

THE MESSENGER

April 2020

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

COVID-19 RELATED UPDATES

Visit www.christmerrill.com/covid19 for the most up-to-date information.

God Feeds His Flock in a Time of Crisis

An excerpt from [Together](#) 03/24/2020

God's people naturally desire the comfort and guidance of God's Word as well as the encouragement of fellow Christians. This is especially true in times of crisis. Congregations are already finding creative ways to keep their people connected to the Word.

Continue to trust in our gracious God and in his promises. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

Serving with you in Christ, WELS President Mark Schroeder

Christ Lutheran Church Services and Programs

Easter for Kids 2020 is **cancelled**.

Suspended until further notice:

- ALL Physical Worship Services
- Sunday Bible Class on *Romans*
- Wednesday Bible Class
- Men's Bible Study
- Women's Bible Study
- OWLS

Pastor Behm will post a **sermonette each Sunday** to the church's [YouTube channel](#) and [Facebook page](#).

NO DATE has yet been set for the **Quarterly Voters' Meeting**.

Interim Adult Bible Class: See page 4 for more information.

Interim Format for Sunday School and Teen Bible Class: See page 6 for more information.

From **11 am to 2 pm each Sunday, beginning March 29**, people may **drive up** to the church to deliver their offerings and to pick up paper copies of the sermonette, Adult Bible Study guide, and *The Messenger*. Offerings may also be mailed to Christ Ev. Lutheran Church, 1204 N. Sales St., Merrill 54452.

In this Messenger:

- 1) COVID-19 Related Updates
- 2) Pastor's Devotion
- 3) Pastor and Council Contact Information
- 3) Livestream Worship Services; Connecting WELS Members; WELS Devotions
- 3) Growing Together in Christ Bible Study
- 3) *Free Forward in Christ*
- 4) Adult Bible Class
- 5) NPH Resources
- 5) Birthdays
- 5) Youth Classes Attendance Awards
- 5) Catechism Class Update
- 5) Youth Rally Update
- 5) WELS Night at Miller Park
- 6) Sunday School Update
- 6) Teen Bible Class Update
- 7-8) Article: Faithfulness and Gentleness



715-536-3313
www.christmerrill.com
www.facebook.com/christmerrill
1204 N. Sales Street | Merrill, WI 54452



Trust in Jesus

“A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, ‘Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.” (Matthew 8:2-3)

Imagine being separated from your loved ones. Imagine not being able to live in town. Imagine telling everyone you meet that they have to stay away from you. Imagine not having any physical contact with others. In many ways we know what this is like right now. We are being told to stay in our homes because it's safer. We have to practice social distancing. We can be afraid to make any physical contact with another person so that we don't catch the virus.

But when I brought up the various things to imagine, I wasn't talking about us, but what people with leprosy went through in Jesus' time. They were separated from their loved ones. They had to shout at people that they were unclean so that others wouldn't come close to them. It was forbidden to have anyone touch you as a leper.

God was the one who gave these restrictions on those who had leprosy. God wasn't trying to be mean to these people, but out of love he was keeping those who had leprosy not to spread it to those who didn't have it. And in the above account you see another example of God's love. A leper came up to Jesus, knelt before him, and asked if Jesus was willing to heal him. And the amazing thing is not just the fact that Jesus was willing and did heal this man, but before Jesus did that, he reached out his hand and touched this man. It may have been years since this leper had someone touch him, and Jesus out of love touched him and then healed him.

So how does this apply to us as we are dealing with all the changes in our lives because of the current situation? What I am not saying is to follow Jesus' example that as he touched the leper then we shouldn't be practicing social distancing and the safety regulations we have been given. Remember that Jesus is God. As God he knew what was best, and Jesus also tells us not to put the Lord God to the test. Therefore, let us follow the instructions our government has given.

What I am saying in this devotion is for us to follow the example of the leper. This man trusted that Jesus would care for him and be willing to heal him. Therefore, let us bow down to Jesus trusting that he loves us, and we know he loves us because he suffered, died, and rose from the dead to save us. Let us trust that Jesus is willing to help us, and we know he is willing because he told us to come to him in prayer. Let us trust that Jesus will save us from this calamity. Immediately Jesus healed this leper, and when the time is right Jesus will immediately save us from this calamity. Therefore, let us be like this leper and trust in Jesus who loves us, is willing to help us, and has the power to save us.

- Pastor Neal Behm

If you have questions, concerns, or needs, please contact Pastor or a member of council. Comments and suggestions are appreciated.

