

**Volume 14, Issue 3**  
**March 2023**

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  
(239) 939-1218  
[www.smlcs.org](http://www.smlcs.org)

**Lenten Midweek Services**

Wednesdays at noon and 6:30pm on March 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29

**Holy Week**

**Palm Sunday**

- Saturday, April 1 at 5:30pm in the church
- Sunday, April 2 at 10:00am in the gymnasium

**Maundy Thursday** – April 6 at noon and 6:30pm

**Good Friday** – April 7 at noon and 6:30pm

**Easter**

- Saturday, April 8 at 5:30pm
- Sunday, April 9 at 8:00, 9:30, 11:00am

# The Messenger

*From the Pastor*

*Rev. Jon Zehnder*

“In like a lion, out like a lamb...” It’s interesting that we refer to the month of March that way, isn’t it? It just naturally draws us to two wonderful pictures of our Savior, Jesus. He is called the “**Lion** of the tribe of Judah” in Revelation 5:5 to signify His strength, and He is called the “**Lamb** of God” in John 1:29 and Revelation 13:8 to signify His willingness to sacrifice Himself for us.

Our Lion and Lamb Jesus was willing to use His strength as God the Son to sacrifice Himself in order to cover the debt of our sins and redeem us. He and He alone had the ability to atone for our sins so that by God’s grace we might be “at-one” with Him again. What a Savior we have!

That is what we remember during this season of Lent (which began on February 22 with Ash Wednesday). Lent is the church year’s springtime; out of the cold and dark of sin’s winter (think northern climates) emerge people reborn to live new lives.

Easter is the oldest Christian season, but the observance of Lent appeared between 200-300 A.D. Originally Lent lasted 40 hours to remember the time Jesus laid in the tomb. Then, it was extended to 40 days to remember Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. Since Sundays were never days you would fast, Lent lasts six weeks.

Lent calls us to take time out of our schedules to think of Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf (because it was for our sins that He suffered and died) and to look back on the impact of our Baptism. As Paul reminds us in Romans 6:4, “We were therefore buried with Jesus through baptism into death in order that, just as He was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

*Pastor Jon*



## From Our Principal

Kati Miser



In this church season that we call Lent, we focus on the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross for our salvation. Joyfully, this somber season is followed by His victorious resurrection on Easter Sunday! **Our mission at SMLS is to educate children and touch families' lives with the awesome love of Jesus Christ** shown by His death and resurrection! Here's a challenge for each of us: as you experience opportunities to express forgiveness in your relationships, take note, and thank Jesus for His daily, unconditional forgiveness for your shortcomings.



Our January and February were so busy with annual events including Open House, Touch-a-Truck, National Lutheran Schools Week, Little Saints' Father-Daughter Dance, Grandparents' Day, basketball tournaments and more. The winter season in Florida is never boring for SMLS! It's now time for one of our school's biggest fundraisers of the year: the "Bid for Kids" **Auction on Saturday, March 25**. This year's theme is "Aloha." You do not have to be a school family to volunteer or even to attend the auction. Tickets are available at the Saint Michael office. Call the office for more information about how you can be a part of this awesome evening.

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 2023-24 school year are now open.** Click the admissions tab at the top of our website to begin your application. Give me a call if you would like to invite a friend, neighbor or family member to experience Saint Michael Lutheran School.



## From the Director of Little Saints

Stacie Thompson



In February, Little Saints ones and twos have been busy harvesting the vegetables growing in our **gardens**. We began to learn about growing plants from seeds and how to care for the things we grow back in November and have finally been able to reap the benefits of our hard work. We hope to share pictures with the congregation as we watch the gardens grow.

In March, we look forward to a study on our **family heritage** and the **diversity** of our friends and how our families come from all over the world. We will work with the children as they pin locations on the world maps to show where their grandparents are from. We will learn how the children in other countries dress differently, go to different schools and eat different foods. Then, we wrap the week up with a delicious array of homemade foods from all over the world when each family brings in one of their family's favorite traditional foods.



## From the Board of Human Care

**Thank you** to everyone who contributed financial gifts to the Harry Chapin Food Bank in February. Your donations are much appreciated!

During March, the board of human care will be collecting **diapers** and **baby wipes** for Eva's Closet. Please place any items you would like to contribute in the marked collection bins in the narthex.



## *From the Ministry Coordinator*

**Lori Schwan**

### **Children's Ministry**

#### **Sunday School Nursery**

Volunteers look forward to serving in the nursery during Sunday school to show the love of Jesus to those two years old and under so parents can strengthen their faith during this important education time.

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

Both Pre-K 3 through Kindergarten and first through fourth grades are studying Jesus helping people in need: a Roman officer, a man born blind, ten men with leprosy and a group of hungry people. If you would like to work with kids or help out behind the scenes, please contact Lori.



