

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

“The Hand of the Lord Leads Us to Lent”

One of the most useful yet underrated gifts God has given to us is our hands. Without giving it much thought, we use our hands for so many daily chores and activities. With our hands, we heal, mend, build, teach, comfort, pray, serve and complete acts of love God calls us to do for our neighbor. Yet, as humans our hands are sinful and unclean. There is not a single cleansing agent on the market today that can wash away the sin that our hands commit. In our corporate confession during worship, we call to mind the fact that “we have sinned against You, Lord, in thought, word, and **deed**, by what we have **done** and what we have left **undone**.” Our hands, our heart and our very soul need cleansing and restoration.

This Lenten season, we will experience how Christ's hands are the ones that can transform our dirty, sinful hands into beautiful, clean ones for His plans. Join us on Ash Wednesday (March 5) at noon or 6:30pm as we begin this journey with our Lenten series entitled *The Hand of the Lord*. Each weekend in worship and on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm, we will explore God's Word to see how His hands are used in both the New and Old Testaments from creation to crucifixion and eternal life.



On Wednesday, April 2 at 6:30pm, we will have a special guest join us who is an author, poet, podcaster and speaker, Tanner Olson. You can learn more about Tanner at his website www.writtentospeak.com. Tanner will bring us a unique perspective of what the hand of the Lord means.

As we approach Holy Week, we will be celebrating first Communion prior to confirmation for the first time in St. Michael's history. This will be on Maundy Thursday (April 17) at 6:30pm worship. This is part of our confirmation course which is offered to students beginning in fourth grade. First Communion prior to confirmation is not mandatory for students but is offered to students with the approval of their parents. As part of our first Communion celebration, Jews for Jesus will be joining us to present “Christ in the Passover.” Sahar Sadlovsky, a student at Fort Wayne Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Indiana will share how the Old Testament Passover links us to the Lord's Supper we celebrate as Christians today. I look forward to contemplating and celebrating this important aspect of our life and faith in Christ with our young people and with you.

Pastor Dave

From the Principal for the Interim

Shelly McGovern



In the church season that we call Lent, we focus on the death of Jesus on the cross for our salvation. This somber season is followed by the joyous celebration of Easter when Jesus rose from the dead to complete God's plan of salvation. **Our mission at SMLS is to educate children and touch families' lives with the awesome love of Jesus Christ!** Here, they learn a powerful, life-giving message and the encouragement to share it with everyone they encounter. This year's theme challenges all of us to "fix our eyes on Jesus" (both His cross and the empty tomb) as

we are witnesses to our faith.

Did you know that all our SMLS families commit to 20 hours of volunteer hours each year to help with school functions? Have you heard that our biggest fundraiser, the annual **St. Michael Gala**, takes place on **Saturday, March 22**? Last year, over 350 guests helped raise over \$177,000 to benefit our children. You do not have to be a school family to volunteer or even attend the gala. Tickets are available at smlcs.ejoinme.org/SMLSGala or by following the Deep Sea Soirée link on our website. This year's theme, **Deep Sea Soirée**, is an excellent and fun opportunity to invest in St. Michael Lutheran School.



St. Michael Lutheran School and Little Saints endeavor to continuously improve the quality of our school and early learning center, staff, educational facilities, curriculum, teaching standards and impact on our congregation and community. **This process is called accreditation.** On March 31 through April 2, a special accreditation review team from the National Lutheran School Association will be coming to St. Michael to renew our dual accreditation with them and COGNIA. Little Saints is included in that same accreditation process. Please keep the accreditation team and our school in your prayers.



There is still time to **enroll for the 2025-26 school year!** Give me a call if you want to invite a friend, neighbor, or family member to experience St. Michael Lutheran School on a personal tour. Please share your stories about the impact St. Michael has had on your family by posting SMLS reviews on Google, Facebook, Instagram and other websites to help prospective families learn about St. Michael. Thank you also for all of the personal referrals to families, friends and acquaintances!

From the Director of Little Saints

Nikki Howley

In March, we will study 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!**

We will also start to talk about **spring** with the children. One of the ways we will teach them all about springtime is by planting flowers in the gardens with them. This is a way for them to learn all about the cycle plants take to grow and to help them learn how to take care of plants so they can take what they are learning and help at home too!



