

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

Send to:  
smcspublications@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     |

**HAPPY  
FATHER'S  
Day!**

# The Messenger

*From the Pastor*

*Rev. Jon Zehnder*

## **“Being the Church” during a Pandemic**

One thing that I hope we will take away from this “new normal” that we’ve been experiencing now since March 22 is that we have had an opportunity to **be the Church** and not just **do Church**. The Good News of God’s grace and forgiveness in Jesus was still shared, the Holy Spirit was still active working through the Word, worship was celebrated on-line (reaching some who might not otherwise participate), caring ministries, Bible studies, meetings continued with Zoom! The bottom line – **ministry and mission never stopped!** Thank you all and all glory, praise, and honor to our God!

**We are meeting to put together the appropriate protocols to have a safe, slow opening that takes into account the most recent medical/health directives and advice. We hope to be able to do our first trial run on June 6-7. There will be a number of things that will need to be done to accomplish this re-opening, so stay tuned for the latest news.**

Just a word about Father’s Day (June 21) – Someone once wrote, “I think what makes a “father” a “dad” is the act of demonstrating love in tangible, visible, extra-special ways to his children.” Here are 3 great “gifts” that “fathers” can give to their children to move them into the category of being a “dad”:

- They help lay a strong spiritual foundation for their children to build their lives on. It’s helping them grow to know God better and love Him more. It’s helping them grow in their relationship with their Savior Jesus and patterning their lives after God’s Word as they are empowered by the Holy Spirit. You teach by example.
- They help their children develop a healthy “God-esteem” – to understand the value that God has placed on them, that they are worth the very life of Jesus! You cement that image through affirmation – by positive reinforcement and encouragement. Don’t assume they know – tell them!
- They give their children a proper understanding of the concept of love. They need to know that there is one person who is absolutely, irrationally committed to them. They need to know if there were a line-up of a million other kids, and you could pick anyone that you wanted, that you would pick them every time!

So, Dads, don’t give your children left overs; don’t give them a worn-out, exhausted father – that doesn’t want to hear it, or play with it, or be bothered

by it – commit yourself to getting more serious about having an irrational involvement in your children’s lives.

*Pastor Jon*

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

The school year is winding down for the older 2's rooms and soon we will close out the year with a small end of year celebration for those attending school, as well as an online version for those following us at home with Google classrooms. We will miss having these friends in our building, but we will still see each other around campus, as many will move on to Pre-K3 in the SMLS main building. Our school has worked hard to partner with the "big school" to reduce confusion in the transition to the PreK-8 building. We held two information sessions this school year to introduce our families to the team that will be working with them from this point on and to answer any questions they may have.



Little Saints is back to 50% capacity as we wind down the month of May. We expect to be at 75% capacity as we head through the summer months with accommodations in place to keep classes sizes smaller than normal and spread out to our empty older 2's rooms. Safety procedures are in full operation around Little Saints as we follow all of the CDC and Health Department guidelines. The children have been so resilient as they have quickly adjusted to the "new normal" around school. Little Saints wishes everyone a safe and healthy summer!

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

**At Saint Michael Lutheran School, our mission is to educate children and touch families' lives with the awesome love of our Lord Jesus Christ!** As another school year - and one to remember - comes to a close, we pray that our families continue to teach their children during the summer to love and follow Jesus. And that mission continues with summer events at Saint Michael Lutheran Church and School. Director

Sue Hampel (239-939-1218, ext. 229) is ready to answer your questions about summer camp. Contact Lori Schwan (239-939-1218, ext. 237) about Summer Sunday School. There will NOT be VBS this summer.



The school fun-draiser, our "Fishin' with a Mission" outing, is tentatively scheduled for the weekend of June 19-21. Check the website for details.

There is still time to give me a call if you want to invite a friend, neighbor, or family member to experience Saint Michael Lutheran School in the next school year. Online applications for 2020-21 are also being accepted on our website.

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for all your support throughout the school year ... your encouraging words and prayers, your helpful hands and your monetary donations. Thank you in advance for continuing that support even during the summer as we prepare our campus, our budget and our calendar for the next school year.

***From the Parish Nurse******Ann Sluiter, RN***

Be positive in your prayer to strengthen your faith. Pray for increased stamina, strength, and serenity. Isolate yourself from fear. John 14:27 says "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." (ESV)

Blessings,

Ann Sluiter, RN  
Parish Nurse



## From the Director of Caring Ministries

Julie Berchtold

### Changed for the Better: How to Keep the Good from COVID Quarantine

By Sabrina Beasley McDonald

This pandemic has brought about devastating effects for many families. Job loss, depression, stress, and grieving the loss of loved ones are not minor issues. But for some families, their lives have been changed for the better.

