

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

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..."**

Dear St. Michael family,

As we enter the month of April, we are once again reminded of the most pivotal event in our Christian faith – the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is a time of reflection, celebration and renewal as we remember the powerful work of God's hand in saving us from sin and death.

**The Resurrection: A Testament of God's Power**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from death is the ultimate display of God's victory over sin, death and the devil. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, you have received the gift of the forgiveness of all your sins, eternal life and the very salvation of your soul. The resurrection of Jesus is not just a historical event to be remembered but a living hope that sustains and strengthens us daily.

As we reflect on the resurrection, we are reminded of the power of the hand of the Lord—His hand that created the universe, parted the Red Sea and reached down to save us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. In Jesus' victory over death, we see that God's hand is not distant or passive but actively involved in our lives, offering grace, mercy and redemption.

**"...Who Saves Us"**

During the season of Lent, our sermon series has been focused on *The Hand of the Lord*.

This month, we will celebrate the image of God's hand extended toward us in divine love and salvation. Throughout Scripture, God's hand is a symbol of His strength, protection and faithfulness. The Psalmist declares, "Your hand, O Lord, has made and fashioned me." (Psalm 119:73) In the book of Isaiah, we read, "I have engraved you on the palms of My hands." (Isaiah 49:16)

This powerful image shows that God has not forgotten us. Through the resurrection of Jesus, God's hand was made visible to the



world in the most profound way. He reached into the depths of human suffering, took upon Himself our sin and raised Jesus from the dead, conquering death for all who believe.

As we approach the holiest week of the Christian calendar, we are reminded that Christ's suffering, death and resurrection is not just an event that took place 2,000 years ago; it is the living power of the living God available to each of us today. The resurrection of Jesus gives us hope in times of despair, courage in times of fear and strength in times of weakness. It is the assurance that, no matter what we face, the hand of the Lord is there to save us. I invite you to join us on the journey to Easter!

*(continued on page 2)*

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

As April arrives, we continue to observe Lent, but we know that Easter is just around the corner. It's time to ponder the words of our theme verse. We fix our eyes "on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, scorning its shame... so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." When we say that **our mission at SMLS is to educate children and touch families' lives with the awesome love of Jesus Christ**, there is no greater love than that of Jesus for students, parents and staff. We confidently practice endurance and



live a life of joyful assurance because of both the cross and the empty tomb.

**Accreditation** has been completed for another term of five years. **Thank you** to everyone who contributed! It was hard work, and we appreciate whatever part you played in the process. We will hear soon what the visiting review team has to say about the ways in which we can continue to improve Little Saints and SMLS. We keep praising God for the multitude of blessings He has bestowed on us.

**Enrollment** continues 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. Post SMLS reviews on Facebook, Instagram and other platforms to help prospective families learn about St. Michael. Thank you also for all of your personal referrals to families, friends and acquaintances.

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

In March, Little Saints celebrated our **family heritage** with a week of learning about the states and countries our children and families are from. Families were asked to send in special ethnic dishes or dishes that held special meaning to their families on Friday as we ended the week with special dress, games and music from all over the world. All the children enjoyed trying the special food and activities that were planned!



Little Saints will be closed April 17 and 18 in observance of **Easter**. Before our long weekend, all of Little Saints will be celebrating Easter with a traditional egg hunt and other Easter festivities. Easter is always a favorite holiday for our little ones because they get to have fun finding brightly colored eggs filled with treats and learning all about the love and sacrifice Jesus made for all of us!

*From the Pastor (continued)**Rev. Dave Bass***Upcoming Worship Opportunities**

- Palm Sunday- 10:00am worship service and fellowship
- Maundy Thursday- "Christ in the Passover" presentation on the seder meal and the celebration of first Communion at 6:30pm in the gym
- Good Friday- Service of darkness at 6:30pm in the sanctuary
- The vigil of Easter Saturday at 5:30pm in the sanctuary
- Easter Sunday services with Holy Communion- Outdoor sunrise service at 7:00am; 9:00am and 11:00am worship in the sanctuary

May you experience the fullness of God's hand upon your life this month, and may His resurrection power fill your heart with peace and joy.

