

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

The Messenger

From the Pastor

Rev. Jon Zehnder

God's Grace Still Amazes Me

There have been times in a message where I have said, "I understand that the next breath I take is only by God's grace." I learned first-hand how true that was when the Covid-virus moved from afflicting me with high temperatures to attacking my lungs. Alone, well, as alone as you can be with nurses, CNAs, and others checking on you, and while on machines assisting you to breathe – you become acutely aware of every breath you are able to take.

It's often been said that you realize that God is all you need, when God is all you've got. In my return to the hospital and the next 49 days, God, and those He sent to help me in my time of need, were what I needed. But let me add that it was also your prayers, love, encouragement and concern added to my family's that also gave me hope and strength.

My life was in God's hands – just as our eternal life is in His hands. God in His grace left nothing to chance or to choice. He did not require us to earn our salvation or deserve it, but He made a way to be **just** (since sin demanded a payment – "the wages of sin is death"; so somebody had to die, if not us than Somebody who could pay for us) and for Him to be our **Justifier** (the One who declares us righteous and holy in His sight because of the payment for our sins by Another – namely Jesus!).

As we approach another celebration of the **Reformation**, those Biblical truths that have become the bedrock of our faith still ring true: We are saved by God's **Grace alone**, through **Faith alone**, in **Jesus Christ alone**, which is declared in **Scripture (the Bible) alone!**

What a God we have! What a God we serve! Let me leave you with the words of a song that I played nearly every day while I was hospitalized – "Whom Shall I Fear" by Chris Tomlin: "You hear me when I call, You are my morning song, though darkness fills the night it cannot hide the light - Whom shall I fear? You crush the enemy underneath my feet; You are my sword and shield, though troubles linger still - Whom shall I fear? I know Who goes before me, I know Who stands behind, The God of angel armies, is always by my side. The One who reigns forever, He is a friend of mine, the God of angel armies is always by my side. My strength is in Your Name, for You alone can save - You will deliver me; Yours is the victory..."

May the assurance of that deliverance and victory in our Savior Jesus be yours today, tomorrow and all the days to come!

Pastor Jon

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

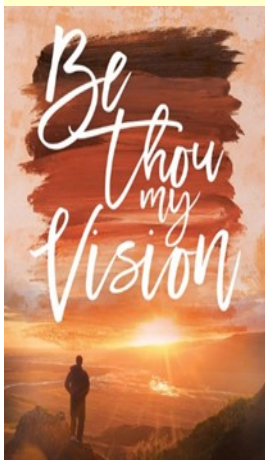
Unfortunately, due to COVID, we will not be able to have our biggest fundraiser of the year for Little Saints, the Pirate Pasta Dinner. Traditionally this event is a great chance for the families to get together to enjoy a few hours eating Carrabba's and bonding while the children enjoy safe games and activities in the gym. We will all miss this special time.



October is fire safety month. This year, as with everything else, we will have to do it a bit differently since we will not be able to have the firefighters visit. But we have plenty of extra fire safety activities planned for the month as we learn to stop, drop and roll; crawl under the smoke; and safely get out of the house.



With all that being said, Little Saints has big plans for extra fall fun this year with a mini fall festival day. On October 30th, our little ones will spend the day filled with games, activities, and a costume parade since they may not get to enjoy a whole lot of Halloween fun this year. We hope to make up for all that by making things at school extra fun this year.

*From our Principal**Kati Miser*

Unbelievable! Our students, those on campus and those whom we call eSaints, have been in school for almost eight weeks! With 28 classrooms ... infants through eighth grade youth ... plus weekly chapels, you can imagine how many times the name "Jesus" has been spoken and His love shared! There is no doubt that **our mission is to educate children and touch families' lives with the awesome love of Jesus Christ!** The theme for this school year is "Be Thou My Vision" ... asking God to help us see the world through His loving eyes and then to react appropriately.



You know how they say, it's always good to have a second pair of eyes in situations? I am privileged to have a multitude of extra sets of eyes ... leaders who faithfully and so ably serve along side me in the workings of Saint Michael School. This month, I would like to introduce one of those people - my assistant principal, **Kayla Swetz**. Kayla is originally from North Dakota. Before accepting this new position, she has spent the past 15 years here as a 7th grade homeroom teacher and teaching various levels of middle school math. She and her husband, Neil, have three children, all attending SMLS. It would be great if you could shower her with notes of appreciation, encouragement, and support as together we tackle nurturing and educating children in our community, especially in these days of the pandemic.



Check out our SMLS Facebook page where Saint Michael families share their stories about the impact Saint Michael Lutheran School has had on their family. <https://www.facebook.com/saintmichaellutherschool/> Give me a call if you want to see our school first-hand.



