

Deadline for submissions
is the 15th of each month for the
following month's newsletter.

Send to:
smlcspublications@gmail.com



Pastor Jon Zehnder



Weekend Regular Worship

Sat: 5:30 pm Informal
Sun: 8:00 am Traditional
10:45 am Blended

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Fort Myers, FL 33901
(239) 939-1218
www.smlcs.org

The Messenger

From the Pastor

Rev. Jon Zehnder

There was an article I had received years ago about a couple that had been married for over 50 years, and over those years they played a game. The goal of the game was to write the word “shmily” in a surprise place for the other to find. So, they took turns leaving “shmily” around the house, and as soon as one of them discovered it, it was their turn to hide it again.

They dragged “shmily” with their fingers through the sugar and flour containers; they smeared it on the dew on the windows and in the steam left on the mirror after a hot shower; one even unrolled an entire roll of toilet paper to leave “shmily” on the very last sheet. There was no end to places “shmily” would pop up – notes on dashboards, on car seats, taped to steering wheels, notes stuffed inside shoes, or left under pillows.

This couple's grandson wrote, “This mysterious word was as much a part of my grandparent's house as the furniture. It took me a long time before I was able to appreciate my grandparent's game. It was more than flirtatious; it was a way of life. Their relationship was based on devotion and passionate affection.”

There's more to this story, you can google it if you'd like, but the secret to the “shmily” riddle is that the letters stand for “See **H**ow **M**uch **I** Love **Y**ou.” That is what February 14th is supposed to be about, but that is exactly what the season of Lent (which begins March 2nd) IS all about! It is our God of grace's way of showing us how much He loves us!

Every time you see that cross or contemplate and ponder that sacrifice, it should remind you that God thought about you above all else. And if you would have been the only person on this earth, God still would've sent

Jesus to cover your sin so you could live with Him now and forever.

There is no greater expression of love. It was in light of that love that Paul could say, “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with Jesus, graciously give us all good things?” Come and celebrate that love God has for you and witness the word “shmily” scrawled across a cross and emblazoned in the morning light around an empty tomb.

Take a listen to Chris Tomlin's song, “Nobody Loves Me Like You.” Part of the words of that song are, “Nobody loves me like You love me, Jesus. I stand in awe of Your amazing ways; I worship You as long as I am breathing. God, You are faithful and true; Nobody loves me like You.”

Pastor Jon

*From our Principal**Kati Miser*

Love, love, love – that’s what it’s all about!
 ‘Cause God loves us, we love each other.
 Everybody sing and shout
 ‘Cause that’s what it’s all about!



Such a simple truth in this children’s song! But the acknowledgement of this truth changes everything in our relationships with each other. **Our mission at SMLS is to educate children and touch families’ lives with the awesome love of Jesus Christ!** As the love of Jesus touches the relationships in this place, we are indeed given reason to sing and shout. It would be great to shout it through notes of appreciation to our staff. It would be great to “sing” about SMLS through inviting family, friends, and neighbors to check out upcoming events highlighting our school.

February is traditionally the month for Grandparents Day and National Lutheran Schools Week. Watch for updates about those events. Check out our SMLS Facebook page where Saint Michael families share their stories about the impact our school has had on their family.

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*

Winter Day was such a blast as always. Our 1 and 2-year-olds enjoyed snowball fights, ice skating, snow shovel relays, playing in the snow and ice, and a warm sweet treat of hot chocolate. Watch for the pictures of our special day at Sunday services in February.

Little Saints will not be hosting the Father Daughter Dance this February. Unfortunately, COVID has once again put a damper on our plans and yearly events; we will miss seeing all those little girls dressed up with their Daddies.

In February, the 2-year-old rooms will study community helpers. We hope to be able to bring in special speakers from the community to talk to the kids about their “community helper” jobs. If anyone has an interesting job like police officer, firefighter, veterinarian, doctor, nurse, garbage man, etc., and wants to come visit the kids, please let us know.

*Visioning for the Future*

In January, we had our sixth 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 measures we use at St. Michael to know that our strategies are working to carry out the unique mission God has given us here in Ft. Myers. We also met with about an eighth of the congregation at a “wet cement” meeting to share what the vision team has developed thus far and see if there are additional tweaks we need to make.