Pastor Behm 920-319-1788 pastorbehm@hotmail.com
President: **Jacob Marheine** 715-218-1340 jacobmarheine@yahoo.com
Financial Secretary: **Bob Dehnel** 715-351-0653
Secretary: **Curt Whitson** 715-539-8647
Treasurer: **Bill Wendorf** 715-539-8152 cbbmwen@gmail.com
Board of Christian Education Chairman: **Scott Schult** 715-539-0250 14schult@gmail.com
Board of Church Properties Chairman: **Nick Cordova** 715-218-8513 nickcordova1@yahoo.com
Board of Elders Chairman: **Willi Heisinger** 715-432-9019 hanswilhelm.heisinger@gmail.com
Church Fellowship Committee Chairman: **Leon Marheine** 715-921-2641
Evangelism Committee Chairman: **Chris Revie** 715-741-0700
Stewardship Committee Chairman: **Ken Neff** 715-218-0519 kenner59@charter.net
Technology Committee Chairman: **Ken Cerney** 715-218-5393 ken.cerney@gmail.com

LIVESTREAM WORSHIP SERVICES: View the WELS Yearbook for a list of congregations that offer their worship services via livestream at <https://yearbook.wels.net/streaming>.

CONNECTING WELS MEMBERS: The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod offers many ways to connect members through social media. Join the WELS online community at one of the following:

facebook.com/welslutherans

twitter.com/welstweets

vimeo.com/wels

instagram.com/welslutherans

WELS DEVOTIONS: WELS offers many free devotional options, including a daily devotion, that can be e-mailed directly to you at <https://wels.net/subscribe> or through the WELS App (<https://wels.app>).

Members are encouraged to make use of the **Growing Together in Christ** Bible Study. Those that currently receive paper copies will have them mailed to their home.

If you wish to receive a copy you may request one through one of the following ways:

1. Sign up at ChristMerrill.com/email and select the "Growing Together" option.
2. Text or leave a message with your name and mailing address at 715-921-5132.
3. Email ChristMerrillEducation@gmail.com.

SPECIAL OFFER! Stay connected with Christ and with your family of faith. Read the digital edition of the **April issue** of *Forward in Christ* magazine for **free**. <https://online.nph.net/fic-free-issue-form>

INTERIM ADULT BIBLE CLASS:

Topic is "Reviewing the Basics of Luther's Small Catechism."

The same lesson will be offered three times per week.

Sundays at 10:00 am;

Tuesdays at 2:00 pm; and

Thursdays at 6:00 pm.



A [study guide](#) is available. If you would like to have a paper copy of *the* study guide [mailed](#) to you, please include your name and address and email christmerrilleducation@gmail.com or call or text 715-921-5132.

Each week's class will be recorded and posted to the church's [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#) so they can be viewed at any time.

The study will be conducted through an online service called Webex. A tutorial is available at <https://help.webex.com/en-us/n62wi3c/Get-Started-with-Cisco-Webex-Meetings-for-Attendees> on how to participate. For technical assistance, call Ken C. at 715-218-5393 or Scott S. at 715-539-0250.

There are two different ways to join the live study:

- 1) Go to <https://globalpage-prod.webex.com/join>. Enter in the meeting number (access code) and meeting password (case sensitive) to join the class of your choice.
- 2) Call **1-408-418-9388** and enter the meeting number (access code).

Sunday number (access code): **623 780 608**

Sunday password (case sensitive): **hPfp4QVhj56**

Tuesday number (access code): **627 643 694**

Tuesday password (case sensitive): **PTcEKmm2W43**

Thursday number (access code): **622 745 434**

Thursday password (case sensitive): **EqtAPpJA296**

If you would like to have a paper copy of *The Messenger* [mailed](#) to you, please include your name and address and email Messenger@ChristMerrill.com or call or text 715-921-5132.

NPH RESOURCES: Available from Northwestern Publishing House, nph.net, or by calling 800-662-6022. Visit the Northwestern Publishing House Facebook page for encouraging devotions and prayers.

SUNDAY SCHOOL & TEEN CLASS

ATTENDANCE AWARDS:

These students earned awards for the second trimester: Caleb Kleinschmidt, Adeline Heisinger, Katelyn Schult, Megan Cordova, Derek Schult, Kaylynn Zeinert, Nicole Zeinert, Adeline Huth, James Cordova, and Paul Huth. Well done!

CATECHISM CLASS: The catechism class has two lessons remaining; youth will complete them at home. Pastor Behm will provide resources to families as needed.

