

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

Send to:
smlcspublications@gmail.com



Pastor Jon Zehnder



Saint Michael Lutheran
CHURCH • DAY SCHOOL • FOUNDATION

Weekend Regular Worship

Sat: 5:30 pm	Informal
Sun: 8:00 am	Traditional
10:45 am	Blended

The Messenger

From the Pastor

Rev. Jon Zehnder

Déjà vu! Kind of feels like we've done this before – seen it, been through it, bought the t-shirt (or the face mask?) Looks like May is going to be like April where we will be mandated to continue, for the most part, sheltering in place, doing social distancing, not gathering in numbers greater than 10 while still distancing from each other, and no school! It reminds me of a phrase from the Herman Hermits 1965 hit, "I'm Henry the 8th I am" where they sing, "Second verse same as the first!"

So, as we settle into this new normal for the second verse of the battle with this pandemic, we take comfort and strength, like Jehoshaphat did in 2 Chronicles 20. As a vast army of three nations came to make war on Judah, Jehoshaphat prayed to God, "We have no power to face this vast army... We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." (20:12) Inspired by God, a prophet says, "Do not be afraid or discouraged... for the battle is not yours, but God's." (20:15)

We know that God has this, and more importantly He has us! The response of the people of Judah to God's promise is that together they praised God for the splendor of His holiness and said, "Give thanks to the LORD, for His love endures forever!" May that be our response as well!

Mother's Day – May 10! In the midst of this new normal, let's not forget to thank God for our moms! Pastor and author John Ortberg shared these things about his Mom... I hope they inspire us to share thoughts of the blessings God gives (and gave) us in and through our moms:

1) **"I always knew I was loved.** Confused about a lot of other stuff, still am confused about a lot of stuff, but I have always known I was loved. I grew up hearing those words... the last words I would hear at night; I heard them when I was discouraged or sad, or when I felt lonely, or when I messed up."

2) **"I knew the value of joy.** I knew what a good thing joy was... a joy that says it is so good to be alive on this earth with God. And there were just a lot of

moments of it. I pray Psalm 90:14 a lot these days, 'Satisfy us in the morning – not with more money, not with more possessions, not with more success, not with more applause – satisfy us in the morning with Your unfailing love so that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.'

3) **"I am so grateful for the faith that was in my Mom and now is in me.** And I want so much to keep getting it passed on. There is no secret formula or program or magic or something we can make to transfer it to the next generation. The most important thing my Mom taught me was that I was not the most important thing, but that God's love and grace in His Son our Savior Jesus is the most important!"

Thanks Mom!

Pastor Jon

From the Director of Little Saints***Stacie Thompson***

Little Saints is open and we are providing care to all of our families with essential workers that need care for their children. It has been a blessing for us to be able to help those families while they provide for our community each day.

We have also been busy providing online lessons for all of the children that are stuck at home each day. Seems strange to be providing online lessons to little ones, but our teachers have been very creative in providing lots of videos of themselves teaching lessons, reading stories and demonstrating skills for the parents to work on at home.

We are looking forward to a full return of all of our Little Saints families in the near future.

***From the Principal******Kati Miser***

Remember those accreditation surveys and the interviews in which many of you were involved a year ago? It was a time when **our mission at Saint Michael - to educate children and touch families' lives with the love of Jesus Christ** - was highlighted and evidenced in so many aspects of life on our campus and our involvement in the congregation and community. And now we have an opportunity to again shine brightly in our community by sharing Jesus' love, peace and hope in the midst of fears, anxieties and uncertainties brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. When was the last time you prayed for our principal, Board of Education, faculty and staff of Saint Michael school? When was the last time you prayed for our children and their parents who are learning in a whole new way? Check out the Wednesday chapel services on the website that have continued, giving not only the children, but their families, a chance to join together virtually in praising the God who has promised to see us through this crisis. The typical end-of-the-school-year events will have a new look, but still special and exciting. Watch for pictures shared on Facebook and at the beginning of our worship services.



