

THE MESSENGER

June 2023

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church



Come join us at Vacation Bible School (VBS) as we travel back in time—*Back to Jerusalem*! VBS will be held **May 31, June 7, 14, 21 and 28** with a meal at 5:00 pm and programming from 5:30–7:30 pm. Adults and children are welcome.

Please invite friends, relatives, and neighbors. Take some flyers from the table near the front doors to share with others. Register on the bulletin board in the hallway, call 715-536-3313 or go to ChristMerrill.com/VBS.

In this Messenger:

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- 1) Summer Worship
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- 4) Birthdays/Anniversary
- 4) Ben Stahoski Award
- 4) Men's Bible Study
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- 4) Shut-in Visits
- 4) Electronic *Messenger*
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- 7) Road Clean-up Pics
- 7) Softball Team Pic
- 8) Activity Day Pics
- 8) Car Wash Pics

Summer Worship Schedule begins June 4.

Sunday mornings at 9:00 am

Monday evenings at 6:30 pm



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The Disciple James the Less

“For he who is least among you all – he is the greatest.” (Luke 9:48)

Alexander the Great, Alfred the Great, Catherine the Great, Constantine the Great, Cyrus the Great. What do all these people have in common? They have all been given the title “the Great.” There are only a few select people throughout history who are given this title. But imagine being given the title “the Less.” Well, one of Jesus’ disciples has that title for he is known as James the Less. The reason James receives this title is to distinguish him from the other disciple James son of Zebedee, the brother of John. It is this other James that we hear about so regularly in Scripture. James the brother of John was a part of Jesus’ inner circle of disciples where Jesus would take Peter, James, and John off to the side. On the other hand, James the Less is only briefly mentioned in Scripture as being one of Jesus’ disciples. This is the only information we are given about this disciple.

So what could we learn from this disciple? Notice what Jesus said above. **Jesus has commanded all of us to consider ourselves least among people.** But let me ask you: would you rather be known as the Great or as the Less? We all want to be called the Great. It is our nature to consider ourselves more significant, more unique, and more special than others. So often we are filled with pride, and we think we are greater than others. In fact, when Jesus made this statement, it was because the disciples were arguing among each other about who was the greatest.

Now contrast how the disciples argued among themselves about who was the greatest and how we can consider ourselves greater than others with what Jesus did. Jesus humbled himself. He made himself nothing. Even though Jesus was very popular in his day, even though Jesus taught with great authority, even though Jesus performed miracles, Jesus did not do these things to glorify himself and to make himself Jesus the Great. **Everything that Jesus did was to glorify his Father in heaven. He did all these things to be known as Jesus the Savior who did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**

It was Jesus and what he did that changed the disciples from arguing among themselves about who was the greatest into being his servants and witnesses throughout the world. Even though we don’t know much about James the Less, we can say confidently that he went out to serve Jesus and others. **Let Jesus and what he did for us move us not to be filled with pride by thinking we are greater than others, but to consider others greater than us and to serve them. And Jesus promises to us that whoever humbles himself will be great in the kingdom of heaven.**

- Pastor Neal Behm

May/June 2023

View the most up to date calendar at christmerrill.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 9:00 am Worship	29	30	31 5:00 pm VBS Meal 5:30 pm Family Vacation Bible School	1	2 1:45 pm Worship @ Bell Tower	3
4 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion) 3:30 pm Softball @ Faith, Maine Sun-Tue Western Wisconsin District Conference	5 6:30 pm Worship (Holy Communion)	6	7 5:00 pm VBS Meal 5:30 pm Family Vacation Bible School	8	9	10
11 9:00 am Worship 3:30 pm Softball @ Immanuel, Corning	12 6:30 pm Worship	13 6:30 pm Council Meeting	14 5:00 pm VBS Meal 5:30 pm Family Vacation Bible School	15	16 Fri – Sun Family Fest @ Camp Phillip	17 9:00 am Men's Bible Study 10:00 am Camp Phillip Annual Meeting
18 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion) 5:30 pm Softball @ St. John's, Hamburg	19 6:30 pm Worship (Holy Communion)	20	21 5:00 pm VBS Meal 5:30 pm Family Vacation Bible School	22 6:00 pm Board of Elders Meeting	23 Thu – Sun Lutheran Women's Missionary Society Convention	24
25 9:00 am Worship 3:30 pm Softball @ Faith, Maine	26 6:30 pm Worship	27	28 5:00 pm VBS Meal 5:30 pm Family Vacation Bible School	29	30	



8:00 am Sundays - worship service on the radio (96.3FM, 730AM)

9:00 am Sundays - worship service online at youtube.com/@christmerrill

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP '21 SPECIAL

OFFERING: A fundraising plan has been established for those that would like to give a special offering toward the new hymnals. The goal is to purchase 44 additional hymnals. With shipping, this will amount to about \$26 per hymnal.

Offerings should be given to the Memorial Fund and designated for "Hymnals." This can be done by writing "Hymnals" on the envelope or in the memo line of a check. Envelopes should be placed in the offering plate. If you wish to have your donation recorded with your other church offerings, please write your name or envelope number on the Memorial Gift envelope.



Memorial Gift envelopes are available in the far-right narthex mailboxes.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

1 Megan C.	19 Mike K.
4 Sully R.	20 Leon M.
9 Terry F.	23 Jim D.
9 Ruth K.	23 Katelyn S.
12 Nicole Z.	25 Alan Z.
13 Brad D.	30 Adalyn D.
17 Asher K.	



