

Deadline for submissions is the 15<sup>th</sup> 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

3595 Broadway  
Fort Myers, FL 33901  
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# The Messenger

*From the Pastor*

*Rev. Jon Zehnder*

A few weekends ago, we shared a message about how God has entrusted us with two callings: first, to be **keepers of the flame** and, second, to be **passers of the torch**. The flame we keep is what the apostle Paul talks about in 2 Corinthians 4:6 where he says, "God said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' and He made His light shine in our hearts in order to give us the light of the knowledge of His glory displayed in the face of Jesus."



Here's the "passing the torch" part: Paul writes to his young pastor friend, Timothy, in 2 Timothy 2:1-2 and says, "You, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, that is, in this life with God. The things you heard me say, this Good News about Jesus and the life, forgiveness and direction that He offers, entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach it to others."

Obviously, I think we would all have to say that we are part of God's family because somebody passed a torch to us, somebody told us about Jesus. Our school's theme this year is "Making Disciples for Life." What a great theme! That is exactly what our Lord Jesus did. He picked out twelve friends to follow Him and said, "I'll give you a torch worth passing; I'll show you how to live with My Father. I'll die on a cross for you so you can have forgiveness, and I'll rise from the tomb for you so you can live in hope, and I'll ascend to the Father for you so the Holy Spirit that is in Me can be in you."

The greatest flame of truth in the history of the human race was passed to those twelve disciples and then beyond them and beyond and beyond until right now, to you and to me. It is the only flame that truly matters: knowing, believing and trusting in Jesus who is the Light of the World. Because that is true, it is the torch we want to continue to pass. Friends, this is too important for us to ever lose our passion and dedication to pursuing these two callings; we have the opportunity to continue making an eternal impact, and, God leading and blessing us, we will!

What an exciting time it is to be the Church and to be a part of the Saint Michael family! Over the course of our 81-year church ministry and our 66-year school ministry, imagine the hearts and lives that have been touched by the light of God's love in Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Yet, we know that our BEST ministry days are still before us.

As we talk about the future and who we are as a church family, the changes to come, it can feel awkward. We are looking for Joshua while Moses, the "old guy," is still around. Moses was the right person at the right time to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt, but, 40 years later, they needed a new, different leader. Things had changed in those 40 years, and they needed Joshua (not "Moses 2.0") to take them into the Promised Land. Well, God's got our transition, and He will lead us. Stay tuned, and keep praying!

*Pastor Jon*

## From Our Principal

Kati Miser



This year's theme is "Making Disciples for Life" and is based on Matthew 28:19-20. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." After being in session now for a month, our master teacher Jesus has already been helping us with this process of becoming disciples: students, teachers, parents and administrators. Making disciples **for life** involves building relationships



between us and our Lord and then between us and those around us. It's obvious that Saint Michael Lutheran School is still *educating children and touching families' lives with the love of Jesus Christ!* Your continued prayers are requested on behalf of that ministry to children and families during the 2022-23 school year.

Give me a call if you want to invite a friend, neighbor or family member to experience Saint Michael Lutheran School. Virtual tours are available!

## From the Director of Little Saints

Stacie Thompson

School is back in session at Little Saints. We welcomed 15 new students to our school in August!

It's going to be another busy year for Little Saints. All of our classrooms are completely filled for the entire 2022-2023 school year. If you know of anyone looking for an early childhood education for their little ones, please advise them to reach out early as we are consistently staying one year out on openings at Little Saints.

Apples and fall leaves abound as we move into our fall studies in September. If anyone happens to make a trip to the North this fall, we would love some real fall leaves to share with our little ones. It's so confusing for our little ones living in Southwest Florida in the fall when the weather is not getting cooler and the leaves only fall if we have a hurricane! Keep safe, everyone!



## Visioning for the Future

Over several months, leaders of Saint Michael gathered to help us understand "who we uniquely are." It's what we needed to understand before we fill our staff ministry leadership positions. We were able to build a framework for both short-range and long-range planning that will take place as congregational leaders, volunteers and members flesh out the details with the new ministry leadership staff.



