

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

Thank you! From Joni, me and our family, thank you for your kindness, love and encouragement, your prayers, thoughts, cards, emails, texts, all of the myriad of ways you have blessed us as we have served our Savior together over all these years. And I know you all will be that same blessing to Pastor Dave, Katy and their family.

A lot has changed since God brought us here back in 1991! What incredible blessings, God making all grace abound to this ministry, blessing us abundantly so that in all things at all times, having all that we would need we could abound in the good work of mission and ministry as we sought to keep our eyes on Jesus and follow Him. (2 Cor 9:8).

With God leading, with God blessing, there are exciting days ahead. So, move, step out, follow wherever God takes you. Paul says that if God did not spare from you His very own Son but freely gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Jesus, graciously give you everything that you need! (Rom 8:32)

You know, over these 32 years we've been to the tops of mountains and struggled in valleys but, through it all, there has been this one constant and that is God's grace and faithfulness to us in Jesus. And that is not going to change! That's God's promise - trust that! Be courageous as you join Pastor Dave in this new adventure.

The litmus test of our ministry together and my ministry here will be what happens after I'm gone. I love these words of the contemporary hymn, "You Be Lifted High" – "I fall to my knees so it's You that they see, not I. Jesus, You be lifted high!" I pray that you saw Jesus in us and heard about the Savior from us just as you will continue to see and hear that same Good News from Pastor Dave and his family!

So, from the Zehnder clan, "We thank God every time we remember you... because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now." (Phil 1:3, 5)



The Ten Commandments from the Outgoing Pastor

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| I | Thou shalt not compare the new pastor and the old pastor for, verily, they are two different people. | VI | Thou shalt not prejudice persons and things for the new pastor. He will have the ability to judge for himself in wisdom and in truth. |
| II | Thou shalt not say to the new pastor, "but Pastor Zehnder did it this way." | VII | Thou shalt not fail to review the new pastor's salary annually and increase it as a symbol of love and appreciation. |
| III | Thou shalt not call back the outgoing pastor for funerals and weddings. Yea, those are the responsibilities of ministry for the new pastor. | VIII | Thou shalt not speak too often of thy former pastor and, when thou dost, may it be kindly. |
| IV | Thou shalt not send to the former pastor, nor in any way communicate with him, matters of gossip or problems. | IX | Thou shalt not forget the new pastoral family at Christmas and on their birthdays with thoughtful remembrance. |
| V | Thou shalt not withhold thine exceeding great capacity of love for the pastor and his family. Thou shalt love them as thou hast loved us and even more abundantly. | X | Thou shalt not forget to pray for the new pastor and his family regularly. |

From the Board of Elders

The board of elders is excited to begin a new chapter in the history of St. Michael as we welcome Pastor David Bass, Katy, Anna and Jonah to our St. Michael family. The call process took time, many prayers and much work. We as a congregation voted to extend a call to Pastor Bass who, after much deliberation and prayer, has accepted our call. We celebrate with thankfulness his decision knowing the Holy Spirit has been behind the scenes orchestrating this entire process.

The elders are dedicated to welcoming, supporting and serving under and with Pastor Bass. We are calling every member to join with us in continuing the ministry of unity in the body, understanding Pastor Bass now has the “baton” of leadership.

We can welcome the Bass family into our family by reaching out in loving kindness with words and actions. Encourage them with cards, letters, gifts and, if you are able, offer services to help them settle in here. **Let them know you are excited and care that they are here by attending Pastor Bass’s installation on Sunday, September 10 at 4:00pm with a dinner reception to follow in the gym.** (Please let us know if you plan to attend by calling the St. Michael office or by visiting tinyurl.com/Bassinstallation.)