In Christ,  
Pastor Dave Bass

*Pastor Dave*



## St. Michael Youth Ministries

# St. Michael Youth Ministries

### Sunday School: Middle and High School

In April, we will learn that each of us are *Out of This World—Set Apart* to be who God calls us to be.

### Wednesday Youth Nights

During Lent, we will gather earlier (at 5:30pm) for soup and sandwiches with the congregation. We will then play games and have small group devotions that will wrap up at 8:00pm.

### Thank You

Thank you to everyone who supported our youth attending the LCMS Youth Gathering in New Orleans on July 18 through 24 via our Wall o' Money. We raised over \$6,065, bringing our total trip cost covered to \$27,161.62 out of our \$41,000 goal.

### LCMS Youth Gathering Preparation

Youth and adults, please plan to attend our April 9 youth night so we can begin forming small groups for the upcoming LCMS Youth Gathering.

### 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 March, 18 middle school students studied Communion with Pastor Dave. Our final confirmation module for this year will be a special day-long retreat on the topic of the Ten Commandments at St. Michael on Saturday, April 5 from 8:30am to 3:00pm. Lunch will be provided. Eighth grade students covered this module last year. If you plan on attending, please sign up at [tinyurl.com/tencommandments25](http://tinyurl.com/tencommandments25).

### Middle School Summer Servant Event

We are excited to have ten 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 18. You can download the form at [tinyurl.com/luthermedical25](http://tinyurl.com/luthermedical25).



### YETI Cooler Raffle

You have a chance to win a YETI Tundra 65 Hard Cooler through our raffle. Tickets cost \$10 for one and \$40 for five. Approach one of the youth attending the LCMS Youth Gathering this summer to purchase your tickets now! We will be drawing a winner at the Palm Sunday BBQ.

### Graduation Blessing

Every year, we recognize our congregation's graduates. If you are graduating high school or college this fall or have done so since June 2024, please send in a brief list of accomplishments (e.g. clubs, sports, honors), future plans and a photograph to Lori Schwan by May 2. We will be having a special graduate blessing on Sunday, May 11 at 8:00am worship and 10:45am worship. Twelfth grade seniors and their parents are invited to participate as part of St. Michael's Faith Stepping Stone program. We will have a special gift for all high school graduates and a cake reception for all graduates in the narthex following the two Sunday services.



### Tanner Olson and Matt Doering

Don't miss national speaker Tanner Olson and musician Matt Doering! *Find more information on page 7.*

### Stay Connected

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





## From the Director of Worship & Music

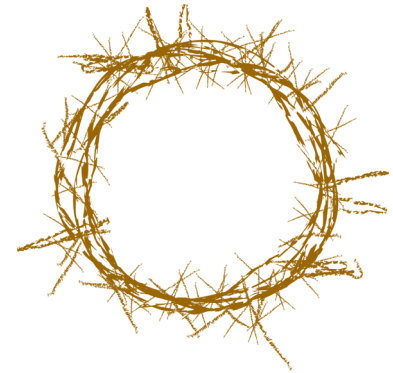
Ben Ball

As we cross the threshold into April, we are only a few weekends away from celebrating Jesus' triumphant resurrection and being able to shout "Alleluia!" with excitement and confidence. However before we get to that point, I cannot encourage you enough to attend our Holy Week services. Palm Sunday is exciting and filled with shouts of "Hosanna!" but please make sure to attend Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and our Saturday Easter Vigil service so that the "alleluias" of Easter will hold so much more weight. So many go from the majestic shouts of "Hosanna!" on Palm Sunday to the heavenly "alleluias" of Easter without experiencing the in-between: the darkness, the silence, the pain, the agony, the sacrifice and the purpose of Holy Week. I am always reminded of this in the poignant words of the hymn "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded."



