

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

“So, in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:26-28)

We stand at the beginning of a brand-new fiscal year of ministry (July to June)... in the midst of ongoing concerns over protecting the most vulnerable among us from Covid-19, as the entire country struggles to restore the economy to its pre-pandemic status, and as we as a nation continue to wrestle with the social issues, problems, and challenges that have been “hiding in plain sight”. There is so much Satan can use to seek to divide, separate and isolate us – and as a result we withdraw from each other. And the story of the human race is that then we attack each other.

So, one day God in His grace said, “Now, I’m going to start a new family; only this is going to be a family for dysfunctional, broken, and sinful people.” And He offers it through our Savior Jesus and He called it the Church – that’s our new family. A place where we are all accepted, supported, and challenged to live for Him! You see, there is only ONE who can change a heart, only One who is called the Prince of Peace, only One under whose cross we ALL stand on level ground – no one closer, no one farther away – ALL of us redeemed by the same blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus! **And that is why we will always be about proclaiming that Good News (the Gospel) of Jesus and Him crucified.” (1 Cor 2:2)**

People all around us are looking for someone who will listen, with a heart that listens to understand. Let us heed the counsel of James, the brother of our Lord Jesus, when he said, “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.” (James 1:19-20) Let us strive to build bridges between us and trust that God in His grace is able to use even this time and these struggles and use it for good.

We are not powerless in this moment; there is a Holy Spirit empowered, deep, unwavering commitment to support each other no matter how rough it may get, to trust each other, accept one another, and serve one another. It is the power of unconditional love – a love that we first freely received from God and that He calls us to share, in the same way, with those around us.

Let us seek to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” The context of that is Ephesians 4:1-6, where Paul challenges us as followers of Jesus, “to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

Unity is a gift from God, but it is up to us to “make every effort” to keep it, to share it, to expand it. The world is unable to solve the problems that confront us – but God is able! This world will always seek to tear us apart, but God is able to “unite (us) in love.” (Col 2:2) Let that be our goal in this new ministry year!

Pastor Jon

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

Our school year has come to an end and we had to say goodbye to another graduating class of 2's as they moved from Little Saints and on to "the big school." It was a bittersweet time for the teachers and parents, as so many of our little ones have been with us since they were infants. They have grown so fast and we hated to see them leave our building, but what an exciting time for our 2 year olds as they are finally "big kids now, cause we are going to the big school!"



Summer has begun, and so has the summer fun. Our classes have moved to a summer camp kind of feel as we work on fun summer themes, like dinosaur week and camping week. We have been enjoying hanging out in our tents and making s'mores with our solar oven.

Summer is also a time to say goodbye to our teachers that are moving on or graduating college and hello to new friends. We are excited to welcome Mrs. Christine Galardo, our new lead teacher in our young twos room, along with several new teaching assistants. Mrs. Nikki Howley will be leading up our older two's class this year as well as taking over as the Assistant Director of Little Saints. Lots of new and exciting changes have been taking place at Little Saints as we begin preparing for a new school year.

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 Jesus Christ!** Check out our SMLS Facebook page for photos and posts about recent events and stories shared by Saint Michael families about the impact of our school on their lives. Give me a call if you want to see our school first-hand. Online applications for 2020-21 are being accepted on our website.

***Notes from Our Congregation***

THANKS TO ALL who kindly sent cards, notes, and gifts in honor of my 25-year teaching anniversary. Pastor Jon and I really enjoyed reading all your cards and notes. It's hard to believe I've been camping out in the Art room for that long, but I have been blessed by sharing that time and touching the lives of so many students and families. Blessings,

Joni Zehnder

**DON'T FORGET....**

.... To sign-up for church. As we re-open church services, please remember to sign-up every week. This helps us ensure we don't exceed our capacity. The sign-up link will be on our church website every Monday.

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)

From the Director of Caring Ministries

Julie Berchtold

How to Reopen Church Now By Carlos Santiago

As communities and individuals discuss the pros, cons, and restrictions to reopen church, one point seems forgotten: The “church” was never closed.

Our pastor announced they would reopen church next Sunday. While I’ll miss the ability to pause the service and engage in a quick couch-side discussion, I can’t wait to see everyone again. Even if it’s only a pair of eyes peering over a mask.

But while my church is opening, many remain closed for the foreseeable future. And the discussions continue ... Should you fight to have it opened now? What if you are in a vulnerable population or members of your family are? What can your family do if your church is still closed? Is opening the church that important anyway?

How to reopen church without a building

In many ways, a church is like a hospital—filled with a mix of those giving help and those in need of it. The only difference is that in a church, the patients also serve as doctors. Every believer, not just the “professional” ones, are there to minister aid.

The Apostle Paul did most of his best work while locked in a Roman prison. There’s no reason we need to wait for our churches to reopen. The physical building may be closed, but **we are the church**. (See [Ephesians 2:19-21](#)) The problem is, most of us closed “church” long before the coronavirus ever hit, choosing instead to outsource our responsibilities to an institution.

- Does our friend need Christ? Invite them to church.
- Are our kids misbehaving? Send them to the youth group.
- Is there a neighbor in need? Talk to the deacons.

But the responsibility is ours. We are the church. And we need to reopen today. Here are some ways you can.

1. Encourage Others

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Heb. 10:24-25).

