

New Ministry

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



Purpose Questions

Q: What are we doing?

A: St. Michael's is preparing to begin a new ministry which will provide a place of belonging to 1 ½ generation immigrants. This group of people is caught between the culture of their parents and the culture they experience daily in their school and work. It is our belief that this ministry will also provide a place of belonging for our children and grandchildren who may feel that they don't belong in their parent's or grandparent's church. Our promise is: You belong, and we're glad you're here.

Q: Why are we doing this?

A: We believe that God continues to open doors for us to reach a new population in Bloomington. When St. Michael's was started, only 1% of Bloomington residents were of non-European descent. Today that number is 28%. Research also shows that 1 in 7 Bloomington residents were born outside of the United States.

God has also blessed St. Michael's through our partnership with Power of Gospel and raised up a leader in Vicar Hunde Takele. This new ministry is an opportunity for our congregation to prepare for a future which will better reflect our current community. *(Reference Leadership Questions to understand who Vicar Hunde Takele is.)*

Q: Who are we focusing on reaching?

A: The ministry is focused on the 1 ½ immigrant community. The 1 ½ consists of people who came to the United States as children with their parents or were born soon after their parents immigrated to the United States. This group of people often feels caught between two cultures and struggles finding a place of belonging. We believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone offers true belonging. Even as we focus on these individuals, any ministry of the Gospel will be inclusive of all people.

Q: Why 1 ½ generation immigrant versus another specific demographic?

A: We're looking at the opportunity in our community. There isn't one specific immigrant group that has come to Bloomington but numerous. We believe that there is a common need among most of the younger people who have been impacted by immigration and that is a place to belong.

Q: Who are you partnering with to bring this ministry together?

A: We are working with several organizations which support this plan. The list includes: the MNS District of the LCMS, Power of Gospel, Pastor Demelash, president of the Mekane Yesus, the largest Ethiopian Lutheran Church, and LINC Twin Cities, which is a non-profit that works with churches to equip and build up leaders. LINC focuses on immigrant and urban populations, teaching how to equip God-given leaders.

Q: Why are we doing this and not something else?

A: We believe that this ministry honors and is consistent with the history of St. Michael's. We have a great history of outreach and serving the community. Some examples are serving in Minneapolis at the Marie Sanvick Center and Trinity First. In Bloomington with Loaves and Fishes, VEAP, and Georgetown Park Kids Clubs and partnerships with schools at Normandale Hills. The surrounding areas with events such as JumpStart2School and food distribution drives. We continue to minister to our community through church-sponsored service and individuals serving in their own areas. God has also blessed us through our partnership with Power of Gospel and the leadership of Hunde Takele.

While there are always "other opportunities" that a congregation can pursue, we believe that God has put in place for us the necessary leadership and skills to move in this direction.

Q: Is this just for a specific age or grade?

A: No, this ministry is for all people who need a place to belong. While our target audience is the 1 ½ generation immigrant, we believe that a place of belonging is important to all people. Many people long for a place that is open and welcoming to them. They seek the comfort of knowing that they belong. Our ministry seeks to fill that need.

Leadership Questions

Q: Who is Vicar Hunde Takele and why would he be leading the efforts?

A: Hunde is an immigrant himself who better understands the difficulty of adjusting to a new country and culture. More importantly, he is a man of God who is studying at Concordia Seminary, St Louis, the same seminary from which Pastors Pat and Ryan graduated, to become a pastor. He is currently a vicar in the LCMS and is a leader with Power of Gospel.

Vicar Hunde is a husband of Martha Oumer and a father of two boys named Jacob (6) and Eba (3). He currently works in the healthcare industry until he receives his first call from seminary.

Q: Is it a foregone conclusion that Hunde is the leader on this?

A: No. The congregation alone has authority to call pastors. Even with two prior votes regarding the ministry, we will have a separate vote regarding the call. In addition, our November Voter's Meeting stated that the Parish Council would come back with recommendations for staffing. It's very likely that we will want/need two or three individuals with varying skill sets and community connections to be part of a team.

One of the unique aspects of this ministry is that it was not a single person's vision or general expansion of ministry (like an additional pastor or a music director). In those scenarios you need to vet multiple candidates to fill an existing need. This new ministry in contrast started with existing relationships (Power of Gospel and Hunde), a recognized and unique need in the community that we aren't meeting, and a budget surplus that we faithfully voted to put toward mission. We believe God has opened unique doors in all these areas.

Q: Do we really need another pastor at St. Michael's?

A: Pastor Pat and Pastor Ryan will continue to lead our congregation. However, we do see a need for a focused and skilled leader to guide this ministry. This new ministry will require a full-time leader to make relationships in the community, to train up new leaders, and to plan for future goals. It will be important for Hunde to be removed from the daily activities of pastoring at St. Michael's so that he can establish this new ministry.

Impact Questions

Q: How will this affect my involvement at St. Michael's?

A: This offers additional opportunity for you to serve and be involved in St. Michael's that we didn't have before. This is a ministry that is in addition to what is currently offered at St. Michael's.

We will need to be prepared for some things to change, that is part of growing and serving our community. There will be a great deal that will remain the same as we continue to effectively minister to our members. One thing that will never change is the Word of the Lord. His Word stands forever, and we will base all ministry on His unchanging Word.

Q: How will this benefit me?

A: This may be a mission opportunity that will encourage you to go beyond your comfort zone as a follower of Christ. We pray that it will also offer new opportunities to connect your children, grandchildren, and other loved ones with a ministry that reflects

their generation's experiences in the world while proclaiming Christ crucified for them. This is an opportunity to leave a legacy of faith.



Q: Is this a church plant or ministry of SMLC?

A: This is a ministry of SMLC which we pray will be an important part of our future. Our desire is to connect more people to Christ as a church body.

Q: Is this just for Bloomington?

A: No. Just as the people of St. Michael's come from several communities in the metro area, this ministry is intended to draw people from several communities. The focus will be on the south metro as the demographics of 1.5 immigrants are consistent across the board.

Q: What's the risk if we don't do this?

A: This is always a difficult question as we need to be careful not to overemphasize our importance. The Lord remains the Lord of the harvest and if we do not move forward then He will cause another group to reach out to this community.

We believe the real risk is not faithfully following the Lord's leading. He has called us to make disciples of all nations, and to love our neighbor. He has brought the nations to our community. If we prayerfully believe that God is calling us to reach out to this community, then we need to be faithful.

Funding Questions

Q: How will this be funded?

A: The immediate source of funding includes:

- St. Michael's surplus of approximately \$133,000 in the 2020-21 fiscal year
- Minnesota South District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod which has pledged \$120,000
- Power of Gospel which has pledged \$10,000 annually for 4 years.
- St. Michael's Endowment Fund of approximately \$32,000

St. Michael's Finance Committee has recommended that we raise an additional \$200,000 to support the ministry before we begin. This is meant to ensure that the ministry is funded for 7 years before it needs to support itself.

Q: Where is this money coming from?

A: The immediate source of funding comes from St. Michael's surplus and Endowment Funds, the Missions Committee of the MNS District of the LCMS, and from Power of Gospel. The remaining start-up funding will come from pledges and contributions from individuals who are led to support this ministry.

Q: What happens when the funding runs out?

A: Prior to beginning the ministry we desire to have pledges for 7 years of operations which we believe provides ample opportunity for the ministry to develop and support itself in the regular St. Michael's budget.