

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

THANKSGIVING

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Now, that is a tall order – being thankful regardless of our circumstances!?! Seriously? How do we pull that off in a world, culture, and society, as well as knowing that each and every human being (including every one of us) is tainted and tormented by sin and brokenness?

At the Florida Georgia District Conference last month, one of the featured speakers was David Kinneman, who works for the Barna Group. He spent time unpacking some of their research regarding current opportunities for mission and ministry by congregations (in other words, “The Church” – people like us who are believers and followers of Jesus). And he made the comparison that we are living, like the people of God in the Old Testament, in a time of Exile – they were taken from Israel and now were living in Babylon.

And what a change that was! Where in Israel their faith was at the center of their lives, as exiles in Babylon faith was pushed to the margins; where in Israel there was One God that they worshipped, in Babylon there were many gods; life was lived at a simpler, slower pace in Israel, in Babylon it was accelerated to the point of being frenetic; where the temptation in Israel was false piety, in Babylon it was the desire to just “fit in”. Sound familiar?

So, what do we do when everything around us seems out of our control? When circumstances are difficult and a path forward seems like peering into the unknown? Well, the people of God have been there before. Maybe you remember this from the Babylonian Exile, recorded in Daniel 6. King Darius is manipulated by jealous advisors who hated Daniel to decree that anyone praying to any god or man other than the king would be thrown into the lion’s den.

But here is what I want you to notice – Daniel 6:10, “Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, **giving thanks to his God**, just as he had done before.” In the midst of exile, under threats for his safety and life, Daniel gives thanks to God. Why? Because our God of grace is still at work for good, even in our exile. And we know, because of Jesus, we are truly “at home” in Him!

So, whether it’s Thanksgiving Eve or Thanksgiving Day, our country has seen fit to afford us a time, as a nation, to offer up thanks to God – gathered together in-person in worship or online, or simply gathered around family dinner tables – take time to give thanks since it truly is God’s will for us in Jesus! And remember, on the Last Day, we will join angels and archangels, and people from every nation, tribe, and language, in saying, “Salvation belongs to our God, and to the Lamb... Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!” (Revelation 7:10,12)

On a personal note, Joni and I want to thank all of you again for your continued concern, care, provision, cards, e-mails, texts, thoughts and prayers – each of those were touches of grace and encouragement that blessed us. As the Apostle Paul said, “As you help us by your prayers... many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.” (2 Corinthians 1:11)

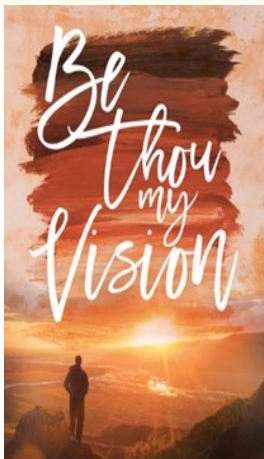
November 25, Wednesday, Thanksgiving Eve – 7:00 p.m.

November 26, Thursday, Thanksgiving Day – 10:00 a.m.

Pastor Jon

From our Principal

Kati Miser



“Come ye thankful people, come,” are the opening words from a familiar old Thanksgiving hymn. This is an invitation to join Saint Michael Lutheran School and Little Saints in praising God for all the blessings He has given us in the midst of these difficult times – supportive parents, a conscientious and dedicated staff and children who are being diligent in following COVID guidelines. And despite all the potential hardships, there is still joy being expressed because peace comes with trusting our faithful God. **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, to react appropriately and to “rejoice always” whatever the circumstances!



On my “thanks” list are the leaders who faithfully and so ably serve along side me in the workings of Saint Michael School and Early Learning Center. This month, I would like to introduce one of those people – the Director of Little Saints, **Stacie Thompson**. She grew up on a small farm in Maine before moving to Florida for high school. Both her husband and son are SMLS graduates. She has her National Child Development Associate Credential and is a certified Childcare Center Director for the state of Florida. Along with being a teacher here for eleven years and continuing as the 2’s lead teacher, she has served as the Director for the past four years. 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. Give me a call if you want to see our school first-hand. This month you can support SMLS through the following events:

- November 2-6 The Scholastic Book Fair
- November 13 The Walk-a-Thon sponsored by the PTL
- November 19 The School Science Fair

Call the school office if you would like more information: 239-939-1218

Thank You

Many thanks to all for your prayers, love and support shown to me during my difficult 8-month journey with serious ear (both) issues. After two surgeries and three hospital stays, prayerfully, I’m now on the road to full recovery. As my ear complications were many and my hearing loss reached the point of profound loss, I was weary and became discouraged. I prayed, trusted God, educated myself on my ear challenges and asked many questions of my health professionals. But God’s ways are not our ways and my long “wait” did come to the point where I saw Him intervene big-time through a team of specialists who had answers for a very rare infection that was an underlying problem. I’m still recovering, but I have hope! To God be the Glory!

