

COME  
LORD  
JESUS

## FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

December 31, 2023

### WELCOME AND OPPORTUNITIES

**Theme of the Day:** With the celebration of the birth of Jesus still fresh in our minds, today we stand at the intersection of a year soon to be in the past and the beginning of a brand new year ahead. As a congregation, we also complete our yearlong activity of reading through the New Testament as we complete the final chapters of Revelation. In these last pages of the Bible we read about the glorified Jesus who will come again. And so we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus."

### INVOCATION AND CALL TO WORSHIP (Revelation 22)

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

P: Jesus says, "Look, I am coming soon!"

C: **Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll."**

P: "Look, I am coming soon! I am the Alpha and the Omega.

C: **The First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.**

P: Blessed are those who wash their robes,

C: **That they may have the right to the tree of life.**

P: The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"

C: **And let the one who hears say, "Come!"**

P: Let the one who is thirsty come;

C: **And let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.**

P: He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

C: **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

### HYMN

Come Thou Almighty King  
(stanzas 1-2)

905

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen

**C:** Holy and merciful Lord, I confess that I have not always honored You. I have broken my relationships with You and others, and have not always reflected Your holy image. I am sorry for my sins and repent of them. Holy Father, forgive me. Have mercy on me. Bless me with Your grace for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

*(silence for personal confession and self-reflection)*

**P:** Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed: forgives your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. May God open your eyes to the truth of His Word, strengthen you to do God’s will, and give you joy to live for Him to the glory of His holy name.

**C:** Amen.

**HYMN** Come Thou Almighty King **905**  
(stanzas 3-4)

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P:** The Lord be with you.

**C:** And also with you.

**P:** Heavenly Father, in this holy season we praise You for the great wonders You have sent us – for the shining star and the angel’s song, for the infant’s cry and our Savior’s resurrection, and for the Word made flesh that dwells among us. We behold Your glory as we move from this year to the next always looking for Your return. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

**C:** Amen.

<b>FIRST READING</b>	<b>Revelation 19:11-16</b>
<b>HYMN</b>	A Great and Mighty Wonder <b>383</b> (stanzas 1-2, 4)
<b>GOSPEL READING</b>	<b>Luke 2:41-50</b>

**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

**HYMN** The Day is Surely Drawing Near **508**  
(stanzas 1, 2, 5, 7)

**SERMON**

“Will the Real Jesus Please Stand”

Revelation 19:11-16

**Rev. Steve Ahlersmeyer**

**NICENE CREED**

**OFFERING/OFFERTORY**

**PRAYERS/THE LORD’S PRAYER**

**THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD’S SUPPER**

**PREFACE/PROPER PREFACE**

**SANCTUS**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**THE PEACE OF THE LORD**

**AGNUS DEI**

**DISTRIBUTION HYMNS**

Come Your Hearts and Voices Raising **375**

Angels from the Realms of Glory **367**

Jesus Name of Wondrous Love **900**

Let All Together Praise Our God **389**

**POST COMMUNION**

**BENEDICTION**

**P:** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn His face toward you, and give you peace.

**C:** **Amen.**

**HYMN**

Lord Dismiss Us with Your Blessing  
(stanzas 1-3)

**924**

**SILENT PRAYER**

Amen. Come Lord Jesus. Amen.

*St. Michael Lutheran Church (LCMS)*

**Dennis Goff**, Senior Pastor

**Shawn Davis**, Missional Pastor

**Stephanie Maxson**, Music Director

**Rhonda Patterson**, Communications Director

**Celine Newman**, Director of Belonging

**Mark Neubacher**, Visiting Pastor

**Emma Deines**, Youth Director

**Tammy Bruns**, Executive Director

**Tina Hoover**, Executive Assistant

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT

St. Michael Lutheran Church

2131 Getz Road 46804

STMFV.ORG | 432-2033

December 30/31, 2023



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## **ST. MICHAEL'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY**

In 2024 we celebrate 70 years of St. Michael! This year of Jubilee we will grow together through celebrations and spiritual practices while sharing the story of what God has done and is doing through His people. One way we will celebrate this coming year is through community events every 7 weeks (approximately). Save these dates on your calendar!

