

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

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Fort Myers, FL 33901  
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# The Messenger

*From the Pastor*

*Rev. Dave Bass*

As Americans, this month finds its focus on Independence Day which commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. This document declared the 13 American colonies independent from Great Britain, a new nation declaring its freedom and its independence.

While often used interchangeably, freedom and independence differ in scope. Freedom is the general ability to act as one pleases while independence is the state of not being subject to the control of others. As a Lutheran Christian, freedom and independence take on a spiritual meaning and understanding in light of Holy Scripture. The reformer, Martin Luther, had much to say on the topic of the freedom we have as Christians in a tract he wrote and published in 1520. *On the Freedom of the Christian* explains the evangelical theology of the Reformation. Having posted the 95 *Theses* in October of 1517, Luther was shortly thereafter threatened with being charged as a heretic by the Roman Catholic Church. Luther responded with a fury of written articles, each tract meant to persuade Rome that his teaching was grounded in Scripture. *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* was published on August 18, 1520. *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* was published on October 6 and *On the Freedom of the Christian* was put out early in November of 1520. This third writing of Luther's is one of the most enduring treatments on Christian freedom.

He begins with two seemingly contradictory propositions:

**"A Christian is an utterly free man, lord of all, subject to none.**

**A Christian is an utterly dutiful man, servant of all, subject to all."**

This paradoxical approach in teaching Christian freedom mirrors the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and St. Paul by joining lord and servant together. By faith alone, God sets a man completely free in Christ. He is lord of all, subject to none. Yet, love binds him as a servant to his neighbor, subject to everyone. The paradox and tension of Christian freedom is found in faith and love together.

The lens through which Luther sees the Christian existence in the world is through Christ: His person and work lived out as He applies His saving effects to the Christian.

Luther summarizes this connection of Christ and the Christian's freedom in his tract via 1 Corinthians 9:19, "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all," and in Romans 13:8, "Owe no one anything, except to love one another."

Love by its very nature is ready to serve and be subject to him who is loved. So Christ, although He was Lord of all, was "born of woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4), and therefore was at the same time a free man and servant, "in the form of God" and "of a servant" (Philippians 2:6-7).

As completely free as Jesus was (incarnationally speaking), He also bound Himself under the law to serve His creatures and win their eternal salvation. The salvation Jesus won for us has given us Christian freedom. This is what is written in John 8:36: "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." What a comfort this Gospel brings with it! By faith alone, the Christian receives all that Christ gives. Faith alone is the saving and efficacious use of the Word of God according to Romans 10:9. "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

In accordance with the teaching of Scripture, a person is justified by faith alone and not any works;

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*From the Principal for the Interim**Shelly McGovern*

Last month, we wrapped up the 69<sup>th</sup> year of *educating children and touching families' lives with the love of Jesus Christ!* We graduated 50 students, our 52<sup>nd</sup> graduating class. In addition to preparing these students for high school, it is our prayer that they will leave this place filled with the love of Jesus and prepared to share His life-giving message wherever they go.



This month, we welcome our new SMLS Principal, Mr. Dan Maser, to our ministry team. Additionally, we are excited to welcome Dan's wife, Carol Maser, as our new middle school history teacher. The start of the 2025-26 school year is just around the corner, and our school administration is working together to create a smooth transition from Kati's ten years of leadership, through my interim term and onward to Dan's new leadership. This is an exciting time for SMLS that is full of new possibilities! God has provided an answer to our prayers through Dan and Carol, and we can't wait to see how God will continue to move mountains in the coming years. I am anxious to return to my role as dean (or, as some say, "queen") of students. Kati will continue working to meet the needs of the administration and school as best she can, and Jennifer will continue as our amazing assistant principal. Thank you for your prayers this past school year. We ask for your continued prayers during the 2025-26 school year.

The new school year begins on Wednesday, August 13! Here are some upcoming dates to keep in prayer:

- Sunday, August 10 – SMLCS staff commissioning, backpack blessing at the combined 9:30am worship service; student orientation and supply drop-off (two sessions: 11:00am-12:00pm and 12:00-1:00pm); new family luncheon 12:00-1:00pm
- Monday, August 4 – Teachers and staff return to campus
- Monday, August 11 – Parent orientation for pre-k to fifth grade (sessions 5:00-6:00pm and 6:00-7:00pm)
- Wednesday, August 13 – First day of school at 8:00am; opening chapel at 8:30am

*From the Pastor (continued from page 1)**Rev. Dave Bass*

for if they could be justified by anything else, they would not need the Word and consequently not need faith. This is the part that most people don't see in us as Christians: the Lord working in our heart and mind, fulfilling His good and gracious purpose in and through us.

