



Mike's Missal



March 2025

St. Michael's Episcopal Church

P.O. Box 720326

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Sunday Services are at 9:00 and 11:00 A.M.

Live on YOUTUBE at 11:00

From Father Joseph Farber

Plugging into God:

You wouldn't start a day with charging your phone.

Why would you start a week without worship?

I was 14 years old when I first read the New Testament for myself. It would be more than an understatement to say that I did not understand much of what I read there. Growing up in the Bible Belt, I believed myself to live in a simple three-level spiritual world consisting of earth (where we work out our salvation ... or not), heaven (where we receive eternal life if we are good), and hell (a place of eternal damnation if we are not). In contrast, the New Testament described a cosmological order I had never imagined. Hell, it turns out, does not actually appear in the Bible without some interpretive magic. I had no idea what roles Angels, Archons, Thrones, and Powers might play in the ongoing operation of the universe; nor did I have any idea where Paul's "third heaven" belonged on my celestial map.

I didn't live in that universe. I lived in an ever-evolving Big Bang universe. But even there, the teachings of Jesus challenged and inspired me. Jesus taught that a good life consisted in very much more than just following the rules. Indeed, in Jesus' presentation the Torah ("teachings") of the Old Testament were clearly more of a guide than a rule. Not that Jesus' disciples were free to discard the law and do whatever they wanted. To the contrary, Jesus preached a higher righteousness than that of the scribes and pharisees. It was not enough to follow the law. It was not enough to do good deeds. Rather, taking guidance from the Torah, one should do all things from a heart rooted in the selfless love of God and of God's children, preferring faithfulness to that love even to one's own life.

Christianity, I learned from Jesus, was about much more than getting into heaven. Christianity was about the transformation of no-account broken human beings (like you and me) into the spiritual likeness of Jesus, right here, right now. That is how God is saving the world, one heart at a time. And that is the Divine Project, saving - *transforming* - the world.

At about the same time I was discovering Jesus in scripture, I was also coming to know him in prayer and, through him, to know his Father as my Father. That knowledge, no matter what has gone on in the world and in my life, has rooted me in "a peace that passes understanding."

This has never changed. To be sure, I have questioned, disputed, denied, reaffirmed, and wrestled with every commonly held Christian belief there is. (At 17, for example, I remember talking to Jesus about my struggles with the whole Virgin Birth/Son of God thing). But I still knew Jesus as a Real Presence. I still talked with him. I still stood in awe of his sacrifice. I still marvelled at the impact of his life, teachings, and sacrifice on me. I still do.

Beliefs about God change throughout life. They should change as we grow in experience and understanding. Our beliefs about God change; but our faith in God does not. God is our Father, our Mother, our Source. Like plugging in your phone for a charge, worship has nothing to do with our beliefs about electricity; worship is about plugging in and connecting to our Source, our Power, the One who is our beginning and our end - however we understand it. Whatever you believe about it, however you understand it, connecting with Source and getting powered up with God's love makes a huge difference in life.

Speaking for myself, Jesus, his life, his teachings, his sacrifice made it possible for me to make that connection in my life. My beliefs about Jesus, about God, and about the fundamental nature of reality have changed and, I expect, will continue to grow and change as I do. But my faith in Jesus and trust in our Father has not. Connecting to Jesus and to our Father has made all the difference.

¹I still do, though I see God in all of it.

² Struggling with the Creeds (rather than merely assenting to them) is a useful and important tool for spiritual growth. Outwardly (exoterically), they outline the Christian story; inwardly (esoterically), they push our hearts and minds to seek a deeper spiritual understanding of our own life in God. One should never be afraid to question one's beliefs -- and, with faith in God's guidance, to do so fearlessly.

From Senior Warden, David Zittel

Dear Parish Family,

Weekly, and often more frequently, I see our time is spent caring for a family member or significant other, especially as we are an aging congregation. There are items on my church to-do list that need my attention but sometimes I must give my own personal care and well-being a higher priority. Others in the parish wear multiple hats and can and do experience burn-out and need to step away from their activities. After a period of time off, they may resume those activities, or they may find new activities to engage in. We must respect their needs; I myself would love to be more involved with our outreach activities.

On another personal note, I am appalled at the manner in which the federal government staffing is being reduced. The highly competent individual who was eventually hired to replace me after I retired had been a contractor and is close to completing his one-year probationary period. As Norman is somewhat remote, he is still employed. Also, woe to anyone who was on any sort of leave the past week. This could be annual leave, sick leave, or family leave. I know of very few federal employees who were either incompetent or lazy. That said, I do know that actually firing an employee was complicated so management would find or create a position that would allow an individual to be a contributing member to the agency.