The next major fund-raiser for our school is the **FISHIN' WITH A MISSION** tentatively scheduled for the weekend of June 19-20. Check out the website for details about how you can be a part of the fun!

By the way, enrollment for the 2020-2021 school year is in progress. Spread the word about our school to your friends and neighbors.

Thank You

We want to thank those of you who came out to donate blood to the Lee Health Blood Drive held on our campus on Sunday, April 26th. We had 27 people show up from our church and school communities and 25 units of blood were collected! Our normal goal is only 10.

The Bloodmobile had to cancel their Monday and Tuesday sites for the following week because of the current shutdowns so our 25 units were able to help cover their goal for Monday and half of Tuesday!

Thank You



From the Director of Caring Ministries

Julie Berchtold

Brokenness: The Heart God Revives

Do you wonder why God seems so far away? It may be that your heart needs to be broken.

By Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth



By most standards, Brian and Melanie Adams had a good marriage. They were both believers, they were committed to each other, and they were trying to lead their eight children to follow Christ. However, over nineteen years of marriage, the intimacy they had once experienced had gradually eroded.

When they had an opportunity to attend a retreat called “Renewing Your Heart—Reviving Your Marriage,” Melanie hoped this might be just what they needed.

On the second day of the retreat, the speaker gave a message on bitterness and the need for personal brokenness and humility. As Melanie and Brian walked back to their room together following the session, Melanie was mentally preparing a lecture for Brian on the need for brokenness in his life.

A supernatural work

What followed can only be described as a supernatural work of the Spirit in Melanie’s heart. She writes: “God began to peel back the layers of my heart, and what was revealed was not pretty: bitterness, hardness of heart, hate, rebellion, and most of all a dependence on my own righteousness, and an underlying pride that corrupted all.”

As God showed Melanie the true condition of her heart, she began to cry, then to weep. Sobs of grief and despair racked her body. Her shocked husband held her close as she poured out her confession. Like an infection being drained from a lanced cyst, the pride and self-righteousness were purged from her spirit.

From that place of humility and brokenness before God and her husband, Melanie cried out to God to take away her heart of stone and give her a heart of flesh. She describes what happened next: “In His mercy, like a refreshing, cleansing wind, the Spirit of God swept through my heart. My tears of anguish were transformed to tears of joy, forgiveness, and freedom. God had chosen to reveal His glory—and I will never be the same. Never.”

Why would anyone choose to be broken? Well, why would a man check into a hospital and allow the surgeon to start cutting? Is it because he loves pain? Of course not. It is because he knows that surgery is the only way to experience healing and to be physically restored.

New life is released

Jesus understood something that His disciples would not grasp until after His death, resurrection, and ascension back into heaven—something the Bible calls a “mystery.” This mystery is that *death brings life*, and that there can be no real life apart from our willingness to die. To help explain this principle, Jesus used an illustration from the world of farming: “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and *dies*, it remains alone; but if it *dies*, it produces much grain” (verse 24, italics added). I can take a grain of wheat and clean it up, put it on a beautiful piece of china on my dining room table, shine lights on it, play music for it, pray for it, and what will happen to it? Absolutely nothing! It will always just sit there “alone.” What has to happen to that grain if it is to bear fruit? It must go down into the ground and *die*. If that grain of wheat had feelings, I can imagine it might say, “Hey, it’s dark down here! It’s cold down here! It’s lonely down here!” But in that dark, cold, lonely place, the grain will shed its hard outer husk so that the life within it may be released. Then—after it has “died”—it will put down roots, and the first shoots of new life will finally spring forth.

Giving up everything

What was Jesus saying? The only way to gain your life is to give it up. The only way to win it is to lose it. We think we are giving up so much by dying. But in reality, it is those who refuse to die who are giving up everything. When we choose the pathway of brokenness and humility we are choosing to receive new life—His supernatural, abundant life—flowing in us and through us.

