is covered by plate offerings, rent, donations, and special offerings. In the immediately preceding years, we have drawn on our endowment funds but would prefer not to. As you are able, prayerfully consider adding to your pledge or making a special donation.

Also, I thank you to all who attended the installation service of Fr. Joseph Farber to be our Rector and Mtr. Ann Murray as our Associate Priest. I am grateful for those who put together the reception following the service. I believe that Bishop Reed was impressed by our turnout for the midweek service.

I continue to be thankful for all who have helped me deal with my prostate cancer, either through prayer or providing me with transportation. Both my urologist and oncologist are pleased with my response to my current drug regimen.

In Christ's Love, David Zittel, Senior Warden

From Nancy Littlejohn, Parish Administrator

It is time to prepare reports for the Annual Report. I need these as soon as possible after the first of the year to prepare the report for distribution on January 19. The Annual meeting will be on Sunday, January 26 after the 11:00 a.m. service.

Debi will be out of the office December 26 – January 8

I will be out of the office December 26 – January 6

Please pray for Fr. Joseph during this difficult time.

My Dear Friends of St. Michael's,

As of 11-25-24 we have 46 pledges totaling \$179,207.00. Last year we had 49 pledges. Our budget committee met this last week to begin planning our budget for 2025. We are still short of meeting our needs. If you haven't pledged yet, please pray about doing this before the end of the year.

November Income	\$15,023.00
Payouts for November	\$17,341.17

A few of November's Bills:

Copy Machine	\$ 418.49
OEC	\$1,152.80
Mutual Ministry	\$3,143.20
Jan-Pro (Sexton)	\$ 590.00
Window Replacement	\$ 986.56

Debi Kelley, Financial Secretary

Advent Formation Theme: The Habit of Sabbath

Advent Formation Events at St. Michael's on Sunday mornings from 10 to 10:45 a.m.

Advent is great time to renew and share our practice of Sabbath. Sabbath is much more than attending worship services. Sabbath is way of being where we slow down and spend time with God and family and friends. Sabbath begins at sundown on Saturday and ends at sundown on Sunday.

Celebrating Sabbath doesn't have to be elaborate. Gather with family and friends or even invite someone new to join you as light the candles of your Advent wreath, say some prayers, and share your joys, sorrows, and hopes. If you are up to it, add a meal as breaking bread together is part of our tradition.

To help you and your family get into the habit of Sabbath, pick up a "Habit of Sabbath" Advent bag. It will have Advent candles, greenery and directions for making an Advent wreath (you will need to supply candle holders and a wreath form if you wish to use one), and a variety of information and prayers you can use as we prepare for the birth of Christ through the practice of Sabbath.

Sunday, December 1st: Our first ADVENT EVENT! Come join us in the gathering hall to learn more about how to get into the Habit of Sabbath. It is a time for fellowship, sharing, learning the ancient practice of Dwelling the Word, and enjoying some light snacks.

Sundays, December 8th, 15th, and 22nd: Dwelling in the Word. We'll meet in St. Michael's Library as we light our Advent candles and practice Dwelling in the Word. If there are too many for the library, we will break into smaller groups. <https://www.epiok.org/stories-news/advent-dwelling-in-the-word-passage>

December Events

(See page 6 for complete Advent and Christmas Schedule)

December 1 1:00 p.m.

Book Discussion Group


See page 4. Contact: Carol Wittmer

December 11 7:00 p.m.

Blue Christmas Service

December 13 7:00 p.m.

WILD MEN'S NIGHT OUT



St. Michael's men will meet for an evening of fellowship and conversation at 7:00 p.m. Friday, December 13th. For just \$20 you can enjoy giant ribeye steaks charcoal-grilled to perfection, baked potatoes, salad, garlic bread and a plentiful choice of craft beers. Non-steak-eaters are welcome to bring other items to grill. First-time participants & guests can enjoy all this for free. Please sign up as we need an accurate count for our steak order by December 11th. Contact: Peter Rodrigues.

December 12 5:00 p.m.

Care-A-Van Meals Prep for the Unhoused

Thank you to everyone who made or helped with meals this past year. I've heard that occasionally

when others go to sign up, spaces are already taken and they feel they don't get a chance to help with the meals. I have signed us up for all of 2025. Those pages are out, and you can sign up for anything throughout the year at any time. Make sure you leave your email address, and you will be reminded a week ahead of time. Also, if you take the main course you can be reimbursed up to \$50. Contact: Debi Kelley

December 15 5:00 p.m.

Lessons and Carols

December 17 9:00 a.m.

Budget Committee Meeting

December 20 5:30 p.m.

Saucy Sisters

Please bring items to share on a Charcuterie Board this month. We meet at 5:30 and dinner is served at 6:00. Suggested donation is \$10, but first time is free. Please sign-up if you plan to attend. Contact: Amy Gardner.

December 29

Discretionary Fund Offering Sunday

December 25 & 26

Merry Christmas!