One side of that framework is "our mission," the guiding compass of our Church. It answers the question, "What are we ultimately supposed to be doing?" in order to set our overall ministry and mission direction. Here is that statement: ***"Reaching across boundaries to cultivate peace in Christ from generation to generation."*** In this column, we're going to unpack that, and here's the first part: ***"Reaching across boundaries..."***



"We live in a world rife with rifts, separations and divisions, symptoms and consequences of sin. However, we, as followers of Jesus, are called and charged to reach out across these chasms to all the people of this world; age, economics, ethnicities, nationalities, politics, social status are of no consequence for our outreaching hands: believers, unbelievers, those who just aren't sure, happy or sad, angry, anxious or content, male or female, the little ones still learning the names of those around them and those who have forgotten the names of even those most dear. For everyone sitting on top of the world or feeling crushed beneath it, we are sinners, all, and all reaching out to each and every one." Next month: "to cultivate peace in Christ..."

## *From the Ministry Coordinator*

*Lori Schwan*

### Children's Ministry

#### **Sunday School Nursery Now Open**

We have volunteers who are serving in the nursery during Sunday School to show the love of Jesus to infants under two years so parents can strengthen their faith during this important education time.

#### **Simply Loved Sunday School**



This month, our focus will be on the first kings of Israel for Pre-K 3 through fourth grades. In August, we also said goodbye to two incredible servants of God who have dedicated around 15 years to children's ministry. Emory and Karen Bottorff, you will be missed, and we wish you God's richest blessings on this next chapter to which God is calling you in the Keys. Thank you for using your gifts to show us that the Bible is alive and that God cares for us through other people like you!



If you would like to **help the children's ministry** in multiple possible ways, please contact Lori.

### Thrivent Financial Members

If you own a Thrivent Financial product, you can give \$250 two times without giving any of your own money. Contact Lori Schwan to see how you can partner with a fundraiser, a service project or an educational Thrivent Action Team. There are several events happening in the fall that would benefit from applying now.



### Women's Bible Study

Join us on Thursdays from 10:00-11:30am on Zoom or on campus in the ELC boardroom for ladies Bible study. We are starting a new study in September. Further details will be included in the church bulletin.

### Pastor Jon's Sunday Bible Class

Join us Sunday morning in the cafeteria to study "Myth or Faith." If you cannot be there in person, Zoom access is also available. [Join Zoom Meeting](#) ID: 305 113 7001 Passcode: church

### DivorceCare

The new session of DivorceCare is meeting on Tuesdays from 11:00am-1:00pm August 16 through November 15, 2022. Anyone who is separated or divorced can join any session. This group is online and in person. Register at [www.divorcecare.org](http://www.divorcecare.org). If you have any questions, please call Lori Schwan at (239) 939-1218, ext. 237.

### Living Faith—World War II Servant Event

Our high school youth, Lacy Roszell, Mason Zehnder, Mason Hart, Spencer Shovlin, Benjamin Records and Jake Gilles, represented Saint Michael as they volunteered at the Spirit of '45 event honoring local World War II veterans. Mayor Anderson challenged our students to "not just be successful but be significant and the next 'greatest generation.'" Thank you to Mandy Zehnder for organizing this special Thrivent Action Team.

### Car Wash

The middle and high school youth will be holding a free car wash from 7:30am-12:00pm on Sunday, September 25. Youth will be able to attend worship on Saturday or online since they will be washing cars during the Sunday services. Parents of youth are needed to help with valet parking. Those serving in the car wash should watch their e-mails for sign-up details. Serving in this fundraiser is a great opportunity to gain points to help pay for youth activities.





## *Saint Michael Youth Ministries*

# *Saint Michael Youth Ministries*

### Fifth and Sixth Grade Sunday School

Our preteen kids in the fifth and sixth grades will ask Jim Grier and Tiffany Roszell their difficult 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. If you haven't checked out this class, come with your questions because they can be answered as Jim and Tiffany formulate the lessons each week in response to students' areas of interest.



