

Deadline for submissions
is the 15th of each month for the
following month's newsletter.

Send to:
smlcspublications@gmail.com



Pastor Dave Bass



Saint Michael Lutheran
CHURCH • DAY SCHOOL • FOUNDATION

Weekend Regular Worship

Sat: 5:30 pm Informal
Sun: 8:00 am Traditional
10:45 am Blended

3595 Broadway
Fort Myers, FL 33901
(239) 939-1218
www.smlcs.org

The Messenger

From the Pastor

Rev. Dave Bass

It's November which means that one important day comes to mind. On the fourth Thursday of November, we celebrate Thanksgiving. But why? Long before European settlers came to the East Coast of what is now the United States, the area was inhabited by many Native American tribes. The area surrounding the site of the first Thanksgiving, present day southeastern Massachusetts and eastern Rhode Island, had been the home of the Wampanoag people and had been visited by other European settlers before the arrival of the *Mayflower* in 1620. The people who comprised the Plymouth Colony were a group of English Protestants called Puritans who wanted to break away from the Church of England.

They did so, sailing across the Atlantic Ocean in 1620 to settle in a "New World." Carrying 101 men, women and children, the *Mayflower* traveled the ocean for 66 days and was supposed to land where New York City is now located. But windy conditions forced the group to cut their trip short and settle at what is now Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

As the Puritans prepared for winter, they gathered anything they could find, including Wampanoag supplies. The Wampanoag realized that these English settlers were preparing for a harvest celebration. Seeing that they were a peaceful people, the Wampanoag joined them in their celebration. For three days, the English and native men, women and children ate together. The meal consisted of deer, corn, shellfish and roasted meat. They played ball games, sang and danced. Although prayers and thanks were probably offered at the 1621 harvest gathering, the first recorded religious Thanksgiving Day in Plymouth happened two years later in 1623. On this occasion, the colonists gave thanks to God for rain after a two-month drought.

The concept of giving thanks goes much further back than the East Coast of North America in 1621. The Greek word for Thanksgiving, "Eucharisteo," is found in the New Testament particularly connected to another meal (namely Holy Communion). In its simplest terms, it means, "give thanks." A deeper study of the word reveals that it is made up of a combination of words. At the very root of "Eucharisteo" is the word "charis," meaning "grace" and its close derivative "chara," meaning "joy."

Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ entered our creation and joined our humanity to give us forgiveness, life and salvation but also the deep sense of His joy which surrounds us always. Jesus tells us in John 15:11, "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

Meaningful and lasting "chara" joy is found only in Jesus and at His table of "Eucharisteo," the table of thanksgiving. This is why Holy Communion is sometimes called the Eucharistic Meal. It is this Thanksgiving table that is at the center of our

reason for always giving thanks to God for it is here that we are reminded again and again that in Christ we are forgiven, redeemed and loved with an everlasting love. Soon enough, the turkey and the ham on our tables will be carved up, eaten, enjoyed and then forgotten about. But the table of Thanksgiving which the Lord prepares for us week after week is preparing us for an eternal celebration with Him in the new creation. Until that day comes, we live in the hope, the promise and the joy of Jesus, giving Him thanks for all He has done for us. From my family to yours, may you have a blessed and joy-filled Thanksgiving!

With joy in Jesus,

Pastor Dave



*From the Principal**Kati Miser*

With Thanksgiving just around the corner, I challenge you to memorize Psalm 23. What a blessing it is to have Jesus, our Good Shepherd, tending to each of us as we have need! Especially, note the good news in the last verses: “Surely [His] goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” What motivation that is for transformation and renewal in our lives! As Saint Michael Lutheran School focuses on *educating children and touching families’ lives with the love of Jesus Christ*, we claim the promises of

Psalm 23. Your daily prayers for SMLS are so appreciated as they continue to be a light in our community.

November is a busy time with activities that you can participate in (especially by praying for those who are involved):

- November 3-5 Middle school youth gathering
- November 17 PTL Move-a-thon
- November 20-24 School closed (Thanksgiving break)
- November 22-24 ELC and extended care closed

If you would like more information, please contact the Saint Michael office at (239) 939-1218.