*Pastor Jacob Hoyer*

From the Ministry Coordinator

Lori Schwan



Children's Ministry

Simply Loved Sunday School - In February, both PK3-Kindergarten and 1st-4th will study Israel wandering and wondering. 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.

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 are using Derwin Gray's study of the Book of Hebrews on RightNow Media.

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



DivorceCare is meeting on Tuesday mornings 8:15 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. through 4/5/22. Anyone separated or divorced can join any session. This group is online and in person. Register at: www.divorcecare.org. Have questions? Call Lori Schwan 239-939-1218, ext. 237.

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 session of GriefShare will start on **Saturday, February 5th** 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.



February Voter's Meeting

The February Voter's Meeting will be Sunday, February 27th at 9:15 a.m. in the cafeteria. The Voter's Meeting will be in place of Adult Bible Study classes. We will be reviewing and voting on the annual fiscal budget.

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Wednesday Youth Nights - Oasis Came

We are excited to share that some of the students from Oasis Youth Shelter joined us this month on Wednesday nights from 6-8 PM. Thanks for joining us in prayer that we can reach all the students the Holy Spirit has been bringing us with His unconditional love through dinner, games, and small group devotions on the Word. We need one additional adult who wants to facilitate small groups for middle school discussions so they can apply the Word to everyday life.

National Youth Gathering

If you missed the chance to register with the other 26 kids and 6 adults, it's not too late! Contact Lori Schwan. On Wednesday, February 9th 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. We had an amazing time helping and learning from veterans last month. Come and fellowship on Sunday, February 6th from 4-7 PM at the Zehnder's House: 1757 Llewellyn Dr. FM 33901. Enjoy a bonfire, s'mores, cornhole, basketball, and more! S'mores will be provided. Bring a main dish to share. Watch for the Google form to sign up.

7th and 8th Grade Confirmation with Parents

In February, we will cover the various aspects of the 8th and 7th commandments in that order as we looked at 9th and 10th commandments in January. 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.

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; more details will be coming. Youth families helping with set-up should arrive between Noon - 2pm. Tear down hands are also needed for about 30 minutes after the parade is over.

Valentines Day Treats for Sale

Treat your loved one to some sweet treats on Monday, February 14th. The youth will be selling baked goods and other special treats throughout the weekend worship services on February 12th and 13th. If you want to donate baked good items, please bring them in on Friday, February 11th to the office center. Youth will be packaging them on Saturday afternoon.

Middle School Summer Servant Event at Camp Luther Springs

Our beloved middle school summer servant event is back! Those going into 6th -9th grade are welcome to join other youth from around the FL-GA District for a week of camp fun as well as serving in the community around Gainesville. Parent drivers will leave Sunday, June 19th late morning, and parent drivers will come and get the campers on Friday, June 24th around noon. Total cost for camp and transportation is \$450 if registered by March 15th (price goes up after that). Payments can be made with a deposit of \$150 to hold your spot. Points can be used to help pay for this event. Watch for more details later this month.

Wall O' Money

Our congregation is so generous in support of all the youth activities we do. From February 19 - March 13, we will have our Wall O' Money fundraiser available in the Narthex of the church. We will have 200 envelopes labeled from \$1-\$200. If you would like donate towards our youth activities like the National Youth Gathering or the Middle School Summer Servant Event, simply select an envelope, place that dollar amount in the envelope, and return the envelope to church. If you are worshipping electronically and want to donate, contact Lori so we can assist you in that process.



From the Director of Worship & Music

Pastor Colton LaMay

Devotion on Hymn 843 - Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus,

I pray blessings in Jesus for you and your family this Epiphany season! May Jesus, the Light of the World, bring you peace and joy as we grow in faith together in God's Word. As we approach the journey to the foot of the Cross alongside Jesus during the season of Lent, this hymn helps us understand forgiveness. Though not mentioned in the verses referenced in the hymnal, this hymn calls to mind the eighth chapter of John where Jesus talks about forgiveness. In John 8, Jesus proclaims that He will bring forgiveness of sin to people of each time and place, and it wasn't received very well at the time. The people couldn't fathom forgiveness by His sacrifice because they had no idea what that kind of grace was like. The crowd dwindles as the chapter progresses, and at the end, Jesus is leaving a different way before the rocks start flying! It's hard for us to understand that kind of forgiveness as humans, but Jesus gives us His Holy Spirit, forming our hearts and minds to forgive as we have been forgiven. The Cross reveals the blazing light of forgiveness beyond our comprehension into the life of resurrection in Jesus! He brings forgiveness that passes all understanding, and by His Spirit, we forgive others as we are forgiven of so much each day. Praise be to God for His love through Jesus by His Holy Spirit and for joining us together as His children, that we may grow in His endless forgiveness and steadfast love.