But does that mean the liberty and freedom Luther writes about is a liberty of ease? Is the Christian free to avoid contributing to society? It does not. As long as we live in this body, we begin to show progress outwardly as to what the Christian life looks like. Luther continues:

"Here the works begin: we must indeed take care to discipline our body by fastings, watchings, labors, and other reasonable discipline and subject it to the Spirit so that it will obey and conform to the inner man and faith and not revolt against faith and hinder the inner man, as it is the nature of the body to do if not held in check." Lest we think this makes for a boring life, it doesn't. As we continue gaining an understanding that we have faith as a gift given to us, we are created in the image of God and we have been saved for all eternity, we serve God joyfully and without thought of gain in love that is not constrained.

Ultimately, *On the Freedom of the Christian* is a confession of Christ in a nutshell. Christian freedom is a gift from Christ Himself, "For freedom Christ has set us free..." (Galatians 5:1). What Christ did to win salvation in His divine and human natures, He imputes to those who by Baptism bear His name: Christian. God justifies the sinner by faith alone. The sinner is changed over the course of their life after the likeness of Christ. The Christian is at once utterly free in faith and a servant to all in works of love. As an American, may you live and enjoy the freedom the Declaration of Independence grants to you. As a Christian, may you live daily in your Baptism and in the freedom that Christ has won for you here in time and for eternity. Independence Day blessings to you!

Serving Christ in perfect freedom,  
Pastor David Bass

*From the Director of Youth Ministry**Sam Morganstern***Thank You!**

Happy July!

I'm deeply grateful for the warm welcome and kindness I've experienced since beginning my journey here at St. Michael. Your support has made this transition so much smoother, and I truly appreciate it. I'm looking forward to continuing to connect with the youth, their families and everyone else here as I settle in during these summer months.

Summer youth ministry has officially begun, and we thank God for the incredible blessings already unfolding. It has been such a joy to see the youth come together in fellowship as we begin this season of growth in faith. It's clear that God's Spirit is at work among us, and it's inspiring to see how the youth are engaging in their walk with Christ.

When we meet, we will be gathering around God's Word. Through Bible study, prayer and meaningful conversations, we're deepening our understanding of God's love for us and what it means to follow Jesus in our everyday lives. These times together are not just about learning; they're about experiencing God's presence and growing together as a community of believers.

Whether through service opportunities, shared meals or simply enjoying each other's company, the youth are growing closer to Christ and to one another. It's wonderful to watch them encourage each other, support one another and step into the fullness of God's love in new ways.

As we continue this summer, let us keep the youth in our prayers, asking God to continue nurturing their faith and drawing them closer to Him. May they be filled with the Holy Spirit and strengthened in their walk with Christ. We are a family in Christ, and we look forward to seeing how God will continue to work through us this summer and beyond.

I pray that this July is filled with God's peace and blessings and that you are strengthened in your faith through His Word. May you find rest in His promises and experience His presence in all that you do.

Blessings,

Sam Morganstern, director of youth ministry and DCE intern

**Middle School Ministry**

Our summer schedule for junior high youth ministry is officially here, and we can't wait to spend time with you! Whether it's a fun night of games, fellowship or diving into God's Word, our middle school youth nights are packed with opportunities to grow in faith and community. We'd love for you to join us and be part of the fun! If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out—I'm here to help.

When I return to Concordia University Irvine in early August to finish my degree, Ms. Chloe Brock will be stepping in to lead the middle school youth ministry until I return in January. Chloe and I will be working together to create a plan for a smooth transition during her time in this role until I return. If you have any questions, please reach out to either myself or Katy Bass.

**High School Ministry**

Our summer schedule for high school youth ministry is here! We're now meeting on Tuesdays, and we'd love to have you join us for one of our youth nights. Whether you're looking for some good fellowship, fun activities or a chance to grow in your faith, it's a great time to get connected. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out—I'm happy to help!

Please note that when I return to Concordia University Irvine in early August to complete my degree, Ms. Janet Oliver will be stepping in to facilitate high school youth ministry until my return in January. Janet and I will be working together to ensure a smooth transition during her time in this role until I return. If you have any questions, please reach out to either myself or Katy Bass.