### There is a place for you to plug in with our 68+ students!

At our parent meeting in August, we shared our annual calendar with all kinds of weekly activities as well as monthly and one-off events. Adults are needed in so many ways. Our **Wednesday night youth group** for middle and high schoolers needs weekly volunteers as, with the start of the school year, we are having 50-70 students every week (setting up and serving food from 5:30-6:30pm, assisting the high school youth from 6:00-8:00pm as they share about their lives, assist with the games that are played each week from 6:30-8:00pm, be a middle school small group leader from 7:15-8:00pm, help with cleanup from 7:30-8:15pm, help with games that require extra setup or teardown, sponsor a meal). We also need help coordinating the **LCMS youth gathering thank you event**, a breakfast that will be happening this winter.



### Living Faith—September

Sunday, September 4 from 10:30am-2:00pm, our high school youth will enjoy a meal at the Bagel Factory followed by a pool party at Pastor Jon's place. Bring \$10-\$15 for the Bagel Factory as well as a bathing suit and towel. Contact Mandy Zehnder at (239) 265-6226 if you want to attend or if you are a parent who is willing to drive. A Google form is also available.

### Ninth Grade Confirmands

Come to the ninth grade **confirmand retreat** with parents at Southern Waters on Saturday, October 15 from 9:00am-3:00pm. Join us for ninth to twelfth grade **Sunday Bible study** in the youth room instead of confirmation. Every confirmand's **faith statement** is due October 19. Book your **individual meetings** now; they must be done by October 24. The **rite of confirmation** will be held on October 30 at 10:00am.

### Seventh and Eighth Grade Confirmation with Parents

We are beginning our year by studying the Apostles' Creed. We encourage parents to attend with their teens. Any seventh and eighth grade students are welcome to join us. This class meets upstairs in the education building (look for printed signs).

### High School Sunday School

Join us in the youth room as our journey of walking through the Old Testament continues in 2 Samuel.

### Stay Connected

If you are not receiving e-mails or text messages about youth activities, please contact Lori so that you can be added to our contact lists.

### Middle School District Youth Gathering

The LCMS FL-GA district is sponsoring a sixth through eighth grade youth gathering at Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center in Leesburg, FL on November 4-6. Friends are welcome to come along. Our main speaker will be Tanner Olson who was at the LCMS Youth Gathering this summer. We'll enjoy music by the Birdsongs, topical breakout sessions and a servant event on site. Registration includes lodging, transportation, four meals and t-shirt. A \$50 deposit of \$250 early bird registration is due by September 25, and a \$50 deposit of \$260 registration is due by October 19. The final payment is due November 1. Details and paperwork will be e-mailed to you. You can use your points to offset the cost of the gathering (see Lori Schwan for balances). There are also scholarships potentially available if needed. Adults should contact Lori if they are interested.



## *From the Board of Elders*



The transition team continues to review the pastoral candidates' information provided by the St. Michael congregation and the LCMS FL-GA district office. We intend to start initial Zoom interviews with possible candidates toward the end of August or beginning of September. We will continue to provide more detailed updates on a regular basis as we prayerfully seek God's guidance throughout this process. Please contact Kelly Zinn if you have any questions at [kellyzinn65@gmail.com](mailto:kellyzinn65@gmail.com).

## *From the Board of Human Care*

The recent, massive flooding in Kentucky has taken a heavy toll on the lives and property of many people. During September, the board of human care is requesting support from the congregation for the victims of the Kentucky flooding disaster. The assistance needed is ongoing. All donations received will be matched by the board of human care up to \$1,000. The donations will be sent to the FL-GA District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod for distribution to those who require assistance. If you would like to contribute, you may do so by check (please make your check out to St. Michael Lutheran Church) or by placing your donation in an envelope with "Board of Human Care - Kentucky Floods" written on it. Thanks to you for your support of these people in desperate need. Our Board is so thankful for your generosity! You are making a difference in so many lives each month.



