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# THE MESSENGER

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February 2021

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

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## 2021 Lenten Services

The Wednesday evening Lenten services will be held at 6:30 pm using a traditional format. Attendees are asked to be mindful of others' possible desire for physical distancing while in the church.

Communion will be offered at the Ash Wednesday service using both the individual and common cups. Any member wishing to receive private communion may set up an appointment with Pastor Behm by calling 920-319-1788 or emailing [pastorbehm@hotmail.com](mailto:pastorbehm@hotmail.com).

The 2021 Series is called **The Hands of the Passion**. Area pastors will be leading worship with the schedule below:

Feb. 17	Pastor Behm	Hands of Betrayal (Judas)
Feb. 24	Pastor Bittorf	Hands of Misguided Zeal (Peter)
Mar. 3	Pastor Willitz	Hands of Hypocrisy (Caiaphas)
Mar. 10	Pastor DeGier	Hands of Repentance (Tax Collector)
Mar. 17	Pastor Behm	Hands of Self-Preservation (Pilate)
Mar. 24	Pastor Bittorf	Hands of Brutality (Soldiers)

To find out about other WELS churches in the area that may be offering Lenten services, go to Yearbook at <https://yearbook.wels.net/unitsearch> and search the *Organizations* tab for churches. Links with contact information are provided. A hard copy of the Yearbook is also available for viewing on the table in front of the narthex mailboxes.

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# Lent It Be

*For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. (Philippians 1:29-30)*

Yes, you read the title correctly. It's not a typo, but rather a play on words of the phrase, "let it be." When people use the phrase, "let it be," they are asking a person to let something go and to let things just happen. In one way that's what we do during the season of Lent. **One major aspect of Lent is to focus on sufferings, not just the sufferings of Christ, but also our sufferings for Christ.**

If there was anyone who knew full well what it meant to suffer for Christ, it was Paul. In the book of Acts we hear God say this about Paul, "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." We see Paul briefly bring up his sufferings in these words to the Philippians. At this time Paul was in prison in Rome because of a false charge against him. Even the Philippians had seen Paul suffer for Christ in their own city. On his second missionary journey Paul was flogged and imprisoned unjustly since he was a Roman citizen. If anyone had any reason to complain about suffering, it would have been Paul.

But this is where Paul says something very interesting. Paul says that suffering for Christ has been granted to us on behalf of Christ. The Greek word that Paul uses here could be translated as "graciously given." **Our sufferings for Christ have been graciously given to us by God.** That's a concept that we normally don't think of because we might view sufferings as something unpleasant or as something to be avoided.

Yet our sufferings as Christians are not by accident or due to God being angry with us. It's quite the opposite; our sufferings have been given to us as a gift from God. Look at it in this way: if we never shared in our sufferings for Christ then our testimony for Christ might not be as powerful. When people see us willingly and joyfully endure sufferings they might be perplexed and wonder why. This is where we can share our faith with them and explain why we do what we do.

Therefore, when sufferings happen in our life we shouldn't view them as a burden but rather as a gift from God. Because of this we say to God, "Let it be. Let these sufferings be in my life so that I can carry my cross and follow you." And that's the other great thing about sharing in the sufferings for Christ. **Not only do we share in his sufferings, but we will also share in the ultimate victory won for us by Christ.** So as we enter the season of Lent this month, let us rejoice in the sufferings of Christ, our sufferings for Christ, and our victory in Christ.

- Pastor Neal Behm



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 4:15 pm Catechism	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 8:00 am   Worship w/ Guidelines (Holy Communion) 9:00 am   Children's Choir 9:15 am   Adult Bible Study 9:15 am   Youth Education 10:30 am   Worship (Holy Communion)	<b>8</b> 6:00 pm Women's Bible Study	<b>9</b> 6:30 pm Council Meeting	<b>10</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 4:15 pm Catechism 4:45 pm Bylaw Review Committee Meeting	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 9:00 am Men's Bible Study
<b>14</b> 8:00 am   Worship w/ Guidelines 9:00 am   Children's Choir 9:15 am   Adult Bible Study 9:15 am   Youth Education 10:30 am   Worship	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study *4:15 pm Catechism <b>6:30 pm</b> <b>Ash Wednesday</b> <b>Worship (Holy</b> <b>Communion)</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 9:00 Board of Elders Retreat
<b>21</b> 8:00 am   Worship w/ Guidelines (Holy Communion) 9:00 am   Children's Choir 9:15 am   Adult Bible Study 9:15 am   Youth Education 10:30 am   Worship (Holy Communion)	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study *4:15 pm Catechism 4:45 pm Bylaw Review Committee Meeting <b>6:30 pm</b> <b>Lenten Worship</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <i>School of Outreach Workshop at St. Peter, Schofield</i>
<b>28</b> 8:00 am   Worship w/ Guidelines 9:00 am   Children's Choir 9:15 am   Adult Bible Study 9:15 am   Youth Education 10:30 am   Worship						

