



Mighty Messengers for Christ By Rev. Dr. Paul Naumann

The Future Is Now is about the way we were feeling at St. Michael Lutheran Church in Portage as we were anticipating what was coming up for us in short order. Lord willing, in 2010 we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of our congregation and graduate our first 8th grade class from St. Michael Lutheran School. When our school first moved into our Family Life Center in 2004, we put only about three grades into our nine classrooms. This gave us the luxury of using a classroom for our Sunday morning nursery, another one for our Youth Room, and still others we filled with pre-school classes. The latter seemed especially foundational to our school as we desired to provide our best facilities for the future school families.

The drawback of this plan was that the upper grades of the school were up and coming such that year by year the school has needed to use more of the existing classroom space. Furthermore our congregation desires to expand our ministry to include an infant/toddler program, something that would again broaden our base but go beyond our existing facilities.

All this came together for "the perfect storm," if you will, that precipitated the need to build on another wing to our building. But before we could do this, we needed to pay off the approximately one million dollar mortgage that remained on

the Family Life Center and so we entered into a capital campaign that we entitled "Mission Forward."

Consultants will tell you that some of the most difficult money to raise is for debt repayment. By and large, the bang for the buck that donors want to see is new ministry and new vision. So we described our situation to the congregation so that people would see the pressing need not simply to be debt free but to be able to move forward. We spoke of how our expanded ministry would reach more lost people and help them become, as we like to say around here, "Mighty Messengers for Christ."

But we also knew that our ministry was not the only worthy cause to contribute to and that many of our people would appreciate an opportunity for their contributions to go far beyond our four walls into the world. For this reason, we decided to include as a part of "Mission Forward" a tithe (10%) to the Michigan District's 125th Anniversary Thank Offering, *The Future Is Now*. This enabled us to say to our people that the need is great not only for our ministry but for new ministries around the state. We reminded people that at one time our congregation was a mission and our school a dream, and that as the Lord has graciously provided for us in the past, so we have an opportunity now to help provide for new churches and new church workers today who will move the mission forward as the future is now upon us.

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"In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

1 Timothy 6:19



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Progress to Date ...

District \$2,281,000

National \$46,800,000

Congregation Highlight

We are excited to announce that Christ Lutheran Church in New Baltimore is a participating congregation in *The Future is Now!*

Resources ...

Now Available Online!
Informative inserts to include in your Sunday bulletins!