It doesn’t take much to encourage someone. A phone call, text, or even a handwritten note in the mail (imagine that) can go a long way. My family checks in regularly with an elderly neighbor. Who in your life could use an encouraging word from you today?

2. Make Disciples

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). Many people shy away from witnessing to others because they fear they aren’t spiritually mature enough. But *1 Peter 3:15* says we should always be *“prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.”* This might sound like we need to be a master of Bible trivia, but it’s much simpler than that. You only need to be able to explain the reason for *your* hope. Why did you believe? Just tell your story. The circumstances were good enough to lead you to Christ, so they’re good enough to lead others.

3. Teach

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col. 3:16). The first time I was asked to lead a Bible study, I was terrified. I looked for a way out right up until the last moment. But the responsibility forced me to read the passage in question dozens of times. There may have been others in the class more familiar with it, but it didn’t matter. God blessed my effort. [Facilitate a small Bible study group online](#), read Bible stories to your children, or sing Bible songs in the car.

The church is open. I worked on Wall Street for most of my life and learned quickly which topics were socially acceptable and which were off-limits. I didn’t want to make waves at work, so my “church” was closed Monday through Friday. The Apostles also faced pressure to stay silent, but their reaction was much different. So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, *“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:18-20).*

I don’t yet have their boldness, but I’m trying. Will you join me? Regardless of what the building you worship in or the government decides—let’s reopen church today.

SOURCE: WWW.FAMILYLIFETODAY.COM



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



Summer Sunday School during the Pandemic

Being forced to be together for several months straight in a small space sound familiar? Well, our Summer Sunday School material is just that. 4 people RVing around the country on "Interstate 4-One Another" helps us see why traveling through life with One Another is a blessing (Philippians 2:2). Zoom with our adult leaders and new PK3-5th graders each Sunday morning starting at 9:15. We email parents each week things that can be helpful to the main Bible story and point. Depending on size and age, we will break into smaller groups to apply it to our lives and have discussions. Contact me if you aren't getting emails with our Zoom ID and password.



FAMILY VBS Changes

We didn't have our normal Family VBS in June because of social distancing, but there may be ways to do something virtual. If you want to help make that happen, let me know.

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 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 finish with our Max Lucado's study *Traveling Light* that expands our understanding of Psalm 23. We are still deciding on our next study. Start looking now on RightNow Media for ideas. We watch the videos ahead of time 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.

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. As it becomes appropriate for us to meet in person once again, we will with the proper procedures.



Contact Jack.Proctor@gsmcls.org for specifics on how we will be connecting virtually for various youth group events. College group - Mondays 7-8:30 pm. 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! 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?

What kinds of conversations am I having with people who do not yet know Jesus?

What good can I do around here?

What can I be praying for?

Jack Proctor, Director of Youth Ministries

Jack.Proctor@gsmcls.org

239.939.1218 ext. 224

LCMS Foundation

In most communities, firework displays have been cancelled due to COVID. That might leave you scratching your head, wondering what you are going to do this year to celebrate the 4th of July. It could be that you have always staked out the same spot each year. Maybe friends and family have joined you there. What will you do now that life has changed? Does this mean that Independence Day has lost its purpose?

Loss of purpose is scary. We often live a big part of our lives without any “purpose” associated with what will happen to the financial gifts found in our estates after the Lord has called us home. That can be scary too! Sometimes, we don’t know how to begin addressing that purpose and organizing ourselves so that we can put together a purposeful plan, using legal documents prepared by our attorneys to direct gifts to Godly design. You are not alone. Nearly half of all Americans have yet to complete this work.

“Fred” and “Mary” had procrastinated throughout their marriage, never wanting to spend the time and navigate the legal complexities of getting everything in order. Finally, they partnered with an LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor to begin organizing their plans, understanding the entire scope of gifts the Lord had given them to manage. Through a few weeks of planning and lots of prayer, they completed their plan. At the end they shared, “It feels so good to have this in place!” Godly purpose feels good, for it resonates with God’s design for our creation.

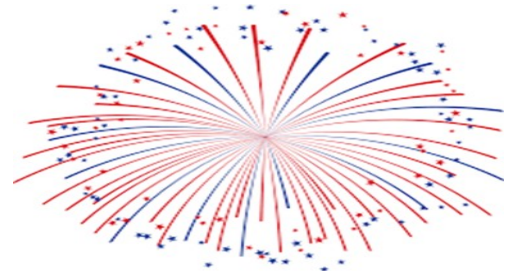
You may not be able to reinject purpose into the 4th of July this year without fireworks. But you can apply purpose to your estate plans. Your LCMS Gift Planning Counselor can help in person or by video conference. Contact Jim Pennington, SMLC Gift Planning Counselor, at 863-370-0305 or james.pennington@lfnd.org



Do you enjoy the convenience of online shopping? Now all of your eligible purchases made through Amazon can benefit St. Michael! AmazonSmile is a program that donates a portion of your purchase price to the charity of your choice.

Every little bit helps! You can choose St. Michael as your charitable organization by using this link when shopping: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-0791044> Thank you for your support!

Have a Safe and Happy 4th of July!



Do you have any specific prayer needs or requests?
Please email them to stephanie.bellino@gsmlcs.org
or you can call (239) 939-1218 Ext.241 and leave a
voicemail message.