### **Thrivent Financial Members**

If you own a Thrivent financial product, you can provide \$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. Those who have Choice Dollars left from 2022 can also direct them until the March 31, 2023 cutoff date.

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### **Palm Sunday Help Needed**



Want to assist with the BBQ on Palm Sunday, April 2? Contact Chuck Oliver if you would like to help with setup or teardown, to bring a dessert to share or to assist in the kitchen in some way. You can reach Chuck at (239) 292-6058 or at [charliet1333@gmail.com](mailto:charliet1333@gmail.com).

### **Women's Bible Study**

Join other women on Thursdays from 10:00-11:30am on Zoom or on campus in the ELC boardroom for a weekly Bible study. During Lent, we will be making our way through *What the Women Saw* on RightNow Media.

### **GriefShare**

GriefShare is currently meeting on Saturdays from 9:00-11:00am through April 15, 2023 in Pastor Jon's conference room. Anyone can join any session. Find out more at [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org). If you have any questions, please call Gail Schultz at (732) 991-0642.

### **DivorceCare**

DivorceCare is currently meeting on Tuesdays from 11:00am-1:00pm through April 4, 2023. Anyone who is separated or divorced can join any session. This group is available 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.



### **Pastor Jon's Sunday Bible Class**

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

### **Mother-Daughter and Father-Son Retreats for Fifth through Seventh Grades**

Thank you for praying for the 36 sets of mothers and daughters and 18 sets of fathers and sons who are participating in the mother-daughter and father-son retreats at Riverside Retreat on March 3-4 and March 4-5 respectively. May their bonds grow stronger by the Holy Spirit fostering great communication that will continue through adolescence.



## ***Saint Michael Youth Ministries***

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### **Youth DCE Call Committee Update**

In February, the youth DCE call committee applied to Concordia University Irvine for a DCE intern. Thank you for continuing to keep this process in prayer as the leaders from the Concordia University System discern from the Holy Spirit if they have a student who would be a good fit for us.

### **Middle School Summer Servant Event at Camp Luther Springs**



Our beloved middle school summer servant event is back! Those going into sixth through ninth grades 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 18 in the late morning, and parent drivers will come and get youth on Friday, June 23 around noon. The total cost for camp and transportation is \$635 if you register by March 13 (the price goes up to \$695 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. Keep an eye out for email updates with more details.

### **High School Summer Servant Event to Georgia**

Let's get away June 10-16 to retreat, serve and connect with each other in the mountains of Blairsville, Georgia. Joe and Sue Clark have opened their home to us while we serve the area in various ways through All Saints Lutheran's connections. We will hike, tube in the Chattahoochee River, and white water raft the Nantahala River. The all-inclusive cost is \$500. There is a \$150 deposit due March 15. Space on the trip is limited to 15 people going into ninth grade through college.



### **Fifth and Sixth Grade Sunday School**

Preteen kids in fifth and sixth grade will ask Jim Grier and Tiffany Roszell their challenging questions. This is a place where it is safe to wonder and talk together as we see how the Holy Spirit answers their questions and empowers us to be bold for Him.

### **Wednesday Youth Nights**

In March, we will have fun and grow in faith together in different ways including having Eric Zinn teach us about going through fires on March 1 as well as preparing for the youth-led Lenten worship service on March 22 at 6:30pm.

### **Seventh and Eighth Grade Confirmation with Parents**

We will be covering the Lord's Supper this month and then begin our study of the Lord's Prayer. 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 Chronicles.

### **Thank You, Parade Seat Buyers**

Thank you to all of the people who purchased a ticket for parade seats to support our youth ministry. We exceeded our goal!

### **Stay Connected**

If you are not receiving emails or text messages about youth activities, please let Lori know so that she can add you to her lists.



## From the Director of Worship & Music

**Ben Ball**

There are so many exciting things happening around our church and school campus that it simply cannot fit into one little newsletter article. To say the least, it is a busy time of the year! Since we are in the middle of the Lenten season, it is a perfect opportunity to take some intentional time out from the craziness of our lives to remember the sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross. An easy way to do that is to worship with us during our Wednesday 12:00pm and 6:30pm services. One new thing that we are doing this year is featuring many of our students (both instrumentalists and different choirs) from our school's fine arts program. While some of these will only be at the 12:00pm service, there will be some crossover with the 6:30pm service as well. Thank you for encouraging these students as you get the opportunity to hear them. They have worked very hard to prepare these special pieces in addition to their regular school responsibilities. It is my goal to involve student musicians more frequently in our worship services.



When looking at our church mission statement (*"Reaching across boundaries to cultivate peace in Christ from generation to generation"*), I ask you to momentarily focus on the "from generation to generation" part of the statement. Training the next generation of musicians is very near and dear to my heart. However, I cannot do it without you. One of the ways that I am seeking to do that is by providing more opportunities for private music lessons for our fine arts students. Together with the fine arts faculty, we have crafted an idea of a scholarship fund for such an opportunity. Students would

- 1) Apply for and audition with the fine arts faculty to be accepted into the program.
- 2) Have an accountability advisor with the private lesson teacher.
- 3) Be required to offer a special piece in our worship services twice each semester as part of receiving the weekly lesson scholarship.

