

Deadline for submissions
is the 15th of each month for the
following month's newsletter.
Send to:
shea.flynn@gsmlcs.org



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

Happy March, happy spring and happy Easter! We are celebrating the arrival of a new month, and we are celebrating the return of spring on March 19. Though to me now as a resident of Florida, it has felt like spring ever since we moved here last August!

The changing of the months and the changing of the seasons reminds us that change in this world is inevitable. As the vision planning team for St. Michael met with Rev. Jacob Hoyer from Clarity Navigator on February 9 and 10, the excitement for the vision at St. Michael continues to come into focus! The board of elders, the church council and the church staff are excited to share with you the 90-day initiatives which the Lord led us to discover along with our one-year, three-year and seven-year vision frames. The seven-year vision is that “by 2030, we will fan into flame the fire of God’s peace to sustain the work of mission.” The tasks that we will be carrying out between now and 2030 will lead us to achieving this goal in our congregation and community.

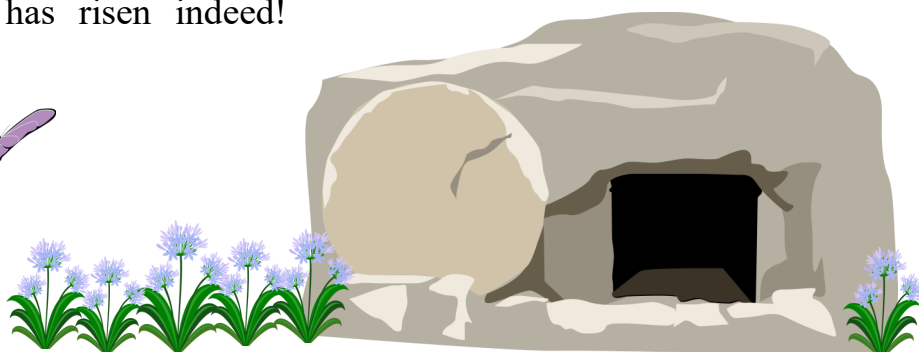
We will develop this vision because of the final event we celebrate in March: the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Daily we seek to fulfill the *why* of our existence as St. Michael Lutheran Church and School: “reaching across boundaries to cultivate peace in Christ from generation to generation.” Sharing the truth and love of the resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ, is the core reason for every mission and ministry which flows forth from our campus. I encourage you to continue to pray for our council, our elders, our school staff and our

church workers as the Lord leads us forward into this exciting and bold venture for His kingdom! Christ is risen; He has risen indeed!

Hallelujah!

With joy in Jesus,
Pastor Dave

Pastor Dave



*From the Principal**Kati Miser*

“The same power that rose Jesus from the grave,
The same power that commands the dead to wake
Lives in us, lives in us.
He lives in us, lives in us.”

These words from a contemporary Christian song by Jeremy Camp bring us a reassuring message as we walk through the season of Lent and come to the celebration of Easter at the end of this month! We proclaim, “Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!” Therein lies our confidence in the power-filled living of a transformed life. At St. Michael Lutheran School, **our mission is to educate children and touch families’ lives with the love of Jesus Christ.** A vital part of that mission is to provide parents with a strong Christian support network in a home-school partnership. The closer that we are drawn to the cross and Christ’s resurrection, the more transformed our lives become and the more influential we are on those around us.



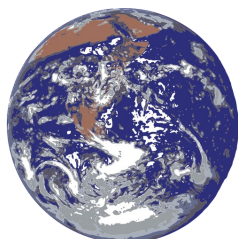
Did you know that all of our SMLS families commit to 20 hours of volunteering each year to help with school functions? Have you heard that our biggest fundraiser, the **SMLS Auction**, takes place on **Saturday, March 16**? Last year, over 350 guests helped raise over \$165,000 to benefit our children. You do not have to be a school family to volunteer for or even attend the auction. Tickets are available at the St. Michael office. This year’s theme, “Denim and Diamonds,” is an excellent and fun opportunity to invest in St. Michael Lutheran School.

Please share your stories about the impact St. Michael has had on your family. Post SMLS reviews on Facebook, Instagram and other websites to help prospective families learn about St. Michael. Thank you also for all the personal referrals to families, friends and acquaintances.

We are accepting new online applications for 2024-25 on our website. Click the “admissions” tab at the top of our website. Feel free to give me a call if you want to invite a friend, neighbor or family member to experience St. Michael Lutheran School firsthand.

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

We are excited to announce that Nikki Howley has accepted the position as the **new director** of Little Saints! Nikki is currently the lead teacher of a two-year-old classroom and has been the assistant director of Little Saints for the last three years. Her in-depth knowledge of the inner workings of our program, the mission of St. Michael and her love for Little Saints make her perfect for the job. Congratulations, Nikki! We wish God's blessings to you as you begin your new role.



