

Volume 15, Issue 1  
January 2024

Deadline for submissions  
is the 15<sup>th</sup> 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

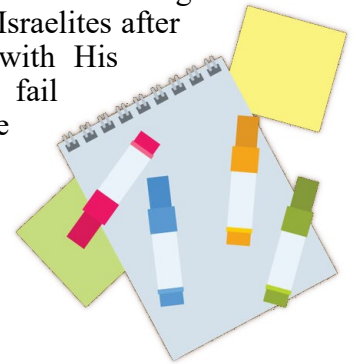
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# The Messenger

*From the Pastor*

*Rev. Dave Bass*

Happy New Year! With every new beginning, we make new promises and new plans for ourselves. But what happens when January turns into February? Research has shown that 92% of people fail at fulfilling their New Year's resolutions. "New year, new me" ends up becoming "new year, same me." Long before New Year's resolutions came along, the prophet Isaiah wrote this of the Lord's interaction in our life: "Behold, I am doing a new thing, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19). The new things that Isaiah is writing about are the fulfillment of God's deliverance for the Israelites after their Babylonian captivity. God has always been with His people, and He will never fail us (even when we fail ourselves). We know that God is perfect and that He never fails, but what about us? Why do we make resolutions for ourselves only to break them? Carey Nieuwhof, the founding pastor of Connexus Church in Ontario, Canada and the author of several books on church leadership and personal growth, gives the following reasons as to why people fail to keep their resolutions:



**Good Intentions**

If your goals die on a piece of paper, it's because nothing happens beyond writing them down. The truth is that next year will be exactly like this year unless you change more than your intention.

**Momentum That Creates False Success**

Momentum masks underlying problems, creating a false sense of success. This means that when your momentum ends (as it inevitably will) you have a much bigger mess to clean up than if you had worked on a strategy that produces long-term growth in the first place.

**Lack of Momentum That Creates a False Sense of Failure**

In the same way momentum can create a false sense of success, the lack of momentum can prematurely create a sense of failure, that any attempt at a fresh goal is useless, and that's a lie.

Nieuwhof concludes with this thought: "The difference between goals that get realized and goals that don't is the presence or absence of a strategy."

With that thought in mind, I'm asking you to be in prayer for our congregational leadership as we continue to meet with Jacob Hoyer from Clarity Navigators. Together, we will be finalizing the vision frame for our congregation along with long- and short-range plans as the Lord leads us into the future. I invite you to be in prayer (especially on **January 13, February 9-10, March 9 and April 13**). Why? These are the dates that Jacob will be personally meeting with our vision team as we pray, plan and prepare to present the results to you! A new year offers us many opportunities to set new resolutions not only for our personal lives but also for the life of the church. To that end, may the Lord continue to bless us, guide us and help us to not only set goals for our ministry but also to follow through with fulfilling them. I'm excited for the new things the Lord is doing at St. Michael. I pray you are too!

*Pastor Dave*



*From the Principal**Kati Miser*

January is renowned for being the month of New Year's resolutions. Our theme for this school year reminds us that resolutions are not just for January. We need a daily renewing of our minds so that our lives are transformed. All of us have experienced disappointment when we fail to make our resolutions long-lasting or life-changing. During these times, praise God for His grace and forgiveness through Jesus. Praise God for the gift of His Holy Spirit giving us the strength to continue our renewal.



**Our mission at SMLS is to “educate children and touch families’ lives with the awesome love of Jesus Christ!”** This provides the environment for such transformations not only for our students but also their families.

This month, you can support SMLS through the following events:

- Invite your family, friends and neighbors to our **Touch-a-Truck** event on Saturday, January 20 from 10:00am to 2:00pm.
- Do you know of families who are looking for a Christian school? Invite them to our annual **SMLS Open House** on Wednesday, January 24 from 6:00pm to 7:30pm. Information will be provided for infants (our Early Learning Center) through eighth grade.



Call the St. Michael office if you would like more information.

Are you following SMLS on Facebook and Instagram to see photos and more about what's happening at SMLS? Check it out @saintmichaellutheralschool.

