

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month for the following month's newsletter. Send to: [smlcspublications@gmail.com](mailto:smlcspublications@gmail.com)



Pastor Jon Zehnder

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### Weekend Regular Worship

Sat: 5:30 pm	Informal
Sun: 8:00 am	Traditional
10:45 am	Blended
Sun: 9:15 am	Education Hour: <i>Kids Sunday School &amp; Bible Classes.</i>

# The Messenger

## From the Pastor

Rev. Jon Zehnder

### The High Cost of Loving

Who knows where the economics are going to take us these days. The stock market sets new highs only to follow that up with the largest single day drop; employment seems to be growing, business indicators are up, but then that drives fears of rising interest rates.

And in the midst of all of these discussions, it seems that few people have a real concern about the high cost that has to be paid for sin. Millions of dollars are lost to theft, investment schemes, robbery, and drugs. And more is then paid out to deal with the sad and lasting after-effects of these afflictors and others. And then add to that the fact that law enforcement, courts, prisons, punishment and rehabilitation are also not cheap.

But there is an even greater cost, greater than even the broken hearts and lives of the innocent and the not-so-innocent – **that cost, that price of sin, is what Jesus paid for on the cross.** He did that willingly in order to take away the eternal consequences of sin from us – because the “wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23). And the truth of the matter is, “Without the shedding of blood there could be no forgiveness.” (Hebrews 9:22). The price of our redemption, so that we could be reconciled to God, was the suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus.

Jesus died for all sins, “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21) Obviously there was no bargain deal for Jesus - it took all of His love, all of His life, all of His suffering in order to set us free. Maybe that’s why so many people don’t consider the cost of sin, they’ve received forgiveness as a gift of grace, but that gift and that grace came at a cost to our Savior Jesus.

Lent is this season in the Church Year where we count that high cost of our sin and we remember and thank God for the incredible love that led Jesus to pay that bill in full for us. For, even though the wages of sin is death, “the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.” (Romans 6:23). And so our Lenten journey focuses on our Savior’s grace and love for us so that we may be empowered to love Him more and compelled by that love, live for Him who died for us and was raised again! (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

### Lent Midweek Schedule

- ◆ Lent Midweek 4 – March 7 (Noon and 7:00 pm)
- ◆ Lent Midweek 5 – March 14 (Noon and 7:00 pm)
- ◆ Lent Midweek 6 – March 21 (Noon and 7:00 pm)

### Holy Week Schedule

- ◆ Palm Sunday Weekend – March 24, Saturday 5:30 pm; March 25, Sunday 10:00 a.m. (gym)
- ◆ Barbecue under the big tent
- ◆ Maundy Thursday, March 29 (Noon and 7:00 pm) with Communion
- ◆ Good Friday, March 30 (Noon and 7:00 pm)
- ◆ Easter Saturday, March 31 (5:30 pm)
- ◆ Easter Sunday, April 1 (8:00, 9:30, 11:00)

~ Daylight Savings – Don’t forget to “spring” forward 1 hour on March 11th ~

## Top Events for



- 3/5 — Council Meeting, 5:30pm
- 3/5 — Adult Basketball, 7:00pm
- 3/6 — Middle School Youth Night, 6-8pm
- 3/7 — Midweek Lent Service, 12 & 7pm
- 3/7 — Mission Board Meeting, 5:30pm
- 3/10 — LWML Meeting, 10:30am
- 3/11 — **DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS**
- 3/11 — Seniors on the Go, 12pm
- 3/14 — Midweek Lent Service, 12 & 7pm
- 3/15 — Board of Christian Education Meeting, 12pm
- 3/17 — **Bid for Kids Dinner Auction, 6pm**
- 3/19 — Stephen Ministry, 6:30pm
- 3/20 — PTL Meeting, 6pm
- 3/21 — Midweek Lent Service, 12 & 7pm
- 3/25 — **Palm Sunday, One Service at 10am in the gym**
- 3/26 — Elders Meeting, 7pm
- 3/26 — Adult Basketball, 7pm
- 3/29 — Maundy Thursday Service, 12 & 7pm
- 3/30 — Good Friday Service, 12 & 7pm
- \*Thursdays, 7-8:30pm DivorceCare Ministry Meetings
- \*Saturdays, 10am-Noon, Griefshare Ministry Meetings

## Seniors on the Go!

Join us for food, fellowship and fun on Sunday, March 11th after late service in the cafeteria. Guest speaker is **William Sandell** and he will be sharing stories from his 38 years as a Merchant Marine on the Great Lakes. He will also talk about winter sailing on the Great Lakes. Brrrr! Cost is only \$7 per person and includes a catered lunch.

