

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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The Messenger

From the Pastor

Rev. Dave Bass

For God and Country

On the first Thursday of this month, we will celebrate Independence Day. This has historically been understood as an American holiday rather than a religious holiday. Recently, however, there's been more and more public discussion about the relationship between Christianity and patriotism.

Some Christians see God's goals and our country's goals as one and the same and view it not as their civic duty but as their Christian duty to love and support America. They point to Paul's teaching in Romans 13. "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities," Paul writes, "for there is no authority except that which God has established." As Lutheran Christians, however, we want to ensure that we are not merely good citizens but that we are first and foremost faithful Christians. As such, we want to interpret biblical texts properly to understand their original intent and meaning.

The Roman Empire was the governing authority when Paul wrote the book of Romans. Paul was writing from a context in which the Roman authorities were not friendly to Christians. Paul had Roman citizenship (which protected him to a certain extent), but not all Christians did. By the beginning of the second century, the Christian community experienced rapid growth, and the Romans were concerned that Christians would quickly take over the empire.

Polycarp, a disciple of John, is the best-known martyr of this period in Christian history. Because he was elderly, the soldiers who arrested him wanted to give him a way out of his death penalty. So, they told him all he had to do to escape death was declare, "Caesar is lord." But, Polycarp refused and instead responded, "Eighty-six years I have served Christ, and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" Polycarp knew well that the New Testament commands that we submit to rulers whether they protect our right to worship or not. However, he refused to renounce his allegiance to his Lord and Savior.



As Americans, we still enjoy the freedom of religious expression. We would do well to ponder the question, "If those freedoms were taken away, would we still worship and serve the Lord without renouncing Him for anything or anyone?"

History reminds us that the Romans did not appreciate Christians declaring, "Jesus is King." In Acts 17:7, we read about Paul and Silas in Thessalonica. The whole city is in uproar because they are preaching and teaching about "another king, Jesus." Towards the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, when the chief priests and the teachers of the law are seeking to get rid of Jesus, they turn to the government they aren't thrilled with to accomplish this goal, arguing, "Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar" (John 19:12).

We would do well to be reminded that it is indeed Almighty God who sets up and deposes kingdoms (Daniel 2:21). Jesus reminds us in the prayer He teaches His disciples to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And so we live with this understanding that this side of eternity, no matter which nation we live in, will be filled with imperfect leaders, with sin and with brokenness.

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

As Christians, the universal principal of living out our faith remains. We show honor and respect to those in positions of authority. "Give to everyone what you owe them," Paul explains. "If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor" (Romans 13:7). We have countless reasons to be thankful and grateful as Christians and as Americans not only on Independence Day but always. Living in thankfulness for this great nation while we remain unwavering in our complete allegiance to Jesus Christ is one of many ways we can show others that in Christ alone do we have true and everlasting freedom. With these thoughts in mind, may you have a wonderful and thankful Fourth of July!

In Christian love,
Pastor Dave Bass

Pastor Dave

*Sunday Morning Fellowship*

You're invited to join us for a time of fellowship in the cafeteria on Sunday mornings from 9:15-10:30am. Coffee and refreshments will be served. You can use this time to get to know someone new or to catch up with old friends. Volunteers are needed to make coffee and to bring refreshments (pastries, donuts etc.). Please contact Laurel Volberding at (239) 470-8026 if you would like to help.

*Saint Michael Youth Ministries***LCMS Youth Gathering 2025**

Students currently in seventh through eleventh grades are invited to the LCMS Youth Gathering taking place in New Orleans. We will be gone July 18-24, 2025. If you already signed up, we will begin planning for our 12 months of fundraising. If you need more information, please check your email for the link or contact lori.schwan@gsmcslcs.org.

High School Bowling

By popular demand of our high schoolers, we will be going to HeadPinz on Sunday, July 21 at 5:00pm. We will be bowling for two hours before going to Dairy Queen on Daniels Parkway for ice cream and a devotion. We will be finished by 8:00pm. St. Michael will cover the lane rental along with a slice of pizza and a soda. Please bring money for an ice cream treat and anything else you'd like to eat. You are welcome to bring friends! Help us plan for the event by letting us know by Wednesday, July 17 if you are planning to come via [this Google form](#).

Middle School Ice Skating

Our new sixth through eighth graders are invited to join us on Sunday, July 14 for an evening of ice skating at Hertz Arena. We will be meeting at 5:00pm. Pizza and beverages will be provided. Please bring \$10 to skate and money for any other concessions that you will want. Dress warmly. Parents will pick up their kids at 8:00pm. Please let us know if you will be joining us so that we know how much pizza to order using [this Google form](#).

