

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

## *A History of St. Michael Lutheran*

**Rev. Jon Zehnder**

### ***What's in a name?***

Have you ever wondered how our congregation became Saint Michael and not Saint Paul, Trinity, or Faith Lutheran? Well, here's a little church history: Near the turn of the century, traveling missionaries visited Fort Myers and discussed the possibilities of starting a congregation. However, no bridge spanned the Caloosahatchee River, so transportation was only by boat and was located quite far from any other population center. Not until 1931, with the completion of the Edison Bridge, did Lutherans renew efforts in the area. In 1939, Rev. H.E. Hartman of Trinity Lutheran in Delray Beach led a delegation of 38 young adults to Fort Myers to help organize a new Lutheran mission. Pastors shared the pulpit duties until a full-time missionary was assigned in 1940.

In September of 1941, Rev. Art Weber arrived to lead the small congregation. On September 29, the day the Christian Church celebrates the festival of Saint Michael (the Archangel) and all Angels, our congregation was formally chartered as ***Saint Michael Evangelical Lutheran Church of Fort Myers***. The first church building was at the corner of Grand and Lafayette. The congregation moved in 1953 to the corner of Coconut and McGregor. In 1956, the school was started. And how we have grown since then—a new sanctuary was dedicated in 1968 at our current location, the Fellowship Hall in 1975, the Education Building in 1978, the Anderson-Eichler Fine Arts and Athletic Center in 1994, and the Early Childhood Center in 2006. And we continue to grow today.

### ***Where do we learn about Michael?***

In the book of Jude vs. 9 we learn that Michael is an archangel. His name means "Who is like God?" alluding that no one is like God. He appears earlier in the Old Testament in Daniel being named "one of the chief princes" (10:13) of the heavenly host and as the special guardian or protector of Israel (12:1). He appears again in Revelation 12:7-9 as the leader of a group of angels during the heavenly battle against the dragon

(the Devil or Satan) and his angels (later known as demons), who together were cast out of heaven and hurled to earth. Because of this, Michael is seen as the field commander of the Army of God and is considered the Patron Saint of paratroopers, police officers, paramedics, and mariners.

## ***Saint Michael and All Angels Day - September 29***

This year we are seeking God's 20/20 vision as we prepare on September 29, 2021 to celebrate our 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Where will God lead us in this next chapter? The unexpected events of this year have taught us that no matter what struggles Satan hurls our way, like the archangel Michael, we can declare no one is like God. We will, by the power of the Holy Spirit, continue to draw people to God's love in Jesus and empower them to become fully devoted followers of Christ.

*Pastor Jon*

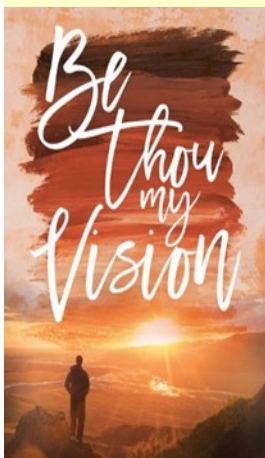
***From the Director of Little Saints******Stacie Thompson***

School is back in session at Little Saints and even in the middle of a pandemic, we welcomed 12 new families to our school in August!

It's going to be another busy year for Little Saints. Our infant and one-year-old rooms are completely full for the entire school year. We still have spaces open for new students in our two-year-old classrooms for this school year. If you know of anyone looking for a school for their two-year-old, please have them contact [Stacie.Thompson@gsmlcs.org](mailto:Stacie.Thompson@gsmlcs.org) to discuss our openings.



Apples and fall leaves abound as we move into our fall studies in September. If anyone happens to make a trip to the north this fall, we would love some real fall leaves to share with our little ones. It's so confusing for our little ones living in Southwest Florida in the fall, when the weather is not getting cooler, and the leaves only fall if we have a hurricane! Keep safe, everyone!

***From our Principal******Kati Miser***

This school year's theme - "Be Thou My Vision" - is based on I Chronicles 16:11, "Seek the Lord and His strength. Seek His presence continually." After being in session now for a month, we are still "seeing" relationships, learning environments, and educational processes that are challenging through the "eyes" of our almighty, loving and ever-present God. Teaching and learning continue in the midst of a changing world because of hope and trust in our UNchanging, faithful God. Even though we cannot guarantee that planned events will happen, we do know that Saint Michael Lutheran School is still **educating children and touching families' lives with the love of Jesus Christ!** PRAISE GOD!



Check out the SMLS reviews on our Facebook page where families share their stories about the impact Saint Michael Lutheran School has had on their family. Give me a call (239-939-1218, ext. 223) if you are interested in checking us out. Online applications for 2020-2021 are still being accepted on our website ([www.smlcs.org](http://www.smlcs.org)).



