

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

3595 Broadway
Fort Myers, FL 33901
(239) 939-1218
www.smlcs.org

As Eugene Peterson once said, "Words make something; they don't just say something." When we bless others in the Name of our Savior, Jesus, we join God's healing and restoration, and we participate in His intention to bless the world in Jesus.

Friends, that opportunity stands before us again in this new fiscal year. So, let's get excited about blessing and being a blessing!

The Messenger

From the Pastor

Rev. Jon Zehnder

I recently ran across an article by Pastor Winn Collier that had been shared with me years ago where he wrote, "Each Sunday, at the conclusion of our church's worship, I stand before the people, extend my hands and speak a blessing over them. If I were ever to stop being a pastor, this moment may be what I would miss the most." I would have to agree!

He went on to explain that, in Biblical terms, to bless is to declare God's truth into someone's life and to announce God as our gracious, sovereign Lord who intends to flood His children with goodness and joy. When a pastor pronounces a blessing, they serve as a witness to the truth that God's generosity and power have by no means been extinguished.

Regardless of the difficulties we face or the despair we know, God's tenacious love is going to have the final word. Lutheran Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing from the prison where he would eventually be executed, wrote, "Blessing means laying one's hand on someone and saying, 'Despite everything, you belong to God.'"

In His teaching ministry, Jesus made it clear that blessings come to us not because of our own ingenuity or effort but because God is kind and always working for our good. Blessings come to us because we have a God whose very Being exudes blessing, the One who exudes grace after grace!

Because we belong to the Lord who blesses we live as a people who bless. As we celebrate the close of another fiscal year and the beginning of a new year of mission and ministry in 2023-2024, we are called to announce and live as instruments of God's blessing in this place!

Pastor Collier ended his comments by saying, "While it's true that a blessing serves as a witness of God's generosity, in some mysterious way it also enacts His generosity."



Pastor Jon

From the Board of Missions

Dominican Republic Child Sponsorship Program

Make a big difference for a needy child with only \$35.00 per month!

Your sponsored child will learn English as a second language which will allow them to become a professional in the future.

Reach out to the Saint Michael office if you would like more information.



Thrivent: July 2023 Events

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

The Five Signs of Imbalance with Touré Roberts

Available on demand July 10-16

Understanding Annuities & Social Security with Robin Mueller

Wednesday, July 12 at 12:00pm and 7:00pm

Untold Rules for Prosperity and Legacy with Eugene Mitchell

Tuesday, July 18 at 1:00pm and 8:30pm

Thursday, July 20 at 7:30pm

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Opportunities to Serve at St. Michael

Church Cleaning

The church housekeeping team is looking for additional members! We have a small team keeping God's house in order. If you are interested in joining the team, please call Lisa Ciarlo at (407) 864-7436.

Ushers and Communion Assistants

We need volunteers as we have returned to the rail for Communion. Interested in becoming an usher or Communion assistant? Please contact Lee Berchtold at (239) 872-8999.

Sound Booth



We are in need of volunteers at all three service times who would be interested in serving in one of a few roles in the sound booth during worship. If enough people become volunteers, then they will be able to rotate weeks in the booth. Different roles are available from clicking through the slides to operating the sound board and camera for the livestream. No prior experience is needed; we can set up training with someone more experienced to help you get started. Please contact Ben Ball if you are interested in serving in this way at (239) 939-1218 or ben.ball@gsmclcs.org.



Altar Guild

The altar guild is in need of assistance at all three services. Altar guild is a wonderful way to serve at St. Michael behind the scenes and to make new friends! Please call Deb Helton at (239) 560-5830 for more information.



From the Ministry Coordinator

Lori Schwan

Children's Ministry

Sunday School Nursery Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers who want to serve in the nursery during Sunday school to show the love of Jesus to those two years old and younger so parents can strengthen their faith during this education time. If you are interested in helping, please contact Lori Schwan.



Simply Loved Sunday School

Both pre-k 3 through kindergarten and first through fifth grades are continuing to study the start of the Church: "God Frees Peter from Prison," "Paul and Silas Sing in Prison," "Paul Survives a Shipwreck" and "Jesus Makes All Things New." We won't have Sunday school on July 16 because of our combined worship service at 10:00am. If you would like to work with kids or help out behind the scenes, please contact Lori Schwan.