*St. Michael Youth Ministries***St. Michael Youth Ministries****Sunday School: Middle and High School**

In March, each group will see that we were meant to know God in a personal way.

Wednesday Youth Nights

On Wednesday nights, we will be enjoying dinner, games and small group devotions from 6:00-8:00pm. If you want to volunteer or would like to sponsor a meal (by cooking, catering or making a financial contribution), please contact Lori Schwan (lori.schwan@gsmlcs.org).

LCMS Youth Gathering

We will have 25 people from our congregation involved in the youth gathering in New Orleans next summer: 14 youth, two young adult volunteers, five adult leaders, two adult flex volunteers, one event planner and one family caregiver. Thank you for praying for us as we prepare for our various roles. Youth and adults, please plan to attend our March 12 youth night so we can begin forming small groups for the gathering and enjoy some New Orleans-style food.

**Compassion International Scholarship**

Thank you for supporting Renata through prayer and our regular \$43 monthly scholarship. She is thriving in her home country of Indonesia.

Youth Confirmation Modules

In February, 16 students studied the Lord's Prayer with help from Chloe Bass. Students who participated must turn in their project by March 2. The next confirmation module will be on the topic of "The Lord's Supper" and will be taught by Pastor Dave on Sunday, March 2 from 12:15-4:00pm. Lunch will be provided. After completing this module, students will be able to receive their first Communion on Maundy Thursday, April 17, during the congregational seder meal in the gym.

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who supported St. Michael's youth programs through our fundraisers, the spaghetti dinner, dessert auction, bingo and raffle tickets. We raised over \$8000.00. We couldn't have done it without our sponsors, the Rhone family and Thrivent, all those who made desserts and everyone who contributed donations. Congratulations to Barbara and Robert Reimels who won the \$772 from the 50/50 raffle, Mason Zehnder who won the Xbox Series X and Nina Wolfarth who won the \$250 Spada gift certificate.

Middle School Summer Servant Event

We are excited to have nine students (going into grades six through nine) joining other youth from around the FL-GA District for a week of camp fun and service around Gainesville. Transportation costs will be shared with participants as we get closer to the trip. Medical forms including a record of a physical in the last eighteen months will need to be turned in by May.

Wall o' Money

Our congregation is so generous in its support of all the youth activities we do! Through March 16, our Wall o' Money fundraiser will continue to be available in the narthex of our church. Possible donation amounts are on display. However, you are welcome to make a donation for any amount. If you would like to donate toward this special fundraiser, select an envelope, and place the dollar amount in cash or check in the envelope and return it to the church. If you would like to contribute electronically, visit <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z8M7/campaign/C-ZW8D> or use your phone to scan the QR code on the right, and mark your donation for "Wall o' Money."

**Stay Connected**

If you are not receiving emails or text messages about youth activities, please email Lori Schwan at lori.schwan@gsmlcs.org so you can be added to our contact lists.