Do all the above with prayer and kindness, recognizing that Pastor Bass has many responsibilities with a new congregation. Continue to pray for God’s guidance and blessings throughout the transition. As your elders, we are committed to serve Christ, you as members of St. Michael and Pastor Bass as our new shepherd. We welcome the opportunity to talk with you. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

In peace,
The board of elders

Lee Berchtold, Darryl Bell, Lou Conzelmann, Kim Dinkel, Jace Habben, Brian Hoffmann, Will Kollmann, Bill Minor, Nathan Miser, David Radecki, Richard St. Dennis, Dr. William Truax, Dr. Tim Verwest, Jason Zehnder

From the Pastor

Rev. Dave Bass

New Pastor, Same Jesus

Howdy! I’m writing this to you amid all of the moving boxes in our Texas home. By the time you read this newsletter, my family (Katy, my wife, Anna, our 15-year-old, and Jonah, our six-year-old) and I will have arrived at home in Fort Myers and at home at St. Michael.

Understandably, those of you who are part of the St. Michael family but who weren’t part of the call process might be wondering who this pastor is and what he’s all about. Changes such as a new pastor coming to serve a congregation and school can cause our heart and mind to be filled with worries, concerns or anticipation for what lies ahead. And so I want to encourage you. Although I am the new senior pastor called to serve here, please rest assured that, through my ministry, you will be hearing from someone who has been with you your entire life: Jesus!



Our theme verse for this new school year at St. Michael is a perfect reminder of this truth. Romans 12:2 says that we are transformed by the renewing of our mind. Jesus and His Word are what work that transformation in us and through us. That very Word is what I will continue to proclaim as Pastor Jon has done so very faithfully.

I look forward to the many opportunities of transformation and growth which the Lord has prepared in advance for us to begin fulfilling right here in the hearts and homes of St. Michael Church and School and to the ends of the Earth!

With joy in Jesus,
Pastor Dave

From Our Principal

Kati Miser



This school year's theme 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." After being in session for a month, our Master Teacher, Jesus, has already been helping us with this process. Can you imagine what it would be like with students, teachers, parents and administration being transformed by the love of Jesus? Building relationships between us and our Lord and then between us and those around us would come naturally. It's obvious that St. 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 2023-24 school year.

Give me a call if you want to invite a friend, neighbor or family member to experience St. Michael Lutheran School. Both in-person tours and virtual tours are available.



From the Director of Little Saints

Stacie Thompson

School is back in session at Little Saints. We welcomed ten new students to our school in August! It's going to be another busy year for Little Saints. All our classrooms are completely full for another 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.



Little Saints is gearing up for another **Pirate Pasta Dinner**. This year, the dinner will be held on Saturday, September 23 from 5:00 to 7:00pm in the gym. This event is the one fundraiser Little Saints holds every year. It gives the families an opportunity to build relationships within a safe environment and the kiddos a chance to play games and win prizes. Grandparents and family friends are welcome!



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 Now Open

We now have volunteers serving 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.

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 happening this fall that would benefit from your attention.

thrivent®

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.

Adult 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 Dave'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.



DivorceCare

A new session of DivorceCare is currently meeting on Tuesdays from 11:00am-1:00pm through November 28, 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.

LWML Craft Fair

Lutheran Women's Missionary League will be hosting a craft fair fundraiser on Reformation Sunday, October 29. They will be renting out eight-foot tables for \$25.00 for you to use to sell your products (independent distributors are welcome). The fair will be in the gym and will extend to other rooms in that building if more space is required. We expect a lot of people to be attending since there is a combined church service that Sunday with lunch provided afterward. It is a great time to participate with various holidays around the corner. So, start planning and creating! Please call Paulette Mueller at (239) 677-6688 or Toni Hanchey at (239) 565-0108 if you would like more information or if you are interested in renting a table.



Saint Michael Youth Ministries

Saint Michael Youth Ministries

There Is a Place for You to Plug in with Our Middle and High School Students

At our parent meeting, we shared our annual calendar with all kinds of weekly activities as well as other special events. Adults are needed in so many ways. Please contact Lori if you are willing to assist.

- Wednesday youth night for middle and high school
 - ◇ Setup and serving food (5:30-6:30pm)
 - ◇ High school small group discussion (6:00-8:00pm)
 - ◇ Weekly games (6:30-8:00pm)
 - ◇ Middle school small group leader (7:15-8:00pm)
 - ◇ Cleanup of food or games (7:30-8:15pm)
- ◇ Sponsor a meal (bring food that you have bought or made or make a financial donation to defray the cost of a meal)
- Help to organize a fundraiser.
- Apply to attend a special event like the middle school youth gathering, high school student leadership event or Rock the Universe.