## *LWML Craft Fair*

Lutheran Women's Missionary League will be hosting a craft fair/fundraiser on Reformation Sunday, October 30. We will be renting 8' tables for \$25.00 on which you can sell your products (independent distributors are welcome). The fair will be held in the gym with room to expand to other rooms in the same building if necessary. We think there will be a large number of people attending as we have one service that day, and lunch is provided. This is a great time as the holidays are just around the corner. So, start planning and creating! Please call Paulette Mueller at (239) 677-6688 or Toni Hanchey at (239) 565-0108 for more information and to rent a table.

## *Walther League*

Concordia Historical Institute is conducting an organizational history project on the Walther League. Those who were involved in the League can provide an invaluable insight into their experiences. Would you be so kind as to share your involvement in the Walther League through a short, two-page questionnaire? Your responses become the property of Concordia Historical Institute and may be used as part of a museum exhibit, online videos about the organization or kept on file in the archives of CHI.



To access the questionnaire, head to <https://concordiahistoricalinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Walther-League-Questionnaire.pdf>. You may print it out, fill it in and send it back to us via postal mail, or you may fill it out electronically and e-mail it back to us at [info@concordiahistoricalinstitute.org](mailto:info@concordiahistoricalinstitute.org) with Walther League Questionnaire as the subject line. Thank you for taking the time to provide this invaluable service.

*From the Board of Missions**Pat Ryan*

*“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”*

-Mark 10:14

Much work has been going on in the five churches and several home churches in the Dominican Republic this year. There are two sites in or near Santo Domingo, the capital. They are Bread of Life and Los Minos. The other sites are in or near Santiago. They are Friends of Life, Lamb of God in Licey and Pueblo Nuevo in Santiago.



Most of the activities are common to all locations such as Bible studies for men, women and children, baptisms, confirmation classes and access to a Mercy Center. They all want more congregational participation and visitation to those who are no longer attending on a regular basis.

Los Minos does not have a building. So, they worship in a park. Friends of Christ has 100-200 people who worship weekly online. They also have piano, guitar and recorder lessons along with several sports. Unique to this church are Portuguese (spoken in Brazil) language lessons.

Lamb of God, which is in Licey, is an instance in which we were involved in construction of the church and school. This school also maintains a garden and grows food which is used for lunches. Once a month, there is an English language service. They have an outreach to Villa Dora, which is nearby, and the surrounding communities.

Pueblo Nuevo is in Santiago and is in the process of calling an assistant pastor. Their big emphasis is having the laity assume more of the leadership. Since this is in the city, they face social problems different to what the other churches face.

Lutheran Church of Palmar Arriba is the one with which we are most familiar. Pastor Idjon is one of the men who was ordained a few years ago. He, along with seminarians and deaconesses, holds daily devotions for the school children. Since the seminary is in the same building as the school, the seminarians are heavily involved in the school and in the community. This location also has several sports, and they would like to construct a multipurpose field. There are two worship services: one on Sunday and another during the week. As the group home is located next to the school, the now young adults get the benefits of having the seminarians as part of their daily life.

The New Lutheran Hymnal which has been in the works for ten years was recently published. This is a real blessing for the community. Also, four new pastors were ordained as were 70 deaconesses from the Latin and Caribbean area. These women learned online and are now participating in the care of the people in their respective countries.

We have also continued growing our relationship with the police and firefighters. The new regional police chief has requested training for his unit. So, police from LCSO will do that in Santiago. We have donated bulletproof vests for a unit in Montecristi. A new group of police is coming in July for training by LCSO. English classes for police and firefighters continue with a new teacher. A principal from a very poor area has requested scholarships for ten students.

Thank you to Pastor Jon, to the board and to all of you who have kept the mission in your prayers.

On a final note, after sixteen years, I am stepping down from the board. I have enjoyed my time serving, and it's now time for someone else to take over. Thank you for your cooperation as we all do God's work.