

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

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Fort Myers, FL 33901
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them for decades to come. The countless prayers, love, support and encouragement from our St. Michael community are what have nurtured and encouraged our students during their time here. I am incredibly proud of each of our graduates, and I pray for success in all that they set out to achieve. Congratulations and God's many and continued blessings, SMLS Class of 2024!

In Christian love,
Pastor Dave Bass

Pastor Dave

The Messenger

From the Pastor

Rev. Dave Bass

Milestones and Memories at St. Michael

The month of May is usually a busy month for a number of reasons. On the church calendar, we celebrate Jesus' Ascension into heaven forty days after He rose from the dead on May 9. We celebrate the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, May 19 (ten days after Jesus' Ascension). On May 26, we celebrate the Holy Trinity, God in three distinct persons of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:16-20).

On the calendar of daily life, we celebrate and give thanks to God for the women in our life who are our mothers, grandmothers or women whom God has used to fulfill that role in your life. Memorial Day weekend is the unofficial start of summer for us as we take some time to reflect on and give thanks to God for the many servicewomen, servicemen and service animals who gave their life in defense of our American freedoms.

While some of these dates are milestones that mark time and life in the church, the other dates are ones that are made up of memories. Mothers and grandmothers think back fondly to when the kids were young and time didn't seem to move so quickly. On Memorial Day, memories of loved ones who have served, their photos slowly fading with time, remind us that peace in this world apart from Jesus remains elusive and that the freedoms we enjoy are truly a gift.

I would be remiss, however, if I didn't include another date of milestones and memories. On May 31, the St. Michael Lutheran School Class of 2024 will officially graduate. Our eighth grade class will celebrate the completion of academic coursework which will move them into the beginning of their high school years. It is my hope and my prayer that the milestones they have achieved and the memories they have created on and off our campus will remain with

Class of
2024



From the Principal

Kati Miser



The month of May brings thoughts of “Summer is almost here!” Celebrations mark those final days of school as well as graduation. Jesus has been here with us and will follow us into our summer activities. **Here at St. Michael Lutheran School, our mission is to educate children and touch families’ lives with that awesome love of our Lord, Jesus Christ!** Thank God for all the blessings of the 2023-2024 school year as we have experienced His love, guidance and presence, transforming us and renewing our minds. By the way, did you know that



the PTL is sponsoring a teacher appreciation week May 20-24? What a great time to send a note to a teacher!



Some special **May dates** to remember:

- May 10-12 Fishin’ with a Mission at South Seas Resort
- May 16-17 Drama presentation of *The Little Mermaid*
- May 23 Band and choir spring concert
- May 29 Eighth grade graduation



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. 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

Another school year is winding down for the older two-year-old rooms. We will close out the year with our **end of year** party on May 24 with a water slide and sprinkler party on the soccer field to celebrate and say goodbye. We will miss having these friends in our building some of whom we have watched grow since infancy. It is always bittersweet to watch them leave our building, but we will still see each other around campus as many will move on to pre-k 3 in the SMLS main building.



All of our Little Saints are busy planning for a very special time of year, **Mother’s Day!** This is always a special time of year as our little ones work on keepsake gifts for our moms to help them remember their babies when they were small. Many tears are sure to be shed as our wonderful moms open their gifts on Mother’s Day. Happy Mother’s Day to all of our moms out there!

From the Board of Human Care

ECHO is an organization based in North Fort Myers that serves the agricultural needs of farming families globally. The board of human care has selected this ministry to support this month. ECHO was started in the 1970s by a group of laymen serving Haiti to help people in poverty there. The ministry has expanded to over 190 countries in the years since. ECHO provides agricultural information to overseas small-family farm workers and distributes seeds around the world. They maintain a website that enables farmers to communicate with each other to collaborate on solving problems. ECHO also provides training opportunities at the Florida farm where agricultural development workers can come from around the world to gain the knowledge and experience that they need. ECHO is open to the public for scheduled tours and have over 10,000 visitors a year.



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 next session will be starting in September. 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 in May. 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.

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Sunday Marriage Enrichment

Anyone is welcome to join Sunday mornings through May 12 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 mornings in the cafeteria through May 12 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 through May 12 in Pastor Dave's conference room.



Thursday Women's Bible Study

This group meets on Thursdays through May 30 from 10:00-11:30am in the Early Learning Center boardroom and on Zoom. They are going through a study of Ecclesiastes that can be found on RightNow Media.

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.

Online Directory

Pictures have been added to our online directory. If you have never created an account through our website to access the directory, we will be sending you an invitation to create a password-protected account sometime this month. The web address to log in once you have an account is <https://smlcs.360unite.com/members>. If you did not get your picture taken at church over the past few months, you can email one that you would like us to use in the directory to lori.schwan@gsmlcs.org.

Golf Cart

The St. Michael maintenance department is looking for an additional golf cart to use around campus. It does not need to be pretty or have bells and whistles; they would just like one that works and will continue to work for a while. If you know of someone willing to donate a golf cart or sell one at a reasonable price, please email steve.eggen@gsmlcs.org. Thank you!

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

LCMS Youth Gathering 2025

Students currently in seventh through eleventh grades and their parents are invited to an informational meeting on Wednesday, May 8 at 7:15 in the band room. Those who register by May 31, 2024 will receive \$50 off their registration cost for the LCMS Youth Gathering taking place in New Orleans. The trip will be on July 18-24, 2025. Your deposit of \$100 should be submitted to Lori Schwan. Everyone who registers for Endure in May 2024 will also be allowed to roll over all their family's accumulated points at the end of May (instead of their balance maxing out at \$200).