**Applications for the 2024-25 school year are now open.** Begin by clicking the “admissions” tab at the top of our website. Call the St. Michael office if you want to invite a friend, neighbor or family member to experience St. Michael Lutheran School.

*From the Faith Community Nurse**Tammy Zinn*

January is **National Blood Donation month**. St. Michael will be celebrating 15 years of having the Lee Health Blood Mobile coming to our campus!

The generous donation of one pint of blood can help save the lives of three people. Did you know that your blood donation is separated into different components? Your platelets may go to a child with leukemia, your plasma to a patient with a clotting problem and your red blood cells to an accident victim, a surgical patient or a cancer patient. The entire life-saving process takes approximately 45 minutes. The actual donation time is only 5-10 minutes. To donate blood, you must weigh at least 115 pounds, be at least 17 years old (or 16 with parental consent) and provide photo ID (if you're a new donor).



Did you know that every time you donate blood, you receive a mini-physical? This is comprised of a pulse rate check, a blood pressure check, a body temperature check, a hemoglobin level check and a blood type and cholesterol level upon successful donation check.



With caring hearts, please consider donating. All the blood donated to our blood centers stays right here in Southwest Florida. That means that together we can save lives, make an impact and help the people closest to us. It's community helping community!

I would like to give special thanks to Laurel Volberding for managing the schedule of the Lee Health Blood Mobile coming to our campus every other month and a special thank you to all who generously donate. There is no substitute for human blood; it is truly a gift of life!

For questions regarding our Blood Mobile's scheduled dates, please contact the St. Michael office. For information about Lee Health's Blood Donation Centers, contact (239) 343-2333.

## *From the Ministry Coordinator*

*Lori Schwan*

### **Thrivent Financial Members**

If you own a Thrivent Financial Product, you can give \$250 two times without giving any of your money. Contact Lori Schwan to see how you can partner for a fundraiser, service project or an educational Thrivent Action Team. Those with Choice Dollars from 2023 can direct them through March 31, 2024.

### **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's new session will run on Saturdays from 9:00-11:00am from January 20 through April 13 in Pastor Dave's conference room. You may join any session. Please register at [GriefShare.org](https://www.griefshare.org). If you have any questions, please contact Gail Schultz at [gail1370@aol.com](mailto:gail1370@aol.com).

### **DivorceCare**

A new session of DivorceCare will be meeting on Tuesdays from 11:00am-1:00pm from January 9, 2024 through April 9, 2024. Anyone who is separated or divorced can join any session. This group is available online and in-person. You can register at [www.divorcecare.org](https://www.divorcecare.org). If you have any questions, please call Lori Schwan at (239) 939-1218, ext. 237.



## *From the Director of Children & Family Ministries*

*Katy Bass*

### **Christmas Eve Family Service**

Thank you to everyone who helped us with the Christmas Eve family worship service. Your assistance was greatly appreciated!

### **Sunday School: Nursery through Sixth Grade**

- Sunday morning Bible studies and Sunday school will be resuming (9:15-10:30am) on Sunday, January 7.
- Kids two years old and younger are cared for in the sanctuary nursery.
- Kids three years old through fourth grade will be learning about the magi and Jesus growing up.
- Kids in fifth and sixth grade are studying questions they come up with about faith.
- Please contact Katy Bass if you are interested in volunteering with the kids or behind the scenes.



### **Worship Packs for Kids**

Beginning on the weekend of January 6 and 7, parents will be able to pick up a worship pack for their children to use during the worship service. Each pack contains activities for children aged 3 and up that correspond with the Bible readings and sermon for that weekend. The pack is yours to keep, and you can use it throughout the week if you would like! You will also find containers of crayons and other writing utensils to use during the service, but we ask that you return those afterward for others to enjoy. Check the worship pack area in the narthex for other materials and information.

### **Children's Ministry Kick-Off Lunch**

All families with kids in fifth grade and below are invited to join us for a lunch kicking off our children's ministry on Sunday, January 21 at noon in the cafeteria. We will have delicious food, fun family activities and time to talk about the future of children's ministry at St. Michael. If you have any questions, please reach out to Katy Bass at [katy.bass@gsmfcs.org](mailto:katy.bass@gsmfcs.org).