### **JUBILEE CELEBRATION DATES**

February 24	Generosity Event
April 28	Congregational Meeting
June 8/9	Camp Lutherhaven Retreat
July 20 or 21	Cook Out Celebration
September 8	Rally Day
October 26/27	Fall Family Fun Festival
December 14/15	TBD

### **SERMON SERIES FOR 2024**

The theme we will highlight for our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year is "Jubilee: Set Free to Tell the Story." The preaching focus throughout 2024 (with a few exceptions), will focus on a number of Old Testament characters who were a part of God's salvation story down through the ages that has become our salvation story. Similarly, there have been countless people connected to St. Michael who have been a part of "telling the salvation story" here. We are all a part of, and continue to share in, that legacy.

### **CAMP LUTERHAVEN WOMEN'S RETREAT—January 26-28**

Dive into what it means to live on fire for Christ in life today with speaker Sara Scheiwe. This New Year's retreat promises to be an intentional, fun, and encouraging time with others and with Jesus. For more information and to register, please visit [www.lutherhaven.org](http://www.lutherhaven.org).

## **iLEAD—this is an amazing opportunity!**

Last year, St. Michael collaborated with three other sister Lutheran congregations – Emmanuel, St. Peter’s, and Holy Cross to participate in a leadership development opportunity called **iLead – “Inspiring Leaders through Engagement and Development.”** This leadership development opportunity included four large group sessions, one at each of the four congregations, and four small group sessions with current and future leaders at our own individual congregations. In January, we will begin year two of iLead! **Everyone in the congregation**, currently serving in a leadership role or not, are invited to any of the four large group sessions with our guest presenters. Here is the lineup for January:

- **January 6 (8:30-10:30)** at Holy Cross: Rev. Mike Newman, President of the Texas District of the LCMS. President Newman’s topic is “The Job of the Church” where he will lay a foundation for all that we do in the church, focusing on the central role of forgiveness and the church’s call to deliver that gift.
- **January 20 (8:30-10:30) at St. Michael:** Dr. Josh Wymore. Josh is an executive coach, keynote speaker, and trainer with **WYMOR** sharing skill sets and practices to become a “humbler” leader. Josh and his family proudly call Fort Wayne their home.

## **EPIPHANY BY CANDLELIGHT—January 7 at 2:00p**

Just like Advent by Candlelight, except in Epiphany! Sign up at the Information Desk to attend, decorate a table with dishes and a centerpiece or to bring an hors d’oeuvre or dessert! We will enjoy a speaker who will share about astronomy and the Christmas Star.

## **YOUTH EVENTS!**

What a joyous End of Year celebration we had for both HS and MS school youth! We look forward to resuming Sunday nights on January 7. Remember we meet the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month with middle school from 4:00p-6:00p and high school from 6:00p-8:00p. Make your New Year’s Resolution to start attending!

**Middle School “Connect Group” 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and their parents:** we usually meet every Tuesday, and will Re-Connect Tuesday, January 9 from 3:00p-5:30p at Electric Works.

## CHECK OUT OUR UPCOMING BIBLE STUDIES!

### **OT Introduction and Genesis**

Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Pulse, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne – 4 sessions beginning January 7

### **The Christian Leader**

Celine Newman, Director of Belonging – 8 sessions beginning January 7 through February 25.

### **A Hebrew Perspective for Understanding the Bible**

Pastor Gary Endersby – 6 sessions February and March

### **Thrive: Living Resilient and Renewed**

Pastor Goff – 10+ sessions February through May

### **Simple Habits of Effective Parenting**

Dr. Ben Stellwagen (ESM Principal) and other ESM Staff – 8 sessions February, March, April

