

Volume 12, Issue 4
April 2021

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

Holy Week Worship Schedule

Palm Sunday Services:

Saturday March 27th, 5:30 pm.

Sunday March 28th, 8:00 and 10:45 am. Fellowship Breakfast 9:00-10:30 am.

Maundy Thursday: April 1st, Noon and 7:00 pm

Good Friday: April 2nd, Noon and 7:00 pm

Easter Services:

Saturday April 3rd, 5:30 pm

Sunday April 4th, 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 am

The Messenger

From the Pastor

Rev. Jon Zehnder

“Why do you look for living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen!” (Luke 24:5-6)

There are plenty of different ways to punctuate the Easter message:

- “Jesus is risen?” It’s a **question** that can’t be fully understood because it is supernatural; it is God’s doing, a miracle.
- “Jesus is risen.” It’s a **statement of fact**. God said so; Jesus predicted it; prophets foretold it; Christians believe it, and there is countless evidence that proves and supports this fact.
- “Jesus is risen!” It’s an **exclamation**; the most important announcement of all time. It is God’s “Amen” to everything Jesus said and did to redeem us and reconcile us back to God the Father. Jesus, God the Son, did die the death we could not die in order to cover our sins and the sins of the whole world. And He did rise on the third day, guaranteeing our resurrection and victory over death!
- “Jesus is risen...” It’s an **incomplete sentence** – because Jesus has risen, those who believe in Him as their Savior will also rise to eternal life; because He lives, we can also experience life now in all of its fullness having been set free by our Savior.

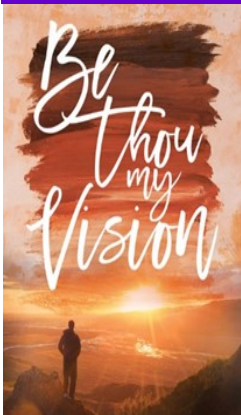
Friends, our Savior Jesus lives! And in light of His victory, we need to ask ourselves this question, “How alive in Jesus am I?” And for all of us together, “How alive is our congregation?” ***How to spot a LIVE Church:***

- LIVE churches are constantly changing; Dead churches don’t have to.
- LIVE churches have lots of noisy children; Dead churches are fairly quiet.
- LIVE churches improve and plan for the future; Dead churches live in the past.
- LIVE churches are sincere and eager to worship; Dead churches aren’t.
- LIVE churches don’t use the word “can’t”; Dead churches use nothing else.
- LIVE churches reach out with the good news of God’s love, grace, and forgiveness in Jesus by word and actions; Dead churches don’t evangelize, they only fossilize.

“When you were dead in your sins... God made you alive with Jesus; He forgave us all our sins” (Col. 2:13)

Special Thanks to staff, faculty, and leadership – Friday March 13, 2020 is one of those days etched in our memories when, following medical advice due to the pandemic, we shut down key aspects of our ministry. By Tuesday March 17th, Saint Michael School was in session using Google Classroom because of the herculean effort made by faculty, staff, and administration. **THANK YOU!** The protocols ministry leadership put into place have kept children, staff, and members safe. There still were too many losses and too many stricken by this virus, but with God’s blessing, soon we may be able to return to some semblance of “normal”! Until then, God continue to bless and keep us!

Pastor Jon

*From our Principal**Kati Miser*

My northern friends and family tell me that Spring Fever begins with the onset of April, usually accompanied by warmer, sunnier days. But no matter where you live, the celebration of Easter in April should put an extra “spring” in your step and a refreshed outlook on life. After all, we as Christians have the Easter assurance of Jesus’ amazing love ... a love that surrounds us all our days – gloomy or joyful ... despite the challenges of the COVID pandemic. **At Saint Michael Lutheran School, our mission is to educate children and touch families’ lives with the awesome love of our Lord Jesus Christ!** Our theme - “Be Thou My Vision” - reminds us to share God’s refreshing, energy-renewing love in the same way the message of Easter reinvigorates us.



In April, I want to highlight two staff people who are such an important part of our mission ... leaders who faithfully and so ably serve along-side me in the workings of Saint Michael School. **Sue Hampel** came to us from New York state, but lives here now with her husband, Dave. She has two adult daughters. After serving in our early childhood program, Sue became the school nurse 18 years ago – a monumental task even without this being a challenging time. She also serves as the Summer Camp Director. Biking, riding jet skis, and travel are among her favorite things. **Beth Cameron** is a native of Fort Myers.