Fifth and Sixth Grade Sunday School

Our preteen kids in fifth and sixth grades will bring their topics to class 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

Any seventh or eighth grader who wants to know more about being a Christian who celebrates their faith in the Lutheran tradition is welcome to attend confirmation classes Sunday mornings from 9:15-10:30am. This class meets upstairs in the education building room 48 (Mrs. Weaver's room). We encourage parents to join us since they spend the week with the students and can apply lessons learned throughout the week. If a student misses a week, we will send out the topic in our weekly email so they can stay on track.

Ninth Grade Confirmation Final Preparation

Faith instruction continues on Sunday morning in high school Sunday school. The Rite of Confirmation will be Sunday, October 29. Ninth graders meet with high school Sunday school. Students should book their one-on-one interviews that will all happen before Confirmation day and should begin writing their faith statements. We will have our ninth grade confirmand retreat with parents on Saturday, September 23 from 9:00am-3:00pm at Southern Waters (16470 Daughtreys Creek Rd., North Fort Myers, FL 33917). Thank you to Tom and Kerrey Hoolihan for their hospitality!

High School Sunday School

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

Stay Connected

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



From the Director of Worship & Music

Ben Ball



This past summer, we took a huge road trip. To be fair, anything over fifty miles is a “huge” road trip in my opinion. However, while we were up North, I had it in my little nerd heart that I wanted to make time to go and visit the Allen Organ Company’s headquarters and manufacturing facility in Macungie, Pennsylvania. It was an organist’s heaven; there were organs being built everywhere! Some were in the beginning stages of conceptual drawings and plans; others were in the woodshop and not even looking like an organ yet; others were in the assembly room, others in the finishing room; others were being wired with all the technological gizmos to complete the instrument and make it sing, and others were being crated to ship to their new homes. I was absolutely over the moon watching this all happen. We were receiving a personal tour of the factory by the vice president of the company (*left*) who graciously answered all my questions. One of these questions was, “How many employees do you have here?” He said, “roughly 150.” Now, most of these are very skilled craftsmen: master woodworkers, electricians, programmers, etc. I thought you would appreciate hearing how our organ will be built.



Music and Worship Ministry Opportunities

The **Sanctuary Choir** meets on Tuesday nights in the choir loft from 7:00-8:30pm and leads regularly in worship (alternating weekly between 8:00am and 10:45am) from September through May. Our first rehearsal is Tuesday, September 5. **Something new** this year is that this choir is now open to anyone in middle school or older. If you have a middle or high schooler who would like to sing, we invite you to join them and make it a family activity!

The **Rejoice Children’s Choir** meets from 9:15-9:30am prior to being taken over to Sunday school on Sunday mornings. This group incorporates the basics of music along with hymns, psalms and spiritual songs to be offered in worship from time to time. Our first rehearsal is Sunday, September 10.

The **Worship Team** rehearses on Sunday mornings at 9:45am and leads the 10:45am blended service through a variety of hymns and contemporary songs.

Our **Grace Notes Handbell Choir** is currently at capacity. However, if you would still like to ring, please contact me to be put onto the waiting list or to be part of a second group (if there is enough interest). This ensemble meets on Tuesday nights from 6:00-6:45pm and typically rings once per month in worship.



The **Tech Production Team** serves as the supportive backbone to make our worship services (both in-person and online) successful through the manipulation of sound and video components. We are always looking for folks interested in learning more about this ministry. Training opportunities are available.

We are always on the lookout for **readers** for our three weekend services! If you are interested in this, please let me know, and I will connect you to the correct folks.

We would love to have you join us as we lift our musical gifts together to glorify God! Please see Ben Ball if you are curious about how you might become involved (even if not every week since we realize what a commitment this is). If you play an instrument or sing and you are feeling a pull to become involved musically, 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 you have. My church email address is ben.ball@gsmclcs.org.

Blessings,
Ben Ball
Director of Worship and Music