### **Money and Marriage God's Way**

Tim Thoms – 7 sessions February, March, April

**Visual Faith** continues with Anna Davis on January 7

## **NEW BIBLE STUDY—THE CHRISTIAN LEADER**

During this 8 Week series for Christian leaders we will be unpacking various topics that are relevant to being a high quality leader. Beginning January 6, an iLead Leadership seminar will be taught at a local Fort Wayne church. The following Sunday we will gather to review and discuss the topic that was discussed. During the in-between weeks we will dive into additional topics focused on helping you to grow as a Christian Leader. **This study is for any leader, those who serve at St. Michael as well those who serve in leadership positions outside the church.**

January 7	Review of the Job of the Church
January 14	A Good Leader Is A Good Follower: Submission to Christ and others
January 21	Review of Humbler Leadership
January 28	Being the Leader God Made Me To Be - Strength's inventory
February 4	Review of Resilient Faith
February 11	The Creator of Time and the Enemy of Hurry: Rhythms of a Godly life
February 18	Review of Women as Leaders
February 25	The Ministry of Investment

## COMING SOON!

A GriefShare support group is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. Through this 13-week adventure, you'll discover what to expect in the days ahead and what's "normal" in grief. Since there are no neat, orderly stages of grief, you'll learn helpful ways of coping with grief, in all its unpredictability—and gain solid support each step of the way. Join us Tuesday evenings, March 5-May 28 from 6:30p-8:30p in Luther Hall. Contact Robert and Rebecca Boyd with questions at (862) 409-4520 or [bb4bboyd@gmail.com](mailto:bb4bboyd@gmail.com).



## MENTAL WELLNESS SERIES AT ST. MICHAEL

St. Michael will offer a series of presentations over the next five months related to mental wellness. Over the course of our life time, one in every two people will be impacted by a mental health challenge in some way. As a church, we believe that God has made us with body, mind, and spirit and so it is appropriate for the body of Christ to address all three to some degree. These sessions will be held in Luther Hall and child care will be available. Join us Tuesday, January 16 from 6:30p-7:30p. Anxiety Awareness: Through discussion we will work to set a foundation by defining and reviewing the basics of anxiety. We will then shift gears and spend the second half of the evening focusing on parenting with mental health in mind. Presenter: Heather Carter, LSW (ESM School Counselor)

## THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper for the forgiveness of our sins and the strengthening of our faith. Our Lord invites to His table those who have been baptized, who repent of their sin, who believe Jesus Christ is their Savior, and who believe the body and blood of Jesus is really present together with the bread and wine. Anyone who is not yet instructed in the Christian faith or who has a differing belief are asked to first speak with one of the pastors. If you need communion delivered to where you are sitting, please notify an usher or elder before the service begins. Gluten free communion wafers are available by raising your index finger as communion is distributed signaling to the elder that you wish to receive a prewrapped gluten free wafer. Grape juice is available in the purple tinted cups located in the center of the tray of individual cups. Children or adults who have not yet been confirmed or instructed in the Lord's Supper are welcomed to come forward for a blessing placing their arms over their chest.



## EXCITING ESM INFORMATION!

With so many schools in the area to choose from, making the decision about where your child will begin their education is easier said than done. We invite you to join us to get a clear picture of what ESM is all about! Learn more and register using the QR codes below.

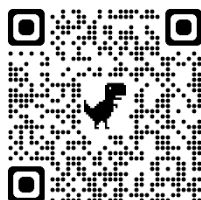
### KINDERGARTEN Information and Enrollment Sessions:

- Wednesday, January 17 OR Thursday, February 15
- 6:30p-8:00p | Getz Road Campus
- Bring your future student for a fun activity with teachers!
- Childcare provided for siblings



### PRESCHOOL Information and Enrollment Sessions:

- Thursday, February 1 | Getz Road Campus
- Thursday, February 8 | Union Street Campus
- 6:30p-7:30p
- Information session for parents
- Childcare provided



QUESTIONS? - Contact Erin Clark, Director of Admissions  
422-6712 | [eclark@esmeagles.com](mailto:eclark@esmeagles.com)

## NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK

Emmanuel-St. Michael Lutheran School will be joining with Lutheran Schools around the country and the world to celebrate during the week of January 21. We are thankful for Emmanuel and St. Michael congregations and their faithful support of ESM both spiritually and financially. ESM celebrates its unique mission as a distinctively Lutheran school in providing 'Education for Life and Faith for Eternity'!