*Please sign up in advance at the sound booth!*

## Faith & Family Night



The Ft. Myers Miracle Baseball Team is offering special group pricing for their April 27th, 7pm game against the Daytona Tortugas! We need at least 15 people to participate. Tickets are \$10 each and include General Admission Ticket, Hot Dog/Drink Voucher, and Post Game Fireworks Show. You must turn in payment to the Church Office **BY APRIL 10th**.

## Women's Bible Study: Bad Girls of the Bible

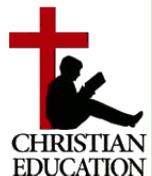
We meet on Thursdays from 10:00-11:30 AM, in the Art Room and are studying Liz Curtis Higgs' Bad Girls of the Bible. Join us anytime.

Shirley Lockman would like to express her gratitude and appreciation for the thoughtful cards and many prayers said on her behalf. She hopes to see all of you very soon.

*Thank You*

The Board of Christian Education meets on the following Thursdays at noon:

- March 15
- April 19
- May 17
- June 14



Thank you dear brother and sisters in Christ for painting at my house. I am humbled and grateful for your love. You served not only me, but Christ Himself. *In as much as ye have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me.*

Love In Christ,  
*Anita Dennis*



March 11, 2018



Time to Spring Ahead

*From the Director of Caring Ministries**Julie Berchtold***Combating the Marriage Meltdown**

By Jim Mueller

The pained voice on my cell phone told the story. He desperately wanted his marriage to work, but now, only one option seemed feasible: Move out. Caught in deadlocked communication, hurtful finger pointing, and a rapid marriage meltdown, this last ditch tactic was the only solution. He had to escape. This relationship was hanging by a thread.

One year before, this couple had made promises on an altar. In front of their friends, family, and God, they promised never to give up. They were in love ... I could see it in their eyes—the romantic attraction, the commitment. They knew upfront that marriage is hard. They knew that a joyful wedding celebration and a fiery honeymoon weren't necessarily predictors of marital success. They expected challenges.

That cell phone call indicated they probably were facing the greatest challenge of their new life together so far: Marriage meltdown! How did this happen? What caused the downward spiral?

**Things go wrong**

Even the best-prepared pre-married couples are ill equipped for shaky finances, dual careers, old baggage, and unmet expectations. Even under "normal" conditions, the best relationships are in for big challenges. And just add a few stepchildren and ex-spouses and things get really interesting.

None of us expect perfection; things go wrong, stuff happens. Marriage is an education. There are adjustments to be navigated, lessons to be learned, and sacrifices to be made. That's marriage. That's normal.

But what do you do when the medical report is not good? When the portfolio collapses? When the spouse walks out? What happens when you miss the red flags and everything disintegrates? What do you do next?

When things go terribly wrong, panic sets in. You lose objectivity, communication ceases; the situation deteriorates—fast. When life caves in, you find yourself on autopilot, struggling to stay focused, incapable of making critical marriage-saving decisions.

Let's do some risk management.

**1. Don't do it alone.** From a spiritual growth standpoint, the best decision Sheri and I ever made was to join a small group. We had an immediate affinity with our church group, meeting regularly for learning, community, and worship—we "did life together."

As new Christians, our spiritual lives soared, but there was an important side benefit: We developed close relationships. When our marriage got rough, we had friends to call. Through unemployment, surgery, and financial crisis, even death, our group was there for us.

**2. Seek assistance.** Fortunately, Sheri and I have been good about recognizing when to seek third party assistance. We've been in tight spots, deadlocked in marriage-threatening issues that we just couldn't resolve on our own.

A professional Christian counselor can provide objectivity and facilitate communication, steering a disaster-bound marriage toward recovery.