Because Jesus understood the ways of God, He did not resent or resist His death. He reminded His disciples that no man took His life from Him, but that He laid it down willingly (John 10:18). When the time came, in obedience to the will of His Father, He turned His face toward Calvary and went as a lamb to the slaughter. He knew that beyond the Cross there was life everlasting. For this reason, the Cross became the site of His true glorification—the place where He conquered death and gave birth to eternal life.

So, too, when you and I are willing to be broken in union with Him, His abundant life is released to flow through us to others. Brokenness is the entrance into life. Not until we are broken can we begin to experience the free flow of the power of His Spirit in and through our lives.

Source: Adapted from Brokenness: The Heart God Revives by Nancy Leigh DeMoss.

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” Psalm 51:10.

From the Ministry Coordinator

Lori Schwan

Spiritual Growth for All Ages

Right Now Media has something for everyone. It's like Netflix for Bible Studies and Christian children's shows. With the ability to search over 14,000 options, there is bound to be something that would meet your needs on a given topic while we can't gather the same way for classes. Some recommendations of our staff are below:



- Overcoming Anxiety During Covid-19 – Julie Berchtold
 - * 4 sessions that are 6-10 minutes each
 - * Free Bible study guide for personal reflection or group discussion
- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John by Tony Evans – Jack Proctor
 - * 8 Sessions that are 9-12 minutes each
 - * Free Bible study guide for personal reflection or group discussion
- Seeds Family Worship – Lori Schwan
 - * Several “albums” of music videos for kids (some with hand motions)
 - * These are some of kindergarten teacher Mrs. Hornbuckle's favorites
- What's in the Bible – Lori Schwan
 - * Bible stories (known and rare) from Genesis- Revelation in a kid friendly format with puppets and more
 - * 26 Episodes
- Ryan Defrates: Secret Agent – Lori Schwan
 - * Animated action adventure 12-session series for kids ages 6 and up
 - * Faith and Bible connection at the end of each story

Need access to Right Now Media or want to share it with a friend? St. Michael pays the subscription for you to do just that! [Click here to sign up](#) or text “RightNow smles” to 41411. Right Now Media wants us to share it with as many people to share the gospel!

Watch by yourself, feel at peace not previewing a show for your kids, have family time together, or invite other households to join you via a form of social media. You can still grow in your understanding of the Bible even during this pandemic.

Family Ministry FAMILY VBS Changes

We are still determining how we will modify VBS, but we wanted you to know it won't happen in June in the normal evening format. Contact Lori Schwan if you are interested in being involved in modifying it: 939-1218, ext. 237 lori.schwan@smlcs.org.

Women's Bible Study

We might be separated, but we are still “meeting.” Any lady is welcome. We have had people from other states stay connected and others invite friends. God is using this format to blessing many. Email me if you would like our Zoom meeting ID and password. We will continue with our Max Lucado's study *Traveling Light* that expands our understanding of Psalm 23. We are using Right Now Media ahead of time to watch his great videos and then discuss when we meet from 10-11:30 AM on Thursdays.

Online Church Directory

Miss some of your St. Michael family and want to send a note, call or email? Having access to our password protected church directory can help. <https://smlcs.360unite.com> lets you do just that. Contact Lori Schwan if you didn't receive your emailed invitation.

Staff Celebrations

Each May, St. Michael recognizes those who are celebrating anniversary years of ministry here, in multiples of 5. However, we have some significant anniversaries and retirements that we want to celebrate as an entire community. Cards, notes, and emails (sent to Lori Schwan) will be gathered in a special binder for each of those listed below. If you would like to include a financial gift, please make your gift out to St. Michael and put “Staff Celebrations” on the envelope, check, or “Other” spot on electronic giving site. ***Please return everything by Friday, May 22nd.***

Twenty-Five Years:

Karen Atkinson—Fourth Grade Teacher
Christy Wenzlaff – Music Teacher
Joni Zehnder – Art Teacher

Retirement:

Paul Schwan – Fifth Grade Teacher and Administrative Assistant

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

Current circumstances may change how it looks but will not stop us from connecting as a fellowship of believers! We will be using online means to continue to connect with one another.