**September 9 – 20 Salvation Army Food Drive sponsored by our Student Government (SGA)**

**PTL MEETING!**

The first PTL Meeting of the school year will be on Tuesday, 09/15/2020 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. Don't miss out on all the events and info for the upcoming school year! Email Meg Minor, PTL President, for details.  
[meg.minor.motr@gmail.com](mailto:meg.minor.motr@gmail.com)

**PRAYER**

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

## From the Director of Caring Ministries

Julie Berchtold

### Quarantined Together: Can Your Marriage Take It?

By Carlos Santiago

This time of being quarantined is challenging! One surprising aspect might be how hard it is to adjust to being together 24/7.

At 9 a.m. one Monday several years ago, my department was classified as “non-essential.” Just like that, I was out of work. My mind raced—*How long could we last without an income? What expenses could I cut? Did we have enough food stocked?* I needed to gather myself before facing my wife and kids. I had to find a way to protect my family from the seeds of anxiety attempting to take root in my heart. For once, I was thankful for my 90-minute commute. By the time I made it home, I was composed and optimistic. But it didn’t matter. As soon as my wife saw me, she started to cry. The time following my layoff was challenging. But one surprising aspect was how hard it was to adjust to being together 24/7.



Now, COVID-19, being quarantined, and “social distancing” have turned everyone’s routines upside down. From finding toilet paper to worrying about every cough and sniffle, everything is laced with fear and stress. In this environment, small cracks in our relationships can easily widen and large ones feel insurmountable. When I first was laid off, our marriage was in a good place. But my presence began to upend the routine and rhythm of our home. After a while, I started to sense an unspoken “I’d prefer it if you weren’t here.” I knew my wife loved me, but I struggled to find a place in my own home.

#### Quarantined: responding to your spouse

Spending time together can be a cure for relational woes, or it can make them worse (especially if you’re confined together for an unknown time). If we’re not careful, minor annoyances escalate into major fights, and the environment in our home becomes toxic. *“A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.” (Prov. 15:18)* Often, when we can’t control our situations, we respond by trying to control others. But God calls us to respond differently. *“But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.” (Col 3:8-10)*

It was easy for me to believe I was the one providing for my family when I had a job, but I was wrong. I was never in control. God provided for us when I had a job, and He provided while I was unemployed. No matter how hard I try to control my world, I’ll fail. I am not God. Job, no job. Virus, no virus. God is good. The more we were able to trust in God, the more we were able to offer grace to one another in the face of tense moments.

Here are a few more ideas for when you find yourself quarantined from COVID-19 with your spouse over the next few days and weeks.

#### Don’t take it personally

That snippy tone coming your way is probably not about you. Be patient while you find yourself confined. Instead of responding negatively, take a moment to recognize the stress your spouse is feeling. And if you want to disarm the situation, offer to help. “It sounds like the stress of being confined by this virus is getting to you. What can I do to help?” *“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Prov. 15:1)*

#### Take a timeout

Being quarantined to your house doesn’t mean you have to do everything together. It’s important to find time apart to recharge, especially if one or both of you are introverts. Preemptive time outs are an excellent way to relieve pressure and stop a fight before it starts. Watch a show, read a book, garden, organize the closet or garage, flip through family photos, or take a bubble bath. Not only will such activities recharge you, but the sense of accomplishment will help you feel a sense of control over at least one small area of your life.

#### Make memories

Almost overnight, our lives have gone from *go, go, go* to *stay, stay, stay*. There are no sporting events. No late-night meetings. Everyone is home. One by one, the distractions that kept us from having time for each other have been removed. But at some point, this crisis will pass. Why not take advantage of the opportunity and make some memories? Move the furniture around and have a picnic in the living room. You don’t have to spend money on a hotel in an exotic location to make memories.

#### Invest in your marriage

One of the things we started when I was laid off was a daily “coffee time.” But it doesn’t have to involve coffee. Sometimes we spend a quick 15 minutes and catch up on our schedules. Other times, we get lost in deep conversation. It’s been more than nine years since the layoff, but we still have our coffee time every day. What positive habits will you start? The challenge of being quarantined and uncertainties of the coronavirus are real, but they will pass.