In March, we look forward to a study of our family heritage, the diversity of our friends and how our families come from all over the world. We will work with the children as they pin locations on world maps to show where their grandparents are from. We will learn how children in other countries dress differently, go to different schools and eat different foods. Then, we will wrap the week up with a delicious array of homemade foods from all over the world as each family brings in one of their family’s favorite traditional foods. Each year, staff and kids alike enjoy **heritage week!**

From the Ministry Coordinator

Lori Schwan

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 current session is meeting on Saturdays from 9:00-11:00am through April 13 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.



DivorceCare

DivorceCare is currently meeting on Tuesdays from 11:00am-1:00pm 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. If you have any questions, please call Lori Schwan at (239) 939-1218, ext. 237.

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. In 2023, St. Michael Lutheran Church, School and Foundation altogether received \$1,864 in Thrivent Choice Dollars grant funding. These funds can be directed to nonprofits all over the world.

thrivent®

Sunday Marriage Enrichment

Anyone is welcome to join any Sunday morning at the boat table in the St. Michael office for the marriage study *The Art of Marriage* on RightNow Media.

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 can't be there in person, a Zoom option is also available. Join Zoom meeting ID 305 113 7001 with password "church".

Sunday Women's Bible Study

This women's Bible study, *Praying the Names of God*, will focus on a specific name of God each week and how they can use it as a focus of 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 on Wednesdays at 10:30-11:30am in the Early Learning Center boardroom as they study the book *His Last Words* by Kim Erickson.

The **Wednesday Evening Adult Bible Study** will not be meeting during Lent.

Thursday Women's Bible Study

This group meets on Thursdays from 10:00-11:30am in the Early Learning Center boardroom and on Zoom.

Saturday Men's Bible Study

This group meets on Saturdays from 9:00-10:30am at the boat table in the St. Michael office. They are currently studying the book of Ephesians.



Photos for Our Online Directory

Thank you to Sam Johnson for taking household pictures for our online directory! We will be uploading all of those pictures into our directory and then emailing out invitations to the password-protected directory. If you didn't get your photo taken, you can email a picture that you would like used to lori.schwan@gsmc.org. You can go to 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.



Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Seventh and Eighth Grade Confirmation with Parents

Seventh and eighth grade students and their parents will wrap up their study of the seventh commandment in March 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 Nehemiah.

Wednesday Youth Nights

Each Wednesday, middle and high school students grow in their faith with dinner, games and small group devotions. During Lent, we eat with the congregation at 5:30pm for soup and sandwiches and wrap up at 8:00pm. 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. Mark "Wednesday Dinner." We will not be having youth group during Holy Week.

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. Mark "Compassion" in the memo.

Middle School Summer Servant Event

Our beloved middle school summer servant event at Camp Luther Springs is back! Students entering sixth through ninth grades are invited to join other youth from around the FL-GA District for a week of camp fun as well as serving in the community around Gainesville. If we exceed 11 youth attending, we will need an additional adult to help chaperone. We will depart from St. Michael on Sunday, June 23 in the late morning and will begin our trip home on Friday, June 28 around 1:00pm, arriving at St. Michael in the early evening. The cost for camp before transportation is factored in is \$525 if you register by March 10. The cost to register will increase by \$60 after that. We will share the cost for transportation as we get closer to the event. Fill out the Google form at tinyurl.com/LutherSprings24 to let us know if you might be interested in this event. Once you know that you will be going, please send in a check for \$175 as a non-refundable deposit to reserve your spot on the trip. Payments and points can be used to help pay for this event. Scholarships are also available.



From the Faith Community Nurse

Tammy Zinn

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the United States. The American Cancer Society's estimates for the number of colorectal cancers in the United States for 2024 are 106,590 new cases of colon cancer and 46,220 new cases of rectal cancer. Overall, the lifetime risk of developing colorectal cancer is about 1 in 23 for men and 1 in 25 for women.

Regular colorectal cancer screening is one of the most powerful tools for preventing colorectal cancer. From the time the first abnormal cells start to grow into polyps, it usually takes about 10 to 15 years for them to develop into colorectal cancer. With regular screening, most polyps can be found and removed before they have the chance to turn into cancer. If you are age 45 or older, you should start screening for colorectal cancer. If you have a strong family history of colorectal polyps or cancer, talk with your doctor about your risk.



God's blessings to you,
Tammy Zinn

From the Director of Worship & Music

Ben Ball

*Go to dark Gethsemane, all who feel the tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see, watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away; learn from Jesus Christ to pray.*
—text by James Montgomery (1771-1854)



Worship Plans

We are in an incredibly busy season! What a blessing that we get to come together each week as we are “Guided to the Cross” as we continually focus on the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. If you have been unable to attend our Wednesday evening Lenten services, please watch them using the live streaming feature on our website. Our amazing volunteer sound and video technicians do a fabulous job of making these services available to us to stream from anywhere!

