

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

Weekend Regular Worship

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

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

The Messenger

From the Senior Pastor

Pastor Dave Bass

Reformation Reflections

As we approach Reformation Sunday at the end of October, we give thanks to God for the bold confession of Martin Luther and the Reformers who held fast to the truth of God's Word. At the heart of the Reformation are the five "solas," five Latin phrases that capture the essence of the Gospel:

- **Sola scriptura (scripture alone):** God's Word is our final authority.
- **Sola gratia (grace alone):** We are saved purely by God's grace and not by our works.
- **Sola fide (faith alone):** This grace is received through faith and not by human effort.
- **Solus Christus (Christ alone):** Jesus Christ is the only Savior, the one mediator between God and man.
- **Soli Deo gloria (To God alone be the glory!):** Our salvation and all we do is for God's glory and not for our own glory.

I'm grateful for the opportunity we had last month to dig into these essential doctrines which remain the foundation of our faith and confession as Lutheran Christians. They are not dusty doctrines of the past but living realities that continue to shape our worship, witness and daily lives in Christ. We give thanks to the Lord for our confirmands who will profess their Christian faith before our congregation on Reformation Sunday. Please continue to keep them and all our young people in your prayers!

In a world filled with distractions, doubts and competing voices, it is more important than ever to remain rooted in God's Word. Just as farmers prepare and tend to their fields, so too we are called to nurture the gift of faith that God has planted in our hearts. Through worship, prayer, Scripture study and receiving Christ's gifts in Word and Sacrament, our faith is strengthened for daily life. Cultivating faith is not about earning God's favor (Christ has already won that for us!) but about abiding in His promises so that we may stand firm in times of trial and shine His light into the world.

Looking Ahead: November Sermon Series – *Overflowing with Thanks*

As the season of Thanksgiving approaches, we will gather around God's Word in a new sermon series titled *Overflowing with Thanks*. Together, we will reflect on what it means to live lives marked by gratitude—not only for material blessings but especially for the forgiveness, life and salvation we have in Christ. Each week will

highlight how thankfulness flows out into every area of our lives: our families, our church, our community and beyond. We will also be celebrating and officially wrapping up our *Find Your Five* initiative.

Hopefully, you've had an opportunity to connect with five new people in our congregation. If not, you still have plenty of opportunities to do so even after *Find Your Five* wraps up. With the holidays soon approaching, it's a wonderful opportunity to invite someone over for fellowship or to make a visit to one of our homebound members. Feel free to contact your elder, and they will be happy to put you in contact with members of our St. Michael family.

I'm grateful for you, for your family and for the St. Michael family! Together, may we always "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). May this month be a time of remembrance, renewal and rejoicing in Christ alone!

Blessings,
Pastor Dave Bass

*From the Principal**Dan Maser***Moving Forward...**

It's still early in the school year. However, one question I've been reflecting on lately is this: "Are we better today than we were yesterday?" Growth doesn't usually come from big, dramatic changes; it comes from the small steps we take each day. Sometimes those steps look like mastering a new math skill, showing kindness to a classmate or taking time to pray as a family.



Let's be honest. Sometimes those small steps don't go perfectly. Just like toddlers learning to walk, we stumble, we struggle, we feel discouraged and we get impatient. Even in those moments, God is at work! Romans 12 reminds us to "be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." Failure isn't the end. In fact, it is part of the learning process. It's part of how God shapes us, teaching us perseverance and reminding us that His grace is what truly transforms us.

At St. Michael, our mission of "Educating students and touching families' lives with the love of Jesus Christ" means we walk with our students not only in success but also in the hard moments. A mistake on a test, a conflict with a friend or a rough day in class can all become opportunities to learn, to grow and to experience the redeeming love of Christ.

So, are we better today than yesterday? With God's grace, yes, because each step, even the hard ones, draws us closer to who God is calling us to be. Guided by our Good Shepherd we keep moving forward, trusting that His grace will turn even our stumbles into growth—growth not just for today but for His Kingdom and for eternity. "Lead on, Good Shepherd!"