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. There are several events that can be action teams happening this summer.

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Thursday 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. This study is currently covering *The Bible Unearthed* on RightNow Media.

Pastor Jon's Sunday Bible Class

Join us Sunday morning in the cafeteria to study *Good Faith: Being a Christian When Society Thinks You Are Irrelevant and Extreme* by Kinnaman and Lyons. If you cannot be there in person, Zoom is also available. [Join Zoom Meeting](#) ID: 305 113 7001 Passcode: church

GriefShare

GriefShare will resume at St. Michael in the fall. Visit [GriefShare.org](https://www.griefshare.org) for other local meetings or to sign up for daily email devotions. If you have any questions, please call Gail Schultz at (732) 991-0642.

DivorceCare

A summer session of DivorceCare is meeting on Tuesdays from 11:00am-1:00pm through August 1, 2023. Anyone who is separated or divorced can join any session. This group is available online and in-person. Register at www.divorcecare.org. If you have any questions, please call Lori Schwan at (239) 939-1218, ext. 237.



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 5:30-7:30pm 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, a meal and lots of fun. Like God's gift of heaven, this time to connect with Jesus and others is totally FREE! **You can register today at** tinyurl.com/SMLVBC2023. Contact Lori Schwan (lori.schwan@gsmclcs.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).

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Wednesday Youth Nights

We will meet off-campus this summer from 6:00 to 8:00pm. Would you like to host a middle school Wednesday youth night in June or July for the incoming sixth through eighth graders or host Revive for the incoming ninth graders through college freshmen at your home or clubhouse? A night of fun usually includes a simple dinner, fun (an indoor or outdoor game or swimming) and devotional time. Someone can share a devotion. Receipts can be turned in to reimburse dinner costs. Let Lori know if you or someone you know might be interested. With everyone's schedules differing, numbers will fluctuate between 5 and 25. We will send out a Google form to families each week to help the host be able to estimate numbers.

Date	Middle school host	High school host
July 5	Service project at Saint Michael	Service project at Saint Michael
July 12	(Host needed)	(Host needed)
July 19	(Host needed)	Hodson family
July 26	(Host needed)	(Host needed)
August 2	Willauer family	(Host needed)



New Sixth through Eighth Grade Summer Sunday School

Our incoming sixth through eighth graders come together each week for summer Sunday school. The youth have chosen RightNow Media's *Why Jesus? (Youth Edition)* hosted by David Nasser. If you don't have RightNow Media, you can create a free account at <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/user/StMichaelLutheranChurch>.

High School Summer Sunday School

Join us in the youth room as our journey of walking through the Old Testament continues in 1 Chronicles.

Stay Connected

If you are not getting emails or text messages about youth activities, contact Lori Schwan (lori.schwan@gsmlcs.org) so that you can be added to the correct communications lists.

Middle School Event at Camp Luther Springs

Thank you for praying for the two adults and event middle schoolers who joined 60 youth and nine adults from around the FL-GA District for a week of camp fun including tubing Ichetucknee Springs, serving in the community around Gainesville and growing in their understanding of the Trinity from June 18 to 23.

High School Summer Servant Event to Georgia

Sue Clark and Lori Schwan had an incredible week with Tiago Passos, Andrew Schwan, William Truax and Savannah Truax as they served the community of Blairsville, Georgia. They are especially thankful for your prayers and for the time that Pastor Dave Weische and Christi Hart put into organizing the projects. Over the week, they landscaped, moved furniture, dug a drainage ditch for a park, painted picnic tables and organized logs for firewood. They also enjoyed God's creation and the joy of fellowship with hikes to see waterfalls, tubing, evenings around campfires and playing cards. They served each other by taking turns cooking for each other.