Office closed

Other Ministries & News

Altar Guild

Thank you to everyone currently serving on the Altar Guild – your work is appreciated! Remember to shop at and thank The Spirit Shop on Berry for their continued donation of wine.

BC Clark - Giving to a Community of Faith

The BC Clark continues the tradition of their church coupon program to give back to the community. When you make a purchase at any BC Clark location, ask the salesperson to give you a “Church Coupon” and 3% of your purchase price will go to the church of your choice. (St. Michael’s of course) The donations are designated to support the women’s ministry of the church.

Bible Study

Our Bible Study continues every Wednesday, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Blessing Bags

We have Blessing bags for you to share with those in need. When you see a neighbor who appears to be needy, give them one of our blessing bags. Bags contain various items such as water, insect repellent bracelets, crackers, lip balm, body wipes, and other items who may be of comfort. This ministry was initiated by Saucy Sisters.

Book Discussion Group

This month's book is “*When the Stars Go Dark*” by Paula McLain, a thriller that weaves together actual cases of missing persons, trauma theory, and a hint of the metaphysical.

Budget Committee

Our Budget Committee prepares an annual budget and reviews expenditure throughout the year. The Next meeting is December 17 at 9:00 a.m.
Contact: Amy Gardner

Care Team

When a parishioner has a need, our Care Team will provide. Sign up to become part of the Care Team. If you are willing to help co-chair this group, please let Debi know. Contact: Debi Kelley

Choir

St. Mike’s choir rehearses at 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays. If you are interested in singing in the choir, contact Parish Musician Jon Roberts.

Churches Caring for Creation

Thank you for continuing to donate clean foam. Densifying is weekly at University Lutheran Church, and volunteers are always needed. Contact Doug Bowden at 405-831-9951. Donations for this project should be made to University Lutheran or to St. Michael’s for tax purposes. Contact: Tina Mahle

Crafters

Crafters meet on Monday evenings from 6:30-7:30. We create scarves and hats for our unhoused neighbors, make baby blankets to be given at hospitals, prayers shawls, items for Christmas at Sea, and other items which support ministries at St. Michael’s. We have a closet full of yarn, so choose your project! Please join us! Contact: Amy Gardner

Discretionary Fund

The last Sunday of each month all offering plate cash goes to the Rector's Discretionary Fund. Please consider putting cash in the plate on the last Sunday or donating any time by writing "Discretionary Fund" on a check. These funds are used to address unexpected needs in our parish.

Flowers and Candles

We would like more people to sign up for flowers and candles for the altar on Sundays. Simply sign your name, what you would like them to be in honor of and we will send you an invoice after that Sunday. Flowers are \$45 and Candles are \$10. Contact: Debi Kelley

Greeting Cards

We need birthday cards for the office, so if you have any extra, please consider donating them. Remember, to celebrate with you we need your dates in our database.

Laundry Love

Our next day to sponsor will be in 2025, but we’ll take your quarters at any time! Contact: Amy Gardner

Lectio Divina

Wednesdays 6:30 p.m. in the Library

Lectio Divina is a contemplative way of reading the Bible. Dating back to the early centuries of the Christian Church, it was established as a monastic practice by Benedict in the 6th century. It is a way of praying the scriptures that leads us deeper into God's word. We read a short passage more than once and the scripture begins to speak to us in a new way. It speaks to us personally and aids that union we have with God through Christ. Contact: The Rt. Rev. Wallis Ohl

Norman Coalition for Refugee Support

On November 9, the Norman Coalition for Refugee Support organized a translator aided Zoom call from Kiev with Olena Amirova and her children, 15-year-old Oleksandr Savzihanov and 12-year-old Alina Savzihanova. Participants in Norman included representatives from St. Michael's: Tim & Judy Phillips and Kenton & Bridget Waters. The call was just heartbreaking and left us all in tears. Olena moved to Kiev from Eastern Ukraine, thinking that they would be safer in the capital city. But they no longer feel safe in Kiev either. Every night their sleep is disturbed by air raids. The children were especially sweet. Alina just wants to be free to play her violin. Oleksandr wants to play football (soccer). Since that phone call, Kenton has completed the paperwork required to sponsor the family. If everything is approved, perhaps we can bring them to Norman in January. Olena understood that with the changing American administration, her visa might not get renewed after two years. Yet she feels immigration would still be worth it for the safety and well-being of her children. The NCRS has received a grant for \$55,700 from the United Methodist Woodworth Trust. The expenses of hosting refugee families can be quite staggering. The grant will be an important part of next year's budget, but the NCRS will continue to need support from member churches. A fundraiser is being planned for Thursday, February 6. Contact Judy Phillips

Outreach

The Outreach committee's next meeting will be in January. Contact: Amy Gardner

Poinsettias and Christmas Décor

We are collecting donations to purchase Christmas décor and poinsettias. Please indicate this fund on your donation or write a separate check.