My sister-in-law shared how staying home has been a blessing in disguise for her family. They're so overcommitted with sports, extracurricular activities, and church obligations, that they were relieved to finally have free time. Her family sat down and ate dinners together. She and her husband sat on the couch and watched a movie holding hands—for the first time in a long time.

Maybe you've experienced similar revelations—like how long it's been since you really talked to your spouse. Maybe you felt a renewed sense of rest. Or maybe the lines of personal and work time have been blurred for far too long, and you see them more clearly.

AJ Shanker, CEO and cofounder of Everlaw, predicts this pandemic will have lasting impact on societal work environments for the better. By normalizing working from home, he says people will challenge the “always available” mindset. “For employee-friendly companies, evening hours will ultimately revert to family or personal time, as they should.”

Sometimes bad circumstances bring about future good. The Bible is certainly replete with examples of how God uses suffering to make life better—for example, the stories of Job, Joseph, Paul, and Jesus.

And isn't that the hope of *Romans 8:28*? “*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*”

#### **Changed for the better—making it stick**

When I chatted with my sister-in-law and heard all the ways her home life has been changed for the better through the coronavirus, I wondered how they're going to keep these changes when the “new normal” is over. Will she and her husband be able to say “no” when the commitments come calling again? Will they know how to protect the rediscovered family time?

Our conversation inspired me to identify ways our lives have been changed for the better and some ideas to, hopefully, help make them stick. Here are five good changes I think we'd all like to hang on to.

#### **1. We're no longer overinvolved and overcommitted.**

Remember, it's OK to say “no.” You don't have to be the coach or snack-shack volunteer every season. Let yourself sit on the bench and cheer! Or if you can't stand the thought of missing out, scale back your role.

#### **2. We have extra family time.**

If you've found yourself longing for this kind of family connection all the time, rest assured it is possible (even during life as usual). Family memories can happen more often than the yearly vacation or occasional birthday party.

One way to continue the pandemic fun is to choose one night a week to have family night. It's not important what you do together—serve popcorn and watch a movie, play a game, make a fire and roast marshmallows. Once it's on the calendar, guard it.

#### **3. We've enjoyed extra connection with our spouses.**

Like family time, if you enjoy more eye contact, physical touch, and your spouse's company, you have to be intentional to keep it going. My husband and I have a weekly date night on Friday. During normal life circumstances, couples are prone to have conversations with their heads down, usually while looking at a phone or computer screen. Television often fills the room with sights and sounds, replacing human interaction.

#### **4. We've discovered a sense of contentment.**

Much of our time and money is spent shopping. One statistic shows approximately two-thirds of the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) comes from retail consumption. “Shopping” at home has also helped. Before I go online to buy, I look around the house to see if I have a suitable substitute. I have things in closets and hiding in the garage I didn't even remember I had!

#### **5. The elephant in the room became unavoidable.**

Many couples have perfected a dance around all the elephants lingering in their homes. It's a lot easier to avoid them when everyone is coming and going. But lock everyone in the same house, and suddenly those elephants start stepping on toes. Some homes may feel like they are in the midst of a stampede. Even though at times it may feel like you won't survive, addressing those big issues actually gives your relationship longer life. Yes, it hurts. Yes, it will take some healing. Going forward, bring up the hard topics as soon as they appear. Just like cleaning house, a regularly “cleaned” relationship will be much easier to maintain. Think of this pandemic as a new starting point from which to move forward.

Going through the COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult, but it has much wisdom to offer if we will learn from it. *Proverbs 27:12* says, “*The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.*”



## ***From the Ministry Coordinator***

***Lori Schwan***

### **Spiritual Growth for All Ages**

Have you checked out Right Now Media lately? Tell me what you are using. 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.

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 smlcs" to 41411. Right Now Media wants us to share it with as many people to share the gospel!



### **Summer Sunday School during the Pandemic**

We started using Zoom to hold Sunday School for PK3-5<sup>th</sup> grade over the month of May. We worked out some kinks and tried making it meaningful each week. Let us know what we could do to make it better. Parents should get an invitation each weekend to join us at 9:15 for our opening and then after the main lesson, we will break into smaller groups to apply it to our lives and have discussions. Contact me if you aren't getting the invitation emails.