\* Catechism class may be moved to a different day

## Weekly Sunday Schedule

8:00 – 9:00 am	Worship Service with Guidelines such as distancing, face masks, reduced touch, etc.
9:00 – 9:15 am	Sunday School Group/Music Time – basement
9:15 – 10:15 am	Education Hour – Adult, Teen, and Youth
10:30 – 11:30 am	Worship Service conducted in a traditional format

**CHURCH SOFTBALL:** Anyone age 10+ interested in playing on the church softball team in 2021, please sign-up on the fellowship board in the narthex.

**2020 YEAR-END OFFERING STATEMENTS** are now available in the narthex mailboxes. If you are unable to come into church to get your statement, email [kenner59@charter.net](mailto:kenner59@charter.net) or call 715-218-0159 to have it delivered another way.

### FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2 Neil Varnum	19 Jeff Berg
3 Connor Varnum	20 Emily Berg
10 Jenny Zeinert	20 Jennifer Marheine
16 Rose Schoepke	25 Lori Neff
17 Amanda Kropp	28 Paul Huth

**THRIVENT CHOICE:** Eligible Thrivent clients with membership, please consider directing Choice Dollars® to Christ Ev. Lutheran Church to help support the students attending WELS area schools through the P-16 Tuition Assistance Fund! Go to [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://Thrivent.com/thriventchoice) to learn more or call 800-847-4836 and, when prompted, say “Thrivent Choice” for more information.

### Church Councilmen Elected in January

**President:** Hans (Willi) Heisinger

**Financial Secretary:** Ken Neff

**Treasurer:** Bill Wendorf

Board of **Christian Education** Chair: Curt Whitson

Board of **Elders** Chair: Scott Schult

**Stewardship** Committee Chair: Losha Heisinger

**Technology** Committee Chair: Ken Cerney

*A complete list of councilmen is located on the bulletin board near the elevator.*

**OFFICIAL CHURCH CONSTITUTION MISSING:** The official copy of the church constitution and bylaws that contains the signatures of the congregation’s voting members may have been borrowed. It is enclosed in a clear front report cover with the back portion being red. If you happen to have it, please return it to the president mailbox or give it to President Willi Heisinger. Thank you.

**CAMP PHILLIP WOMEN’S RETREATS:** Get details at <https://www.campphillip.com/retreat-groups> or call 920-787-3202.

**March 5-7 Women’s Retreat:** a weekend of relaxation for your body and renewal for your soul!

**March 19-21 Quilting Retreat:** Suitable for both new and experienced quilters.

**SAVE THE DATE!** A virtual **Men of His Word Conference** will be held on Saturday, April 17, 2021 with the theme, “Separated yet United”. Find more details at <https://www.menofhisword.org/>.

**WINTER PARKING RESTRICTIONS:** In the city of Merrill during **February and March**, no person shall park any vehicle on any street except on:

1. The **odd-numbered side** of any street **on odd-numbered days**.
2. The **even-numbered side** of any street **on even-numbered days**.

Since the church’s address is **1204 N. Sales Street**, vehicles not in the church parking lot should be parked on the church (west) side of Sales Street on even-numbered days and on the east side of Sales Street on odd-numbered days.

Please submit items for next month’s Messenger by the 20<sup>th</sup> of this month to [Messenger@ChristMerrill.com](mailto:Messenger@ChristMerrill.com) or place them in the Messenger slot located in the top row of church mailboxes in the narthex.



# Bible Study Opportunities at Christ



**Sunday Adult Bible Study** meets at 9:15 am in the sanctuary; the current study is *Our Christian Response to Blessings and Challenges Part 1*.

