

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

On May 23rd, we will celebrate again the birthday of the Church – it's **Pentecost**. And we'll remember how, by the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's Word, hearts were touched by grace, and then, through the gift of faith in Jesus as their Savior, thousands were brought into an eternal relationship with God.

It is the culmination of Salvation History, which is what the Bible is all about. A number of years ago, we read through "The Story," a unique way to read the Bible so that we stay focused on the main point, that "God was reconciling the world to Himself in Jesus, not counting people's sin against them... God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Jesus we might become the righteousness of God. And God has committed to us this message of reconciliation. We are therefore Jesus' ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Jesus' behalf to be reconciled to God." (2 Cor 5:18-21)

Friends, **we are living in the culmination of all of Salvation History!** I love how Tom Wright talks about the way the "Bible itself offers the best framework for us to understand how we respond to The Story." He says, "Think of the Bible as telling the big story of God's plan to save us in 5 acts: Act 1 is creation (Genesis 1-2, and it's all good); Act 2 is the fall into sin (Genesis 3-11, where everything is messed up); Act 3 is God working with the people of Israel (Genesis 12-Malachi); Act 4 is the coming of Jesus, His life, death, and resurrection here on earth (the 4 Gospels). And Act 5, Jesus goes, sends the Holy Spirit, and now there's the Church (Acts-Revelation).

Dr. Wright says, "We are Act 5 people, we own the whole story of Salvation History, we love and observe the whole thing but we live in Act 5, and this is exactly what the New Testament writers were doing. They weren't setting aside the Old Testament, they were working out how those of us who live in Act 5 respond to the entire account of how God revealed Himself in creation, how everything was messed up through the fall into sin, how the people of Israel became God's redemptive people, and then, at the right time, God sent His Son, our Savior Jesus, to be born under the Law to redeem us under the Law's condemnation!"

Now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we have received a new way of life, a life centered in God's grace and forgiveness so that we can fulfill the Great Commission of making disciples of all people as we live out the Great

Commandment of loving God and loving others as ourselves.

Friends, more than ever, this is the time for us to "implore people to be reconciled to God through Jesus." For the first time in 20 years, Gallup polls showed Church Membership (which includes Christians, Jews, and Muslims) fell to under 50% (47%). After WWII, it was 76%, taking 55 years to get to 70%, but in the past 20 years has dropped to 47%. This drop has affected Generations differently: Traditionalists (born 1927-1946) are at 66%; Boomers (1946-1964) at 58%; Gen X (born 1965-1980) 50%; Millennials (born 1981-1996) 36%.

What does all that mean? As Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field." (Matthew 9:37-38) Eternity is hanging in the balance. Will you be one of those workers; will you be an ambassador of Jesus who makes a difference for eternity?!

Pastor Jon

*From our Principal**Kati Miser*

As another school year comes to a close, continuing the mission of Saint Michael ... **to educate children and touch families' lives with the awesome love of Jesus Christ** ... is passed along to our families during the summer months. But wait! That mission also continues with our summer camp which begins in June. What an opportunity to keep on proclaiming Jesus! Even if your children do not currently attend Saint Michael Lutheran School, they (and any other children you know) are invited to participate in Summer Camp. Summer Camp brochures are available in the school office, and camp director Sue Hampel (239-939-1218, ext. 229) is ready to answer your questions. Plus, there's a new program at Saint Michael Lutheran Church beginning in June for families – "Faith and Film." Check out the details in this newsletter.



In May, I want to highlight two people on our church staff who are such an important part of our school's mission ... leaders who faithfully and so ably serve along-side me in the workings of Saint Michael



School. Lori Schwan is the Ministry Coordinator who serves to collaborate with pastors, principals, faculty, and staff to help provide opportunities for working together to draw people to God's love in Jesus and empowering them to become fully devoted followers of Jesus. That includes providing guidance, being a teaching resource for faith, leading school chapel and much more. She has served at Saint Michael Lutheran Church for 22 years.



Of course, we all know Pastor Jon Zehnder whose office is appropriately in the main hall of the school. He has served at Saint Michael for 30 years encouraging and supporting all faculty, staff, children and parents at our school, whether it's leading chapel or sitting down for a heart-to-heart talk. Both Lori and Pastor Jon are especially known for being available whenever someone needs that boost in their faith walk.

Check out the SMLS reviews on our Facebook page that are creating a buzz of excitement as 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. New online applications for 2021-22 are being accepted on our website.



It's on to the next major PTL-sponsored event that children of all ages, parents, extended families and our friends in the community enjoy ... **FISHIN' WITH A MISSION** ... May 7-9 at South Seas. The tournament is guaranteed to provide fun for everyone. Contact Ashley Underhill (239-243-1533) for more information.

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

The school year is winding down for the older 2's rooms, and soon we will close out the year with our end of year party to celebrate and say goodbye. We will miss having these friends in our building, but we will still see each other around campus, as many will move on to Pre-K 3 in the SMLS main building.

