

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month for the following month's newsletter.

Send to:
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 & Bible Classes.</i>

The Messenger

From the Pastor

Rev. Jon Zehnder

“A Prayer for the New Year”

“Our neighbors lost their house, Lord; a co-worker’s family is going through a separation; a friend is struggling in retirement. Our nation seems to be losing its footing – there is division, and anger, and reports of shootings. The world is a mess and it scares us. The headlines are always ominous with the news of some impending doom.

All the finger-pointing, and arguing, and frustration – people are asking, “What’s next?” So, Heavenly Father, we’re asking You, “What is next?” We’re listening and we’re admitting that You were right, You told us this would happen.

Lord Jesus, You told us the truth about the consequences of loving stuff and using people, rather than using stuff and loving the people that matter so much to You. You warned us that greed would break our hearts, that money would love us and leave us feeling uncertain and insecure; You told us not to put our ultimate hope in riches. So now Lord we acknowledge You as the Giver of every good and perfect gift; that You are the Maker, the Creator and Sustainer – and only You can get us out of this mess.

And we know that You can, because You always have. You led slaves out of slavery; You built temples out of ruins; You turned stormy waves into glassy seas; You turned water into wine; You gave sight to the blind, made the deaf to hear, and the crippled to walk; You even raised the dead back to life! You covered our sins and paid for our redemption price so that we could be Your very own now and forever.

Lord Jesus, we come to You now on behalf of our country, for all people, and for ourselves, and we are asking for Your help; we pray especially for those who have concerns, fears, worries, loneliness, and hurts. We ask Lord, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, You would enable us to lay these issues at the foot of Your cross and let the Spirit do His work in our hearts and lives. We ask this in Your holy and precious Name, Jesus. Amen!”

“I have held things in my hands and I have lost them all, but whatever I have placed in God’s hands, that I still possess.” – Martin Luther

Top Events for

JANUARY

- 1/7 — Church Council Meeting, 5:30pm
- 1/8 — Middle School Youth Night, 6pm
- 1/12 — Griefshare Ministry winter session begins, Saturdays at 10am
- 1/13 — Lunch & Learn, 12pm
(Formerly called Seniors on the Go)
- 1/13 — Blood Drive, 8:30am - 12:30pm
- 1/14 — Board of Human Care Meeting, 7pm
- 1/14 — Adult Basketball, 7pm
- 1/15 — PTL Meeting, 6pm
- 1/17 — Prayer Shawl Ministry
- 1/17 — School Board Meeting, 12pm
- 1/19 — GAME SHOW NIGHT, 6:30pm
(See page 6 for details)
- 1/22 — Middle School Youth Night, 6pm
- 1/23 — Open House at SMLS, 6-8pm
- 1/26 — Touch-A-Truck Event at SMLS
- 1/28 — Elders Meeting, 7pm
- 1/28 — Adult Basketball

Offering Envelopes will be available in the little chapel **Jan. 5-6**. They will be labeled and sorted alphabetically. If you do not currently have offering envelopes but would like to receive some, please contact the church office at 939-1218.

Seniors on the Go will now be named **Lunch and Learn** in an effort to reach a broader audience. All are welcome.

Join us on **January 13, 2019**. Our speaker will be a Lee County Sheriff Deputy from the Fraud and Scam division.

'Statistics show that the older you get the less likely you are to be a victim of crime. But it still makes sense to take precautions, especially against fraud and con games, which are the greatest crime threats for seniors.' - LCSD

We will also have a flyer available concerning the New Medicare Card.

So, come and join us for lunch and fellowship and see what you can learn! *Please sign up in advance at the sound booth.*

Gifted To Care ~ Stephen Ministry

Spiritual gifts are gifts to give away. God gives them to us, and we use them to serve others. How are you using your gifts right now? Are you looking for a new way to use them? If your spiritual gifts include one or more of the following: faith, mercy, teaching the faith, encouragement, or knowing — consider **Stephen Ministry**, our congregation's one-to-one caregiving ministry. This may be just what you've been looking for! A new training class will be offered in **January 2019**. If you would like more information about Stephen Ministry, please contact Stephen Leader: Janet Marderness, 645-8999.

LWML wants to thank everyone who participated in this year's Christmas Cookie Extravaganza! The cookie and goodie assortment was amazing! We hope that you all enjoyed your cookies and goodies and we look forward to next year's event. Thank you again!



GriefShare Support Group meets Saturdays from 10:00am to noon beginning **January 12th** in the ELC boardroom. GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences, the loss of someone close. **You may join any session.** For more information, please call Bob Betancourt at 274-8188

Congratulations to Coach Bob Schaaf! His SMLS Boys Basketball team gave him his **700th career coaching win** on Saturday, December 15th. We are blessed to have him on staff at St. Michael Lutheran School.

From the Director of Caring Ministries***Julie Berchtold*****Why Your Relationship With Your Child Matters***By Dennis and Barbara Rainey*

You have the privilege of growing a child who knows the love of God personally and knows how to love people well.