The next family event at Saint Michael takes place on Friday, October 16: **FALL INTO FUN!** Watch the Sunday bulletin for details.

From the Director of Caring Ministries

Julie Berchtold

My Spouse Wants Me to Get Off My Phone! Breaking a Technology Addiction

By Janel Breitenstein

If your spouse has recently said, “Get off your phone!” here are some tips. At what point does a habit become an addiction? American adults touch their phones, on average, 2,500 times daily, spending 325 hours monthly on media consumption. For perspective, that’s likely a whopping 67% of your waking hours. Is the time you spend on your phone really that damaging?

Fact: There is now an official “Internet Addiction Disorder.” And one in eight Americans is said to “suffer from problematic internet use.” It’s been shown to inflict chemical changes on the brain similar to substance abuse—contributing to anxiety, depression, impulsiveness, materialism, social phobia, and sleep problems.

A friend of mine explained the pain and straight up anger she encountered after speaking with her husband one night. After a long day, she recounted to him what had gone wrong in a plague of daily events. Then, phone in hand, he erupted in laughter. “I was even angrier when he explained he wasn’t laughing at me. His friend had texted him something funny,” she relayed to me, along with her desire to toss his phone in the garbage disposal. Her face-to-face presence—over something that mattered to her—had been trumped by the entertainment of cyber-presence. How many times have we shared on social media rather than sharing eye contact? Or tuned out kids to tune into our phones?

How do I break a phone addiction? Some tips:

1. Technology addiction: identify the bait.

Most addictions begin with a similar cause: a desire to relieve a form of stress. And like any trap ready to clench, addiction is baited with appeal. Consider how someone might begin an addiction to, say, cigarettes. What does that cylinder of nicotine deliver long before a chemical stimulant? For a 13-year-old, smoking might well mean acceptance, even rebellion. Independence. Freedom. Author John Piper isolates six reasons we turn to our phones first thing in the morning: the “candy” of novelty (what’s shocking? Intriguing? Cute?), ego (approval, mentions, likes, traffic), or entertainment. Or we might be avoiding boredom, responsibility, or hardship. Maybe you thrive on productivity—and beneath it, the myth that you are what you accomplish. We often choose instant, faux gratification rather than the richness of connecting with God or each other.

2. Realize what screen habits rob from your life (& your spouse’s).

Often, time on our phones connects indirectly to identity. We find worth in our influence, in our security via information or vigilance (hello, incessant headlines), in what others think of us, in our constant productivity. So beneath that spouse-trumping technology addiction lies a desire for something more than the relationships around us, marriage included. In a sense, we begin to inordinately trust our phones in ways we would normally trust God Himself: His security. His declaration that Jesus has done enough. Your phone may help deliver groceries. But it will never fully deliver what you crave. And our spouses feel what’s robbed by those insatiable, driving thirsts. We’re no longer “all there” for the people we care about. Our love is no longer “sincere” (Romans 12:9), because our minds are distracted, duplicitous. Presence is a precious form of love.

3. “How can I get off my phone?” New habits start here.

- You’ve heard of a weight-loss plan. Develop a personal screen-loss plan—complete with goals, rewards, and consequences.
- Turn off phone notifications except those most urgent.
- Install screen-time limiting features or apps on your phone.
- Start with a half day per week to routinely fast from your phone (Sundays, perhaps?). Refuse to check social media. Inform friends who may be concerned by your lack of online presence. (Bonus: This provides added accountability.)
- While traveling, choose periods of silence rather than listening to music, podcasts, audio books, or making phone calls. Train your brain to be okay with your own thoughts.
- Don’t multitask on your phone while watching TV or movies.
- Deposit your phone in a bowl or basket when you enter the house (or at least during mealtime), checking it once per hour.
- Choose not to check your phone while in the presence of others. (People in front of you have priority over online presence.)
- Refuse to check your phone within one hour of sleeping and rising—unless tied to your spiritual disciplines.
- Remove social media from your phone.
- It’s more difficult to fight an addiction when you’re only removing, not adding, pleasure. As author Timothy Keller notes, “Change happens not just by giving the mind new arguments but also by feeding the imagination new beauties.”

Source: www.familylifetoday.com

“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; and put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” Eph. 4:22-24.



From the Ministry Coordinator

Lori Schwan

Bible Studies Begin to Phase Back

Starting in October, some small groups and Bible studies will be phasing back on campus depending on the desires of the individuals in the group. Check with your group leader to know the options. Some will be able to still have Zoom participants in addition to those in person. St. Michael's policy is that everyone wear masks on campus.



