

Volume 13, Issue 1
January 2022

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

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www.smlcs.org

The Messenger

From the Pastor

Rev. Jon Zehnder

“When they (namely the Magi) saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped Him.”

Matthew 2:10-11

Epiphany – January 6th, the celebration of the 12th Day of Christmas and the message of the angels that there was “good news of great joy for all the people... for a Savior has been born” (Luke 2:10-11). It is a normal reaction – worship is our natural response to God’s love, mercy, and grace to us in our Savior Jesus.

And that worship is in the context of God’s family called the Church. We know that God created us for community, that He made us interdependent like parts of a body fitted together; that He fashioned us for fellowship and formed us for His family. Those are all things that we cannot create or have or celebrate by ourselves – alone.

A number of years ago, we did a congregation wide study that reminded us of this Biblical truth. In this study, we learned, “The Bible knows nothing of solitary saints or spiritual hermits isolated from other believers and deprived of fellowship. The Bible says we are put together, joined together, built together, members together, heirs together, fitted together, held together, and better together... you are not on your own.”

So, we as believers in Jesus and followers of Him gather **together** around God’s Word and Sacraments. Obviously COVID has made our gathering challenging (to say the least) for 26 months; we pray that as we move beyond its reach and fear into this new year we might gather together again soon, in person, with each other. We certainly encourage those who are not comfortable gathering like that yet to continue joining us on our live stream at www.smlcftmyers.com. But here’s the **together** “catch” – let us know that you are there.

As we consider our worship response, not motivated out of a sense of guilt or obligation, but as always, in response to the mercy, grace, and love we have received from God through Jesus by the power and working of the Holy Spirit, let our lives in 2022 be a life of worship to our God.

Pastor Jon

*From our Principal**Kati Miser*

So, what are your New Year's resolutions? Do they include spending more personal time with Jesus? That's the only lasting resolution worth pursuing. And what about daily praying for the staff and families associated with our school? Despite these complicated times, the staff continues to proclaim **our mission at SMLS: to educate children and touch families' lives with the awesome love of Jesus Christ!** The families continue to support that mission by their involvement in school



functions. And the children are involved in carrying out that mission as students through a variety of mission endeavors ... for example, the Pet Food Drive, the Bountiful Blessing project for Harlem Heights, Valerie's House, and the latest being "Blue Monday."

This month you can support SMLS through the following events:

- Do you know of families who are looking for a Christian school? Invite them to our annual Open House on Wednesday, January 19th.
- Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to our TOUCH-A-TRUCK event on Saturday, January 29th.

Call the school office if you would like more information.

Are you following SMLS on Facebook and Instagram to see photos and more about what's happening at SMLS? Check it out: @saintmichaellutheranschool.

Applications for the 2022-23 school year are now open. Click the admissions tab at the top of our website. Give me a call if you want to invite a friend, neighbor, or family member to experience Saint Michael Lutheran School.

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

Happy New Year! Little Saints is gearing up for another great year as we recently have welcomed several new families to our Saint Michael family. We will continue to be blessed with full enrollment in 2022.

In January we will be learning all about winter at Little Saints, as all of the children spend the month building up to our annual Winter Day celebration on January 28th. The entire Early Learning Center will enjoy a day of games and activities focused on winter fun, Florida style, complete with snowball fights and yes, ice skating!



Little Saints is lifting up prayers for 2022 as we have great hope for a year full of God's blessings!

Visioning for the Future

In December, we had our fifth of seven monthly meetings with Pastor Jacob Hoyer, Certified Navigator in the Vision Planning Processes. Our vision team, made up of congregational leaders and staff, discussed what strategies we use at St. Michael to carry out the unique mission God has given us here in Ft. Myers. In January, we will discuss how we measure and how we reach our mission. We will also hold a "wet cement" meeting with about 1/3 of the congregation to share what the vision team has developed thus far and see if there are additional tweaks we need to make. Please continue to be in prayer as we journey through the Vision Planning Process.

*Pastor Jacob Hoyer*

From the Ministry Coordinator

Lori Schwan



Children's Ministry

Thank You for Serving! In December, our Sunday School kids held our annual **Jammies for Jesus** project: buying PJs for 55 kids who are being served by Lutheran Services of Florida in effort to help families stay intact. The social workers appreciate the support, prayers, and all the items which were donated.



The kids and parents served again in a great way through singing and sharing the story of Jesus' birth at the Family Christmas Eve Service. Thanks to Amanda Brine and her sons, Daniel and Josh, for directing the service. The children did a beautiful job. All of the parents' support was a blessing as well. If you or a family member missed the service, it can be seen on our website via livestream.

Simply Loved Sunday School - In January, both PK3-Kindergarten and 1st-4th will study the story of Moses. Contact Lori Schwan if you are interested in volunteering with the kids or behind the scenes.