As a matter of fact, she graduated from Saint Michael Kindergarten when the building was on McGregor Boulevard! Her experience at SMLS includes 11 years of teaching in PK-4 and 17 years as director of the Extended Care program. She and her husband have two daughters, two grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Beth enjoys reading, spending time with her family, and traveling. Your notes of encouragement are always welcomed by our staff.



Let's create a BUZZ around town about our wonderful school! Post SMLS reviews on Facebook, Google, and other websites to help prospective families learn about Saint Michael. Thank you for all the personal referrals to families, friends, and acquaintances. Give me a call at 239-939-1218 if you want to arrange to see our school first-hand.

Watch for results of the Bid for Kids Auction which took place OUTDOORS at SMLS on Saturday, March 20th.

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

In March, Little Saints celebrated our family heritage with a week of learning about the states and countries our children and families are from. Families were encouraged to send in special ethnic dishes and treats on Friday as we ended the week with special dress, games, and music from all over the world.



Little Saints will be closed April 1st and 2nd in observance of the Easter Holiday. Before our long weekend, all of Little Saints will be celebrating Easter with the traditional egg hunts and celebrations. Easter is always a favorite holiday of the little ones; finding brightly colored eggs filled with treats is so exciting!



How to Be Single and Content

By Alex McMurray

Since I was small, I dreamed of getting married. My parents married at 22, and as silly as this may sound, I never imagined graduating college and facing the world single. I want to marry my best friend, someone I can have fun with whether we're traveling the world or washing our cars. So I've wondered: How can I be single and content while holding on to these desires? Sometimes, I'm embracing the freedoms of singleness. Other times, loneliness hits me like a punch in the gut. It throws me off balance and leaves me feeling empty.



Maybe you appreciate a good rom-com like me. The idea that there's one person out there who can make you the happiest you've ever been is enticing. I'd never admit to believing another person can complete me. Still, I find myself hoping someone could. But what if there's more to marriage than "happily ever after"?

So why doesn't the love of God feel like enough for me? Why is it so hard to be single *and* content? C.S. Lewis answers in his sermon, *The Weight of Glory*: "Now, if we are made for heaven, the desire for our proper place will be already in us, but not yet attached to the true object..." In other words, my desire for a perfect relationship with God is ingrained in my humanity. My own brokenness keeps us from it. But deep down, I know it's what I was made for.

The things I love and desire now—a God-honoring family, for instance—are an incomplete picture of what is to come. Marriage was made to be transcendent—it reaches beyond the love of two people and, like the moon receiving the sun's light, it reflects the love of the God who made them (*Eph. 5:31-32*). So if I find myself treating marriage as the ultimate destination, I'm settling for the dim reflection of a brighter, more beautiful light.

Recently, a friend reminded me I won't be content in marriage if I don't first learn how to be single and content. Often, I spend so much time looking to the future, that I forget to savor the moment. I don't know if God is calling me to marriage, but I do know He has called me to serve as a FamilyLife intern this year. I don't know who I will meet in the future, but I do know I have a loving community of friends and family. Paul reminds me to live the life God has called me to *today*. My purpose as a Christ-follower is to glorify God whether single, engaged, or married.

Ever been in a room full of people and realized, unlike everyone else, you didn't have your person? I've been single for a year since my engagement broke off, and I'm still figuring things out. The loneliness is real. But I have already seen God use my singleness to bring me unique opportunities, like my move to Orlando. I'm getting to know friends better and trusting God's plan for my life. Lewis' words toward the end of the *Weight of Glory* remind me of my ultimate joy: "To please God ... to be a real ingredient in divine happiness ... to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is." Reflect on God's goodness and His deep love for you today. He is for you.

"Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him" 1 Cor. 7:17.

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From the Ministry Coordinator***Lori Schwan*****Galatians Study Feedback**

We pray you enjoyed studying the book of Galatians together. We would love to get feedback on the various components. Watch for the evaluation to be emailed to you in a link (or mailed if you don't have an email).