### **What Is Family Ministry?**

1. **Family ministry is an intentional strategy.** When it comes to family ministry, we must know the purpose, have a plan and execute that plan accordingly. Execution without a strategy is aimless, and a strategy without execution is pointless. Family ministry without intentionality is no more than a good idea.

*(continued on page 6)*

## *Saint Michael Youth Ministries*

# *Saint Michael Youth Ministries*

### **Seventh and Eighth Grade Confirmation with Parents**

Seventh and eighth grade students and their parents will study the sixth commandment in January during Sunday school (9:15-10:30am) in the education building, room 48 (Mrs. Weaver's room).

### **High School Sunday School**

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

### **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 to sponsor a meal, please contact Lori Schwan. Electronic donations can be made in the youth designation at [secure.myvanco.com/L-Z8M7/home](https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z8M7/home).

### **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 will be \$145 which includes park ticket, bus and snack. The registration and payment must be submitted to Lori Schwan by Wednesday, January 10. Musical artists that will be performing at the event include Casting Crowns, Phil Wickham, Brandon Lake, CAIN, Andrew Ripp and Hulvey.



### **Luminary Blessings**

Thank you to all of the youth and adults who set out over 400 luminaries on Christmas Eve to remind us of Christ bringing light into the darkest parts of our lives.

### **Compassion International Scholarship**

Thank you to everyone who is living generously by sponsoring a child in a developing country through Compassion International. Our youth group sponsors Renata, a 15-year-old girl who lives in Indonesia. In addition to bringing in cash to help pay for her \$43 monthly scholarship, you can now make electronic donations in the youth designation at [secure.myvanco.com/L-Z8M7/home](https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z8M7/home).



### **Middle School Summer Servant Event**

Please save the date of June 23-28, 2024 for the middle school summer youth servant event at Luther Springs.

### **Stay Connected**

If you are not getting emails or text messages about youth activities, please contact [lori.schwan@gsmllcs.org](mailto:lori.schwan@gsmllcs.org).

## *From the Lutheran Women's Missionary League*

LWML would like to thank everyone who helped with our **cookie extravaganza** this year! We were able to make over 120 cookie boxes which were all sold! We made well over \$1,000.00 that will go toward our missions. Thank you again!



## *Photos for Our Online Directory*

In October, Sam Johnson took about 100 household pictures for our online directory. If you didn't get your picture taken, Sam will be taking more at worship on January 20-21 and February 3-4. Go to [tinyurl.com/SMLCPortraits](https://tinyurl.com/SMLCPortraits) and enter the password *church* to preview your pictures and purchase them at a special rate for St. Michael families. If you have any questions, you can email [studiosam08@gmail.com](mailto:studiosam08@gmail.com).





## From the Director of Worship & Music

Ben Ball

*O Morning Star, how fair and bright!  
You shine with God's own truth and light, aglow with grace and mercy!  
Of Jacob's race, King David's son, our Lord and Master,  
You have won our hearts to serve You only! Lowly, holy!  
Great and glorious, all-victorious, rich in blessing!  
Rule and might over all possessing!*  
—text by Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608)



Happy New Year! It is hard to believe that 2023 flew by, and it is already 2024! As we stand at the threshold of this new year, I hope we will daily remember and deeply cherish the gift we just celebrated at Christmas—Jesus, our beautiful Savior, who was born as a humble baby and walked the earth to know both our joys and our sorrows, Jesus who knew the road before Him would lead to the pain and suffering of the cross yet gladly did it anyway, Jesus, the all-victorious King who will come again to reign. As the great hymn writer Charles Wesley penned in one of his greatest hymns (“And Can It Be”), “Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, should die for me!”

As I look back at 2023, I am simply amazed at all that has transpired in the music and worship ministry at Saint Michael, and that is all because of your generous and loving support and prayer! I wanted to provide a few updates of those projects which you helped to make happen. Our organ fund was completed with incredible speed! It is set to be delivered and installed throughout the month of July. (The dedication recital will be in November. There will be more details in the newsletters to come.) Our handbell extension octave should arrive in February. The “Share the Music” scholarship fund has been going steadily and currently supports four students in weekly private music lessons. We did major renovations to the sound and video systems in the sanctuary, we expanded collaboration between the church and the school’s fine arts program. We had an incredibly successful “Sounds of the Season” Christmas concert which greatly blessed a local mission organization, and the list just keeps going. It is exciting as we look to this new year and contemplate what will come to pass. I ask you to continue praying for our worship and music ministry.