5th and 6th Grade Sunday School Class

Our preteen kids in 5th and 6th grade have heard the Bible stories, but their minds have developed to ask those harder questions. This is a place where it is safe to wonder and talk together as we see how the Holy Spirit answers those questions and empowers us to be bold for Him.



Advent Thank You!

Thanks to all who helped make and deliver Advent Wreaths for the homebound. We received word back each time as to how God blesses through those acts of love for our church members who can't join us anymore on campus.

Thrivent Financial Members

If you own a Thrivent Financial Product, you can give \$250 two times without giving any of your money. Contact Lori Schwan to see how you can partner with a fundraiser, service project, or an educational Thrivent Action Team. Those who have Choice Dollars can also direct them for 2021 up until March 31, 2022.

Women's Bible Study

Join Lori Schwan on Thursdays from 10:00-11:30 AM on Zoom or on campus in the ELC Board Room for ladies Bible study. We will be wrapping up Derwin Gray's Advent study on RightNow Media and starting a new study in January.

Pastor Jon's Sunday Bible Class

Join us Sunday morning in the cafeteria to study "Living A New Life - What do I Believe & Why it Matters" If you cannot be there in person, Zoom is also available.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 305 113 7001

Passcode: church

DivorceCare



A new session of DivorceCare begins 1/4/22. We will meet Tuesday mornings 8:15 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. through 4/5/22. Anyone separated or divorced can join any session. This group will be online and in person. Register at: www.divorcecare.org. Have questions? Call Lori

Schwan 239-939-1218, ext. 237.

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Wednesday Youth Nights 50-60 People

The Holy Spirit has been drawing about 50 youth each week for Middle School and High School Youth Group Wednesdays from 6-8 PM. Join us as we have dinner hosted by families each week. Each group separately has activities and discussions. We are growing closer to each other and God. We need about 2 additional adults who want to facilitate small groups for middle school discussions so they can apply the Word to everyday life.

Youth Service

- The Christmas Progressive Servant Event was a blessing. Thanks to Amber Truax for coordinating this event, all the parent volunteers, and the many congregation members who provided desserts and financial contributions. The youth were able to buy gifts for 17 students who are staying at Oasis Youth Shelter and additional students were bought for after the event so that all kids would have gifts. The Oasis Youth asked if they could join our youth sometimes. We hope in the new year for that to be an option each week.
- Thanks to the youth and adults who put out 400 luminaries on Christmas Eve as we remember Christ bringing light in the darkest parts of our lives.

National Youth Gathering

If you missed the chance to register with the other 25 kids and 6 adults, it's not too late! Contact Lori Schwan as hotel numbers will be configured in January. The next payment of \$250 is due January 16th. Also, on Wednesday, January 12th, we want all NYG Participants to join us from 6-8 PM.

High School Living Faith

The High School Youth Group is taking the opportunity on the first Sunday of every month to live out our faith, bringing the Scriptures to life. On January 2nd, we will meet in the youth room at 9:00 a.m. for a little food and then at 9:15 head to Rabe O. Wilkinson American Legion Post 38 to serve and fellowship with local veterans. At 11:30, we will head back to St. Michael for a quick devotion. We will be done at noon.

7th and 8th Grade Confirmation with Parents

In January, we will cover the various aspects of the sixth commandment. Parents are encouraged to be a part of these classes as these are sensitive topics that apply to their life. Please bring Small Catechisms each week.

Youth Thank You

The youth want to thank the congregation for all the support you gave this holiday season with our many fundraisers: Poinsettias, Amy Grant Virtual Christmas Concert, Breakfast with Santa, and the Apple AirPods Pro Raffle. This helps the youth with all their activities including Rock the Universe and the National Youth Gathering.

Annual Edison Festival of Lights Parade

The Edison Parade is Saturday, February 19th. The youth are selling seats downtown for \$12 each. There will be an option to buy them online; be on the lookout for more details. Youth families helping with set-up should arrive between Noon-2 PM. Tear down hands are also needed for about 30 minutes after the parade is over.

Father-Son Retreat Postponed

With the desire to be able to have more fathers and sons participate, we will be postponing the Father-Son Retreat until next school year.

Youth DCE Call Committee Update

With all the very busy events of the Advent and Christmas season, we did not meet in December but are individually working to gather names of possible DCEs from the Synod's database; we will meet soon to bring all those names together. Thanks for continuing to keep this process in prayer as we discern from the Holy Spirit whom God has in mind.

More Youth News!