*From the Director of Little Saints**Nikki Howley*

We are happy to announce that our annual **Pirate Pasta Dinner** was another huge success this year! This event is always a great chance for the families to get together to enjoy a few hours eating Carrabba's and bonding while the children enjoy safe games and activities in the gym. A great time was had by all!

Little Saints will be holding our **mini fall festival** day again this year on October 31. Our little ones will enjoy a day filled with games, pumpkin painting and a costume parade. This event has always been a big hit with the kiddos.

Little Saints will hold our tenth annual **pet food drive** for ARC in North Fort Myers on November 1 to 9. Please keep us in mind for pet donations; the shelter could really use our help.



*From the Associate Pastor & CFO**Pastor Roy Peterson*

Dear fellow saints,

Hardly a Sunday passes without someone asking me, "How is it going?" With my answer, I always try to express how blessed I am to serve all of you at St. Michael as I partner with an exceptional team of professional and lay leaders. I often recall the words written by St. Paul to Philemon, "I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers."

My transition back into parish ministry has gone very well, and I am grateful for the wonderful support that I have been receiving from Pastor Dave and the rest of our staff along with the leaders of our many boards and committees. I would like to offer a special word of thanks to Bob J. whose duties I will be assuming as he transitions toward retirement later this year. He has been a faithful steward, and we can all be grateful for his work among us.

During this season of transition and change at St. Michael, allow me to request your patience and understanding as we work together to position the Lord's Church for the future He has planned for us. In the words of our school theme this year, "Lead On, Good Shepherd!"

Serving you and Jesus,
Pastor Roy

*From the Faith Community Nurse**Tammy Zinn*

October is **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**, an international health campaign dedicated to raising awareness, promoting screening and reducing the risk of breast cancer which **affects 2.3 million women** worldwide each year.

Why It Matters

- Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women globally.
- One in eight women in the U.S. will develop invasive breast cancer in their lifetime.
- Every two minutes, a woman in the U.S. is diagnosed with breast cancer.
- Male breast cancer is rare but real. About 2,800 men in the U.S. are diagnosed annually.

**Early Detection Saves Lives**

Early detection through regular screening, knowing the risk factors, recognizing the signs and symptoms and having access to support resources is crucial. **Breast cancer caught early is often very treatable.**

Do Your Part

- Get an annual mammogram starting at age 40.
- Perform regular self-breast exams.
- If something doesn't feel right, contact your healthcare provider.

Don't let financial barriers stop you. There are local resources available to help you get the care you need.

Show Your Support

Join us **October 4 and 5** in **wearing pink** to raise awareness and stand in solidarity with those affected by breast cancer.

If you need help scheduling a breast screening or accessing health care resources, please **contact Tammy Zinn**, St. Michael's faith community nurse. The St. Michael office can put you in contact with Tammy.

Together, we can make a difference.
Stay informed. Stay proactive. Stay healthy.

From the Director of Youth Ministry

Sam Morganstern

It's hard to believe it's already been over a month since I returned to Concordia University Irvine to finish up my last semester. While I've been busy diving into my studies and learning so much to bring back to St. Michael this January, youth ministry has been continuing in wonderful ways!

I'm so grateful for Chloe and Janet who have really stepped up and are shining Christ's light to our middle and high school youth in the church, school and community. I'm also incredibly thankful for Pastor Dave and Vanessa Passos who have taken on teaching Sunday school for our middle and high school students.



A young person is much more likely to stay strong in their faith when they have five or more adults walking alongside them. So, it's so encouraging to see how many people are willing to pour into these kids' lives. Whether it's those mentioned above or the many volunteers who give their time in all sorts of ways, their dedication means so much. It truly takes the whole body of Christ to help raise the next generation.

I'm counting down the days until I can return to St. Michael as I deeply miss being present in the community this congregation offers! Until then, I pray you feel reminded of the incredible promise we have through Jesus' life, death and resurrection as we head into this beautiful fall season.