Little Saints recently received a \$500.00 grant from the University of Florida! Thank you Jason Zehnder for heading up the project. The money will go to planting fruit trees on our natural playground. These trees will provide shade as well as delicious fruit for the kids to enjoy for years to come. The playground will be shut down over the summer months, so this would be an ideal time to get new trees established and allow the natural elements to recuperate from the constant use during the school year. Wishing you a safe and fun summer!



When Your Friend's Marriage Shows Signs of Divorce: 7 Non-Pushy Ways to Help

By Janel Breitenstein

Maybe you've been there: On the phone call, where the voice on the other end is hitching with tears. Or at the play date, where, as you watch your kids munch goldfish or play house, your friend confesses things at home aren't going well. Or over lunch or coffee, where your friend's eyes look distant, bewildered, and wounded as they explain a marriage with pieces falling off in raw, giant slabs. It's distressing when the warning signs of divorce become evident in a fearful, angry, or removed version of your friend. Chances are, by the time couples have gotten to this point, your friend has already flirted with the idea of splitting up.

What to do when you see signs of divorce

1. Be there.

Our society doesn't live with a ton of margin for—well, anything. But particularly for in-depth relationships that go the distance. Walking with friends whose marriage shows signs of divorce often seems to take time we don't have. But compared to some of the other less-consequential items consuming our schedules, it's a tremendous return on investment to create the time to help friends save what matters. To love them well.

Ask God for the wisdom and love to remain fully present and engaged, even if helping doesn't end in success. The big results are not in your hands or mine All the good that you will do will come, not from you but from the fact that you have allowed yourself, in the obedience of faith, to be used by God's love.

2. Tend to systemic signs of divorce—more than slapping on bandages.

Though romance unquestionably keeps a marriage in the more "satisfied" zone, expecting to renovate years of damage with a single weekend or a date, though helpful, may not be realistic. Ask questions of both parties to uncover not just the presenting issues (the lack of sex, the financial issues) but the pain and communicated values beneath them (we're not attracted to each other; my spouse has no self-control or respect for the systems that help our family thrive). Maintain a bigger picture about what it takes to keep a relationship together.

3. Inspire rather than goad.

In general, people are far more motivated to create change for problems and solutions they've come to themselves rather than solutions thrust upon them. Listen well. Ask lots of wise questions to truly understand. **Then gently (!) remind them of truth.** Help them remember why they married in the first place and to sort out cultural norms ("I deserve to be happy!") from truth (*"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us"* 1 John 3:16).

4. Help carry your friend's load.

"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1-2). Is an addiction involved? Brainstorm counseling, accountability, and/or rehab options. Offer to help watch the kids or to help hold the person accountable. Is abuse present? Help a friend get the counseling he or she needs, and possibly work with the counselor to plan a separation with the purpose of reunification after mutual goals and heart attitudes have been met.

5. Resist the urge to take sides.

Yes, there are spiraling marriages where one party is primarily at fault. And the person we speak to first in a conflict is psychologically the story we're prone to believe. But far more often, no matter the signs of divorce you see, there are two sides to the story—two profound needs. Both parties in any marriage need forgiveness, need the gospel. Yes, one may be more responsible for certain issues than the other. Help the spouse you're working with take 100% responsibility for the log in his or her own eye (see Matt. 7:3-5)—even if you both believe your friend's contribution was only 10% of the problem. God is judge here. It is not your responsibility to make someone pay, but rather for yourself and your friend to love as Jesus did.

6. Pray for your friend and their marriage.

We're talking more than a laundry list of prayer requests mentally checked off. Though God has given us much power to affect change, much of life also falls squarely into the *"not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit"* (Zech. 4:6) category. As we help our friends pursue God's tender principles for marriage, we also commit to God all the battles that are His. We listen to His heart for them and allow His Spirit to "intercede"—to intervene on behalf of us—*"with groanings too deep for words"* (Rom. 8:26).

7. Know your limits.

Do love your friend extravagantly and sacrificially when you see signs of divorce. But it's also okay, with your friend's permission, to seek help elsewhere as you help others.

It's a pretty sure bet you won't have all the answers. And there's a decent chance you'll feel overwhelmed at points, depending on how deep you go with your friends. *"Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted,"* (Gal. 6:1) You might not be tempted in the same ways as those you're helping. But despair? Thinking you have the answers or see things clearly? Gossip? Peacemaker Ministries differentiates that gossip is sharing with people who aren't part of the solution. Seek wise counselors with tight lips—best case scenario, after asking your friend. And prayerfully ask God to show you what you don't know and can't do, as well as where to find help.



From the Ministry Coordinator

Lori Schwan

Sunday School

We will wrap up the Old Testament stories with the prophets and their 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, you can give \$250 two times without giving any of your own money. We have several opportunities to partner with services 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 study the book of Daniel with Larry Osborne's *Thriving in Babylon* on RightNow Media.

Vacation Bible School Update

After evaluating VBS, our Parish Education Board decided to partner with the Youth Board to achieve the following objectives we usually have for VBS in a different way:

- learning the Bible
- communicating with others from various generations
- cultivating fellowship within and between families
- provide tangible opportunities for serving our community
- helping people be more comfortable talking about their faith
- applying our faith to our everyday lives



Check out our Faith and Film series that will launch on Mondays in June.

