

THE MESSENGER

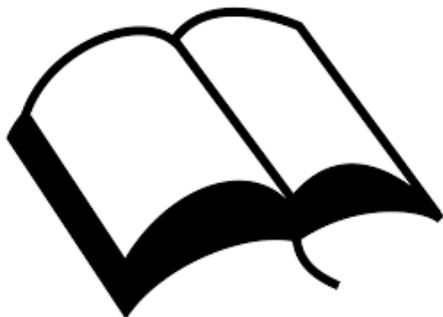
February 2020

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY is held on the second Saturday of the month through April. (Pastor) Neil Varnum is leading the group through a study of The Book of the Twelve (The Minor Prophets). Each class is an introduction to a book and an overview of its message. It may be helpful to read the Minor Prophet ahead of time to get a flavor of the book before coming to the Bible study.

The **February 8** class will be about the book of **Jonah**.



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY led by Colleen Schult, is held from 6:00 to 7:00 pm on the second Monday of each month. The topic for **February 10** will be **Names of God**.

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY is held each week at **10:30** in the church basement. The current study is about **Worship**.

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY is held each week at **9:00** in the church basement. The current study is about **Basics of Christianity**.

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. January through May will focus on several New Testament studies. To get an electronic copy in your email, sign-up at ChristMerrill.com/email and subscribe to the *Growing Together* Bible study.

In this Messenger:

- 1) Bible Study Opportunities
- 2) Pastor Behm's Devotion
- 3) February Calendar
- 4) Youth Group Meeting
- 4) Church Softball
- 4) Messenger Sign-up
- 4) Birthdays
- 4) Women's Retreats
- 4) Support NLHS
- 4) Winter Parking
- 5) Men's Conferences
- 6) Forward in Christ update
- 6) WELS online subscriptions
- 7) Article: Being a Welcoming Congregation
- 8) Feature: Where to Find Information at Church – Narthex Mailboxes



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What is Love?

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

(1 Corinthians 13:4-8a)

Love is a word that we love to use, but what is love? A lot of people will say that love is an emotion. It's an emotion that you can have for someone else that makes your stomach feel like it's tied up in knots. Others will say love is a word we use to describe something that we really like. For *instance*, children can say they love ice cream. People in Wisconsin will say they love Friday fish fries, dairy products, and hunting. Still some of you when you hear the question, "What is love?" may think of the popular 1993 song by Haddaway which was used in popular skit in Saturday Night Live.

But what does the Bible say love is? Take a quick look at what Paul said love is. According to Paul love is not really an emotion, rather love shows itself in actions. Now take a quick look at your actions. Do you see love in your actions? Are you always patient, kind, not easily angered, not keeping a record of wrongs, not self-seeking? Even on our best days we all fail in showing love faithfully to others. The reason for this is because by nature we only love ourselves. Sinfully we will only show love so that it will benefit us. Even as Christians who desire to show love to others, we will still fail to follow this command from God.

Even though by nature we are loveless people we hear in God's word that "God is love" (1 John 4:16). This is who God is. He is love, and he put his love into action. **God is love** by setting aside his riches in heaven to become poor so that by his poverty we could become rich toward God. **God is love** by suffering when he was tempted so that he could fulfill God's love on our behalf and help us when we are tempted. **God is love** by sacrificing himself for our sins so that we could be forgiven of every time we failed to show love. **God is love** by bringing us to him through faith which he created through his Word.

Our **God is love**, and in Christ he loves you. Now you are able to show that Christ-like love in your life. You can show love by being patient and kind with others because you know that God is patient and kind with you. Your love can now no longer keep a record of wrongs because God keeps no record of your wrongdoings. Your love has changed from being self-focused to being selfless because of God and his love. This is what love is, and we can know that God's love is upon us because **God is love** and his love never fails.