God's first choice for receiving and experiencing love is the family. Warmly snuggled in this incubator, love nurtures life, feeds souls, and calls forth the blossoming flower of God's unique individual design in every person He has created. Then love calls for love to be given in return.

Home is where a child takes the first tentative steps from receiving love to giving love. At home, parents *and* children learn that selfishness and love can't coexist. And at home we learn what to do when we hurt others and fail to love well.

The home is God's supreme training ground for the life skill of love. And as a parent, you are God's best choice for communicating His unfathomable love to your children. You are also His original choice for teaching and training your child to love others.

The most well-known verse in the Bible, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16), sums up God's ultimate motivation toward us: His great unfathomable love.

Love sent Jesus Christ to dwell among flawed, broken humans ... to be our Immanuel.

Love motivated Jesus to live a perfect life so that He might woo us back to the Father.

Love kept Jesus nailed to the cross when He could have called on a legion of angels to rescue Him from His agony. Love did all this so that we might know the Father and live with Him forever.

All because He wants a relationship with us.

First John 4:19 tells us, "We love because he first loved us." God reached out to us first. He made the first move. He created us with our physical senses so that we could see, hear, smell, and touch one another. But most important, He fashioned our cognitive and emotional capacity to taste His love and to give it in return. As 1 John 3:11 says, "For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."

And because He wants His family to be full of healthy relationships with others.

When asked, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment?" Jesus answered, "You shall *love* the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall *love* your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:36-39). Who are your closest neighbors? Your spouse and your children.



From our Parish Nurse***Ann Sluiter*****Compassion or Humility or Blessings?**

In November 2018 I went to the mall to look for a blouse. There, I noticed a lady doing the same thing. Every so often she reached behind her and touched her child. Her child was a teenager, propped up on a cart-like wagon with his head supported by a special soft ring. His hands were gnarled and deformed. His feet were bare and protruded outward from his ankles. He appeared to not be able to speak, only looking in one direction and blinking his eyes.

I was drawn in compassion to this mother and son. A voice in my head projected me forward. But what should I say? I didn't want to offend her. I asked God for the right words. 'Excuse me, ma'am, there is no way that I can know what yours days are like, or what your world is like, but I would like to pray for you and your family'. She gave me a strange look, but said 'OK'. I asked her name and she told me. I said, 'I am going to start praying for your family today'. Her look said she didn't believe me. She turned back to the clothes rack.

As I was leaving, I gently reached down and stroked her son - shoulder to elbow. She turned back to me and said, "Wait!" 'In my recollection, of the last 10 years, you are the only person who has ever voluntarily touched my child!' Oh my! All that I could say was, 'yes, ma'am'. Tears well up in my eyes as I retreated. Out of her sight, I let my tears flow. Then I said a prayer of thanksgiving - for my own family, for my healthy children who were able to walk and run and dance and play and talk and even talk back.

The hymn, Count Your Blessings came to mind. 'Count your blessings, name them one by one, Count your blessings, see what God has done, and it will surprise you what the Lord had done.'

Will you join me in praying for this mother and all the parents of children with disabilities and children with disabilities.

Compassion or Humility or Blessings - for me it was all three, what will it be for you?

John 15:17 ~ These things I command you, that you may love one another.

Ann Sluiter RN
Parish Nurse

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

It's time for a quiz ... that's what teachers do, right? First, the easy one ... What day is Christmas? What is its significance? December 25 – the birth of Jesus. Of course, but do you know what day Epiphany is and its significance? January 6 – traditionally marking the coming of the Wise Men. The word “epiphany” could be expressed as “Eureka – we’ve found Jesus, the promised Savior!

Here at Saint Michael, **our mission 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 all with whom they come into contact. We pray for many “eureka” moments among our staff, students and parents ... “Eureka - we’ve found the love of Jesus through the love of the children and people at Saint Michael.” “Eureka - we’ve found opportunities to share that love.” “Eureka - we’ve found the reason for being excited about life with Jesus as our focus in all things.”



Check out the SMLS reviews on our Facebook page where Saint Michael families share their stories about the impact Saint Michael Lutheran School has had on their family. Give me a call if you want to see our school first-hand. We are also beginning enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year.



*From the Director of Music Ministry**Vicar Colton LaMay*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus,

I hope and pray that you had a wonderful Christmas season as we enter the season of Epiphany. Thank you for the thoughtful notes and gifts during Christmas. It is such a blessing to serve such a loving and generous congregation. My family and I appreciate our family at Saint Michael very much and are so happy to have the opportunity to live and grow with you.

Thank you very much to all the musicians who have graciously given their time and talents to serve God in worship over the year! We have a plethora of musical opportunities here and would always love for more folks to jump in and serve with us. The choir really needs your help, **especially male voices!** I hear a lot of great voices singing each week, and I would love if we could get together as a choir and sing together. If you are interested, but have a conflict with the time, please send me an email and let me know.