**3. Soften your heart.** Relationships are most vulnerable when disagreements escalate to the point of deadlock. If you let them, circumstances will quickly spiral to standoff stage—past disagreement, beyond raised voices to a point where communication stops and the only option seen through the helplessness and hurt is to walk out.

Before you give up, pause and look at yourself:

- Do you need to ask forgiveness?
- What are you angry about?
- Do you need to forgive?
- Is a headstrong attitude stonewalling your marriage?
- How might you compromise?
- Why did you get married in the first place? Remember?

*(Continued on page 4)*

*(Continued from page 3)***Julie Berchtold**

Someone needs to give in. Someone needs to soften his or her heart and take a first step toward healing. Relinquish your need to "be right." Stop the finger pointing, quit the blaming. Humble yourself and submit to the possibility that you contributed to the breakdown. Turn your focus from anger to negotiation and next steps. What's more important, your pride or your marriage?

**4. Engage spiritually.** The catalyst for a loving, thriving marriage comes from God. It's easy to disconnect from God—missing church services, skipping prayer, and avoiding close friends—when you're deep in relational disorder. Yet, this is the time you most need to be spiritually connected.

Without God, our tendency is to drift into self-sufficiency; we try to fix bad situations on our own. When we operate independently of God, we're simply surviving, finding temporary fixes.

Begin with prayer. Ask God to show you what you need to change about yourself. And then ask Him to help you do that.

Praying with your spouse can be awkward even in great marriages, but if you can take that risk, it will pay dividends. Suggest prayer to your partner. Begin by simply sitting together, holding hands and closing your eyes; you take the lead. Keep it simple.

Has your church attendance been sporadic? Suggest to your spouse that you combine a church service with a breakfast or dinner. Make it a date. Make it a weekly priority to get in the car, drive to church, and walk in the door. Your hearts will soften and you'll begin hearing God.

You may feel especially distanced from God during this time. Reach out to Him. He wants to have a personal relationship with you. That may be the critical missing link that is so essential to you and your marriage.

It is possible to reclaim your relationship. But you need to prepare in advance and be ready to deploy any or all of these steps before your marriage shuts down. These suggestions will not come naturally—they are not intuitive—especially during troubled times. The foundation you build now could make the difference between healing and heartbreak.

*"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves" (Rom. 12:10).*

**From the Saint Michael Lutheran School Principal****Kati Miser**

The most important days of the season of the church year come at the end of March and beginning of April this year, and I'm not talking about Spring Break. If you asked your children and grandchildren what those days are, would they be able to tell you that they are Good Friday and Easter Sunday? Would they be able to tell you why they are so important? At Saint Michael Lutheran School, our mission is to educate children and touch families' lives with the love of Jesus Christ ... a love that was confirmed on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We provide parents with a strong Christian support network in a home-school partnership that assists them in fulfilling their responsibilities to teach for now and for eternity ... the eternity won for us by Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection!



Let's create a BUZZ around town about our wonderful school! Post SMLS reviews on Facebook, Google, and other websites to help prospective families learn about Saint Michael. Thank you for all the personal referrals to families, friends, and acquaintances. Thank you for attending our awesome January Open House! New online applications for 2018-19 are being accepted on our website.

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 fund-raiser – the BID FOR KIDS Auction – takes place on Saturday, March 17? Last year over 220 guests helped raise over \$100,000 to benefit our children. You don't have to be a school family to volunteer or even to come to the auction. Tickets are available at the school office. This year's theme ... "An Evening on the Emerald Isle" ... is an excellent and fun opportunity to invest in Saint Michael Lutheran School.



## *From the Ministry Coordinator*

**Lori Schwan**

### Children's Ministry

#### **Preschool Sunday School**

This month we've GONE FISHIN' as we learn about how Jesus taught the disciples to be fishers of men. How did they learn to be fishers of men? Well, they followed Jesus! And, we want our preschoolers to know that they can follow Jesus too!

#### **Elementary Sunday School**

When Adam and Eve decided that their way was better than God's, they changed the relationship between God and His creation. God decided to make peace through Jesus. We don't have to get even, but can reflect the character of Christ by caring for others and making peace with others.

#### **Sunday School Nursery Reopening**

Enjoy loving on little ones? Contact Lori Schwan if interested in volunteering with 0-2-years-olds once a month!