Volunteers Needed

As we come back on campus, we are in need of volunteers in a few areas:

- to vacuum the pews and prepare the sanctuary for weekend worship
- to disinfect the buildings after worship and parish education groups
- to set up the classrooms after parish education groups
- to help Sunday School kid activities

Contact Lori Schwan to find out more.



Sunday School Coming Back

Starting October 4th, our kids will be back on campus for Sunday School. Since we have varying ages, unpredictable numbers, and a volunteer shortage due to health risks, the activities we will plan will be different than those we have done in the past, including the space used. Are you willing to help volunteer (either full or part time, sharing the load with other volunteers – perhaps one or two weeks a month) to assist in that programing? We will also try to meet the needs of those who can't meet in person. Let us 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. Email me if you would like our Zoom meeting ID and password. We are studying the book of Judges led by JD Gear on RightNow Media. We meet from 10-11:30 AM on Thursdays.

Special Reformation Celebration

Each year we like to celebrate Reformation in a special way. We will still do that this year on Sunday, October 25th in a safe way.

- We will have a combined worship service at 10:00 AM in the sanctuary that will include the Rite of Confirmation. We will still social distance and, if needed, overflow into the Anderson-Eichler building. Like all our services, this service will be livestreamed for those. More details to come.
- Following the service, the Board of Fellowship will provide an opportunity for those who want to connect with each other to share a simple meal. We will have inside and outside seating options. To keep things safe, we will not be asking anyone to bring food items. We will be providing all food items this year. If you want to help with this event, contact Chuck Oliver Charliet1333@gmail.com or (239) 292-6058.



From the Director of Christian Education

Jack Proctor

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Contact Jack.Proctor@gsmcls.org for specifics on how we will be connecting virtually for various youth group events. College group - Mondays 7 PM. The Fellowship - young adult group is meeting every Tuesday night 7-8:30 PM. We also have Sunday School Zoom, Confirmation and Middle School Youth Group on Zoom. High School Revive is getting together in person Wednesday nights in the gym 6 - 8 PM. Bring a mask with you.



FL-GA Middle School Youth Gathering!

There is a whole new look for MSYG! Dr. Jacob Youmans and his high school daughters will be the main speakers with Bread of Stone leading worship! The party is happening 11/7 5:30 - 9 PM at Saint Michael.

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@gsmcls.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

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

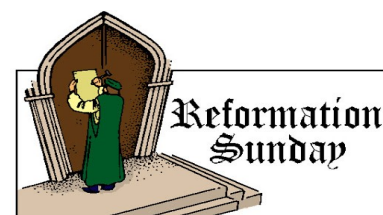
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus,

As we enter into the month of October, that brings to mind the anniversary of the Reformation. We thank God for bringing people the Gospel of Jesus by the Holy Spirit working in the hearts and minds of Luther and his colleagues. Though the works Luther produced were quite detailed and cover the breadth of our faith, the summary of Luther's teaching is Jesus' greatest command for us: Love God with everything you've got, and love your neighbors as yourself. And as we might advance in our understanding of the world, we still deal with the same human struggles that people have wrestled with since creation. Though we are extremely connected, people feel lonely; we have plenty while people are hungry; we have so much, yet we struggle to find happiness and meaning. God's command cuts to the very core of our what it means to live as Easter people: People redeemed to God through Jesus Christ. Age to age He stays the same, and we are in a unique point in history for spreading the message of salvation won through Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. We are tempted to ask: "What does this mean?" Friends, it means that we live our one and only life for the God who draws us to Himself through Jesus and gives us the Holy Spirit to continually guide our lives so that we may be able to share the grace, peace, mercy, joy, love, and freedom that only Jesus can provide. He has claimed us as His very own children, writing us into His story of salvation for all humankind. He wants us to share that light in our hearts that is the light and love of Jesus so that He may be known to all generations while we await His promised return. We focus our eyes on Jesus, joining together with the company of heaven singing His praises and reflecting His love to everyone He puts in our lives so that His glory may be made known to all. To Him be all the glory, honor and praise, now and forever!



Blessings in Jesus,

Vicar Colton



LECTOR SCHEDULE

<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:45 a.m.</u>
Oct. 4: Ricard St. Dennis	Jason Zehnder
Oct. 11: Nate Miser	Mike Roach
Oct. 18: Rob Royston	Lee Berchtold
Oct 25*: Elders/Lectors scheduled for the 10:00 a.m. Reformation Service: David Radecki and Jason Zehnder.	

Upcoming Meetings

- Sunday, October 4: Youth Board Meeting at 10:45 a.m. via Zoom.
- Monday, October 5: Church Council at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.
- Monday, October 26: Elder's Meeting at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.