Julie Berchtold



From the Director of Caring Ministries

Julie Berchtold

How to Overcome Discouragement By Dennis Rainey

Perhaps no other human emotion is so commonly experienced and yet so infrequently exposed. Discouragement. Who hasn't felt its chilling grip on the heart? Discouragement neutralizes optimism, assassinates hope, and erases courage. Have you ever been tempted to lose heart because God didn't answer a critical prayer for you? You know, something urgent—something inextricably linked to your heart—and even something that you knew was God's will? Barbara and I have. We've experienced those apparently unanswered prayers. We've gone through the questioning, the soul-searching, and the inner struggle of being disappointed with God's seeming lack of response.



Tools for sale

Robert Lewis, my pastor, tells a story about a public auction that the devil once had. As the prospective buyers assembled, they noticed an assortment of tools that the devil was selling. The tools of worry, fear, lust, greed, and selfishness were all carefully inspected before the sale. But off to one side, standing alone, there was one oddly shaped, well-worn tool which was labeled, "Not for sale." Asked to explain why, the devil replied, "I can spare my other tools, but I cannot spare this one. It is the most useful implement that I have. With it I can work my way deep into hearts otherwise inaccessible. After I have plowed deeply with this tool, the way is open to plant anything there I desire. It is the most effective tool I have. It is the tool of discouragement." What do we need to overcome discouragement? In *Gal. 6:9-10*, the Apostle Paul tells us, "***And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.***"

1. Be truthful with God.

I've found that God is not fooled by my lofty prayers for the missionaries in Africa, when deep inside I'm hurting. God is able to handle your emotions. Be honest. Are you discouraged about a child who rarely reaches your expectations? Tell Him. Disheartened about your mate and an unresolved conflict? God knows already but pour it out. Disillusioned with a friend? Then pray. Are you questioning God—His fairness, your circumstances, or your unanswered prayers? Get alone. Share your grief with the One who knows you best.

2. Find the source of your discouragement.

Sometimes it's a goal that was not attained ... again. Or the problem may be a cutting remark of a friend, the feeling that you're carrying this particularly heavy burden alone, or the lack of approval by an important person in your life. By isolating the source of my discouragement, many times I've found that my hope was in the wrong person or in the wrong place. On other occasions I've found that my response was normal—and, because I can't quit, I've just got to work through my feelings of wanting to throw in the towel.

3. With a heart of faith, look beyond your circumstances and your emotions to a God who will renew you day by day.

Realize that hardship is what God uses to perfect our faith (Romans 5:1-10). And remember, God promises "***... we shall all reap if we do not grow weary.***" One of my favorite stories is that of the British missionary Elizabeth Aleward. Miss Aleward had two great sorrows as a young girl: Her hair was black and straight (when all of the popular girls' hair was full of golden curls), and while all her friends kept growing, she ended up short. Years later, God called her to the mission field in China. As she stood looking at the people to whom God had called her to minister, she said, "I noticed two very apparent observations about these people. First, each and every one of them had long, straight black hair. And, secondly, each and every one of them had stopped growing at exactly the same moment that I did. And I bowed my head and prayed, *Jehovah, God, you know what you are doing!*" My friend, the tomb is empty—Jesus Christ is alive—He is the One who can lift up heavy hands or a burdened heart.

From the Ministry Coordinator

Lori Schwan

Bible Studies on Campus

October was a great start to Bible studies coming back on campus, many with in-person and online options. We are still working out the technical kinks. Thanks for your patience. Thanks for following St. Michael's policy 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 me if you would like to know more.

Operation Christmas Child

Help share God's love with kids through Operation Christmas Child. Pastors in other countries invite kids who don't have much to know Jesus by giving them a box filled with gifts and the message of Jesus. On Sunday, November 15th, bring in your small items and a shoe box (please do not include any candy or food; toothpaste; used items; toy guns, knives, or military figures; liquids or lotions). Some of our older kids will sort and pack the boxes on November 22nd. \$9/box is needed to ship each box if you wish to donate.



Sunday School

Once again, we are making our way through the Bible this year, except we are hitting some different stories than we did last year to see additional aspects of how God has used His imperfect people to share His grace and love. We are also finding some creative ways to draw the kids online and in person together to apply these stories to their faith lives too.