### **FAMILY VBS Changes**

We won't have Family VBS in June in the normal evening format. If you are interested in helping to come up with an alternative way to have VBS, contact Lori Schwan: 939-1218, ext. 237 [lori.schwan@smlcs.org](mailto: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 bless many - over 30 women. We also started breaking into smaller groups for some discussion questions. 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. Look for the sign- in tab in the upper right hand corner. Contact Lori Schwan if you didn't receive your emailed invitation.

### **How can we serve you better?**

Textbooks haven't been written yet about how best to serve our congregation and community during these unprecedented times. However, you might have some ideas of what would help you or others you know in our St. Michael community or beyond. Feel free to pass that along to us so we can better serve you and also enable you to serve as well so that together we can grow in Christ and be His church to the world!





***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](mailto: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!

**Middle School Mission Trip to Camp Luther Springs has been cancelled**

After prayerful and informed consideration, the leadership team of Luther Springs has made the difficult decision to suspend all scheduled camp programming for summer 2020. I am sorry for the disappointment that we are all feeling about this. All money submitted for the trip will be refunded. Contact me with any questions.

**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! You can use this on any device, and it 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. In "The Fundamentals" we break down different parts of the Bible 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>

**StMichaelYouth - Instagram Devotions** - Check out the StMichaelYouth Instagram page for devotions throughout the week!

**Spiritual Growth Questions**

How have I seen Jesus at work these past few months?

What has Jesus been teaching me through His Word?

As things get back to "normal", what changes do you hope come out of this Covid-19 experience?

Jack Proctor, Director of Youth Ministries

[Jack.Proctor@gsmclcs.org](mailto:Jack.Proctor@gsmclcs.org)

239.939.1218 ext. 224

## ***From the Church Office***

Dear St. Michael Church Family,

I am excited to share some news with you! In June I am moving from the Ft. Myers area with my husband and son up to Clermont, FL. My husband has been offered a position in a large company based in Orlando, and it was an opportunity that he didn't want to pass up. We prayed about it and came to understand that this was where God was leading us. It ended up not being too difficult to convince my son that living 30 minutes away from Disney World might be kind of fun.

While I am happy and looking forward to this next adventure, I am also very sad to leave St. Michael and the family that has warmly embraced us for the last 8 years. I found comfort and understanding when I arrived in 2012 as a newly divorced single parent. You celebrated my new marriage with me in 2015, lifted me in prayer and sent notes and cards when I injured myself in 2017, and then supported me through the loss of my brother in 2018. I have experienced first-hand the power of prayer and the impact the simple act of reaching out to another can have. You truly are family.

Many of you may not know this, but my first introduction to St. Michael was in 1973 when my brother was enrolled in the school on McGregor Blvd. as a Kindergartner. I would tag along as my mother dropped him off for school, and I had to wait (very impatiently) for two years until I was old enough to come to school, too, as a PreK-4 student. I was in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade when we moved into the new school building on Broadway, and I graduated from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in 1985. I had so many special memories here and formed bonds with people that are still very strong today. When God led me back to Ft. Myers in 2012 and I was presented with an opportunity to not only enroll my son in school here but also given the chance to be hired on a staff member, I felt the Holy Spirit working in and around me to place me right where I needed to be.

I want to thank each of you for making this such a special place. Thank you for praying with and for me. Thank you for volunteering and helping in more ways than I can begin to list.... I love you all.

Now I have the honor and privilege to introduce you to the person who will be taking over my position. Please welcome **Stephanie Bellino** to our office staff. She is a school parent with a son going into 1<sup>st</sup> grade next year, a son going into Kindergarten, and a son who graduated from 8<sup>th</sup> grade in 2019. God answered our prayers by leading Stephanie to us as she is kind, caring, bright and incredibly capable. I am leaving you in *very* good hands. We will invite Stephanie to include a letter in next month's newsletter so you can learn a little more about her and her family. You can contact her at: [Stephanie.Bellino@gsmles.org](mailto:Stephanie.Bellino@gsmles.org) or (239) 939-1218 ext. 241

God's Blessings to you all. You have all been such a blessing to me.

Eileen O'Hara

## ***Notes From Our Congregation***

*Thank you so much for the prayers, cards, calls, and expressions of sympathy that you extended to me upon the death of Larry. I miss him and know that he is with Our Lord in a place to which we all aspire. Not only will he be missed here, but also in the Dominican Republic where he was Santa for many years. A special thanks to Pastor Jon for his care and concern.*

Pat Ryan

*Please extend a thank you to everyone who sent cards and letters. It was a great tribute to Ralph, and I truly appreciated it.*

Dorothy (Dottie) Schneider

### **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](https://tinyurl.com/SMLGiving)

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