

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

The Messenger

From the Pastor

Rev. Jon Zehnder

It's hard to imagine that, as we prepared last August for the start of another fall season of ministry in our church and school, within a few weeks (on September 28) a category five hurricane named Ian would cause catastrophic damage to our barrier islands, coastal areas and throughout other parts of southwest Florida. More amazing are the "scars" left behind even while we continue recovery, repair and rebuilding.

We all have our own "storm stories" (or permitting or insurance stories), but we thanked God then (and again now) that there were no serious injuries or loss of life among us. Plenty of stories involve wind damage: trees down, shingles, roofs and sheds sent flying, debris everywhere, flooding, pool cages and lanai screens and structures bent, torn or obliterated, electrical outages, gas lines, difficulties finding grocery items and fuel...

But whether it is a storm that is weather-related or a "storm" that may be more personal, relational, physical or even spiritual, the truth is that we all face storms. And there are some wonderful promises from our God of grace about the strength He provides us as we go through those storms. I'd encourage you to check out Romans 8:26-39, but let me share some truths that are a part of our "storm survival kit":

1. We have Holy Spirit-assisted prayers! It's okay if you don't know what to say or what to pray. God says to just pour out your feelings as best as you can because the Holy Spirit is going to sort it out and present your concerns to God the Father.
2. We have divinely orchestrated circumstances! God works all things together for our good. That's His promise! Paul argues that if God did not spare His own Son but freely gave Him up to cover our greatest need (the forgiveness of our sins) then how will He not also along with Jesus graciously give us all the other things that we need?
3. We have God's sustained effort to conform us to the image of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit working in our hearts and lives. God is committed to seeing us mature in our faith, our character, our relationships and our values. God's ultimate goal for our lives here on earth is not our comfort but our character development, and He can even use a storm to do that.
4. We know that God is for us! And if God is for us now and in the future, it doesn't matter what the storm might be; we will not be discouraged because God is right here, and He is for us. He goes before, stands behind but is always at our side. We are never alone in this battle; He will never abandon us.

So, here's the deal: even when you feel like you can't take another step, remember that nothing, absolutely nothing, can ever stand against you. Nothing can ever separate you from the love God has for you in Jesus, our Savior!

Pastor Jon



From Our Principal

Kati Miser



Saint Michael Lutheran School continues to experience God's grace and the support of His people. Thank you! Now another exciting time lies just ahead as **the new school year begins on Wednesday, August 9.** This year's theme is, "Be Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind," which is based on Romans 12:2, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then, you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will." Just imagine what life at Saint Michael would be like if

students, staff and parents would make this their goal! It would be just as exciting as watching a beautiful butterfly come out of its homely cocoon.

Your continued prayers are requested on behalf of our ministry to children and families during the 2023-24 school year. **At Saint Michael Lutheran School, our mission is to educate children and touch families' lives with the awesome love of our Lord, Jesus Christ!** There is still time to give me a call if you want to invite a friend, neighbor or family member to experience Saint Michael Lutheran School in the upcoming school year. Online applications for 2023-24 are being accepted on our website.



From the Director of Little Saints

Stacie Thompson

We are gearing up for another great year! Little Saints is excited to be welcoming ten new families to our Saint Michael family this August. We have a great group of teachers and assistants at Little Saints again this year. Our team consists of Megan Oharriz (older twos), Nikki Howley (older twos), Carol Flores (younger twos), Ashley Negron (ones), Tiffany Coyne (transitional ones) and NaKiaya Pickett (infants). With God's help, this group of amazing ladies and our support staff are going to make it a great school year!



Little Saints is holding our annual **Pirate Pasta Dinner** for our families on Saturday, September 23, from 5:00-7:00pm. This is a great opportunity for the families to bond while the kids have fun playing games. Save the date!



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@gsmlcs.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 beginning a study on Jesus' friends: "Jesus Gathers Disciples," "Jesus' Friends Go with Him to the Garden," "Jesus Appears to Mary" and "Jesus Makes a Beachside Breakfast for His Friends." 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 fall.

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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 continuing the series *Divided We Stand: How to Love When We Disagree* 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 is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences, the loss of someone close. A new session of GriefShare will run September 9 through December 2. This group meets on Saturdays from 9:00-11:00am in Pastor Jon's conference room. You may join any session. Please register at [GriefShare.org](https://www.griefshare.org). If you have any questions, please contact Gail Schafer at gail1370@aol.com or (732) 991-0642.

GRIEF SHARE®

DivorceCare

A new session of DivorceCare will be meeting on Tuesdays from 11:00am-1:00pm beginning on August 15, 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 Connect

Thank you to everyone who made Vacation Bible Connect so special! We had a little over 100 people each night for our education. 68 people served in the community at Gigi's Playhouse, LARC, North Shore Park and Cedarbrook. 145 people participated over the course of Thursday through Saturday. That number doesn't include everyone who came to the combined worship service and fellowship event on Sunday. Thank you to the 45 volunteers who were used by God to reach across boundaries to cultivate peace in Christ from generation to generation.



Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Wednesday Youth Nights

Join us for our last summer youth night off-campus on Wednesday, August 2 from 6:00-8:00pm. A night of fun usually includes a simple dinner, fun (an indoor or outdoor game or swimming) and devotional time. The Willauers will be hosting middle school, and we are still looking for a high school host. If you are interested, please contact Lori Schwan.