Blessings to you in Jesus!

Pastor Colton



Youth DCE Call Committee Update

During January, the Youth DCE Call Committee met twice to discuss names that they had gathered of possible DCEs from the Synod's database. Initial contacts are being made to who might be potential candidates. Thanks for continuing to keep this process in prayer as we discern from the Holy Spirit whom God has in mind.

Youth Thank You

The youth want to thank the congregation for all the support you gave through the car wash. This helps the youth with all their activities including Rock the Universe, the National Youth Gathering, and middle school summer servant event at Camp Luther Springs.

Intermezzo Choir

The next season of the Intermezzo Choir will run from January 19 - March 30, 2022. The Intermezzo Choir is for people with early to mid-stage memory loss, their support partners, and singing volunteers. The choir practices every Wednesday from 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. at St. Hillary's Episcopal Church on McGregor Boulevard or on Zoom. Cost is \$40 per person and includes music folder, tote bag, and rehearsal CD. Register online at www.mastersingersfm.com/intermezzo-choir.

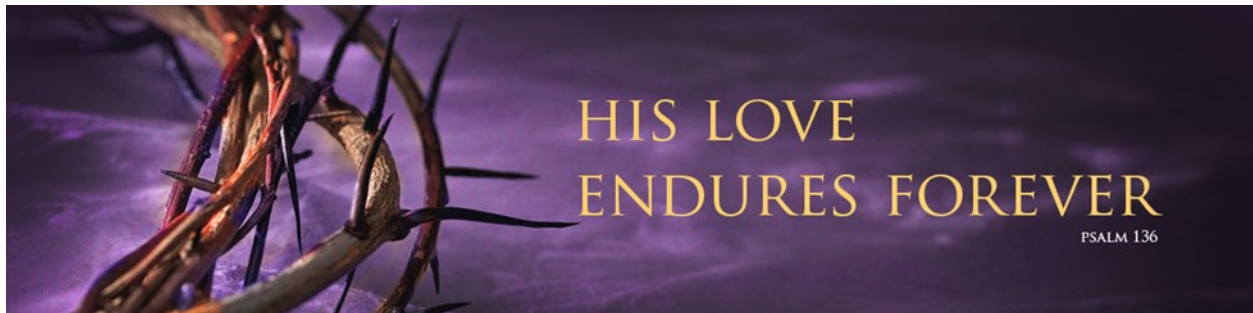
MasterSingers Concert



St. Michael will be hosting The MasterSingers for a free community concert on Sunday, February 20, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. This concert is part of the Edison Festival of Light festivities. We hope you are able to join us for this wonderful community event.

Lent and Holy Week Schedule

We hope you can fellowship with us during this upcoming Lenten season.



Wednesday, March 2nd - Ash Wednesday

Service times at Noon and 6:30 p.m. with a light fellowship meal at 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 9th

Service will be recorded and posted online only.

Wednesday, March 16th

Service at 6:30 p.m. led by the Concordia Choir with a light fellowship meal at 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 23rd

Service will be recorded and posted online only.

Wednesday, March 30th

Service at 6:30 p.m. with a light fellowship meal at 5:30 p.m. The youth group will be assisting in this service.

Wednesday, April 6th

Service will be recorded and posted online only.

Palm Sunday Services

Saturday, April 9th at 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 10th at 10:00 a.m.

Fellowship Lunch and Easter Egg Hunt immediately following the 10:00 a.m. service.

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 14th at Noon and 6:30 p.m.

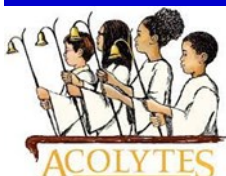
Good Friday

Friday, April 15th at Noon and 6:30 p.m.

Easter Services

Saturday, April 16th at 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 17th at 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:00 a.m.



Acolytes, the link to sign up for February services is now available! Thank you for serving!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0D45ACA9292-acolyte1>