The joy of this is that it is a win-win situation. It benefits our church in worship, and it benefits the fine arts program of our school. If this is something you would be interested in sponsoring, please chat with me directly, or make an offering designated to *"Acct #9105 Private Music Lesson Scholarship."* I appreciate your support as we build up the Kingdom from generation to generation!

Thank you for all of your support thus far in the campaign for the new organ! We are at roughly 45% of the overall project in just these few short weeks. Please watch for updates every few weeks in the bulletin. This is such an exciting project, and I know you will be thrilled with the outcome of the final installation! It will greatly enrich our worship services.



### **Opportunities for Involvement in Worship and Music Ministry**

The **sanctuary choir** meets on Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:30pm and leads regularly in worship (alternating weekly between 8:00am and 10:45am services). The **worship team** rehearses on Wednesday nights from 7:00-7:45pm (except during Advent and Lent) and leads the 10:45am blended service. The **Rejoice Children's Choir** meets on Sunday mornings at 9:15am in the sanctuary prior to being taken over to Sunday school. This group incorporates the basics of music along with *"hymns, psalms and spiritual songs"* to be offered in worship from time to time. The **tech production team** serves through the manipulation of sound and visual components. We are always looking for folks interested in learning more about this ministry. Our **Grace Notes Handbell Choir** is currently at capacity. However, if you would still like to ring please contact me to be put on the waiting list for a second group (if we have enough folks to begin a second handbell ensemble in the fall). If you play an instrument or sing and you are feeling a pull to become involved, please chat with me and see where we can get you plugged in as part of our music and worship ministry.

Please continue to reach out to me at any time with questions, concerns or song requests. My church email address is [ben.ball@gsmcls.org](mailto:ben.ball@gsmcls.org).

Blessings,  
Ben Ball  
Director of Worship and Music

## Vacation Bible Connection



Thursday through Sunday, **July 13 to 16**, we are reviving our summer opportunity to grow in faith with people of all ages in our community! Our theme this year will be Holy Week where we will walk in the steps of Jesus. Join us Thursday and Friday nights from 5:30-8:00pm to learn and grow from Jesus in fun and creative ways (dinner is provided). Then, come back on Saturday as we serve like Jesus through projects around Fort Myers. We'll rise like Jesus on Sunday with worship, small group time, a meal and lots of fun. Like God's gift of heaven, this time to connect with Jesus and others is totally FREE! **Registration will begin in April.** Contact Lori Schwan ([lori.schwan@gsmllcs.org](mailto:lori.schwan@gsmllcs.org)) if you are interested in volunteering on our team; there is a place for everyone (behind the scenes or working directly with kids, teens or adults).

## Visioning for the Future

The clarified **strategy** for Saint Michael includes three primary programmatic areas: **gather for sacraments**, **join in community** and **serve the world**. In "staffing to function," these programmatic "buckets" form the basis for organizational departments. In addition, Saint Michael has departments for **school** and **finance** and could consider a department for **administration**.



As Saint Michael approaches the senior pastor transition, you have the opportunity to define the role of the senior pastor in relationship to these strategic departments. Whether the senior pastor holds responsibility for one of these areas or not, the competency of that candidate can inform who God is providing to lead Saint Michael and how the congregation can best staff around that individual.

### Senior Pastor Profile

- **Character traits:** a collaborative leader; navigates conflict with grace to maintain relational harmony; approaches ministry as a lifestyle built on calling; strong interpersonal communication skills; an ability to "stick with it" when things get hard
- **Competencies:** experience building small groups or mission programming; experience designing or operating leadership training systems (training leaders to the second and third generation)
- **Other areas of special focus:** open to ministry through school partnership; possesses an awareness of challenges around intergenerational ministry and is passionate to overcome these challenges

## Senior Pastor Ministry Description and Profile

Since some of you have asked, there will be a printed copy of the **senior pastor ministry description** along with the introductory information of the second senior pastor candidate who will be visiting Saint Michael from **Saturday, March 25 to Tuesday, March 28**. The specific dates and times for the congregational meetings with this pastor candidate will be shared as those dates approach.

## Thrivent: March 2023 Events

Anyone who is interested can attend Thrivent's free virtual events for March 2023. Learn more about the events, and RSVP at <https://www.thrivent.com/member-network/southeast/events>.

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### BINGO: A Celebration of Membership

March 16 at 7:00pm

### Increase Your Lifetime Wealth with Tax Planning

March 28 at 1:00pm and 8:30pm

March 30 at 7:30pm

### Market and Economic Update

March 21 at 12:30pm