Yours in Christ, David Zittel, Sr. Warden

The Family of Charles Woltz would like to thank everyone at St. Michael's for the Memorial Service.

“You all were wonderful, and it was exactly the occasion we were hoping it would be. St. Michael's did a great job in so many ways and met the needs of our family.”

MARCH EVENTS

March 2

Canon Stephen Carlsen, Canon for
Congregational Vitality

1:00 p.m. Book Discussion Group

March 4

10:00 a.m. Budget Meeting

6:00 p.m. Fat Tuesday Dinner

March 5

9:00 a.m. Budget Committee Meeting

12:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Ash Wednesday Services

1:00 p.m. Bible Study

March 8

10:00 a.m. Outreach Committee

March 9

First Sunday of Lent

March 13

4:30 p.m. Care-A-Van Meals Prep

March 14

7:00 p.m. Wild Men's Night Out

March 15

9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Vestry Retreat

March 21

6:00 p.m. Saucy Sisters Fellowship

March 30

Worship Committee Meeting

OTHER MINISTRIES and EVENTS

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild needs a few more members to round out our ranks. If you are available once every few weeks on a Saturday morning to help set the altar and Sunday morning after church to clean the altar, please contact the church office. Thank you to Michael Dillinger who has volunteered to pick up flowers on Saturdays. Contact: Suzanne Moore

Bible Study

Our reading of the books of the Bible together continues from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. Come read with us.

Book Discussion Group

This month's book is *The Collected Regrets of Clover* by Mikki Brammer, a story that turns the normally taboo subject of death into a reason to celebrate life. Contact: Carol Wittmer

Book Sale

We continuously collect items for future book sales. Please place items under the table in the choir room. We have been given some specialized books which we will be selling on Facebook Marketplace. Amy will post the names of the books and their prices on our Facebook page. Most of these books have been

available during previous book sales, but did not find a buyer.

Budget & Finance Committee

Our next meeting will be at 10:00 a.m. on March 4th. This will be a hybrid meeting via Zoom and in person at the church. Contact: Amy Gardner

Care a Vans Meal Prep

We are signed up for all of 2025. You can sign up for anything for the year at any time. Make sure to leave your email address for a reminder. If you take the main course you may be reimbursed up to \$50. Contact: Debi Kelley

Care Team

Our thanks to those who have been wonderful about providing meals and transportation for our home-bound members. If you have a need let Debi or Nancy know. If you would like to join the Care Team, a sign-up sheet is available.

Choir

St. Mike's choir rehearses at 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays. If you are interested in singing in the choir, contact Organist Jon Roberts.

Churches Caring for Creation

March Densifier schedule: March 1 at the Blanchard (10:00 a.m. and Newcastle (1:30 – 3:00 p.m.) Public Libraries. Densifying on Univ Lutheran parking lot takes place during the week when the weather allows. Call Doug Bowden at 405-831-9951 to volunteer. Remember to bring your CLEAN foam to our styro-station. Contact: Tina Mahle, Green Team

Crafters

Our crafters meet at 6:30 p.m. every Monday. Bring your knitting, crocheting, or other crafts and join the fellowship. We have plenty of yarn for your use. Contact: Amy Gardner

Directories

2025 Directories are available on the front counter.

Discretionary Fund

The last Sunday of each month all offering plate cash goes to the Rector's Discretionary Fund. Please consider putting cash in the plate on this Sunday or donate any time by writing "Discretionary Fund" on a check. These funds are used to address unexpected needs.

Fat Tuesday 2025

We will celebrate Fat Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 4th with Breakfast for Dinner. Our breakfast meal will include eggs, breakfast meats, various muffins, fruit, coffee and teas. If you would like to help bake muffins, please contact Kathy Rodrigues. Please join us at this celebration before the season of Lent.