Starting on August 9, we will be returning to campus for our weekly Wednesday youth group from 6:00-8:00pm. We continue to ask for families to sponsor a dinner either through making, purchasing or funding the meal. We will send out a weekly Google form to help us estimate numbers for food.



Parents and Sixth through Twelfth Grade Kickoff

We would like all parents of sixth through twelfth grade students to join us on Wednesday, August 30 from 6:00-8:00pm in the band room to hear about the youth program for this year. Dinner will be provided. At the meeting, we will discuss:

- 2023-24 youth calendar
- Plans for sixth grade Sunday school, seventh through eighth grade confirmation and high school Sunday school
- Wednesday night youth for middle school and high school
- Ninth grade confirmand retreat with parents
- Middle school district youth gathering
- High school leadership event
- High school summer servant event possibilities
- Camp Luther Springs FL-GA District summer servant event
- Fundraisers throughout the year
- Point system explanation to fund activities and trips
- Service projects for the year
- Ways for families to be involved directly or behind the scenes

Fifth and Sixth Grade Sunday School

Our preteen kids in fifth and sixth grades will bring their topics to class starting on August 20 so they, along with Tiffany Roszell, can select lessons that will help to answer their 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.

Seventh and Eighth Grade Confirmation with Parents

Our first official week of confirmation will begin Sunday, August 20. We encourage parents to attend with their students. Any seventh and eighth grade students are welcome to join us. This class meets upstairs in the education building during the Sunday morning educational hour. Follow the signs posted around campus.

High School Sunday School

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



From the Director of Worship & Music

Ben Ball

*All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.
Him serve with mirth, His praise forthtell;
Come ye before Him and rejoice!*
(text by William Kethe, 1593)



The hymn text above is such a great reminder that our duty is to glorify God, serving Him with joy and spreading His great Gospel to all the world. A book I read many years ago had a simple title, *Worship Is a Verb*. Worship is a participatory act. It is something we must do rather than just sitting back and waiting to receive. In other words, worshiping God should be our way of life. For those of you who have told me, “But I cannot sing very well.” Who cares? Make a joyful **noise** unto the Lord! Remember that there are many other ways to worship God besides singing.

We are about to begin another wonderful academic year here at school. I cannot wait to see where the fine arts program goes this year. Plans have been established for this to be the first official year of the “Share the Music” scholarship program, and I have already received several inquiries about this over the summer. Folks are excited about this new opportunity for our school and church. There is something that I would ask everyone to participate in with this new venture: prayer. Please pray for the program as we build it and iron out all the wrinkles which can arise when starting something new. Pray for both the students and the teachers involved and their growing relationships. As you see students offering a special piece in worship, please pray for their nerves to calm and for them to be able to transform notes on a page into beautiful music that glorifies God. I appreciate your continued support in this generation-to-generation scholarship opportunity! If you are feeling called to do so, please make any offerings for this program designated to “Acct. #9105 Share the Music Scholarship.” Thank you!



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

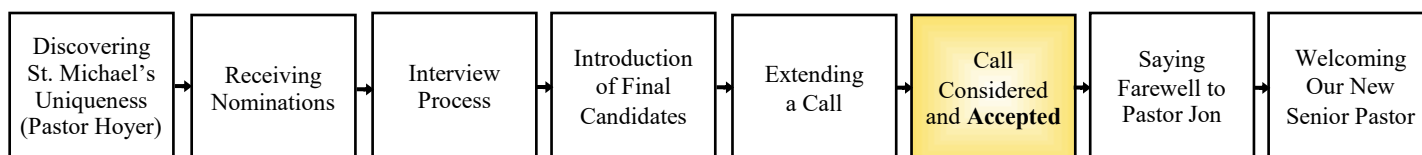
Senior Pastor Succession

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 to carry the ministry forward.

The board of elders worked long and hard to evaluate the 42 nominations they 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 having felt led by the Lord to continue his ministry at St. John.

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, visited again July 5-10, meeting with key staff and leaders to make sure they had all the information they needed about Saint Michael to prayerfully deliberate where God was calling them to serve in His kingdom (whether continuing at Hosanna or coming to Saint Michael).

Great news: Pastor Bass has accepted our call to serve as our next senior pastor! It will take some time for the Bass family to say farewell to the Hosanna congregation, pack up, move, get their children settled in school here and set up their household. We will keep you posted as to the timing of their arrival! There will be times and dates for the last two steps in this process: saying farewell to Pastor Jon and welcoming and installing Pastor Bass as our new senior pastor.



City Takers: Shop for a Family



City Takers of Southwest Florida is seeing even greater needs for help with food and are kicking off a new monthly program called "Shop for a Family." When you are going to the grocery store, please consider adding a few extra items for a family in need. Once a month, you can deliver nonperishable foods to their mission base at 3592 Broadway, Suite 120, or City Takers will pick your donation up. If you are led to purchase meat, cheese, dairy or other perishable foods, they have cold storage available. Please contact City Takers at (239) 204-9947 to arrange drop-off to make sure that the food is stored properly. Thank you for participating in City Takers' drives. They are a distribution spot for a local food bank, but needs are exceeding the available resources.

Thrivent: August 2023 Events

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

Market and Economic Update

August 1, 2023 at 12:30pm

B.L.E.S.S.: Five Everyday Ways to Love Your Neighbor and Change the World

Available August 7-13, 2023

Women, Wealth & Wisdom

August 8, 2023 at 12:00pm and 7:00pm

The Generosity Story: A New Page in Christian Giving

August 10, 2023 at 12:00pm

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