In Christ,
Sam Morganstern

November Confirmation Module

The November confirmation module, "Lutheran Living" will be held Sunday, November 2 from 12:00 to 4:00pm in the cafeteria. Lunch will be provided. It is available to students in sixth grade or older. This module dives into how the Lutheran church came about, why we believe what we believe and why we worship the way that we do. Students will be encouraged to see how their Lutheran faith is something to be lived out daily at home, at school and in church. Please plan to attend if you have not yet completed this module. Bring your Bible, and be ready to learn, to discuss and to learn in faith together!

From the Board of Outreach

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19). That's the heart of outreach—and we'd love for you to be part of it! The board of outreach at St. Michael is forming a team of people who are passionate about stepping outside our church walls and into our community. Our mission is twofold: to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and all that He has done for us and to let people know about St. Michael and the ways we can serve them. This team helps plan and carry out events that connect with our congregation, school families and the wider community—from neighborhood activities to school partnerships to special outreach opportunities. Whether it's welcoming new families, hosting a community event or finding creative ways to build relationships, you'll be part of making an eternal impact.

If you love meeting people, building connections and using your gifts to reach others with the hope of Christ, this could be the perfect place for you to serve. Pray about it, and if God is nudging you to get involved, come talk with us—we'd love to have you on the team! At St. Michael, our mission is clear: *Reaching across boundaries to cultivate peace in Christ from generation to generation.* Join us as we live this mission together. Please contact katy.bass@gsmllcs.org.

Wild Food Drive

Kids Give Charity and St. Michael Lutheran Church and School invite you to participate in the Wild Food Drive! This contest challenges each SMLS classroom to collect a wild amount of non-perishable food donations between October 16 and October 24. Food donations from each class will be weighed the morning of October 24, and the classroom with the most weight will win a pizza and candy party! All donations will go directly to our community through Community Cooperative. Last year, we collected 3,067 pounds worth of donations! Our goal this year is to collect the weight of a hippo or white rhino which is 3,400 pounds.

From the Director of Worship & Music

Ben Ball

*In Christ there is no east or west; in Him no south or north
But one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth.*
(text by John Oxenham, LSB 653)



One of my favorite movies is *Mr. Holland's Opus*. If you have seen it, you will no doubt recall one of Mr. Holland's famous lines: "I will use anything from Beethoven to Billie Holiday to rock and roll if I think it will help me teach a student to love music." Why do I bring this up? Simply because there are so many styles to use in our worship of God. In keeping up with the state of worship and music within the church (both the LCMS and other denominations across a broad spectrum of the church), I constantly see comments from others in similar positions to mine saying, "Oh, well *that* church is for *this* age group and *their* style of music," and "Oh, don't go there because *that* church is for *this* group and *this* style of music." And, the list of defenses goes on and on. It seems to be a church culture phenomenon wherein you define your church by the age category or the style of music. One thing I have observed here at St. Michael is that we are fairly evenly represented between the generations. As a whole worshipping community, we are not top-heavy in one age category or another. A few weeks ago, Pastor Dave asked us in worship, "If someone who had never been to our church were to ask you about St. Michael and what it was about, what would you tell them?" That got me thinking.

As the director of worship and music here, you often hear my perspective on things related to those topics. However, I have an unusual request this month. I am giving *you* homework! I want to hear *your* stories and to hear them from every generation we have at St. Michael if possible. As Psalm 79:13 (and our mission statement) says, "From generation to generation we will recount your praise." If you are willing to share your stories, please email your response to me at ben.ball@gsmcls.org. I can't wait to hear from you!

Here are some questions to get you started:

- What does worship mean to you?
- What defines a strong worship service to you?
- What are your favorite worship songs *and why*?
- What was the most meaningful or memorable worship experience you have ever had?
- What helps facilitate worship for you?

I am very curious to get each generation's take on worship.

Blessings,
Ben Ball, director of worship and music



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!