Volunteer Work Day at St. Michael

Thank you to everyone who made such a difference at our work day in June. What a blessing so many hands can be! Now that carpets have been cleaned in the classrooms, we will need to return the furniture to the rooms. Please check your calendar to see if you can lend a hand on Sunday, July 7 from 9:15 to 10:30am.

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*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.

**Online Directory**

Invitations to members who have not already signed up for the online digital directory were sent in May. As we pause Bible studies for the summer, this can be a great way to stay connected. You can login through this site: <https://smlcs.360unite.com/members>.

If you did not get your picture taken, you can edit your own account or email one to me at lori.schwan@gsmlcs.org.

*From the Director of Children & Family Ministries**Katy Bass***Sunday School in a Box**

The July boxes for each family are in the narthex. This month, there will still be games and activities for all ages, but we have also added some fun recipes for snacks and more! Families can talk more about the parables of the week and then work together to cook a simple meal. There will also be packets for our families with preteens and teens.

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.

Worship Pack Snack Donations

We are in need of some snacks for our children's worship packs. We need individually-packaged snacks such as Goldfish, Nilla Wafers, Teddy Grahams, pretzels, Cheez-Its, veggie straws, granola bars and animal crackers. Please avoid any snacks that contain nuts. Please deposit any snack donations in the collection bin in the narthex.

**Church Nursery Update**

Over the summer, the occupational therapy class that has been using the church nursery will be moving to another location on campus. This means that we will have more space in the nursery and are in need of **very gently used** or new items. We are looking for toys meant for children three years old and younger (preferably ones that do not make noise or play music). Other items that would be helpful include baby wipes, small packs of diapers in various sizes, Play-Doh, cookie cutters, board books and Lysol wipes. We plan to have the nursery completely renovated this month.

Sunday School Teachers and Substitutes

We are currently making plans for our Sunday school for infants through fifth grade for when we resume this fall. Over the years, we have had incredible teachers to help teach our youngest people about Jesus, but we could use a few more hands to help make it happen! If you are interested in leading a group of children this coming year, please let Katy Bass (katy.bass@gsmlcs.org) know. There will be an informational meeting in August for those who are interested.

Wacky Water Fun

Kids in kindergarten through fifth grade are invited to join us for an evening of water fun on Sunday, July 28 from 6:00 to 7:30pm. We will play games that all involve water. It will be a great evening to cool off, visit with friends and enjoy some summertime treats! Please bring your own towel.

From the Director of Worship & Music

Ben Ball

“We can mention only one point (which experience confirms), namely, that next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. No greater commendation than this can be found — at least not by us. After all, the gift of language combined with the gift of song was only given to man to let him know that he should praise God with both word and music, namely, by proclaiming the Word of God through music.”

– Martin Luther



Our new handbells have arrived! Because of a delay in one of the small handle parts (the smallest part of the entire bell but a vital one that holds the handle securely to the cast bell), the bells did not arrive until June. However, they are shiny and beautiful and will be used in worship this coming fall. Thank you for your generosity in providing them for the music ministry to use in worship!

Mark Your Calendars

There will be several more dates to add this fall, but two very important dates to plan to attend are:

1. **Sunday, November 10, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.** – In conjunction with Martin Luther’s birthday, we will be holding a festival of Reformation hymns led by organ, choir, soloists, readers and brass quartet.
2. **Sunday, January 26, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.** – The official dedication concert of the new organ

Blessings,
Ben Ball



Saint Michael Youth Ministries

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Youth are encouraged to join anyone from the congregation or school who want to help with our institutional renovation. Points and service hours can be earned. Come be a part of this intergenerational service project on our campus!

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. Type “compassion” in the text box.

Growing in Faith During the Summer

Taking a break from Sunday school or confirmation during the summer doesn’t mean we should break from growing in God’s Word; we just have the opportunity to do it in a different way. One way to grow is by checking out one of the 20,000 Biblical videos offered through RightNow Media. It’s like Netflix for Bible studies! St. Michael pays for the subscription, and RightNow Media wants us to share this resource with as many people as we can. Feel free to make use of it yourself, and pass it on to your friends. You can get started at <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/user/StMichaelLutheranChurch>.



Stay Connected in the Summer

If you are not getting emails or text messages about youth activities, please reach out to Lori so you can be added to these lists. Lori will be sending out devotions you can share with friends and family over the summer.