## Reading through the New Testament

### ***Becoming*** more like Jesus—growing in His Word

“The book of Revelation is the last book of the Bible. Whether it was written last or not, the church was led to place it at the end of the canon because she saw in it the completion of God’s revelation. *Nothing further would be revealed* by God until the second coming of Jesus Christ. Revelation is thus the culmination of the entire story of salvation contained in the Bible. It is the end point of all that is written in both the Old Testament and New Testament. For it draws all of revelation, both prophetic and apostolic, to its final goal: the exalted reign of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords (19:11-16) and the fulfillment of the promise of the new heaven and new earth (21:1).

As the last book of the Bible and the completion of God’s revelation to His church, it is the lens through which the entire Scripture is to be viewed. *Revelation reveals and confirms that Christ was prophetically promised and that his incarnation, death, and resurrection happened so that God’s creation could be restored to its original glory and righteousness.*

Revelation thus points to the *final meaning* and the *final answer* to all that is revealed in the Bible. In addition, as the last book, Revelation puts an imprimatur on all of God’s revelation, a *final confirmation* of the divine truth and origin of God’s spoken and written Word. This finality points to the urgency of the last times, in which all things will be brought to an end – an urgency which reminds the Christian to hold fast to the faith (2:10) and which encourages the church to complete her mission (10:11).”

(From, Concordia Commentary: A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scripture – Revelation, by Louis Brighton, p 1.)

## New Testament in a Year

### Revelation

Chapter 19  20  21  22 

## Additional Reflections from this week's reading

**Revelation 19** | As the chapter begins, the scene changes from judgment day to heaven. John heard, “what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven” (19:1). The 24 elders and the four living creatures (19:4) are a part of this multitude. The 24 elders represent all the believers of the Old and New Testaments. The four living creatures symbolize all God’s created world. The roaring sound reflects the multitude’s great joy.

**Revelation 20** | The “thousand years” referenced in v. 2 has perhaps been misunderstood more than any other word in the Bible. It is important that this “thousand years” not be understood literally. (Actually, every phrase in vv. 1 and 2 is understood figuratively.) If there is any doubt about the meaning of the thousand years in this passage, we need to go back to Jesus’ literal descriptions of the last days in the Gospels. Our Lord’s clear words there speak against a literal thousand years of Christian domination and universal peace. While much more can be said about this “thousand years,” keep in mind that the world “millennium” was the name of the largest number in the vocabulary at that time. “A thousand” seemed like an unbelievably large number back then. Therefore, “a thousand” in v. 3 symbolizes the unspecified length of the New Testament age during which Satan would be bound.

**Revelation 21** | John saw “a new heaven and a new earth” (21:1). Throughout this closing scene, literal and figurative descriptions of paradise stand side by side. Will our earth and sky be destroyed and entirely new ones be created? Will our present world, as we know it, be destroyed and a renewed earth be our eternal home? It is also possible that John’s words are highly figurative. A new heaven and earth may be his picture for an entirely new place that we call heaven.

**Revelation 22** | What John recorded in Revelation came from God and from Jesus. The angel said, “The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel” (v. 6). Later we read, “I, Jesus, have sent my angel” (v. 16). Jesus and the God of the prophets are one in essence. As they share the throne in heaven (v. 1), they share in the work of putting their divine message into the hearts of the prophets.

## ***Blessing*** the World

"Therefore, go and make disciples..." Matthew 28:29

As we approach a new year, it provides us with an opportunity to pour into the people around us. If we look at Jesus' example, we see that he poured into his direct disciples, especially his inner circle of four. Who in your life can you disciple? Who can you step alongside, be an example of being a child of God, and pray for daily? Write that person's name down and a Bible verse that you think might encourage them on a notecard. Put the notecard somewhere you will see it daily as a reminder to be intentional in connecting with that person throughout 2024.

*God's Richest Blessings on Your New Year!*