Ignite345

Calling all third to fifth graders! Join us on Wednesdays from 6:00 to 8:00pm for dinner, games and a hands-on Bible lesson that helps kids grow in faith and friendship. Ignite345 is designed to “fuel faith and spark fun,” giving students a safe, Christ-centered space to belong and serve together. We follow the St. Michael Lutheran School calendar and therefore **will not meet on Wednesday, October 29, 2025**. Thank you for planning accordingly! If you have a friend who you think might love it, please invite them! Parents, watch the weekly emails for themes, meal details and any sign-ups.

Reformation Sunday Celebration

Join us on **Sunday, October 26 at 9:30am** for a special worship service celebrating both the **Reformation** and our **confirmands** as they publicly confess their faith. This is a joyful milestone in their walk with Christ and a meaningful reminder of our Lutheran heritage. After worship, head to the gym for a **celebration lunch** featuring a hearty menu of brats, hotdogs, hamburgers, potato salad, green beans, mac and cheese, red cabbage, sauerkraut and delicious desserts. Stay for an afternoon of fun with **games, crafts, prizes and (of course) plenty of candy!** **Donations of candy** are appreciated, and **volunteers are needed** to help with games. Come ready to celebrate, fellowship and rejoice in the Good News that sparked the Reformation and continues to shape our faith today!

Confirmation Service

Join us on **Sunday, October 26 at 9:30am** for a very special worship service as we celebrate with our **confirmands**. On this important day, these young people will publicly confess their faith and commit to living out their baptismal promises. This milestone is not only significant for them and their families but also for our entire St. Michael church family. Come and be part of this joyous occasion as we surround our confirmands with prayer, encouragement and support. Your presence will remind them that they are not walking this journey alone but with the love and care of their church community.

Ladies at the Table

All women are invited to join us for our next Ladies at the Table event on **Saturday, October 1 at 11:00am** in the art room. We’ll enjoy a time of fellowship, devotion and creativity as we make a **fall door hanger** craft (cost: \$15). Bring a dish to share for lunch, connect with other women and be encouraged by God’s Word in a warm and welcoming setting. Sign up by contacting katy.bass@gsmlcs.org or by scanning the QR code on the right. Don’t miss this fun opportunity to gather in grace, grow in faith and share in community!



St. Michael Cookbook

Pick up your copy of the *St. Michael Lutheran Church Cookbook* at the **Reformation lunch on October 26** for \$20. It’s packed with favorite recipes from our church family—perfect for your kitchen and a thoughtful Christmas gift for friends and relatives. Stop by the cookbook table in the gym to grab one (or a few!) while supplies last.

From the Director of Assimilation and Senior Adult Ministries

Lori Schwan

Senior Adults

21 seniors enjoyed lunch at Mel's Diner, and 14 went to Belle Theatre to figure out what happened *While the Lights Were Out*. As we schedule activities for our seniors, we are planning to vary the type and cost of activities so that there might be something that appeals to a variety of interests and budgets as we fellowship, grow and serve together.

Senior Adults Serve Oasis Youth

On Labor Day, ten of our seniors had a blast serving around a dozen students and two staff members from Lutheran Services of Florida's Oasis Youth Shelter. After some open gym time, dodgeball and Uno, the students enjoyed a cookout. They devoured delicious homemade desserts before learning to play water balloon volleyball. Thank you to Greg Gehringer for sponsoring this Thrivent Action Team service project.

Tour of Oasis Youth Shelter

Join us for a tour of Lutheran Services of Florida's Oasis Youth Shelter on Wednesday, October 1 at 10:30am. The shelter is located at 3642 Central Ave., Fort Myers, FL 33901. Afterward, those who are interested can go to Biggy's Place for lunch and a discussion of what we learned. Please contact Lori Schwan if you are interested in the tour or in lunch afterward.

Tuesday Movie Matinee

Last month, we started a new Tuesday tradition by taking in a show which, last month, was coincidentally titled *The Senior*. Join us for *Soul on Fire* on Tuesday, October 14 at 12:50pm at Bell Tower. Tickets are \$8 on Tuesdays if you have a free Regal Crown Club membership.