#### **Children in Palm Sunday Celebration**

On Palm Sunday, March 25, the children will come to the cafeteria at 9:45 to be a part of the processing during the 10:00 AM Combined Palm Sunday Worship. They will also get a chance to sing: "Jesus Loves Me" for the congregation. Following the service, there will be our annual Easter Egg Hunt, a family BBQ and Inflatable Games on the lawn.

### Family Ministry

**FAMILY VBS from 5:30-8:00 PM will be Monday – Thursday, June 4-7.** Venture onto an uncharted island where kids are rescued by Jesus! Anchor kids in the truth that Jesus carries them through every storm in life. They'll learn to hold onto God's promises when they are lonely, they worry, they struggle, do wrong, and feel powerless. This FREE adventure is for the whole family with dinner, service projects and raffle prizes! Registration will begin in April. Contact Lori Schwan if you are interested in volunteering on our team 939-1218, ext. 237 [lori.schwan@smlcs.org](mailto:lori.schwan@smlcs.org).



### Faith Stepping Stones:

- **Father-Son Retreat for 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Thank you so much for prayerfully supporting the 12 participants and leadership team of 10 who celebrated what it means to be a man of God: Courageous, Honorable, and Faithful to the end.
- **Mother-Daughter Retreat for 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade:** God's Design for His Daughters is May 5-6. Cost it \$100 per person. Brochures go out this month.



### **Thrivent Financial Members**

If you own a Thrivent Financial Product, you can give \$250 or \$500 without giving any of your money. Contact me to see how. Those who have choice dollars can also direct them for the 2017 up until Mar. 31, 2018.

### **Women's Bible Study: Bad Girls of the Bible**

We meet on Thursdays from 10:00-11:30 AM, in the Art Room and are studying Liz Curtis Higgs' Bad Girls of the Bible. Join us anytime.

### **Palm Sunday Help Needed**

Want to assist with the BBQ on Palm Sunday, April 9? Contact Chuck Oliver if you want to help with set-up/take-down, bring a dessert to share, or assist in the kitchen in some way. (239) 292-6058

[Charliet1333@gmail.com](mailto:Charliet1333@gmail.com)

***From the Director of Christian Education******Jack Proctor*****Saint Michael Youth Ministries**

**The Youth Ministry is always looking for adults who are passionate about investing in the lives of the youth. There are many different ways to get involved! Please prayerfully consider if God is calling you to serve in this way!**

**Faith Stepping Stones**

These Stepping Stone seminars are specifically designed for Parents and Teens with intentional topics for important points of life. These seminars support families to bring Christ to the center of their lives and to set up students for a life-long faith. Questions? Want to sign up? Email [Jack.Proctor@gsmles.org](mailto:Jack.Proctor@gsmles.org)

**10th grade** - "Enjoy the Ride." Parents and teens will learn to communicate with accountability and trust, to clarify expectations, to make responsible choices. **March 4th, 12-3 PM**

**Summer Mission Trips!**

**\* Fantastic opportunities to connect to God and serve His people! \***

**Middle School: Camp Luther Springs. - June 24th-29th**

**High School: Dominican Republic - June 9th-16th**

**FL-GA District Mission Trip to Fort Myers Beach - June 17th-22nd**

**Confirmation**

We are taking St. Paul's advice to be prepared to give a reason for the hope that we have in Christ (1 Peter 3:15). We are starting out the year by learning about God's love through the 10 Commandments! Bring your Small Catechism and Bible (electronic or paper) with you each week in Room 48 from 9:15-10:30 AM.

**High School Sunday School**

Sunday Mornings from 9:30 to 10:30 with the wonderful Mrs. Sue and other high school students as they dive into God's Word to strengthen and grow them for the week ahead!

**Middle School Breakaway**

We play games, enjoy snacks, build community, and learn more about God together! We meet on select Tuesdays from 6-7:30 PM in the Joy/Youth Room! Date's we'll meet. March 6, April 10, 24, May 8, 22.

**High School Revive**

Revive is a community of high school students coming together to support, encourage, learn, and laugh together centered on the truth of Christ. Join us on Wednesday nights from 6-8 pm in the youth room!