Flowers and Candles

Sign-up sheets are out for flowers and candles for the altar on Sundays. Simply sign your name, who or what you are honoring, and we will send you an invoice after that Sunday. Flowers are \$45 and Candles are \$10. Contact: Debi Kelley

Greeter and Usher Team

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered!! The schedule will be in every Tuesday's email. Contact: Santa Velez

Laundry Love

St. Michael's will sponsor Laundry Love on April 26 so please begin to bring quarters to support this ministry. We need \$500 to pay for the washing and drying. Contact Amy Gardner

Outreach Committee

The next Outreach Meeting is Saturday, March 8th at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome to attend. Contact: Amy Gardner

Prayer Chain

Members of St. Michael's have committed to praying daily for concerns that have been given to any member of the Prayer Chain. Our Prayer Chain is confidential (not published). Please bring concerns to this group or if you feel called to this ministry. Contact: David Sims

Saucy Sisters

Saucy Sisters women's fellowship will be on Friday March 21st. Emily Ryther will provide dinner. In April, we will meet at Evelyn Bibens' home on the fourth Friday - April 25th to avoid Good Friday. Please sign up in the ingathering space. The suggested donation is \$10, but the first time is free!

Sharon's Wagon

In March Sharon's Wagon will collect new socks for distribution at the April Laundry Love. Contact: Amy Gardner.

Sign Up Counter

Opportunities for Participation are on the Sign-Up Counter. We have many ways for you to be involved in the life of St. Mike's – check it out!

Special Services Team

We have a team to help at special services such as weddings or funerals. We have a detailed procedures manual for funerals. This is an important ministry in the life of St. Michael's. Contact Nancy Littlejohn or Debi Kelley.

Tea in the Kitchen Al-Anon Family Groups

Tea in the Kitchen Al-Anon Family Group is for the friends, family, and loved ones of someone who is struggling with addiction. Please join us, all are welcome! This group meets on Fridays at 8:00 p.m. in the Education Building.

their guests are welcome. Please sign-up before March 12. Contact: Peter Rodrigues

Wild Men's Night Out

On Friday, March 14, we'll have the usual excellent charcoal-grilled steak; The Best Steak You Ever Had for only \$20.⁰⁰. Salad and baked potatoes, complete the menu with many choices of ales and specialty brewed beverages. All men of Saint Michael's, and

Yoga Class

Join instructor Anne Roberts on Fridays at 9:00 a.m. Each class session is \$10.00

Outreach News

We are calling for continued cold weather donations including but not limited to warm coats for our unhoused neighbors at A Friend's House (the Norman warming station). We have also been made aware of a need for over the counter reading glasses. Feel free to leave any donations on the round tables in the end gathering space from which we will distribute to the shelter.

Oklahoma Legislation updates: The legislation authored this session against our unhoused neighbors including Oklahoma SB484, HB1798, and HB1689 are presently in committee: SB484 Senate Local and County Government Committee, HB1798 House Rules Committee, and HB 1689 Criminal Judiciary House Committee. A full breakdown of these bills and contacts to voice your opinion are located at www.matthew25isgreater.org

This is Walking the Mourner's Path

-- a place to come in our pain instead of withdrawing, to be comforted; a place to come together and to join hearts and hands so that we can do together what we cannot do alone." The Rev. Linda Shelton

St. Michael's is looking for people who are ready to address the grief in their lives due to loss—it can be the loss of a person, loss of a job, or loss of a relationship. We will be offering the Walking the Mourner's Path Eight week workshop on Tuesday evenings at St. Michael's. We will start the class as soon as we have 4-8 people who are ready to take the class and join us walking this path.

Walking the Mourner's Path differs from other programs because it is not opened-ended. Research has shown that effective grief programs have a beginning and an end. At the heart of the program are eight weekly workshops. The workshop will be led by a lay person and a clergy person who have been trained in the process. You will be provided with a notebook that will guide us through the process.

If you are interested in this class, please contact Mother Ann Murray at 405-919-8533.

Lent Madness 2025

Brought to you by Forward Movement, Lent Madness is a unique Lenten devotion and a fun way to learn about Saints. Lent Madness pits 32 saints in a "holy smackdown" for the "prize"- The Golden Halo!

Information about the saints is provided by Forward Movement. **THE *Saintly Scorecard* IS BACK!!** This booklet contains information about all the Saints who are on the brackets to win The Golden Halo. You can also research the saints on your own or follow their YouTube channel, Facebook posts, or their website lentmadness.org (which is great general resource page about Lent Madness).

The format is straightforward: 32 saints are placed into a tournament-like single elimination bracket. Each pairing remains open for a set period and people vote for their favorite saint. 16 saints make it to the Round of the Saintly Sixteen; eight advance to the Round of the Elate Eight; four make it to the Faithful Four; two to the Championship; and the winner is awarded the coveted Golden Halo.