2W Club: Escape Room

Nine members of the 2W club had a great time trying to solve "Aunt Elsie's Inheritance" and "The Country Club Caper." Keep an eye on our weekly announcements bulletin for more information about October's activities. Any widow or widower is welcome to attend.

Lunch and Learn: Memory and Brain Health

Please save the date of Sunday, November 2 at noon. The board of congregational care will provide a catered lunch from Jason's Deli while we are joined by a special guest speaker: Stephanie Malally, a social worker with Lee Physician Group's Memory Care Clinic. Any adult is welcome to attend. Please RSVP at <https://forms.gle/a5FSK8N9aDfDk3h96> or by contacting Lori Schwan.

Christmas Senior Social

Save the date for our annual Christmas luncheon on Sunday, December 14 prior to our annual Sounds of the Season concert! Stay tuned for more information.

Serving at Memorial Receptions

St. Michael's board of congregational care is currently developing a list of those who have the gift of hospitality and a heart for compassion to assist those who are grieving by setting up, serving and cleaning up memorial receptions. Please contact Lori Schwan if you are interested.

DivorceCare

A session of DivorceCare for those separated or divorced meets on Tuesdays from 11:00am to 1:00pm through December 9. You are free to join any session online or in-person in the ELC boardroom. Go to DivorceCare.org to register or to sign up for daily email devotions. If you have any questions, call Lori Schwan at (239) 939-1218, ext. 237.



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From the Director of Assimilation and Senior Adult Ministries

Lori Schwan

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GriefShare

GriefShare is a support group for people dealing with the death of a family member or friend. It is currently meeting from 9:00 to 11:00am on Saturdays in Pastor Dave's conference room in the St. Michael education building. To enroll, visit GriefShare.org. If you have any questions, please contact Gail Schultz at (732) 991-0642.



Thursday Women's Bible Study

Join us on Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:00am as we study Lisa Harper's *Lyrics of Life: A Psalm for Every Situation*. We will be meeting on the St. Michael campus in the ELC boardroom and on Zoom (Meeting ID is 305 113 7001 Password: church).

Sunday Women's Bible Study

Join us on Sundays from 9:30 to 10:30am as we dive into Donna Snow's book, *Strong and Courageous: Studying God's Promises in Joshua*. All women are welcome—come grow in faith and fellowship together! We will be meeting on the St. Michael campus in the band room and on Zoom (Meeting ID is 305 113 7001 Password: church).

LWML

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) is an official auxiliary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Since 1942, LWML has focused on affirming each woman's relationship with Christ, encouraging and equipping women to live out their Christian lives in active mission ministries and to support global mission.

The next meeting of LWML will be held on Saturday, October 18 from 11:00am to 12:30pm in the music room. All women are encouraged to attend. We will be working to complete the preparation for the LWML rally to be held at St. Michael on November 8 from 11:15am to 3:00pm. The theme of the rally is "Equip and Encourage."

Registration for the meeting will begin at 11:15am with lunch starting at 11:30am. Following lunch will be officer elections, worship, Bible teaching, mission spotlight and business meeting. Blythe Ann Barreto, daughter of Jody Jackemeyer, is a phenomenal teacher of the Bible and will tell us about her time teaching in Slovakia. Please RSVP to the St. Michael office.

Michael W. Smith Concert

Michael W. Smith will be performing at Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall on Sunday, December 14 at 7:00pm. St. Michael has 20 tickets in the mezzanine. They are \$91 each. If you are interested in going, please contact Lori Schwan at (239) 939-1218, ext. 237.



Help Spruce Up the Sanctuary

If you have a heart for service but not a lot of time, please consider joining the team who spruces up the sanctuary every week. This group meets Thursday mornings from 8:30-10:00am. The work is light. If you are interested in helping, please call Sharyn Dahn at (978) 884-7294 or Kathy Hultgren at (847) 313-5278.