Contact Jack.Proctor@gsmclcs.org for specifics on how we will be connecting virtually for various youth group events. The Fellowship - young adult group is meeting every Tuesday night 7-8:30 and high school Revive is still meeting every Wednesday 6-8 PM through zoom!

**Resources to share**

RightNow Media - If you don't already know what RightNow media is, you are missing out! This is a perfect resource for where we find ourselves today. It is a streaming media library filled with biblical content! On any device and works just like Netflix or Disney Plus. Follow this link [RightNow Media](#) to get started with your FREE account. Everyone in the whole family can have their own account if they desire and you can share the link with your neighbor! Also on RightNow Media you will find great kid shows, family devotions, and conference sessions from top Christian conferences on a variety of different topics.

The Fundamentals Podcast - "The Fundamentals" is a former radio show I hosted with my best friend Jeff, who is now a vicar at Christ Lutheran in Phoenix, Arizona. As "The Fundamentals" we break down different things to the roots. Currently we are taking a look at the Book of Hebrews! You can find the podcast on apple podcasts by searching for the Fundamentals Jack Proctor or check us out on Youtube. We pray it may be a blessing to you. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbFuHtXVmW0&t=5s>

Family Bible Studies - Want to study the Word of God as a family and looking for some help to do so? Check out this family Bible study - [Refuge](#)

Family Daily Challenges - These are daily challenges that start with a Bible verse or two that call us to action in different ways each day. A chance to intentionally live out God's Word daily. [Family Challenge 1st 10](#)

In Home Confirmation Materials - The confirmation discipleship will continue at home! Resources will be sent to the families with confirmand students.

StMichaelYouth - Instagram Daily Devotions - Check out the StMichaelYouth instagram page for daily devotions each weekday!

We are trying to provide many different ways for people to continue to grow in their faith during this time!
Jesus is as active as ever right now!

Jack Proctor, Director of Youth Ministries

Jack.Proctor@gsmclcs.org

239.939.1218 ext. 224

Director of Music Ministry**Vicar Colton LaMay**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus,

Wow! What a strange month it has been not seeing you each week! I sure do miss you, but we are doing what we can to keep one another healthy. As we enter into the month of May and another month of worshipping together at a distance, I am going to begin a new music series from home. You will see a third event on the Livestream page in addition to Worship and School News the new event Live from Colton's Studio where I will stream a live event at least once a week. I am planning to do a live broadcast on Thursday evening from 5:30 – 6:30 PM at least. It is likely that I will do more sessions, but I am going to commit to that time to start. I will play what I can based on our license agreements and copyright regulations, so I may not be able to accommodate all requests. Please send me anything you might want me to play to my email:

colton.lamay@smlcs.org

The Lutheran Service Book is also available for purchase in digital form on the various reading applications. I use iBooks on my phone and computer for Apple products, and I have found that having the hymnal on my phone and computer is extremely handy, and I imagine it would be very helpful for you if you don't have access to a physical hymnal. Let me know if you need any help getting a digital copy! You are continually in my prayers and I look forward to seeing you in the future soon!

Blessings in Jesus,

Colton LaMay



This month's newsletter format is a bit different than normal as our campus shutdown and move to online worship continues. We hope to be able to plan and share events with you again very soon.

We also made a change by sending the newsletter via email to all households who have an email address listed in our database. We mailed paper copies only to those without an email address in our system. If you received a paper copy but wish to instead receive by email only, please send that request to

eileen.ohara@gsmcslcs.org

Useful links:

You can view our worship services online here: <https://www.livestream.com/smlcs>

You can download newsletters and bulletins here: [Publications](#)

You can support our ministry through online contributions here: tinyurl.com/SMLGiving

(You may also mail your offerings to our church office: 3595 Broadway, Ft. Myers, FL 33901)