Prayer Chain and Prayer List

A small group of members of St. Michael's are committed to praying daily for concerns. Our Prayer Chain is confidential (not published). Please bring concerns to this group. If you feel called to this ministry or have a prayer request, contact David Sims. The Prayer List is a public list of those in need published in the Sunday service bulletin. Contact: Nancy Littlejohn

Sharon's Wagon

Sharon's Wagon is in honor and memory of Sharon Vaz who had great compassion for those in need of support. We fill her wagon with items which go to others in our community. **In December we have the opportunity to purchase Christmas gifts for nursing home residents in a joint project with St. John's. A list is in the ingathering space.** Contact: Amy Gardner

St. Crispin's Summer Camp

Registration is open for Summer Camp 2025.

Early Bird rates are open until April 1, 2025. See stcrispins.org/camp for details.

Ushers and Greeters are needed.

Have you ever visited a church, and no one greets you at all? It feels terrible and we don't want our visitors to feel anything other than welcome. So, we need volunteers to greet on Sunday mornings! And we need ushers! Please sign up ahead of time to serve as a greeter or an usher. A list of specific tasks for these positions is available on the sign-up counter. Contact: Santa Velez.

Vestry

We will need FOUR new vestry members to begin in February 2025. Please prayerfully consider serving the church by being on the vestry. Our next meeting is on January 12. Contact: Fr. Joseph

St. Michael's Website

Every time you take a photo at St. Michael's, please send it to Katie Blair or Tim Phillips for our website. Please help them out by sending them current information or new photos.

Yoga Class

Join instructor Anne Roberts on Fridays at 9:00 a.m. Each class session is \$10.00.



St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Advent and Christmas Schedule 2024

Advent Formation Events on Sunday mornings from 10:00 to 10:45 a.m.

Sunday, December 1 Advent 1 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 8 Advent 2 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, December 11 Blue Christmas Service 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 15 Advent 3 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Lessons and Carols 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 22 Advent 4 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Hanging of the Greens after the 11:00 a.m. service.

Tuesday, December 24 Christmas Eve Services

Caroling at 4:45 p.m., service at 5:00 p.m.

Caroling at 10:30 p.m., service at 11:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 5 Epiphany

December Days to Remember

Birthdays

12/10 Rosemary Carlyle
12/12 Judy Phillips
12/18 Jessica Sprouse
12/20 Sonia Bugher
12/24 Boris Gray
12/28 Tom Wakely

Anniversaries

12/15/2015 Tina Mahle & Thomas Tahkofper
12/20/1977 William & Karen Petrie
12/20/1985 Todd & Ann Murray
12/21/2000 Nelson & LaVetta Dent
12/22/1967 Roger & Carol Smith
12/22/1984 Randy & Suzanne Witzke

On the anniversary of their death



12/12/1984 ✠Charles Berry
12/10/1992 ✠Elizabeth Roberts
12/9/1992 ✠Nellie Mae Underwood
12/17/1994 ✠Sarah Swartz
12/6/1995 ✠Anne Baker Baldwin
12/16/1997 ✠Marvin Pemberton
12/13/2002 ✠Melbourne O'Neal
12/29/2009 ✠Cece Kelly
12/24/2014 ✠Martin Gardner
12/23/2018 ✠Evelyn Orth
12/10/2019 ✠Robert Franklin
12/13/2019 ✠Heidi Brandenburg
12/12/2022 ✠Gary Ramsey Eckle

Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to thy never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that thou art doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Handy Information

If you have a pastoral emergency, please call the office at 405-321-8951 during office hours, or call Father Joseph, Mother Ann or Deacon Laura in case of emergency outside office hours.

Office Hours: Monday – Wednesday 9:00 A.M.– 2:00 P.M. Thursdays 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

St. Michael's Webpage: www.stmichaelsnorman.org

St. Michael's Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/6273015521>

St. Michael's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZX8EOJFq5VykhE5K9q8eA>
Subscribe to receive update notices when we post new videos for worship or other resources.

Father Joseph Farber fr.jos.farber@gmail.com 405-321-8951 or 405-561-1414

Mother Ann Murray, Associate Priest deaconann18@gmail.com 405-919-8533

Deacon Laura Blazek laurablazek@sbcglobal.net 405-639-0300

Parish Musician Jon Roberts dachs.mirabilis@icloud.com 405-850-5252

David Zittel, Senior Warden david12330@gmail.com 405-834-8764

Tina Mahle, Junior Warden Tina.mahle@alumni.ou.edu 405-517-5142

Nancy Littlejohn, Parish Administrator administrator@stmichaelsnorman.org 405-321-8951 or
cell 405-924-2782

Debi Kelley, Financial Secretary, treasurer@stmichaelsnorman.org 405-321-8951 or d3bi.kelley@gmail.com 405-306-3450

St. Michael's 2024 Vestry

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