At St. Michael's we are joining the formation fun by creating a "betting pool" where the money raised will go toward programs at our parish. The person/s who picks the saint that wins The Golden Halo will get bragging rights and a small gift.

How the 'betting pool' works at St. Mike's: For every \$5 donation you will pick one saint that you think will win The Golden Halo. If you like to hedge your bets, you can pick as many saints as you like, e.g. if you pick 4 saints you will donate \$20. For every \$20 donation, you will receive a **FREE *Saintly Scorecard!***

Want to learn more about some saints, but don't want to join the "betting pool"? You can purchase a *Saintly Scorecard* booklet for a \$5 donation to our Outreach Ministries.

See Deacon Laura if you have questions, are ready to pick your saint/s, or want to purchase a *Saintly Scorecard* booklet.

The 'betting pool' opened on February 23rd and will close on Fat Tuesday, March 4th @ 8 p.m.

Sunday Mornings During Lent

"Saints and Their Impact on Christianity"

Beginning on Sunday, March 9th (10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.) and continuing every Sunday through Lent (April 13th), come join one of our clergy in St. Mike's Library to discuss how the Saints that are on the Lent Madness bracket impacted our Christian faith and what we can learn from them. Bring your *Saintly Scorecard 2025* if you have one, but they are required to participate. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about a few saints!

Lenten Discipline - Alms Giving

One of the three Lenten disciplines is alms giving. This is the practice of giving money, goods, and time to those in need. We have many opportunities at St. Michael's for you to donate goods and your time- Laundry Love, Sharon's Wagon, Meals for our Unhoused Friends, and many others. If you aren't already participating in these ministries, Lent is a great time to make a commitment to participate in them. Another way to participate is to use one of our Lent Offering Boxes/Cards/Cans to make a daily offering of money. You can make yourself a promise to add a set amount every day during Lent or put in change that is just rolling around in your wallet. All money collected in the Lent Offering Boxes are for helping to fund our Outreach Ministries. They will be available starting on Sunday, February 23rd. Please return your Lenten Offering Boxes at the Easter Vigil or on Easter Sunday.

March Days to Remember

Birthdays

3/3 James Cassidy
3/5 Deacon Fleming
3/11 Debbie Bennett
3/15 Don Kelley
3/16 Andrew Strout
3/17 Melissa Gray
3/18 Roger Smith
3/20 Nathan Gray
3/27 Karen Petrie

Anniversaries

3/10/1984 Adam & Betty Falato
3/15/1980 Jeff & Nancy Littlejohn
3/23/1957 Richard & Nancy Hancock

On the anniversary of their death



3/18/1979 Gladys Tout
3/24/1980 Eva Appleby
3/17/1984 Emma Rodriguez
3/02/1984 Willie Gorham
3/22/1987 John Miles
3/23/2000 Neil Dikeman
3/07/2002 Fred Shellabarger
3/10/2007 Patricia Kellogg
3/15/2012 B.G. Schumacher
3/16/2012 Art Crucet
3/27/2013 Phillip Linneman
3/20/2014 Ruth Pearson
3/21/2019 Wilma Jean Price

Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to thy never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that thou art doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Handy Information

If you have a pastoral emergency, please call the office at 405-321-8951 during office hours, or call Father Joseph, Mother Ann or Deacon Laura in case of emergency outside office hours.

Office Hours: Monday – Wednesday 9:00 A.M.– 2:00 P.M. Thursdays 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

St. Michael's Webpage: www.stmichaelsnorman.org

St. Michael's Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/6273015521>

St. Michael's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZX8EOJFq5VykhED5K9q8eA>
Subscribe to receive update notices when we post new videos for worship or other resources.

Father Joseph Farber fr.jos.farber@gmail.com 405-321-8951 or 405-561-1414

Mother Ann Murray, Associate Priest deaconann18@gmail.com 405-919-8533

Deacon Laura Blazek laurablazek@sbcglobal.net 405-639-0300

Organist-Choirmaster Jon Roberts dachs.mirabilis@icloud.com 405-850-5252

David Zittel, Senior Warden david12330@gmail.com 405-834-8764

Josh Yarbrough, Junior Warden jry246@gmail.com 405.226.5187

Nancy Littlejohn, Parish Administrator administrator@stmichaelsnorman.org 405-321-8951 or
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Debi Kelley, Financial Secretary, treasurer@stmichaelsnorman.org 405-321-8951 or d3bi.kelley@gmail.com 405-306-3450

St. Michael's 2025 Vestry

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