Women's Bible Study

Over the last nine months, the ladies in our Thursday Bible study have grown close to each other as we explore God's word and how it applies to our lives. It has been the highlight of many of our weeks. Any woman is welcome to join us. Email me if you would like our Zoom meeting ID and password. We will conclude our Judges study led by JD Gear on RightNow Media. We meet from 10-11:30 AM on Thursdays.

Special Reformation Celebrations

Thank you to all who helped with the Reformation Combined Worship and meal. It was a blessing to so many and a great way to connect with the St. Michael family.

Advent Event for Families of All Ages

The Board of Parish Education is still working out the details of how families will be equipped with Advent devotions and the opportunity to make Advent Wreaths this year on Sunday, November 29th to prepare for Jesus' birth. Some people who are staying home due to COVID might appreciate a wreath even more than usual this year. Watch the bulletin for more details.

Thrivent Financial Sponsors Needed NOW!

We usually do more than half of our Action Teams during the Holiday Season (over 50). We are in need of people who want to sponsor teams as service is still needed in the midst of COVID. Please contact Lori Schwan if you are interested in sponsoring a Thrivent Action Teams education event, fundraiser, or service project.



From the Director of Christian Education

Jack Proctor

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

We are back primarily in person with virtual participation options!

Sunday Mornings

Confirmation: 7th and 8th grade students with parents in the cafeteria.

Youth Sunday School: With Ms. Sue in the youth room.

Middle School Youth Night

6th - 8th grade from 6 - 7:30 PM starting in the gym! We will have dinner, fun games, and explore how God is working in our lives!

Revive

Revive is a community of high school students who gather weekly to connect with each other and with our God! 6 - 8 PM in the youth room.



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.

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 <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Account/Invite/StMichaelLutheranChurch> 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 in his final year at the seminary in Saint Louis. In "The Fundamentals", we break down different topics to the roots. Currently we are taking a look at the Book of Daniel! 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@gsmcls.org

239.939.1218 ext. 224

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.

Director of Music Ministry**Vicar Colton LaMay**

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus,

The month of November is here, and we like to take this time to reflect on the gift of the ministry that God has drawn us together in the family of faith at Saint Michael. We have truly been blessed by the unity of our congregation, and it is truly an amazing family and partnership in ministry under the guidance of our Lord Jesus by His Holy Spirit. I am amazed at the continual outpouring of God's love in this community in a myriad of ways, and our congregation truly takes to heart God's greatest command as taught by Jesus: to love God above all else and to love all the people He places in our lives. Even in the midst of the current situations in the world, we continue to be blessed by God to be a blessing to our community and beyond. We thank God for bringing families to our school so He can work in the hearts and minds of the families in our community. And best of all, we have the opportunity to share the life-saving Gospel of Jesus' sacrifice, resurrection, promise, hope, and comfort that comes by faith. Through the sure Word of God heard and proclaimed here and as we join together in the Sacraments as Jesus comes to us in ways we can understand, we thank and praise God for always keeping His promises toward His children. His salvation is the chance to be honest about who we are and Whose we are, allowing for honesty with our brothers and sisters as we walk alongside each other in our Church. And may She ever stand by the grace of God who ordained this ministry and who continues to guide and direct our footsteps each and every day. So we are thankful for the legacy of faith that is passed along generations here at Saint Michael, and as we look forward to the future to where God is leading us by grace that all people may come to know the free gift of salvation for all through Jesus. Thanks be to God that we have the opportunity to partner together in this ministry!



Blessings in Jesus,
Vicar Colton

Board of Human Care**Service Times**

**It's Beginning to Look a Lot
Like Christmas.....**

Senior Ministry

The Board of Human Care is gearing up for Christmas! Due to COVID-19, they will be celebrating our seniors in a new way this Christmas season. The Board is planning to fill gift bags with faith, hope, and love to brighten this Christmas season for our seniors. If you are a senior in need of a gift bag, or if you know a senior in need of a gift bag, please call the church office so the Board

of Human Care can reserve a bag for you. 239-939-1218 extension 241. Please RSVP for a gift bag on or before December 1st.

Children's Ministry

The Giving Tree for children will go up Thanksgiving weekend. This year, due to COVID-19, we are only accepting Christmas Cards with gift cards. The Board of Human Care thanks you for your generosity to those in need this holiday season.

Thanksgiving Service Times

*Thanksgiving Eve -
Wednesday, November 25th
at 7:00 p.m.*

*Thanksgiving Day -
Thursday, November 26th
at 10:00 a.m.*