From the Director of Worship & Music

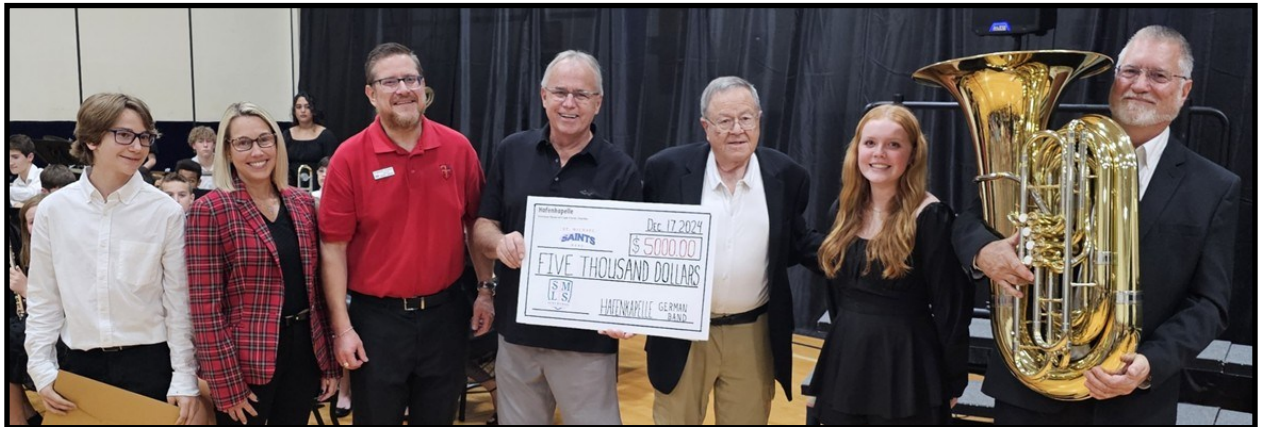
Ben Ball

St. Michael's fine arts department is blessed to have established some outstanding **community music partners** to come alongside us in our educational music ministry. One such blessing happened at our Christmas concert this past December. Our middle school band needed a new tuba since the former one had served for many decades and was beyond repair. Plus, it was a half-size tuba and not a full-size instrument. The Hafenskapella German Band of Cape Coral generously jumped in to provide complete funding for this new tuba! We are also blessed to have band members from both the Hafenskapella Band and the Lee County Community Band who regularly attend band rehearsals in order to provide our students with private instruction on their individual instruments and sections.



Mark your calendars! **Lent begins** with Ash Wednesday on March 5! On that day, we will have worship services at both noon and 6:30pm. For the remainder of Lent, we will be holding one midweek service each Wednesday at 6:30pm. Pastor Dave will be taking us through a sermon series titled *The Hand of the Lord*.

Blessings,
Ben Ball



(from left to right: Jacob Schwan, SMLS band member; Jennifer Pohlman, assistant principal; Dave Bass, senior pastor; Mike Bortz and Ron Hagemeyer, Hafenskapelle Band; Malcia Atkinson, SMLS band member; Mike Wenzlaff, SMLS band director)

Maundy Thursday: The Seder Meal



Join us in the gym on Thursday, April 17 at 6:30pm to observe Maundy Thursday with a seder meal. This powerful experience will illustrate the link between the Jewish feast of Passover and the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples with the sensory exploration of the beautiful Jewish ceremony called a seder. As we taste the traditional symbolic foods, we will weave the story of the Jewish exodus from slavery together with the messianic hope realized in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. The words "given and shed for you" will take on an even deeper meaning to Christians as we learn the significance of the tradition Jesus observed the night before He died. It will also give us a closer look at the very Jewish life Jesus led. At this seder, our first Communion students will take part in this very important sacrament with their families.

Lenten Soup and Sandwich Meals

Join us in the St. Michael cafeteria before our midweek Lenten services for a soup and sandwich supper! These opportunities for food and fellowship will begin at 5:30pm on Wednesday evenings from March 5 through April 9. Following each dinner will be a Lenten worship service in the sanctuary beginning at 6:30pm.

From the Director of Children & Family Ministries

Katy Bass

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.

Service Project Donations

On Sunday, February 9, our Sunday school kids prepared a special Valentine's Day meal for two families in need. They prepared a fruit tray, salad, garlic cheese bread, baked ziti, brownies and cookies. They also wrote special notes for each of the families. Thank you to everyone who donated a gift card to help with this service opportunity!

VBS: Camp Moosefeather Falls

Mark your calendars; VBS is back and better than ever! Get ready for an adventure-packed week from June 16 through 19 from 5:30-8:15pm.

- **Who can join?** All kids from four-year-olds through those entering fifth grade are invited to be a part of this exciting camp experience.
- **Meet your camp leaders!** Join Camp Director Dave, Kodi the bear and Beez the bee as they lead us through amazing Bible stories and joyful music each evening before we head to our cabins for more fun.
- **Choose your cabin adventure!** Campers will get to pick from awesome activity cabins in their age group including cooking, sewing, messy fun, Lego, science, sports, arts and crafts, games and more.
- **Register fast!** Registration opens March 14, and cabins will fill up quickly. Don't miss out on this unforgettable adventure.
- **Questions or interested in volunteering?** Contact Katy Bass at katy.bass@gsmlcs.org.



Pack your bags for fun. We can't wait to see you at Camp Moosefeather Falls!

