

October 20, 2008

Dear St. Michael's Family,

Father George has asked me to write you and tell you, from my heart, my thoughts about St. Michael's. Truly, my heart is filled with admiration and awe for the ministers and the people who are the foundation of St. Michael's family.

This church has welcomed me since the Sunday that I entered the doors of St. Michael's. I came to St. Michael's almost by accident. I was late leaving my home in Tioga to attend service at St. James, so I decided that I could attend the service at the Episcopal Church that I had heard about on Edgewood Drive without being late. I know now that God had a hand in my tardiness that Sunday because of the blessing it is to belong to St. Michael's church family. Deacon Belle's warm hugs, Father George's bright smile, and the greeting from everyone I encountered on my first visit made me realize that St. Michael's is where I belong.

Soon, I became aware of the charitable nature of St. Michael's church family. As I think about the time and talents that this church family has provided us this past year, I am amazed! I think about the much needed renovations at the church hall and the beautiful stained glass windows in the church as just an example of the hard work and generosity of those who made what were once dreams now a reality.

I think about the youth who are so fully engaged in church activities, both at the services and wherever work is being done. St. Michael's provides a safe place where these young members can learn to become Christian citizens in a world where so many have not that privilege.

I think about those victims of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike who found a refuge at our church door and of those of our flock who filled our pantry with food and supplied clothing, bedding, and other provisions for these unfortunate ones. I think especially of members of our church family who were there to provide for and encourage people who knew not whether they had anything remaining of the homes they had left. And then, I think of how blessed I am to be a member of the holy church family, for the spirit of Christianity truly abides at St. Michael's.

St. Michael's family has provided an awesome amount of time, talent, and hard work in 2008, but as we look forward to 2009, we must consider that financial security is also essential to satisfy the needs that we may encounter in the coming year. Now, possibly more than ever, pledges are crucial if we are to fulfill what will need to be done in 2009. I realize that the sagging economy is at the forefront of all of our minds, but I also know that what we give in God's name is returned tenfold. Therefore, each of us needs to pledge as much as we can in time, talent, and money this coming year so that our coffers allow us to provide service where needed.

With this letter, Father George and the Vestry have enclosed 2009 pledge cards with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Please prayerfully consider your pledge and return your card to the church office by November 23.

With love and blessings,

Lillian Wooley