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## From the Director of Worship & Music

Ben Ball

I do not know how you spend your summer, but after the hectic schedule of the school year and liturgical happenings, I am enjoying some downtime to rest and recuperate, to organize and declutter, to plan for the coming year, to practice and learn some new material and to compose and arrange some new music.

No matter what you are doing or where you are traveling this summer, I hope you will take these words penned by contemporary hymn writers Matt Boswell, Keith Getty and Matt Papa with you:



*Our God will go before us and guide us by His presence.  
What confidence this promise is: We will never walk alone.  
Our God will go before us; the Lord of Hosts is with us.  
O, praise the One who leads us on for His grace will bring us home.*

Many blessings on your summer! Rest up! Fall will be here soon!

Blessings,  
Ben Ball



Do you have a favorite *psalm, hymn, or spiritual song*? Or more than one favorite? Please list them below or send them to me in an email. Don't forget to include your name please!

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME HERE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Fishin' with a Mission

St. Michael Lutheran School PTL's annual Fishin' with a Mission event is back on September 12 to 14, 2025 at South Seas Resort on Captiva Island. This event brings together school families and anglers for a weekend of fishing, beach time and fellowship. You won't want to miss it! Registration links are below. Click on the link for the per-event pricing. If you have any questions, please email [fishinwithamission1@gmail.com](mailto:fishinwithamission1@gmail.com).

- Inshore registration: <https://smlcs.ejoinme.org/inshoreangler>
- Offshore registration: <https://smlcs.ejoinme.org/offshoreangler>
- Rock the Dock: <https://smlcs.ejoinme.org/rockthedock>
- Luau: <https://smlcs.ejoinme.org/luau>
- Awards dinner: <https://smlcs.ejoinme.org/awardsdinner>
- Room request options include **1 bedroom beach and bayside** and **2 bedroom tennis and beach**. Email your room request to [fishinwithamissionrooms@gmail.com](mailto:fishinwithamissionrooms@gmail.com)



## From the Director of Children & Family Ministries

Katy Bass

### Wiggles Welcome: Grab a Worship Pack!

Wiggles happen—we get it! That’s why we’ve created worship packs for kids to help little hearts and hands stay engaged during worship. Each bag is filled with goodies like sermon-themed activities, stickers, a fun craft or fidget toy and even a snack to keep stomach grumbles at bay. Grab one at the sanctuary entrance before the service starts! The plastic bags are yours to keep, but please drop the pencil pouch back in the basket when you’re done so we can refill it for next week. Worship together, wiggles and all; we’re glad you’re here!



### Let Go of Your Lego

Is your foot tired of stepping on stray Lego bricks? Is your Lego bin bursting at the seams? We can help! Children’s ministry is on the hunt for Lego donations. If you have any Lego sets or loose pieces collecting dust, we’d love to give them new life in our ministry. Drop donations off at the St. Michael office or contact Katy Bass if you would like to contribute. Help us build faith and epic Lego towers one brick at a time!

### Thank You from Camp Moosefeather Falls!

*It was a Christ-filled week in the woods we won’t forget.*

What a **wonder-filled week** we had out in the pines at **Camp Moosefeather Falls VBS**! Nestled deep in the “backwoods” and surrounded by laughter, singing and the truth of God’s Word we hiked through one of the most memorable VBS weeks yet.

With **155 curious campers** and **70+ incredible volunteers**, the campgrounds were alive with the sounds of **footsteps on forest trails, joyful worship and kids growing closer to Jesus**. Whether you helped pitch in with dinner, registration, leading cabins or helping in any other way, **thank you** for being part of this Christ-centered adventure!

Each day, we unpacked powerful Bible stories that reminded us that Jesus is always with us, guiding us through life like a steady compass:

- 🕯️ Jesus called the disciples and showed us how we’re invited to join **God’s team**.
- 📖 Jonah taught us how important it is to **listen to God’s voice** even when it leads us somewhere unexpected.
- 💧 We remembered **Jesus’ incredible love** through His death and resurrection—proof that our Savior is alive and will never leave us.
- 🍞 The story of the **five loaves and two fish** showed us how **God can do amazing things through even the youngest hearts**.

Our campers also put their faith into action by raising **over \$1,500.00** for **Filters of Hope**, a mission that brings **clean, life-giving water** to communities in need. That’s right! **About 160 people** will have clean water for the next **10 years** because of the kids’ giving hearts. That’s real impact in Jesus’ name!