*O sacred Head, now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down,  
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns, Thine only crown.  
O sacred Head, what glory, what bliss, till now was Thine!  
Yet, though despised and gory, I joy to call Thee mine.*

*What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered was all for sinners gain;  
Mine, mine was the transgression, but Thine the deadly pain.  
Lo, here I fall, my Savior! 'Tis I deserve Thy place;  
Look on me with Thy favor, and grant to me Thy grace.  
(LSB 449)*



Something new and exciting this year is that we have changed up our Easter Sunday celebration! Join us on Saturday evening for the Easter Vigil service where we begin in the darkness of Good Friday and end in the light of Easter. Then on Sunday, we have three opportunities for worship: 7:00am sunrise service (outside), 9:00am (traditional) and 11:00am (blended) in the sanctuary.

Blessings,  
Ben Ball

## 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. If you plan to attend, please sign up at [tinyurl.com/smlseder25](http://tinyurl.com/smlseder25) so we can have an accurate number of supplies and seating prepared.

## 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 continue on Wednesday evenings 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.



### Donate Your Extra Lego Bricks

Do you have extra Lego bricks sitting around? Our children's ministry is in need of Lego donations for upcoming activities and projects with our kids and youth. We are looking for new or gently used Lego bricks, sets or minifigures to help create a fun and engaging experience. Donations can be dropped off in the narthex or front office. Thank you for supporting our ministry and helping us build something amazing—one brick at a time! If you have any questions, contact Katy Bass.

### Easter Egg Donations Needed

We're excited to be hosting an Easter egg hunt for all kids on Palm Sunday, and we need your help! We are collecting donations of plastic eggs and Easter candy to make this event extra-special for the kids. If you would like to contribute, please bring your donations to the church narthex by Sunday, April 6. If you have any questions, please contact Katy Bass. Thank you for helping us to create a fun and memorable experience for our kids!

### Easter Story Walk

Families are invited to join us on Easter morning for an interactive journey that brings the Gospel story to life. Based on the book, *Before We Hunt for Eggs* by Kristi Dusenbery, this engaging walk will take you through the colorful message of Easter from the golden streets of heaven to the red blood of Jesus to hearts washed white as snow. As you journey through each stop, kids will receive a special Easter surprise while discovering how deeply loved they are by God. The Easter story walk will take place in the grassy area across from the gym entrance and will be open all morning. Stop by before or after any Easter Sunday service, and experience this meaningful celebration of Easter.

### Preschool Playtime

We had a great time at our first preschool playtime! Thank you to everyone who was able to attend. We will not be holding one in April, but we look forward to setting a date for our preschool playtime in May.

### 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 to 8:15pm.

- **Who can join?** All kids from four-year-olds through those entering sixth 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 is open, and cabins are filling up quickly. Don't miss out on this unforgettable adventure. Register at [tinyurl.com/smlvbs25](http://tinyurl.com/smlvbs25) or using the QR code.
- **Questions or interested in volunteering?** Contact Katy Bass at [katy.bass@gsmlcs.org](mailto:katy.bass@gsmlcs.org).



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

## From the Ministry Coordinator

Lori Schwan

### Widows and Widowers Group

We are organizing a new group for widows and widowers to create fellowship and social opportunities for people who have lost a spouse. The group is open to any widow or widower regardless of age or church affiliation. The first meeting will be held on Saturday, April 5 from 12:00 to 2:00pm in the St. Michael gym. Lunch will be provided. This is an additional opportunity to Find Your Five! Please RSVP to Gail Schultz at [gail1370@aol.com](mailto:gail1370@aol.com).



### Congregation Member Name Tags

You can now pick up a name tag if you already ordered one. If you didn't receive one but would like one, you can order it at [tinyurl.com/smlnametag](http://tinyurl.com/smlnametag). When enough people have put in their requests, we will place another order. Each name tag will cost the church between \$7.25 and \$12.50 depending on how many are ordered at once. If you would like to help defray this cost, feel free to drop a gift in the offering plate marked "name tag." If you would like to make the donation online, place it in the "other" category.