Give me a call if you want to invite a friend, neighbor or family member to experience Saint Michael Lutheran School. Both in-person tours and virtual tours are available.

*From the Director of Little Saints**Stacie Thompson*

Our “littles” once again enjoyed a day full of fun fall activities on October 31. Keep an eye out for pictures of our sweet little friends being shown in our pre-service slides in November.



The week of November 6-10, Little Saints is sponsoring our ninth annual **pet food drive**. The holidays are a particularly difficult time of year for animal shelters. People are focused on holiday shopping, and the shelter donations drop. Please join us in giving when the need is so great. We are collecting dog food, cat food, treats, pet toys, bleach, old towels, cat beds and leashes. All donations are going to ARC (Animal Refuge Center) in North Fort Myers. Please drop your donations off in the drop box in the church narthex starting Sunday, November 5. Thank you!

*From the Board of Human Care*

Saint Michael family, we so appreciate your generous hearts. This month, the board of human care is helping to prepare people without homes for the cold weather that is coming. We are collecting **sweatshirts and jackets** and will donate them to the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army will then distribute them. We will have a box set up in the narthex into which you can drop off your gently used or new jackets and sweatshirts. We are grateful for your donations. Blessings to you, and thank you!

*College and Career Servants Needed*

Young adults should text Janet Oliver if they would be willing to serve food at the annual board of human care **Senior Social** luncheon on Sunday, December 3. You can reach Janet at (239) 645-6957.

From the Ministry Coordinator

Lori Schwan

Children's Ministry

Sunday School Nursery through Sixth Grade

- Kids two years old and younger are cared for in the sanctuary nursery by consistent volunteers.
- Kids three years old through fourth grade will be starting a unit about Emmanuel.
- Kids in fifth and sixth grade are studying questions they come up with about faith.
- Please contact Lori Schwan if you are interested in volunteering with the kids or behind the scenes.



Operation Christmas Child

Help share God's love with kids through Operation Christmas Child. Pastors in other countries invite kids who don't have much to know Jesus by giving them a box filled with gifts and the message of Jesus. Please bring in your small items (no candy or food, toothpaste, used items, toy guns, toy knives, military figures, liquids or lotions) by November 12. Some of our older kids will sort and pack them on November 19. We already have shoe boxes to use for this year. \$10 per box is needed for shipping if you would like to donate.



Thrivent Financial Sponsors Needed

We usually do more than half of our action teams during the holiday season (over 50). We are in need now of people who want to sponsor teams. Please contact Lori Schwan if you are interested in sponsoring a Thrivent Action Teams education event, fundraiser or service project.

Sunday Marriage Enrichment

Anyone is welcome to join any Sunday morning at the boat table in the office center for our marriage study, *One Thing(s) for Married People*, by Ted Lowe on RightNow Media led by Lee and Julie Berchtold.

GriefShare

GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences, the loss of someone close. GriefShare is currently running on Saturdays from 9:00-11:00am through December 2 in Pastor Dave's conference room. You may join any session. Please register at GriefShare.org. If you have any questions, please contact Gail Schultz at gail1370@aol.com or (732) 991-0642.



GriefShare: Surviving the Holidays

Are you wondering how you'll survive the weeks surrounding Thanksgiving and Christmas? Are you dreading the holidays knowing that everything has changed and happy memories from past years can't be recreated? Our "Surviving the Holidays" seminar on Sunday, November 4 from 9:00-11:00am is specially for people who are grieving a loved one's death. Please register at GriefShare.org.

DivorceCare

A new session of DivorceCare is currently meeting on Tuesdays from 11:00am-1:00pm through November 28, 2023. Anyone who is separated or divorced can join any session. This group is available online and in-person. Register at www.divorcecare.org. If you have any questions, please call Lori Schwan at (239) 939-1218, ext. 237.



DivorceCare: Surviving the Holidays

After separation or divorce, your Thanksgiving or Christmas holidays won't look the same as they used to. Traditions change. Some family members won't be there. Social gatherings can feel stressful, but "DivorceCare: Surviving the Holidays" can help. This special DivorceCare class will meet on Tuesday, November 7 from 11:00am-1:00pm. This group will be online and in-person. Please register at www.divorcecare.org.