Speaking of unforgettable moments, let’s talk about the **slime**. When the kids met their giving goal, **Pastor Dave, Janet Oliver, Sam Morganstern** and I stood tall (and slightly nervously) as we were **gloriously slimed**! Because the **girls won the giving challenge**, I had the honor of **smashing a pie in Pastor Dave’s face**! Camp traditions at their finest.

From crafts to snacks and echoing songs to quiet moments in prayer, **Jesus was at the heart of it all**. Camp Moosefeather Falls wasn’t just a fun summer memory; it was a week where **kids grew in faith and learned that they matter deeply to God**. We’re beyond grateful for the support of our **church and school families**, and we’re already planning for next year’s adventure. **Camp Moosefeather Falls will return**, and the forest trail is only getting wider. Until next time, keep your walking sticks ready and your eyes on Jesus—the best trail guide of all!

In His Service,  
Katy Bass

*From the Ministry Coordinator**Lori Schwan***Who Is a Senior Adult?**

As I move into my new role as director of assimilation and senior adult ministries, I've been mulling over the second half of that title to ask who is a senior. Is it anyone who is retired? We have members in their 80s still going into the office every day as well as members who retired before they turned 60. Kids might say grandparents are seniors, but I know first-time grandparents in their 40s and in their mid-70s. Around St. Michael, we think of you as someone with great experience and wisdom who has a great deal to contribute to our mission of reaching across boundaries to cultivate peace in Christ from generation to generation. We'll use the 55 and older guideline from our Southwest Florida communities and also promise not to card anyone! Our activities will be open to couples or singles who are widowed, divorced or never married as well as friends outside of St. Michael. The activities will include fellowship events and service projects at St. Michael, events around our community and even trips!

**Senior Potluck & Cards**

Join us on Thursday, July 31 from 5:00 to 7:00pm in the cafeteria for a potluck. Bring your favorite main dish, side or dessert for six to eight people. We will be sharing ideas of activities that we would like to plan for this year. Then, you can choose from a variety of card games: euchre, pinochle, hearts, hand and foot, spades, rummy or poker. If you're not familiar with card games, we will have easy games that you can participate in, or you can choose to enjoy visiting. If you have any questions, please contact Lori Schwan at (239) 292-6544 or [lori.schwan@gsmcls.org](mailto:lori.schwan@gsmcls.org). You are not required to let us know that you plan to attend, but it will be helpful for planning purposes at <https://gforms.app/r/21IFhd2>.

**2W Club Activities**

On June 10, nine members had a great time taking advantage of the Lux Theater's \$6 Tuesday movie deal and heading over to Red Lobster for a great meal. This month on Saturday, July 19 from 1:00 to 3:00pm, Pat Hartman will teach the group how to play Mexican train. Bring a snack and beverage to share. Anyone who has lost a spouse is welcome to attend regardless of whether they are a member of St. Michael.

**Nametags**

Over 330 nametags have been purchased and distributed. If you would like to receive one, please let me know or fill out this online form: <https://forms.gle/DpgeWAx2TpU8bjGHA>.

**Thursday Women's Bible Study**

The Thursday women's Bible study attendees have decided to keep meeting over the summer with members facilitating Lysa TerKuerst's Bible study, *I Want to Trust You, but I Don't*. It will explore areas where we want to trust others, ourselves or even God, but we don't. Join the group on Thursdays from 9:30-11:00am on Zoom (meeting ID: 305 113 7001; passcode: church) or on campus in the ELC boardroom.

**DivorceCare**

A new summer session of DivorceCare meets on Tuesdays through August 26 from 11:00am to 1:00pm in the ELC boardroom. Join any session in-person or online. Go to [DivorceCare.org](https://DivorceCare.org) to register. Daily email devotions are also available at this site. If you have any questions, please call Lori Schwan at (239) 939-1218, ext. 237.

*From the Director of Youth Ministry (continued from page 3)**Sam Morganstern***LCMS Youth Gathering**

The youth gathering is right around the corner! Our LCMS Youth Gathering team will be commissioned during all three services the weekend of July 12 and 13. We will be departing for New Orleans early in the morning on Thursday, July 18 and will return on Thursday, July 24.

We are excited for this amazing opportunity to grow in faith, fellowship and service with other youth from across the nation. We would like to thank the St. Michael congregation for your continued support, prayers and encouragement as we prepare for this life-changing experience. Your generosity and faithfulness make events like this possible, and we are truly grateful for your involvement in our ministry.