### Senior Adult Luncheon

The sixth grade students of SMLS would like to invite the senior adults of our congregation and their friends to a luncheon on Friday, May 2 from 11:30am to 2:00pm. The sixth graders will be cooking and serving the food and organizing activities for the attendees to do together. This will be the culmination of the sixth graders' service project week. If you are interested in attending, please let us know by April 13 at [tinyurl.com/seniorluncheon25](http://tinyurl.com/seniorluncheon25).

### Thrivent Financial Members

Thrivent members, we need your help with no cost to you! Order one free Thrivent Cause Kit (either water filter build or solar light build). You can bring it to St. Michael yourself or have it shipped here for free. Sixth grade students and adults will assemble them on May 2 at the senior luncheon. We will then ship them via the provided return mailing label. If you want to sponsor a Thrivent Action Team, contact Lori Schwan to learn how you can partner with a fundraiser, service project or education event with \$250 donated at no cost to you. We have a lot of opportunities coming up in April!



### 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. Before Easter, we will be studying Pastor Dave's Lenten sermons from the weekend and Wednesday services.

### I Want to Trust You, but I Don't Bible Study

Author and national Christian speaker, Lysa TerKuerst, will walk us through areas where we want to trust others, ourselves or even God, but we don't. Join this six-week Bible study for men and women from the book of the same title from 11:00am to 1:00pm in the ELC boardroom on the following Tuesdays: April 8 and 15 and May 6, 13, 20 and 27.



### 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](http://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](http://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.



## Meet Sam Morganstern, Our New DCE Intern

We are excited to welcome Sam Morganstern as the new director of Christian education (DCE) intern at St. Michael! Sam will be working with our middle and high school youth. He is passionate about sharing the love of Christ with young people and helping them grow in their faith. He will be completing his DCE internship as part of his studies at Concordia University in Irvine, California, and he is eager to connect with the youth and families at St. Michael. Sam would like to share more about his path to becoming a DCE in his own words:

*Hi! I am Sam Morganstern. I was born and raised in Placentia, California, where I still live today. I grew up attending Hephatha Lutheran Church and School in Anaheim Hills, California. There, I was a student, a church member and eventually an employee from 2018 through 2023. I was blessed to have a plethora of people pouring God's love into me throughout my life such as teachers and my church's DCE. The influence of these mentors and the opportunity to serve at my alma mater for six years showed me that my calling was to serve as a DCE.*



## Easter Breakfast

Celebrate Easter morning with a delicious continental-style breakfast in the cafeteria! Breakfast will be served from 8:00 to 10:45am. So, you can enjoy a meal before or after worship (depending on which service you attend). Make the most of your morning: stop by the photo areas, walk through the Easter story walk, and then join us for breakfast as we celebrate the joy of Easter together!

## 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](https://tinyurl.com/smlcookbook). Cookbooks will cost \$20.00 each and will be available at the beginning of April. They will also be available to purchase at our Palm Sunday lunch.

## 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 will 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 on Wednesday, April 2 at 6:30pm in the St. Michael sanctuary. Learn more about the event at [mattdoeringmusic.com/tour](https://mattdoeringmusic.com/tour).

### A NIGHT OF MUSIC, POETRY, & HOPE MATT DOERING & TANNER OLSON



**ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN • WED. 4/2 • 6:30P**



**Palm Sunday**  
*April 13th*

**Combined Service @ 10:00**  
**Lunch following service.**

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**GAMES ♦ CRAFTS ♦ FELLOWSHIP**

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**Easter Egg Hunt for children in 5th grade & under will happen on the soccer field following worship.**



## **EASTER SUNDAY**

### **Worship Services**

7:00 am - Outdoor Sunrise Service  
9:00 am & 11:00 am

### **Easter Breakfast 8:00 am - 10:45 am**

Continental breakfast in the cafeteria

### **Family Photo Opportunity**

There will be 2 photo areas for your family to enjoy.

### **Easter Story Walk**

Families are invited to join us on Easter morning for an interactive journey that brings the gospel story to life. Join us in the grassy area across from the gym entrance to experience this meaningful celebration of Easter.