(Colton.Lamay@gsmllcs.org) We are evaluating whether or not the time of the rehearsal is keeping folks away, so your input would be most helpful in making that determination. January is also an exciting month for music educators, as we are blessed to spend January 9-12 in Tampa at the annual Music Educators' Conference. It is a great opportunity for our music staff to grow professionally and have some time to spend time with one another.

Vicarage and seminary classes are going very well. I passed the first course, Introduction to Pastoral Ministry, and the new course I am working through is Introduction to Worship. This class is one of the two intensive courses we do during a year. That means the readings for the course started in December in preparation for an on-campus week where we get all the seat time for the class covered during the week. From January 14th to the 18th, I will travel to Saint Louis to attend the on-campus portion of this course. Please pray for a balmy week of weather in Saint Louis, as I am afraid your poor vicar has lost all resistance to the cold over the last twelve years. I am very excited for this opportunity as this will be the first time I get to meet most of the brothers in my cohort. Although this is a very intense time as far as the course is concerned, we will get a chance to spend some time together, as well. There may also be a chance participate in worship music on campus that week, as my professor for this course is the Director of Music for the seminary and is letting the musicians help him out for the daily chapel services. I am looking forward to incorporating the information learned from this particular course into our worship practices!

Thank you all again very much for offering your prayers and support for the ministries here at Saint Michael. It is such a blessing to serve alongside you each and every day. I hope and pray God's richest blessings to you and your family and look forward to what He will be up to here in our congregation for 2019. As always, please feel free to reach out to me with anything! I love to hear from you and appreciate your input as we serve our Lord Jesus together.

Blessings!

~Vicar Colton LaMay

From the Director of Christian Education

Jack Proctor

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

National Youth Gathering ~ July 10-16, 2019 ~



The 2019 national youth gathering will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota! 25,000 high school youth will be gathering together to connect with our “Real. Present. God.” Please be praying for our NYG team.



Confirmation

7th/8th grade students & parents

Bring your Small Catechism and Bible with you each week in Room 48 from 9:15-10:30 AM.

Sunday School 9:15 - 10:30am

High School: in the Youth Room

6th grade: in room 47

Sunday School offers age appropriate teaching and community.

Middle School Youth Nights

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!

January Meetings: 8th & 22nd.

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!

Progressive Dinner Servant Event

Thank you to all who donated and helped us bless the teens at Oasis this Christmas.

Game Show Night - Saturday, January 19th!

The 2nd Annual Game Show Night Fundraiser! Be on the lookout for tickets going on sale. Dinner and entertainment for the whole family! Various favorite game shows being played and exciting “mini games” (trivia, bingo, and more!). Invite friends and family for this fantastic night of fun and cool prizes! All the money raised will support our youth doing great things through trips like the National Youth Gathering. **Game Night: Saturday, Jan. 19th from 6:30-9:00pm.** Dinner provided.

Usher Schedule

8:00 A.M.

10:45 A.M.

Please contact Marge Bennett if you are unable to serve as scheduled, or secure your own replacement. If YOU would like to serve as an usher, please contact Marge Bennett at 560-4159, and indicate which service you prefer.

January 6

Bill Truax	Tom Kosteno
John Hoffmann	Leroy Waldren
Nila Little	Marge Bennett
Bob Richardson	Christian Bottorff
	Neil Meador

January 13

Tom Schlotterbeck	Ken Fritsch
Kathy Royston	Aaron Bonenberger
Bill Truax	Eric Zinn
Bob Richardson	Jacob Haycook
	Roy Hendry
	Diane Hendry

January 20

Bill Truax	Leroy Waldren
Nila Little	Marge Bennett
John Hoffmann	Christian Bottorff
Bob Richardson	Eric Zinn
	Roy Hendry
	Diane Hendry

January 27

Tom Schlotterbeck	Ken Fritsch
Kathy Royston	Aaron Bonenberger
Bill Truax	Neil Meador
John Hoffmann	Brian Bottorff
	Tom Kosteno
	Jacob Haycook

Church Greeters for January Sunday Services

- Jan 6** 8:00 a.m. Tom & Jo Zeller
10:45 a.m. Marlene King
- Jan 13** 8:00 a.m. Bill & Polly Bryden
10:45 a.m. Aaron Bonenberger
- Jan 20** 8:00 a.m. John & Janis Pohlman
10:45 a.m. Woody & Nancy Jackemeyer
- Jan 27** 8:00 a.m. Ron & Dee Engel
10:45 a.m. Linda Franks

If you are moved to serve the congregation of St. Michael Lutheran Church either as a *Greeter* or an *Usher*, please contact the church office at 239-939-1218 Ext. 241.

We have many other volunteer opportunities as well, including helping in the office on Fridays, assisting with our newsletter assembly, and preparing the sanctuary for worship.

We have openings
in our
January 2018
Acolyte and
Crucifer schedule.
Sign up today using
[SignUpGenius.com!](http://SignUpGenius.com)





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

8:00 am ThursdayMoms In Prayer,
.....Little Chapel

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

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

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

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