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Seventh and Eighth Grade Confirmation with Parents

Any seventh or eighth grader who wants to know more about being a Christian who celebrates their faith in the Lutheran tradition is welcome to attend confirmation classes Sunday mornings from 9:15-10:30am. This class meets upstairs in the education building room 48 (Mrs. Weaver's room). We encourage parents to join us since they spend the week with the students and can apply lessons learned throughout the week. If a student misses a week, we will send out the topic in our weekly email so they can stay on track. They are currently studying the Ten Commandments.

High School Sunday School

Join us in the youth room as our journey of walking through the Old Testament continues in 2 Chronicles.

Wednesday Youth Nights

Each Wednesday, middle and high school students grow in their faith from 6:00-8:00pm with dinner, games and small group devotions. If you would like to volunteer or would like to sponsor a meal, please contact Lori Schwan. November 15 will be our special Chick-Fil-A Thanksgiving feast. You may bring a side dish or dessert to share. Youth group will not be meeting on November 22 due to the Thanksgiving Eve worship service from 6:30-7:30pm.



Decorating the Church for Christmas

Youth are invited to help decorate the church for Christmas on Saturday, December 2 at 9:00am. Donuts will be provided along with service hours and points. We expect to be finished around lunchtime.

High School Summer Servant Event at Lutherock

The FL-GA District will be sponsoring a summer servant event for current eighth through twelfth grade students on July 13-20 at Lutherock in North Carolina. People must sign up by Sunday, December 3 with a \$150 down payment. The total cost without transportation is \$575. Points can be used. Additional information will be shared this month.



Middle School Summer Servant Event

Save the date for the Middle School Summer Youth Servant Event at Luther Springs on June 23-28.

Rock the Universe

On Saturday, January 27, middle and high school students (along with adult chaperones) will be going to Rock the Universe at Universal Studios. They will meet at Saint Michael on Saturday at 10:30am to depart on a bus, stop for lunch on the way and be in the park from 4:00pm-1:00am watching concerts and riding rides. After the park closes, they will head home, returning early Sunday morning around 4:30am. The cost has not yet been determined. The registration and payment (covering park ticket, transportation and snack) must be submitted to Lori Schwan by Wednesday, January 10. Bands performing include Casting Crowns, Phil Wickham, Brandon Lake, CAIN, Andrew Ripp and Hulvey.



Prayers for Our Youth (November 3-5)

We are excited to be sending seven middle school students to the LCMS FL-GA District Youth Gathering. Three high school students will be attending the Youth Leadership Event. Please keep them in your prayers.

Thank You!

Thank you to the youth and adults who helped in various ways with the **car wash** last month. We would also like to thank the congregation for their generosity. We raised \$858 for our youth ministry.

Stay Connected

If you are not getting emails or text messages about youth activities, contact Lori Schwan (lori.schwan@gsmllcs.org) so that you can be added to the correct communications lists.

*From the Director of Worship & Music***Ben Ball**

*“All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing, ‘Alleluia! Alleluia!’
O praise Him, O praise Him! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!”*
– Text by Saint Francis of Assisi



Happy November! November is always an exciting month in the life of a church. Amongst all the hustle and bustle of the Saint Michael campus, we pause to remember those who have gone home before us on All Saints' Day and then celebrate Thanksgiving followed immediately by Christ the King Sunday on November 26 (which officially closes out one liturgical year) before springing into Advent and the new liturgical year! It is quite a month! November at Saint Michael is also special for me because it marks one year that you have been putting up with me!

I hope you will make special plans to attend our Thanksgiving Eve worship service at 6:30pm on November 22. We will be celebrating our normal weeknight Advent worship services beginning on November 29. Check the bulletin's announcement cover for all the dates and times.