- **March 6, 13, 20 – Wednesday Lenten worship** services begin in the church at 6:30pm. There is a light dinner provided beforehand at 5:30pm in the cafeteria.
- **March 24 – Palm Sunday** combined worship service will be held at 10:00am in the gymnasium. After worship, we will hold a BBQ lunch along with egg hunts, crafts and games for kids. (If you would like to help with setup, cleanup or desserts, please contact Laurel Volberding at (239) 470-8026 or laurelvolberding@gmail.com.) Saturday evening service will be held as usual at 5:30pm in the sanctuary on March 23.
- **March 28 – Maundy Thursday** worship at 6:30pm – This is a very reflective service as we celebrate the Last Supper and begin to step into the darkness our Lord was to suffer as he was betrayed and arrested in the garden.
- **March 29 – Good Friday** worship at 6:30pm – In this, the most somber service of the Christian worship calendar, we end in utter darkness and silence as we reflect on Christ's suffering and death.
- **March 30 – Easter vigil** worship service at 5:30pm – Beginning in darkness, we conclude with glorious light as our Lord triumphs over death.
- **March 31 – Easter Sunday** worship services at 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00am – The 8:00 service will be traditional, and the 9:30 and 11:00 services will be blended.

Concert at St. Michael

On Sunday, March 3 at 3:00pm, St. Michael Lutheran is blessed to be hosting the Mastersingers Chamber Choir in concert. Music will include compositions by Mozart, Dvorak and Brahms accompanied on piano by Janet Carter. This concert is free and open to the public.

New Organ Update

I am so excited to share these pictures with you of the progress on our new instrument! As you can see, the new console is completely constructed and has entered the finishing stages before having “all the guts” of the wiring and control boards installed inside along with the keyboards and stops on the front. The wood shop does an impeccable job! The console is crafted out of solid walnut and will look stunning. Our instrument will be completed by the beginning of May and will be installed in July.

Please continue to reach out to me at any time with any questions, concerns or song requests you may have. My church email address is ben.ball@gsmlcs.org.

Blessings,
Ben Ball



From the Director of Children & Family Ministries

Katy Bass

Children's Ministry Survey

If you didn't join us at the kickoff lunch and would like to fill out a questionnaire for your family, please contact Katy Bass at katy.bass@gsmlcs.org or (239) 939-1218 ext. 227.

Sunday School (Nursery through Sixth Grade)

- Children two years old and younger are cared for in the sanctuary nursery by a consistent team of volunteers to allow parents and older siblings to attend Sunday school or Bible studies.
- Kids three years old through fourth grade will be learning all about Jesus and what he teaches us through his parables.
- Kids in fifth and sixth grade are learning answers to questions that they have.

Please contact Katy Bass if you are interested in volunteering with the kids or helping out behind the scenes.

Worship Packs for Kids

Don't forget to pick up a worship bag for your child as they enter the church. Each bag contains activities related to the sermon and children's message, stickers, a craft and a snack. The plastic bags are yours to keep, but we ask that you return the pencil pouch to the designated basket.

Cross My Heart Lent Devotional

The children's Lenten devotions, *Cross My Heart*, are ready to be picked up in the narthex! Be sure to pick up one for your family and follow along with our Lenten journey here at St. Michael.

Donations Needed

We will gladly accept any donations of individually wrapped candy for our Easter egg hunt on Palm Sunday.

We are in need of resealable plastic bags (e.g. Ziploc bags) for various projects for our children and family ministry. Any donations of sandwich, quart or (especially) gallon size bags would be much appreciated! Please reach out to Katy Bass if you would like to make a donation or if you have any questions.



Palm Sunday Egg Hunt and Activities

All kids are invited to our Easter egg hunt on Palm Sunday (March 24). Following the 10:00am worship service, the children will gather in the soccer field. We will hunt eggs and then turn them in to receive an Easter goodie bag! We will also have an area set up for kids to do a fun Holy Week craft to bring home.

Small Group Census

We are in the process of compiling an accurate listing of all of the small groups at St. Michael! If you are the leader of a small group, please email Katy Bass (katy.bass@gsmlcs.org) to let her know the name of the group, when and where the group meets, the theme or topic of the Bible study, whether you are open to new members and any other notable information. Thank you for your help in connecting all of our church's small groups!

From the Board of Human Care

Easter is almost upon us, and the board of human care would like to serve approximately 70 families in collaboration with two agencies, Oasis Youth Shelter (under Lutheran Services Florida) and Thrive (formerly Lifeline Family Center). The families that will be served are from our church, school and surrounding community. We would like to give these families and the two agencies gift cards to help purchase their Easter dinner. If you feel led to help in this way, please put your donation in an envelope and write "Board of Human Care – Easter," or if you write a check write "BOHC-Easter" in the memo line. We are always appreciative and amazed at your loving response to our requests. May we all be blessed during this holy Eastertime!