If you are feeling a tug (or a push from someone!) to become involved musically, please chat with me and see where we can get you plugged in as part of our music ministry. You do not have to be able to read music to join in this ministry. We will take you as you are and grow together from there. Please continue to reach out to me at any time with any questions, concerns or song requests you have. My church email address is [ben.ball@gsmlcs.org](mailto:ben.ball@gsmlcs.org).

Blessings,  
Ben Ball

## From the Board of Human Care

Lutheran World Relief has many outreaches in the world. They supply food and medical care as well as hope to people in need. They aim to help families restore their lives. The organization was founded by Lutherans in the United States at the end of World War II.

This month, the board of human care is asking for your support financially and with prayers as LWR sends aid in the form of resources and people to areas of disaster. If you would like to help Lutheran World Relief, please write “LWR” on your check’s memo line or put your donation in an envelope marked “LWR.” We are very appreciative of your help. Thank you and blessings to you!



## From the Director of Little Saints

Stacie Thompson

To my friends and families of Little Saints and St. Michael,

It's not often we can sit back and look back at our lives knowing that without a doubt God had a hand in every aspect of our professional journey. But as I look back on all of my years here at St. Michael, I know that He indeed had a plan.

My journey began with St. Michael back in 2002 when my son was only three. I can't remember a time when this school and church were not a part of my life. Over the years, I have had many roles here on campus: a parent, a summer camp lead, a pre-k 4 aide and, perhaps my favorite job of all, the lead teacher for my two-year-old classroom that I led with pure love for many years which led to my current role as the director of Little Saints.

Any way you slice it, Little Saints is me. I have poured my heart and soul into building this program into the much-loved school it is today. I could not have done it without my beloved Mrs. Robbins and so many hard-working teachers and staff along the way who saw the vision of what Little Saints could become. And through it all, God led me each and every day as I prayed for guidance every morning before I entered the building, "God, show me the way." And, He did, for He brought me all of these great ladies, and He showed me what He wanted this school to be for each of the children that have entered these doors. I often tell my staff, "They may be little now, but they will take a piece of you with them for the rest of their lives." As I sit writing this letter today, I know that to be true as I leave a piece of me with this school.

It is bittersweet for me to write this letter today as I make my announcement that I will be leaving St. Michael and Little Saints at the end of February. Although I am physically leaving, I will continue to work remotely and manage daily operations with the help of my staff through May. It is hard to leave such a big piece of me behind, but it's such a joy to know that my husband and I are finally following our dreams. Those of you who know me know that I have long dreamed of moving to the mountains. With much prayer to God to "show me the way," my husband and I are going to live the dream. Pickens, South Carolina is where we will make our new home, and, although I will miss St. Michael and so many of you, I know I am leaving a piece of me to be remembered.

I thank each of you for all the memories.

Blessings,

Stacie Thompson, director  
Little Saints Early Learning Center



## From the Director of Children & Family Ministries

Katy Bass

(continued from page 3)

### What Is Family Ministry?

2. **Family ministry is a partnership between the church and the home.** Some advocate that discipleship happens best at church or happens at home, but Scripture reveals how the two work together in collaboration. When the responsibility and effort to raise up the next generation is shared by the family and the church, a more holistic approach can be undertaken.
3. **Family ministry focuses on three groups: kids, parents and leaders.** The kids are the most obvious of the three groups. These are the ones staff and leaders often have the deepest heart for. After all, why would you start serving in kids ministry without a desire to invest in kids? Parents and leaders are also a necessary component of ministry to the next generation but are easy to forget. A faithful and effective family ministry will intentionally invest in the kids, their parents and their leaders.
4. **Family ministry aims to develop disciple-making disciples.** The aim is to grow kids, parents and leaders to become more like Jesus in such a way that they become more faithful disciples who are doing the same for others.