From the Director of Worship & Music

Ben Ball

*Joyful, joyful we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee, praising Thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.*



As you read through this glorious hymn text by Henry Van Dyke, I am willing to bet that you began humming or singing the tune in your head (or, maybe, you sang it out loud). Now, imagine you are worshiping via our livestream; you are singing and worshiping along from home, and the sound or video goes out for whatever multitude of reasons technology throws at us. It really interrupts the flow of your worship or stops it altogether! I was reading an article the other day titled “Connecting the Community with God Using Livestream” which was praising the online platform which many churches use to stream their weekly services. It really made me stop and think. Yes, the platform itself is important, but what is *more* important is our technicians in the booth who are running the platform. They are really the unsung heroes of our worship services, tucked away in the back corner as they are. Without them, we are without any audio or visual resources to complement and reinforce our services. While this may not mean as much if you are physically in the sanctuary for worship, it is vital to our online worshippers. Please take a moment to thank our techs at whichever service you attend. They volunteer to serve in that capacity week after week at our regular services and are always willing to jump in for memorial services and other events. Thank you!

I need your help! I enjoy doing random surveys of the congregation’s favorite music. If you would, please fill out the info below, and get it back to me. Feel free to send me an email if that is more convenient for you.

Please continue to reach out to me at any time with any questions, concerns or song requests you have. My church email address is ben.ball@gsmc.org.

Blessings,
Ben Ball
Director of Worship and Music



Do you have a favorite *psalm, hymn, or spiritual song*? Or more than one favorite? Please list them below or send them to me in an email. Don't forget to include your name please!

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME HERE: _____

Senior Pastor Succession

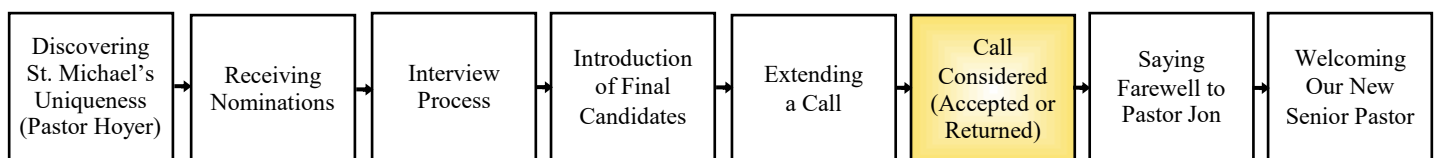
Where we have been: Starting in 2021, leaders of the church and school met with a ministry consultant, Pastor Jacob Hoyer, to help us understand the unique culture of our ministry, how we do ministry and how we work together. That enabled the church to develop a ministry position description and allowed us to understand the unique gifts, talents and experiences the next senior pastor will need in order to carry the ministry forward.

The board of elders worked hard and long to evaluate the 42 nominations they had received. As the list was narrowed down, top candidates were interviewed again. The top two candidates and their spouses were brought down for a visit to allow everyone at Saint Michael a chance to meet them and get to know them better before selecting one of them to call. On April 16, the congregation voted to extend the call to Rev. Jon Thomas. After much prayer and deliberation, Pastor Thomas returned the call on May 30 feeling led by the Lord to continue his ministry at St. John.



Where we are now: A second congregational voters' meeting was held on June 18, and the congregation voted to extend a call to **Rev. David Bass**. Pastor Bass, his wife Katy and their children Anna and Jonah have been invited to visit again to make sure they have all the information they need about Saint Michael. This will allow them to prayerfully deliberate where God is calling them to serve in His greater kingdom (whether continuing at Hosanna Lutheran in Kerrville, Texas or coming to serve as Senior Pastor at Saint Michael). After visiting, there is usually a two- to four-week length of time where the called individual considers God's will (whether to accept or decline the call).

Please keep praying! Pray for unity, pray for grace, pray for guidance for Pastor Bass and strength for the church, ministry and members of both Saint Michael and Hosanna.



From the Board of Human Care

The Multicultural Centre of Southwest Florida and Eva's Closet are collecting donations for their annual **Big Backpack Event**. These two organizations help prepare Lee County children to start the school year with confidence and pride. If you would like to help these dear children start the school year off in a helpful way, please deposit your donation in the box in the narthex. Donations can be pencils, paper, notebooks, markers, etc. If you prefer to donate dollars, put your donation in an envelope marked "backpack," or note "backpack" on your check. The Board of Human Care thanks you for helping our children here in Lee County.