JUNE ANNIVERSARY

23 Cody & Leah G.

BEN STAHOSKI AWARD: This annual award is given out to a catechism class youth that can recite all the books of the Bible in order in the fastest time. This year Derek S. had the fastest time of 29.9 seconds. Congratulations!

Please submit items for next month's *Messenger* by the 20th of this month to ChristMerrillEducation@gmail.com

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY: The study of the series *Destruction and Deliverance* about Noah and the Flood will continue on **June 17 at 9 am**. All men are invited to attend.

USHER SIGN-UP: All confirmed men of the congregation can serve as ushers. If you would like to serve as an usher in upcoming weeks, please sign up on the hallway bulletin board.

<i>Spiritual Growth Weekly Averages</i>	April
Sunday worship	71
Maundy Thursday, Good Friday	38
Men's Adult Bible Study	7
Sunday Adult Bible Study	20
Wednesday Adult Bible Study	12
Women's Adult Bible Study	5
Sunday School & Teen Bible Study	7

OUR OFFERINGS TO THE LORD (as of 4/30/23)

Anticipated offerings: \$52,804

Actual offerings: \$47,244

Actual expenses: \$52,752

General Fund balance as of 5/7/23: \$19,933

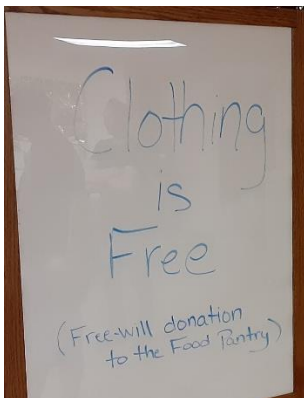
Your offerings help to support the ministry of the congregation. We are currently trending below budget. For more information see the Treasurer Report on the bulletin board by the elevator.

SHUT-IN VISITATION: The Elders welcome help from members visiting our shut-ins. Members are encouraged to visit and/or keep them in our prayers. Please reach out to Pastor or an elder for contact information.

Brad B., Laurene H., Tom L., Phil M., Lorna P., Kathleen P.

MESSENGER SIGN-UP: To get an electronic copy of each month's *Messenger* in your email, go to ChristMerrill.com/email and subscribe to *Messenger*. Paper copies will continue to be available at church.

TRAVELING THIS SUMMER? Find a WELS church in which to worship at <https://yearbook.wels.net/>.



May 20th Event

Thank you to everyone who helped with the garage sale and open house. We had over **200 people** visit our church. Nearly \$600 was raised and some additional food was brought in for the Merrill Food Pantry as well.

Here is an email received from someone who attended the May 20th event:

On Sat I came to your church for the community FREE sale. I was impressed with how organized everything was, all the free stuff and the free food was amazing!! But what I was most impressed with was how kind and friendly all the volunteers were. They served the Lord with smiles. Thank you again and may God Bless you all!!

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHURCH PRESIDENT

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15 NIV / 2023 theme verse)

Seeing the outpouring of love and support for last month's outreach event was amazing. We have much to be thankful for. In the months ahead there will no doubt be other opportunities for us to show love to others. The theme verse chosen for this year is 1 Peter 3:15 which extols us to always be ready to share the hope we have.

What is the hope that keeps you going? Is it your eternal destination? Is it the privilege God has given you to serve others? Is it your identity as a dearly loved child of God? Is it the support of Christian community? Whatever it may be, sharing the hope we have can seem excruciating and make us very uncomfortable. So how do we do this? By starting with those closest to us - our family - including our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. From the outpouring for Jesus' love in our hearts we can help, encourage, confront, share burdens, and forgive one another by reminding each other of what God tells us in His Holy Word - that God works everything out for the good of those that love Him (Rom 8:28; 1 Pet 5:50); Jesus knows our pain and the temptations we deal with (Heb 4:15; Matt 26:28); we are never alone for God is with us (Deut 31:8; Heb 13:5; Matt 28:20); all honor, thanks, and praise are His - for He is worthy (Rev 4:11; 1 Cor 10:31), all our sins are forgiven (1 John 1:9; Eph 1:7); this is not our home, Heaven is (Phil 3:20; 2 Pet 3:13) etc.

Make no mistake, where we find ourselves in this time and place didn't happen by chance, God has put each of us in a unique position to reach others for a purpose, and that purpose being to share the hope that we have (Acts 17:26; 1 Tim 2:4). This is God at work - putting people in our paths - whether at school, work, play, or around our home. So, let's start with our fellow believers as we prepare ourselves to share Jesus' love - for this is God's purpose for us as a community of believers. And we can do this because the same Jesus that submitted in gentleness and respect to His Father's will by going to the cross to endure excruciating pain, die, and rise again - lives in us. We have this certain hope - Jesus won our salvation - forgiving us and gifting us His righteousness, and now we have the privilege and joy of sharing life giving hope with others. So let's talk about the things that REALLY MATTER for we know the Risen One who has the final say and He is with us every step of the way.

- Willi H.



Spring Roadside Clean-up



You can participate in the fall clean-up in September!



Derek, Scott, Katelyn, Colleen, Alan, Henry, Jennifer, Leon

Church Softball: Christ Lutheran & Mountain of the Lord



Bold Names are Members of Christ Lutheran Church.

Back row: **Scott, Ethan, Sam, Derek, Tom, James, Nate, Leon**

Front row: Ronnie, Owen, **Jerome, Brianna, Sophia, Katelyn**

Sunday School Activity Day



Play Dough Fun



Musical Chairs

Youth Group Car Wash



Katelyn, Nicole, Kaylynn, Danielle, Derek, Sonia