Youth Special Summer Connection

We are planning special times this summer for each group to connect with each other in a fun way. Top Golf and an escape room have been suggested. If you have any ideas for youth activities, reach out to Lori Schwan.

Seventh and Eighth Grade Confirmation with Parents

Seventh and eighth grade students and their parents will study through May 12 during Sunday school (9:15-10:30am) in room 48 of the education building (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 Job. Check out this incredible story enduring faith. Our final meeting before the summer will be May 12.

Wednesday Youth Nights

Each Wednesday, middle and high school students grow in their faith with dinner, games and small group devotions. We are returning to meeting from 6:00-8:00pm now that Lent has ended and will have our final meeting of this school year on May 29. If you would like to volunteer or to sponsor a meal, please contact Lori Schwan.



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.

Middle School Summer Servant Event

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. We have 9 students and 1 adult registered. 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 is \$585. Thank you to a member of our congregation for generously helping to defray the transportation cost. **Final payments will be due on May 13.** There is currently a \$50 reduction in price when you invite a friend (for yourself as well as your friend). 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.

Car Wash

Thank you to everyone who helped make the car wash a success! We raised over \$700 that will go to defraying the cost of youth group's trips and other activities.

From the Director of Worship & Music

Ben Ball

*“Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music
is the greatest treasure in the world.”*

—Martin Luther



We are about to finish our first full academic year of the Share the Music Scholarship program. Your contributions to this special account have enabled us to bless the lives of six of our middle school students with weekly lessons with professional instructors in our community. This not only enhances our school’s music program but blesses us in worship and gives the kids a safe opportunity to get comfortable playing solo in front of a loving congregation. As we end this academic year, we are in the process of replenishing funding for next year. If you feel called to support this wonderful music support ministry, please designate any contributions to “Acct. #9105 Private Music Lesson Fund.” Thank you for all of your support!

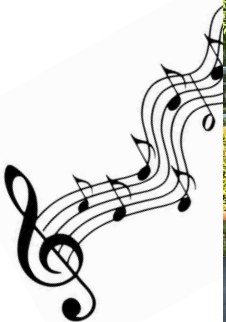
Exciting Updates

We have so many wonderful things going on around our St. Michael campus and so many yet to come!

- **New Octave of Handbells:** As you know, we purchased the next extension octave of handbells, and they were supposed to be here by the end of February. Because of one shipping issue with a part of the handle mechanism, they have been delayed (although the brass castings are completed). We now know that we will have them ready to begin using this fall.
- **New Sanctuary Organ:** Our new sanctuary organ is moving through the building stages at the Allen Organ Company factory in Pennsylvania. It has moved out of the cabinet finishing room, and they are now working on installing all the keys and wiring components. It is still on schedule to be delivered and installed in July. One detail to note is that the installation of the instrument is not open to the public. As exciting as it is, the sanctuary will be considered a construction zone during the installation. So, it will open to the installation teams only. I will update our social media accounts with progress pictures so that anyone who is interested can follow along safely.

Thank you all for your continued prayers and support of our music ministry! Your support does not go unnoticed. I ask a favor of you: please take a moment to thank the members of the choirs, handbells and worship team for all their hard work and dedication to enhancing our worship ministry. They dedicate their time every week to rehearsing and practicing to make our worship services special.

Blessings,
Ben Ball



2023-24 Share the Music Scholarship students from left to right: Jacob (7th grade), Thomas (7th grade), Brett (8th grade), Ali (8th grade), Nicola (7th grade), Maddie (7th grade)

From the Director of Children & Family Ministries

Katy Bass

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 the book of Exodus.
- 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.

"Sunday School at Home" Family Kits

Beginning in June, our families will be able to pick up a monthly box of themed activities to enjoy as a family. Each month's box will have a different theme. Families will be able to progress through the activities at their own pace throughout the month as they grow together in a deeper understanding of the Bible.

Pancake Breakfast Party

Kids three years old through sixth grade will enjoy a pancake breakfast, Bible lesson and games on Sunday, May 19 in the cafeteria during the Bible study hour. This will take place while the adults are meeting in the sanctuary for a congregational gathering.

Sunday Morning Fellowship

Starting on Sunday, May 26, we will be having fellowship time in the cafeteria from 9:15-10:30am. Coffee and refreshments will be provided. You can use this time to get to know someone new or to catch up with old friends. We will need volunteers to help make coffee and bring refreshments (pastries, donuts, etc.). Please contact Laurel Volberding at (239) 470-8026 if you would like to help.

Children's Ministry Service Project

Thank you to everyone who helped by donating items for the children's service project. They completed 75 birthday boxes for a local food pantry and 40 cancer patient care kits for the Lee Health Cancer Institute.



Additional Items

Thank You from the Christman Family

The Christman family (Craig, Ruth and Emily) would like to thank everyone who helped Emily successfully raise funds to attend Lutheran Summer Music Camp this summer. The prayers, love and support from our St. Michael family are so gratefully appreciated!

Trip to Liberia

Recently, Anita and Ben Dennis's son, Peter, and Peter's children, Mali and Morlu, traveled to Liberia to fulfill Ben's wishes to have his ashes spread in his father's and mother's villages. Gravesites were constructed in Vahun and Somalahun, and Ben's farewell letters were read at each funeral. The tombstone read, "Dr. Benjamin G. Dennis, sunrise-1929, sunset-2009, follower of Jesus Christ. 'I never forgot you.'" A Lutheran mission, Hope & Care for Children, facilitated the trip. The Lord protected this group as they traveled the dangerous road over the Kambui mountain range. The second church in Vahun will now be called the Dr. Benjamin G. Dennis Memorial Church. (Read more about the trip from Anita at tinyurl.com/AnitaLetter24.)