Faith and Film This Summer

"Vacation Movie School? Talking Pictures? Jesus Christ Movie Star? In All Things God has hope for any situation." Join us Monday nights throughout the summer for Faith and Film! We know that God can speak through anything: a burning bush, a donkey, and even the movies of today! With that in mind, the goal is to process secular movies through God's redemptive lens and develop the skill of how to have spiritual conversations with different ages over popular culture. It's perfect for families and people of all ages! Doors to the gym open at 5 PM, and the movie will begin at 5:45 PM. Bring your favorite lawn chairs or rent chairs or even couches to support the youth ministry! Dinner and movie snacks will also be available for a free will donation. The SMLC Youth are raising money for the 2022 National Youth Gathering! We will have service projects on various weeks to support our local community agencies in theme with the movie. Watch for a listing of the weekly movies. Co-sponsored by the Youth and Parish Education Boards. Questions? Email Lori.Schwan@gsmlcs.org or Jack.Proctor@gsmlcs.org.



Fellowship Breakfast

Be sure to join us on Sunday, May 30th between services in the gym for a breakfast honoring our veterans and celebrating anniversaries of our staff members. If you are a veteran and have not appeared on the Veteran's Day or Memorial Day bulletin inserts, contact Stephanie Bellino so we can include you as well.

From the Director of Christian Education

Jack Proctor

Saint Michael Youth Ministries



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 - 9:15 to 10:30 AM

Youth Sunday School - in the youth room. 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.

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 it 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. As "The Fundamentals" we break down different things to the roots. Currently we are taking a look at 1st Corinthians! 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://youtu.be/MGdXEQR74tc>

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.

Jack Proctor, Director of Youth Ministries
Jack.Proctor@gsmcls.org
 239.939.1218 ext. 224



Happy Mother's Day to all the Mom's, Aunt's, Grandmother's, and Great-Grandmother's who go above and beyond every day! Thank you for all you do, and may God richly bless you!

Lee Health Bloodmobile

Mark your calendar! The Lee Health Bloodmobile will be on campus Sunday, May 23rd from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. All donors will receive a thermal tote bag and a wellness checkup!

Director of Worship and Music***Pastor Colton LaMay***

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Our Risen Savior Jesus Christ,

I hope and pray you are well as we enter in the month of May. In the last month, we have begun to see one another more and more in our worship services, and it is a great joy to join in worship together, both in-person and online, as we joyfully go forth in the faith of God's promises for us. That love fills us so that we may be the light of Jesus to those around us. Whatever those gifts and talents that God has given you, there is a place for your unique gifts and talents within His family. With that, I am sure you have noticed the choir has begun to rehearse and serve musically during our worship services. As I am transitioning into more pastoral service, it is necessary to have help directing some of the musical ensembles. And God knew we would need that sort of help, so I was so happy when Diane and Ron said they would love to help get the choir back together. With that, I would like to take a moment to formally introduce our new Choir Director, Diane Rohrs with assistance from her husband, Ron. Ron is a retired chiropractor from Ohio and is an excellent member of the bass section. Diane is a professional organist who served in the church for fifty years before retiring a couple years ago from full-time ministry. She brings with her a wealth of liturgical music experience and a heart for serving God's kingdom in the church. I so appreciate the wonderful music that the choir has blessed us with over the last couple months and am looking forward to the music they will share in the future. If you would like to be part of the choir, there is room for you, and we would love for you to join! Keep an eye out for more musical groups starting up again in the coming months. You all are in my prayers daily! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate give me a call or send an email. God's richest blessings to you!

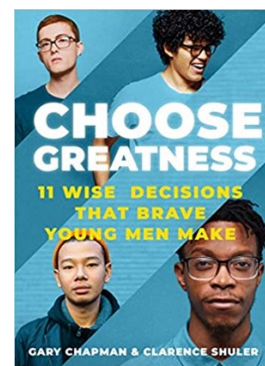


Blessings in Jesus,
Pastor Colton

TMN Network News and Events

Check out these exciting events from Thrivent! For more information, go to the Thrivent Southeast Event page. (<https://www.thriventfinancial.com/member-network/southeast/events/>)

- May 5: Creating Your Mental Health Toolkit
- May 7 - 9: Rebecca St. James Virtual Concert
- May 12: Dr. Gary Chapman: Things I Wish I'd Known Before I Got Married
- May 19: Understanding Social Security and Annuities with Robin Mueller
- May 26: Virtual Volunteering
- June 4 - 6: Michael McDowell, NASCAR Driver
- June 9: The Power of Membership
- June 16: Choose Greatness with Dr. Gary Chapman
- June 23: Savvy Tax Strategies
- July 14: Ron Blue - Simplify Money Management, God's Way
- July 21: Retirement and Taxes with Ed Slott
- July 28: Bethany Hamilton



STAY CONNECTED:

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Web: [Thrivent.com/southeast](https://www.thrivent.com/southeast)

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