**From the Ministry Coordinator****Lori Schwan****BE THOU MY VISION****Seeing in Part**

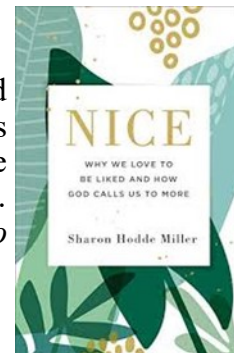
1 Corinthians 13:12 used to really puzzle me. “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” I felt like it didn’t make sense because when I look into a mirror, I can see pretty clearly. However, when I did some research, I found out Paul’s mirrors were very different. That shed a lot of light on the verse. Have you ever looked into a silver pitcher and can see a slight reflection, or in the water, but things look distorted? That is how mirrors were back then. You could get a general idea, but the details weren’t clear. As we look at verses 9-11, we can see that Paul is trying to help us be patient when we can’t fully understand what God is doing. We have glimpses, an outline, but not the whole complete picture. How does this affect our faith? We trust God to provide for us even when we don’t fully know how God is going to work something good out of Covid-19 or Pastor Jon being hospitalized so long. We step out in faith with our eyes fixed on Jesus knowing He will carry us through any storm, and we don’t need to fear the winds and the waves. Some day we will see how He was fixing all the parts carefully together, but until that time, we can have peace as we pray for God’s vision to be ours.

**Sunday School during the Pandemic**

During September, our Sunday School adult leaders will continue to Zoom with our new PK3-5<sup>th</sup> graders each Sunday morning starting at 9:15. We are starting in the Beginning – the meaning of the word Genesis! 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 ID and password.

**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 use Right Now Media’s *Nice: How we love to be liked and how God calls us to more*. 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 to 360unite.

*From the Director of Christian Education**Jack Proctor*

## **Saint Michael Youth Ministries**



**Contact [Jack.Proctor@gsmlcs.org](mailto:Jack.Proctor@gsmlcs.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! Sunday School Zoom, Confirmation and Middle School Youth Group!**

### **FL-GA Middle School Youth Gathering!**

Like all things, this year the MSYG will look different, but it will still be an incredible experience! **Save the date - 11/7/2020.** Sign ups coming out soon.

**Recurring youth ministry events will primarily be held online. Certain events that allow for gathering will be held in person with appropriate procedures. To be in the know with specifics for each week in youth ministry, contact [Jack.Proctor@gsmlcs.org](mailto:Jack.Proctor@gsmlcs.org) to be included in the weekly emails.**

### **Resources to Utilize**

**rightnow MEDIA**

**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 access RightNow media 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 topics to the roots. Currently we are taking a look at the Book of 1 Peter! 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>

Jack Proctor, Director of Youth Ministries

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

239.939.1218 ext. 224

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

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus,

As we celebrate the birthday of the congregation this month, we thank and praise God for establishing His ministry here seventy nine years ago and that He continues to work through His church, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to spread the Gospel of Jesus to our community and abroad. What an incredible blessing it is to have the opportunity to share in this ministry together! Not only do we look back on the incredible journey of the growth of God's congregation here in this place, but we look to the future and wonder with expectant hearts what God has in store for the years ahead. In light of that, I thought it might be helpful to fill you in on the progress of the Specific Ministry Pastor program. I recently completed the eighth course, Means of Grace, and am preparing to start Lutheran Confessions on the 14<sup>th</sup> of this month. With the completion of the next course, I will be eligible for ordination, which we are scheduling for early January. This will mark the halfway point in the SMP program, and I will continue under mentorship with Pastor Jon for the remaining two years of the program. The SMP program is set up as an apprenticeship with the mentoring pastor, the congregation, the seminary, and the SMP candidate in order to partner together in pastoral formation in the context of the community of faith. After two years in this apprenticeship, the extent of the formation and experience has been completely unexpected and completely humbling. My family and I thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the continual prayer, love, and support. Especially in the last weeks, your continual outpouring of concern and care for the whole ministry at Saint Michael has been incredible. The Holy Spirit continues to guide and bless our lives together: We see each day how God is at work to call people to Himself, how He teaches us to love Him, and love one another with the love that Jesus provides to His children by His boundless grace for us. It calls to mind Ephesians 3:16-19: "that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith that you, being rooted and grounded in love may have the strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." May the grace of Jesus continue to abound in your hearts and minds as we go forward in faith in the ministry that God calls us to share here at Saint Michael by the power of the Holy Spirit!



Vicar Colton

## LECTOR SCHEDULE

8:00 a.m.

Sept. 6: Bill Minor

Sept. 13: Rob Royston

Sept. 20: Bill Minor

Sept. 27: Nate Miser

10:45 a.m.

Lee Berchtold

David Redecki

Mike Roach

Richard St. Dennis

Thank you for serving!

## Upcoming Meetings

- Sunday, Sept. 9: Youth Board Meeting at 10:45 a.m. via Zoom.
- Monday, Sept. 14: Church Council at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.
- Monday, Sept. 28: Elder's Meeting at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.