**Sunday School**

We continue to go through the less popular Old Testament stories after the divided kingdom and during the various times of captivity. Join us in person in the music room or on Zoom. Contact Lori Schwan for Zoom info.

Thrivent Financial Members

If you own a Thrivent Financial Product, with the start of the new year you can give \$250 two times without giving any of your own money. We have several opportunities to partner with service projects like prayer shawl ministry, Memorial Day celebration, and many more. Contact Lori Schwan to see how you can partner with a fundraiser, service project, or an educational Thrivent Action Team.

**Women's Bible Study**

Join Lori Schwan on Thursdays from 10:00-11:30 AM on Zoom as we begin a new study after Easter.

Holy Week Helpers

Thanks to all who helped us as we celebrated this special time of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter! Whether you helped with the fellowship breakfast, egg hunt, or one of the worship services by lecturing, acolyting, attendance taking, handing out communion elements or assisting in the sound booth, we greatly appreciate your efforts.

Vacation Bible School

The Board of Parish Education is still trying to determine if we will have VBS this year and if so, what format would fit best. If you are interested in sharing your perspective, we are open to hear it. Contact Lori Schwan (239) 939-1218, ext. 231 or lori.schwan@smlcs.org or Sue Parker, our Parish Education Board Chair (330) 635-8033 or sparkbonita@aol.com

Pastor Jon's Friday Morning Bible Study

Pastor Jon's Friday morning Bible study is pausing for a little while. Thank you to all who joined the Bible study this Lenten season. We pray you found the study of Galatians inspiring and enriching.

Adult Information Class

While this has been a very different season in church, home, and school life due to COVID, St. Michael Lutheran Church has been blessed with an increase in visitors, new attenders, and new church and school families during the last 12 months. We will be having an Adult Information Class (AIC) starting later this month. This class is for any adult who would like more information about becoming a member of St. Michael Lutheran Church. Class will be every Thursday evening from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m., both in person and on Zoom, from April 15th - May 20th. If you have questions about the AIC, please call or email me. (239) 939-1218, ext. 231 or lori.schwan@smlcs.org

Zoom Meeting ID: 305 113 7001

Passcode: smlcs

Join Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/3051137001?pwd=c1FRanZqRVFvbWl6bmtFMTVpOHpyQT09>

*From the Director of Christian Education**Jack Proctor***Saint Michael Youth Ministries**

Jesus is at work in the lives of our Saint Michael Youth! It's a joy in my life to be able to be a part. Ever wanted to be a part of discipling young Christians? Let's talk! We also know that there are plenty of youth in our community that need to experience God's love through a community rooted in Jesus. Know any youth outside of the church? Please pass along the invitation that they are wanted and welcome to join in on anything we are doing!

**Confirmation**

7th/8th grade & parents: Bring your Small Catechism and Bible with you each week in the cafeteria from 9:30-10:30 AM. Also on Zoom 639-538-5881 PW: luther

Sunday School

Youth Sunday School: 9:15 - 10:30 AM in the youth room for all 6-12th graders not in confirmation.

High School Revive

Revive is a community of high school students coming together to support, encourage, learn, and laugh together centered on the truth of Christ. Join us on Wednesday nights from 6-8 pm in the youth room! Bring your mask.

Middle School Youth Nights

We play games, enjoy snacks, build community, and learn more about God together! We meet on select Tuesdays from 6-7:30 PM in the Joy/Youth Room! Check the bulletin for specific dates.

To be in the know with specifics for each week in youth ministry, contact Jack.Proctor@gsmles.org to be included in the weekly emails.

Jack Proctor, Director of Youth Ministries

Jack.Proctor@gsmles.org

239.939.1218 ext. 224

Thank You!

The March 21st Lee Health Blood Drive was a huge success! Thank you to all who donated! Our congregation donated 15 pints of blood which helped 45 local patients in the Lee Health system. Thank you, and please mark your calendars for our next blood drive:

Sunday, May 23rd from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

The Dominican Republic Mission Team would like to thank everyone who donated their used tech to the students in the Dominican Republic. As usual, we are overwhelmed by your generosity and support. Thank you!

Thank you to Meg Minor, Carolyn Mazzola, and the entire PTL team for hosting the Annual Bid for Kids Auction last month. It was an amazing evening, and we thank you for all your hard work!