Rock the Universe

On Saturday, January 29, 2022 a group of middle and high school students and adults will be going to Rock the Universe held at Universal Studios. The group will meet at St. Michael on Saturday at 10:30 AM, travel by bus, stop for lunch on the way, and be in the park from 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM watching concerts (see list below) and riding rides. After the park closes, they will head home, returning early Sunday morning (approximately 4:30 AM). Cost is \$140 which includes park ticket, bus, and snack. Deadline to register is Wednesday, January 12th - turn in check and medical authorization / liability release to Lori Schwan. Bands include: Casting Crowns, Zach Williams, We the Kingdom, Big Daddy Weave, Cory Asbury of Bethel Music, and Social Club Misfits.

GriefShare

It hurts to lose someone. GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences. You don't have to go through the grieving process alone. A new group will meet Saturdays from 1/8/22 - 4/2/22 from 10 AM - 12 PM in Pastor's Conference Room. Register at: www.griefshare.org. Questions? Contact Susan Gaertner (586) 243-9335 or gaertner.susanmark@gmail.com.

Dominican Republic Missions

Thank you for your generous donations to our DR mission. Unfortunately, we were not able to go this year, but we did have a Dominican Santa distribute small gifts to 300+ children in six different locations! Since they still need food, beans, rice, and oil were given to many families. One hundred bags of rice were donated by a local food store in Santiago. This was a big help to us as we could feed more families than we originally planned. We look forward to having conditions improve so that we can join Leonardo and all the children next year.

A blessed New Year to you and your family!

Thank You from the Board of Human Care

Through your generosity, the St. Michael Board of Human Care was able to provide Publix gift cards for more than sixty local families and monetary assistance to four local agencies for Thanksgiving and then again for Christmas. With your contributions to the Angel Tree Program, the Board was able to give Target or Walmart gift cards to more than 100 children throughout our community. Again, this is only made possible by your generosity. "Thank You, Thank You, Thank You" does not come close to showing our appreciation for your donations, assistance, and generosity during 2021!

Board of Human Care January Drives

Assistance for Areas Hit by December Tornadoes

In January, the St. Michael Board of Human Care will be collecting monetary donations to go to Lutheran Churches near the tornado affected area through the Mid-South District of our Church. The Board of Human Care will match our congregations' donations up to \$1,000. Please note on checks (or envelop if cash) "Board of Human Care-tornado." You may place donations in the offering plates as you enter or leave church or mail or bring them to the church office. Donations must be in by January 31, 2022. Thank you for your continued generosity. The people of St. Michael Lutheran Church are truly amazing.

Warm Clothing Drive

The Board of Human Care will be collecting gently used sweatshirts and sweaters for our local homeless shelter at the Salvation Army during the month of January. There will be a box in the narthex to drop off any donations. Donations must be in by Sunday, January 30th.

Office Job Available

Would you like a job where you are challenged every day to keep church members, school parents, children and staff up-to-speed on all that is happening at St. Michael? Then we may have a position for you as our **COMMUNICATIONS AND FACILITIES COORDINATOR**. If you are “old-fashioned” enough to recognize and appreciate the use of proper grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation in things you read -- you have an important qualification for this job. Getting along with others (mostly by being flexible and willing to multi-task) gives you the majority of the “must haves”, while familiarity and comfort with technology means you check all the boxes. This is a **full-time position with benefits**, accountable to Senior Management, in which you’ll use various software packages – familiarity with which would, naturally, be a plus. They include publishing and web posting applications; parts of the Microsoft Office 365 Suite, Adobe Acrobat, Proclaim, Lutheran Service Builder, as well as Church 360 – Members. **If interested, please call Bob Jablonski at 239-939-1218 x339.**

LWML



The Lutheran Women’s Missionary League will re-start on Saturday, January 8th! The LWML meets every Saturday at 10:30 a.m. in the narthex. Call Dee Engel with any questions. (763) 443-5411

Blood Drive



The next Blood Drive will be Sunday, January 23rd from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Please consider donating if you are able. Type O+ remains critically low, and supply levels for all other blood types are also below normal. Be sure to eat a good breakfast before you donate and drink plenty of fluids. Thank you for helping this worthy cause.

Acolytes

Thank you to Bill Minor for leading an acolyte training last month. We have some new acolytes joining the team! How exciting! We will start using a signup genius link so you can signup for the services at which you would like to serve. Parents, please be on the lookout for the email with the signup genius links. Acolytes, please be sure to arrive 20 minutes prior to service. Arriving early will give you time to get robed up and ready to serve. Thank you to all our Acolytes. We appreciate you!

SMLS PTL Touch-a-Truck

The St. Michael PTL Touch-a-Truck fundraiser will be Saturday, January 29th from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. We are currently looking for cool cars, large trucks, and heavy equipment for this event. Vehicle registration is free. We are also looking for event sponsors. If you are interested in registering a vehicle or sponsoring the event, please contact Lina Cerquera at 239-699-4051 or LinaCerquera@live.com.

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