First Communion Class

Students in fourth and fifth grade are invited to attend the first Communion class alongside a parent on Sunday, March 30 from 12:15 to 4:00pm. Lunch will be provided. Students will learn about the meaning of Communion and will prepare for this important sacrament. They will take the time to create a chalice that they will use for their very own first Communion. Don't miss this meaningful opportunity to grow in faith together. Students who take part in the class will celebrate their first Communion on Maundy Thursday, April 17, at the congregational seder meal.

Preschool Playtime

Children not yet in kindergarten (five and under) are invited to join us for an open gym on Saturday, March 15 from 9:30 to 11:00am. We will have a craft, snacks, open gym, toys and more! An adult must accompany their child. If you have any questions, please contact Katy Bass at katy.bass@gsmlcs.org.

Moana Movie Night

Come out and enjoy an afternoon at the movies! On Sunday, March 9 at 3:00pm, we will be watching *Moana* in the gym. Snacks and drinks will be provided. Please bring a chair or something comfortable to sit on. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Lent in a Box

All families are invited to pick up an at-home devotion kit for Lent. It will walk you through the 40 days of Lent including Holy Week. This devotion kit is meant for preschool and elementary age kids. Kits will be available in the church narthex beginning on March 1. If you have any questions, please contact Katy Bass.

From the Ministry Coordinator

Lori Schwan

Thrivent Financial Members

If you own a Thrivent Financial Product, you can give \$250 two times without giving away any of your own money. Contact Lori Schwan to see how you can partner with a fundraiser, a service project or an educational Thrivent Action Team. Those who have Choice Dollars can also direct them for 2024 projects until March 31, 2025.



Thursday Women's Bible Study

Join us on Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:00am on Zoom and on campus in the ELC boardroom for a women's Bible study led by Lori Schwan. We are currently learning from Lisa Harper's *Why Do We Need the Bible?* on RightNow Media.

Congregation Member Nametags

Do you struggle to remember people's names at church? Members can help each other by ordering a nametag and wearing it to worship services or other church events. If there is more than one member of your household, thank you for submitting the following Google Form by March 16 for each member of your family: tinyurl.com/smlnametag. Each nametag will cost the church \$7.25. If you would like to help defray this cost, feel free to drop a gift in the offering plate marked "nametag." If you would like to make the donation online, place it in the "other" category.



GriefShare

St. Michael's GriefShare group is meeting Saturdays through May 3 from 9:00 to 11:00am in Pastor Dave's conference room. Feel free to join any session. Go to www.griefshare.org to register or sign up for daily email devotions. Reach out to Gail Schultz at (732) 991-0642 with any questions.

DivorceCare

DivorceCare is meeting on Tuesdays from 11:00am to 1:00pm through April 1. Anyone who is separated or divorced can join any session. The group meets virtually and in-person in the early learning center boardroom. Please register at www.divorcecare.org. Daily email devotions are also available from the same website. If you have any questions, please call Lori Schwan at (239) 939-1218, ext. 237.

Women's Bible Study: Luke in the Land

We will be holding a women's Bible study on Monday evenings during Lent at 6:30pm in the youth room. We will be working our way through the book *Luke in the Land* by Kristi McLelland. Contact Katy Bass for more.

Church Cookbook

The church cookbook is done with the editing stage and off to the printer! If you would like to preorder a cookbook, please complete the form at tinyurl.com/smlcookbook. Cookbooks will cost \$20.00 each and can be shipped for a fee of \$5.00 per book. They will be available at the beginning of April. All money raised will be used to benefit the ministries of St. Michael. You can pay for your cookbook at the time of pickup or by placing a check in the offering plate. Make checks payable to SMLC, and include "cookbook" in the memo.

A Night of Music, Poetry and Hope

Join singer/songwriter Matt Doering and author/spoken-word poet Tanner Olson for an inspiring evening of music, poetry and storytelling. Through heartfelt songs and thought-provoking spoken word, Matt and Tanner create a space filled with hope, laughter and connection. Expect a night that is fun, uplifting and deeply meaningful—one that will leave you encouraged and reminded that you are not alone. Don't miss this unforgettable evening as they lead our midweek Lenten service on Wednesday, April 2 at 6:30pm in the St. Michael sanctuary. Learn more at mattdoeringmusic.com/tour.