WELS INTERNATIONAL YOUTH RALLY

scheduled for June 23-26, 2020, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee has been **cancelled**. The WELS Commission on Discipleship is exploring options to make resources available online from the key presentations that were scheduled for the rally for youth groups and members to use.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Sandra Abbrederis | 22 Trina Green |
| 9 Preston Collins | 22 Jacob Marheine |
| 9 Don Paroubek | 23 Steve Huth |
| 12 Derek Schult | 23 Christina Weiland |
| 14 Grace Golomb | 24 Lisa Kohnhorst |
| 17 Marion Schmoltdt | 24 Laura Pierzchalski |
| 20 Pastor Behm | 27 Rachel Berg |
| 21 Dick Stahoski | 30 Willi Heisinger |
| | 30 Lois Woller |



Happy Birthday



WELS NIGHT

AT MILLER PARK

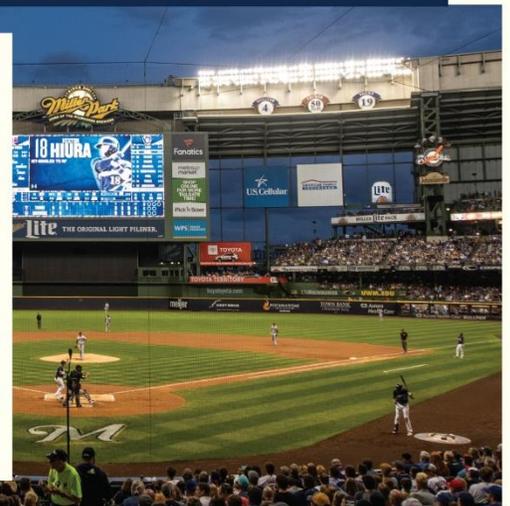
FRI, 7/24  **7:10 PM**

50% OFF SELECT TICKETS

TICKET PRICES

FIELD OUTFIELD BOX \$21	LOGE OUTFIELD BOX \$17	TERRACE RESERVED \$9
-------------------------	------------------------	----------------------

Tickets can be purchased online at BREWERS.COM/WELS
 Deadline to purchase tickets is Friday, June 26.



INTERIM FORMAT FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL:

The schedule of Sunday School lessons for the remainder of the school year:

- March 29: Jesus Calms the Storm
- April 5: Daughter of Jairus
- April 12: The Lost Son
- April 19: The Lord's Supper
- April 26: Jesus' Crucifixion
- May 3: Jesus; Burial and Resurrection
- May 10: Jesus' Ascension

Each week the lesson and activity pages will be emailed. If your family would like to receive these materials, please email christmerrilleducation@gmail.com or call or text 715-921-5132 with your name and mailing address. Parents can also [download these lessons](#) for free, compliments of Northwestern Publishing House.

The teachers are available for questions, comments, or just to chat with their students.

- PreK: Mrs. Schult 715-539-0250
christmerrilleducation@gmail.com
- K-Gr. 3: Mrs. Jankowsky 715-921-4546
- Gr. 4-6: Mrs. Cerney
ellen.cerney@gmail.com

INTERIM FORMAT FOR TEEN BIBLE CLASS:

The schedule of Teen Bible Class lessons for the remainder of the series "What Do I Say, Lord...":

- March 29: When Someone is Tempted to Turn Away from Jesus?
- April 5: When Someone Puts Me Down for My Faith?
- April 12: When Someone Pressures Me to Sin?
- April 19: When Someone Deliberately Keeps Living a Sinful Life?

Each week the lesson will be emailed. If your family would like to receive these lessons, please email christmerrilleducation@gmail.com or call or text 715-921-5132 with your name and mailing address.

Mr. Huth is available at 608-572-0417 or huths@hotmail.com for questions, comments, or just to chat with his students.



Want your kids to stay connected to Jesus? The most recent editions of "Kids Connection" are available to view at online.nph.net/kidsconnection2020. Parents can use the September 2019 through March 2020 monthly videos at home with their children as part of their daily devotional life.

Faithfulness and Gentleness

By John A. Braun

Dissentions and factions create roadblocks along the Christian Way.

Paul's acts of the flesh include some hazards we must avoid on our journey. He lists them as dissensions, factions, and envy. But he does not leave us paralyzed, unable to move toward our heavenly goal. He also cites two important fruits of the Spirit to help us make progress: faithfulness and gentleness.

Acts of the flesh: Dissensions, factions, and envy

Paul's world was different from our own. It's hard to imagine that Paul faced protests for civil rights, abortion, or other political causes. Roman law and power settled almost all such issues. Most found little tolerance for social or political protests. Yet Paul was in the midst of a vehement protest with Demetrius and the silversmiths. That disagreement turned into a riot in Ephesus (Acts chapter 19). That was an example of dissension, faction, and envy caused by the message of the gospel.