We always need God's guidance and the reassurance that He loves us, especially when we face difficult challenges. We also need to remember that God uses even our most difficult challenges to bless us. But sometimes obvious blessings cause us to stumble just as much as the challenges do. This Bible study leads us to think about how redeemed children of God respond to blessings and challenges in a way that glorifies our Lord.

**To join the class virtually**, use this link:

<https://kennethcerney.my.webex.com/kennethcerney.my/j.php?MTID=mae7d2dd32e1bf0b17a2def7d92bcea47>

**To join by phone**, call: 1-415-655-0001 US Toll and enter meeting number (access code) 126 863 6922 and meeting password 23858242.

**Men's Bible Study** is held at 9:00 am on the **second Saturday** of the month in the church basement. In February, Neil Varnum is leading the group to finish its study of Malachi and then move on to the time between the Old and New Testaments.

**To join the class virtually**, use this link:

<https://kennethcerney.my.webex.com/kennethcerney.my/j.php?MTID=mee950ca2249b82e65b6797a72758a2b1>

**To join by phone**, call: 1-415-655-0001 US Toll and enter meeting number (access code) 126 147 5214 and meeting password 63672425.

**Women's Bible Study** is held from 6-7 pm on the **second Monday** of the month through May. February's topic is *Which Mary of the Bible is This?* that explores the six different women named Mary in the New Testament.

**To join the class virtually**, use this link:

<https://meet.google.com/egv-bntw-ewt>

**Wednesday Adult Bible Study** meets at 9:00 am in the sanctuary; the current study is about the book of *Revelation*.



## GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST:

*Growing Together* is an ongoing congregational Bible study intended to provide mutual support to each other to grow through individual, family or small group study. A study of the book of **2 Corinthians** will begin **February 14**. To receive a copy of the lesson in your church mailbox, sign-up on the narthex sign-up board. To get the weekly study sent to your email, sign-up at [ChristMerrill.com/email](http://ChristMerrill.com/email) and subscribe to the *Growing Together* Bible study.

## Check out what's NEW in our church library!



# Callings for LIFE

God's Plan, Your Purpose

JEFFREY LEININGER

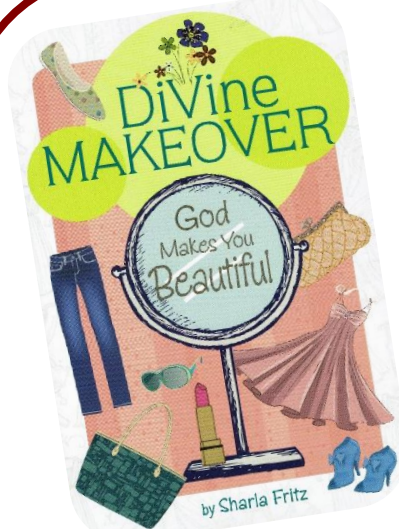
**What is my purpose in life?**

**What is the one thing I was born to do?**

The world wants you to think that unless you achieve one great thing—land the perfect job, find your soul mate, check every box on your bucket list, or find your capital-C calling—you have failed. But this is a myth.

The truth is that God fills your life with various callings, plural. These callings are found in the people God puts in your life, the time and place He has you, and the roles and responsibilities He gives you.

Be assured that God is at work in you and through you, His beloved, redeemed, precious child—not because of who you are but because of who you are *in Him*.



Are you ready for your makeover?

Who doesn't love the idea of a makeover at the hands of an expert? Someone to show us how to wear the right clothes, the best accessories. Someone to guide us to style perfection.

The world tells us that outward beauty is what counts. The problem is that when we judge ourselves by the world's standards, we definitely fall short of those standards.

But did you know that there is a different beauty standard, one that focuses on true loveliness? Did you know that there is Someone who makes us perfect?

God's divine makeover will restyle your life and show you true beauty through His love for you. His makeover will transform your heart, soul, and mind.

**I NEED to CHANGE:** a DVD with study guides from TIME OF GRACE with Pastor Mark Jeske

*Less Bitter,  
More Content*

*Less Selfish,  
More Giving*



*Less Critical,  
More Encouraging*

*Less Angry,  
More Gentle*

The church library, located in the lower level near the windows, has many more items available to help you and your family grow in faith. Take a look at the resources and take home a book, CD, or DVD today!