Sounds of the Christmas Season Concert

On Friday, December 1, we will have our second annual *Sounds of the Christmas Season* concert at 6:30pm in the sanctuary. Music will be a variety of sacred and secular Christmas favorites by different musicians. Last year, we presented just a concert. This year, we want to make it bigger and better (and more impactful to our community)! So, we are partnering with Eva's Closet to give them a Christmas blessing. We ask that, as part of your "concert admission," you bring one of their most needed items (which are packages of diapers and baby wipes, children's clothing and sneakers, sheets and blankets, nonperishable food and toiletry items). Eva's Closet seeks to help so many folks in our community, from children in poverty, migrant farm working families, at risk children, victims of natural disaster, domestic violence victims, homeless families and individuals, foster children and teens who are aging out of foster care. Cash or check donations (made out to "Eva's Closet and Foundation") are also welcome. We want to partner with them through this special concert as we come alongside their ministry through a night of music and fellowship in our community. My goal for us as the family here at Saint Michael is to bring so many donations that they have to make multiple trips to transport it all back to their center!



One thing I want to mention in this month's newsletter is an update on the life of our school's fine arts program. In addition to the band and choir, we added an orchestra this year. The middle schoolers are split evenly into these elective music options with roughly 45 kids in each ensemble. We are absolutely busting out of space for rehearsals, but is that not such a glorious problem to have? They have been working diligently on their Christmas program music for many weeks now. The skills they learn by working together in an ensemble to create something so beautiful are skills which will stay with them for a lifetime.

Please continue to reach out to me at any time with questions or concerns or to let me know your favorite hymns. My church email address is ben.ball@gsmllcs.org.

Blessings,
Ben Ball
Director of Worship and Music

Find a Bible Study

We have several Bible studies that meet weekly on various days and times via Zoom and in-person! Find out more about some of these Bible studies and find one that you might be interested in joining below.

Sunday Adult Bible Class

Join us Sunday morning in the cafeteria to study *One Christ, Many Creeds*, a look at various denominations in the Christian Church. If you cannot be there in person, Zoom is also available. [Join Zoom Meeting](#) ID: 305 113 7001 Passcode: church

Sunday Women's Bible Study: Praying the Names of God

This new women's study will focus on a specific name of God each week and how we can use it as our focus for prayer. Priscilla Flynn looks forward to welcoming you on Sunday mornings in Pastor Dave's conference room.

Wednesday Women's Bible Study

This women's group meets Wednesdays from 10:30-11:30am in the ELC boardroom as they study the book *The Women of the Bible Speak*.

Wednesday Evening Adult Bible Study

Join us every Wednesday from 6:00-8:00pm at the boat table in the office center as we discuss *Unshakable*. Dinner will be offered beforehand in the cafeteria. *Unshakable* looks at eight remarkable people from the Bible who God shook to the core and then used to point people to the hope of salvation. If you have any questions, please contact Vicky Manietta at (239) 826-6325.

Thursday Women's Bible Study

Join other women on Thursdays from 10:00-11:30am on Zoom or on campus in the ELC boardroom for a weekly Bible study. This study is currently discussing the series *Women in the New Testament* on RightNow Media.

Saturday Men's Bible Study

Feel free to join at any time. This group is currently studying Ephesians every Saturday morning from 9:00-10:30am at the boat table in the office center.

Advent Wreath Event

The board of parish education invites you to our annual Advent wreath making breakfast on Sunday, November 26 from 9:15-10:30am. In addition to making wreaths for your household, some will make wreaths for people who are homebound and will deliver them along with Advent devotions. Please consider reusing your Styrofoam wreath from last year.



New Member Class

Pastor Dave Bass will be leading a two-day class for people interested in becoming Saint Michael church members on Saturday, November 11 from 10:00am-4:00pm and Sunday, November 12 from 1:00-3:00pm in the cafeteria. You may also join if you are simply interested in learning more about the Lutheran tradition and Christian faith. You may watch an introductory video at www.lhm.org/GodConnects.

Christmas Poinsettias

Saint Michael youth will once again be selling poinsettias to raise money for our youth ministry. Instead of the eight-inch pots we've had in the past, we will be selling six-inch pots for \$10. We will have a limited number of plants that can be ordered to be picked up before Christmas beginning around the end of November. In addition, there will be plants that can be purchased to beautify our sanctuary in honor or memory of a loved one and be picked up after Christmas. Orders can be placed with a youth or by filling out one of the bulletin inserts.