It was ugly and dangerous. "Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there [in the theater]" (Acts 19:32). Finally the city clerk quieted the crowd and told the people to take their grievances to the courts, warning them of the danger of causing a riot. The crowd melted away.

In our own age, protests and divisions are part of our everyday newscasts. Differences escalate into heated confrontations. Like the riot in Ephesus, some shout one thing and some another. Perhaps such displays of factions and dissension are part of our system of government. We vote and contend for our positions in a way people in Paul's world did not. Roman soldiers did not stand by in riot gear awaiting flying stones.

That factor doesn't matter much today. What does matter is that dissensions, factions, and envy have not disappeared. The sinful nature within asserts itself from time to time and creates conflict. Paul's list is not just a list of ancient characteristics we no longer have. His acts of the flesh persist in our age because the sinful nature persists. Envy persists. Factions persist.

Paul adds envy to the list, I think, to help us understand. Envy distorts every thought to help others. It is subtle at times; at other times, it is blatantly obvious. Sometimes we allow envy to blockade our ability to listen and love. As a result, we become harsh and hostile, ready for a fight or argument. It's so much a part of our world, we are carried along without thinking. We fall for the temptation to be disagreeable, assert our own rights or thinking, and oppose others.

It is bad enough that the conflicts arise in our country and society, our marriages and families, our neighborhoods and our government at all levels. Sadly, they also arise within the church—among God people. Paul was no stranger to them. To the Galatians he warned, "If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other." (5:15).

Yes, these negative attitudes reside in Christians as well. Paul saw divisions rise up in the churches he founded. He warned against "false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ," reminding the Corinthians that even Satan masqueraded as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:12-14). He also told the Romans to avoid those who taught false doctrines (Romans 16:17).

Paul's view of the future of the Christian church emerges from his words to Timothy, "The time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of

teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” (2 Timothy 4:3,4).

Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness and gentleness

Throughout history, the church has often had to contend with those who have not put up with sound doctrine and claimed to be right. Sadly, they claimed to be righter than right. That sentence doesn’t make any sense grammatically or theologically, but it raises the question of who is right and who isn’t. There can’t be two rights or a righter than right. How do we navigate differences and factions? Paul suggests two fruits of the Spirit: faithfulness and gentleness.

Faithfulness first. The antidote to all the false teachers and heretical factions was—and still is—faithfulness to the Word of God. The Holy Spirit has created a desire within us to treasure the Scriptures that tell us of Jesus and of all of God’s promises. So we remain faithful to the Scriptures. They are our authority for truth, our Supreme Court, to decide what is right and what is not. Faithfulness to that truth will move us to compare anyone’s teaching with the Scriptures and evaluate it on the basis of that standard. John suggests, “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

Then, with firmness in the truth, Paul advises gentleness. Peter advises the same attitude when he said that we are to share the hope we treasure with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). No one wants divisions, and we must deal with love and kindness with those who think differently. When they will not listen to the truth, then we have no alternative but to avoid those ideas and the groups that proclaim them.

But not all disagreements are about doctrine. Sometimes Christians have arguments and quarrels about whether or not to have carpeting in the church and what color it should be. Some question which preacher is better—even Paul mentioned this disagreement (1 Corinthians 1:10-17); others anguish over how the budget was set and whether we should spend money on the school or on the front steps of the church. Every church has these differences or others like them.

Faithfulness and gentleness are valuable in all these discussions. We remain faithful to God’s Word and also faithful to Jesus’ command to love one another. Then we can be gentle in our disagreements, not belligerent or harsh.

Dissensions and factions dog every step of our journey, and our sinful flesh is often tempted to feed them. They become group activities. One person solicits support from others who are like-minded. Then another person gathers others who disagree. The result can be belligerent, bitter, and divisive.

We should not let differences get out of hand. Even everyday disagreements may become roadblocks to the Christian concept of loving one another and may block the work of the congregation and the larger church. They will turn the character of a congregation sour. Perhaps they also will turn some away from the path we follow together. Let us walk by the Spirit and “not gratify the desires of the flesh. . . . Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other” (Galatians 5:16,25,26). Remain faithful to the Scripture and gentle in our dealings with each other.

Volume 106, Number 9 Issue: [September 2019](#) Copyrighted by WELS *Forward in Christ* © 2019

Forward in Christ grants permission for any original article to be printed for use in a WELS church, school, or organization, provided that it is distributed free and indicate Forward in Christ as the source.