**Adult Pickup Basketball**

Lace up your sneakers for some fun and friendly exercise. We play a series of pickup basketball games on select Mondays, 7PM until everyone is tired (usually around 8:30-9). March 5th, 26th and April 9th, 23rd

<b>Usher Schedule</b>	
8:00 A.M.	10:45 A.M.
<p><i>Please contact the head usher if you are unable to serve as scheduled, or secure your own replacement. If YOU would like to serve as an usher, please contact the church office at 939-1218, and let us know which service you prefer.</i></p>	
March 4	
<b>John Hoffmann 936-8362</b> Kathy Royston Bob Richardson David Engstrom	<b>Leroy Waldren 989-1048</b> Brian Bottorff Jacob Haycook Eric Zinn
March 11	
<b>Bill Truax 482-8418</b> Bob Richardson John Hoffmann Dale Mast	<b>Tom Kosteno 489-4398</b> Judy Ward Christian Bottorff Marge Bennett
March 18	
<b>Dale Mast</b> John Hoffmann Kathy Royston Tom Schlotterbeck	<b>Leroy Waldren 989-1048</b> Ken Fritsch Hannah Zinn Neil Meador
March 25	
<b>John Hoffmann 936-8362</b> Bill Truax Kathy Royston David Engstrom	<b>Tom Kosteno 489-4398</b> Marge Bennett Jacob Haycook Roy Hendry Diane Hendry
April 1	
<b>Dale Mast</b> Bob Richardson Kathy Royston Tom Schlotterbeck	<b>Ken Fritsch 997-2596</b> DD Schleicher Judy Ward Neil Meador

<b>Church Greeters for March Sunday Services</b>	
<b>Mar 4</b>	8:00 a.m. Nila Little 10:45 a.m. Marlene King
<b>Mar 11</b>	8:00 a.m. Bill & Elaine Armour 10:45 a.m. Phil & Connie Coffey
<b>Mar 18</b>	8:00 a.m. Bob DeMott 10:45 a.m. Ron & Chris Silc
<b>Mar 25</b>	10:00 a.m. <i>Palm Sunday Service</i>

<b>Holy Week Worship Schedule</b>	
<b>Mar 25</b>	10:00 am One Service in the gym, followed by Family Games and Barbecue
<b>Mar 29</b>	12:00 pm. Maundy Thursday 7:00pm Maundy Thursday
<b>Mar 30</b>	12:00 pm. Good Friday 7:00pm Good Friday
<b>Mar 31</b>	5:30 pm Easter Service
<b>Apr 1</b>	8:00am Easter Service 9:30am Easter Service 11:00am Easter Service



We have openings  
in our  
March 2018  
**Acolyte and  
Crucifer** schedule.  
Sign up today using  
SignUp Genius!





**St. Michael Lutheran Church**  
**3595 Broadway, Fort Myers, Florida 33901**

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**Return Service Requested**

**Sunday School & Bible Study Opportunities**  
**9:15-10:30 AM**

**Sunday School**

**9:00 – 9:15am “Excite” (games)**  
**9:15 – 9:30am “Engage” (opening)**  
**9:30 – 10:30am**

**Individual Grade level Activities**

*Toddlers- 2 year olds*  
*Preschool*  
*Elementary*  
*6th-8th Grade*  
*9th-12th Grade*

**Adult Bible Studies**

**Bible Focused Friends**  
**Parents of High School Students**  
**Marriage Enrichment**  
**Family Enrichment**  
**Moms In Prayer**  
**Pastor Zehnder’s Adult Bible Study**

**Weekly Bible Study Opportunities**

**7:30 am Tuesday** ..... Men’s Bible Study,  
 .....6835 Porto Fino Cir, Suite #2, Mike Roach, 275-9233

**10:00 am Thursday** ..... Women’s Bible Study,  
 ..... led by Lori Schwan, in the Art Room

**8:30 am Friday** ..... Men’s Bible Breakfast,  
 .....Pastor’s Conference Room

**9:00 am Saturday** .....Men’s Ministry/Bible Study  
 ..... Education Bldg., Art Room. Call Lee Berchtold,  
 872-8999

**4:15 pm Saturday** .....Bible Study with Pastor Hubbard,  
 .....Education Bldg., north end, Classroom #48

**9:15 am Sunday** ..... Pastor’s Bible Class,  
 ..... Cafeteria