- Pastor Neal Behm



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 9:00 Worship (Holy Communion) 10:30 Adult Bible Class 10:30 Sunday School 10:30 Teen Bible Class	3 5:00 Board of Christian Education Meeting	4	5 9:00 Adult Bible Class 3:30 Catechism Class 5:00 Youth Group Meeting 6:30 Adult Choir Practice	6 11:30 OWLS	7	8 9:00 Men's Bible Study
9 9:00 Worship 10:30 Adult Bible Class 10:30 Sunday School 10:30 Teen Bible Class	10 6:00 Women's Bible Study	11 6:30 Council Meeting	12 9:00 Adult Bible Class 3:30 Catechism Class 6:30 Adult Choir Practice	13	14	15
16 9:00 Worship (Holy Communion) 10:30 Adult Bible Class 10:30 Sunday School 10:30 Teen Bible Class	17	18	19 9:00 Adult Bible Class 3:30 Catechism Class 6:30 Adult Choir Practice	20	21	22
23 9:00 Worship 10:30 Adult Bible Class 10:30 Sunday School 10:30 Teen Bible Class	24 6:00 Youth Education Meeting	25	26 9:00 Adult Bible Class 3:30 Catechism Class 6:30 Adult Choir Practice	27	28	29

YOUTH GROUP MEETING: will take place on **Wednesday, February 5 at 5 pm.** All youth in grades 6-12 are encouraged to attend. Main topics of discussion include the International Youth Rally and serving a Lenten meal.

CHURCH SOFTBALL: If you are interested in playing on the church softball team in 2020, sign-up on the fellowship board in the narthex.

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.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

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

*Would you prefer your name to be printed in a different way than above in the future?
Put a note in the Messenger mailbox.*

UPCOMING CAMP PHILLIP

WOMEN'S RETREATS:

February 27-March 1: Quilting Retreat

March 20-22: Women's Retreat

Visit CampPhillip.com for more information and to register or pick up a paper form from the Christian Education bulletin board at the top of the steps.

Please submit items for next month's Messenger by the 20th of this month to Messenger@ChristMerrill.com or place them in the Messenger slot located in the top row of church mailboxes in the narthex.

SUPPORT NORTHLAND LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL:

HuTerra Rewards App lets you support Northland by shopping for items you use daily.

- Download the 'My HuTerra' app and set up your account.
- Search for the Northland Lutheran High School education community and select General Fundraiser as your fundraiser.
- Shop at participating businesses on the app, including local businesses and hundreds of name brand online stores.
- Scan and submit your receipts via the My HuTerra App and you're done!

NLHS SCRIP SALES: You can purchase gifts cards for your everyday expenses such as gas, groceries, clothing, household items or dining out. A percentage of each gift card you purchase is given to NLHS as a rebate. Cindy Whitson is available to assist you at the table near the elevator in the narthex.

WINTER PARKING RESTRICTIONS: In the city of Merrill during **December, January, 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.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES FOR MEN

CROSS+MEN LAKESHORE WELS CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

7:30 AM - 2:00 PM

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran School

3607 45th Street, Two Rivers, WI

EARLY REGISTRATION (THROUGH JAN 31) \$25

NORMAL REGISTRATION (THROUGH MAR 7) \$30



REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Regular admission is \$35. High School & College Students are FREE until March 7.

Visit ironmenofgodwi.org

for more information

or to register.

WELS PUBLICATIONS AND ONLINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Forward in Christ magazine debuted a new look and fresh new features in its January 2020 issue. The issue includes a redesigned cover and interior pages, brighter and thicker paper, an expanded Confessions of faith section, a new Q&A column with accompanying Bible study, and a new column featuring photos from readers.

Check out the new *Forward in Christ* in your congregation today. Also explore *Forward in Christ's* new website, forwardinchrist.net, for additional content and to sign up to receive a free weekly e-newsletter filled with articles, photos, and sneak peeks delivered right to your e-mail inbox.

Like *Forward in Christ* magazine on [fb.com/forwardinchristmagazine](https://www.facebook.com/forwardinchristmagazine).

Follow *Forward in Christ* magazine on [instagram.com/forward_in_christ_magazine](https://www.instagram.com/forward_in_christ_magazine).

The above is an excerpt from January 7, 2020 *TOGETHER*- A biweekly and breaking e-newsletter from WELS.

WELS offers many items to receive by email including those listed below. Sign up at <https://wels.net/subscribe/>

WELS Daily Devotions

Transformed: Devotions connecting teens to Christ

Early Childhood Educator's Devotions

Military Devotions

Worship Helps

Through My Bible in Three Years

Together - The official WELS newsletter and video featuring synod news and ministry updates.

An Encouraging Word - A stewardship-focused newsletter with resources for congregations from the Ministry of Christian Giving.

CLS E-news - A weekly newsletter for teachers and administrators at WELS schools.

His Hands - From the WELS Commission on Special Ministries, highlighting several areas of compassion ministries.

Prison Ministry Newsletter - Updates about WELS Prison Ministry activities.

Missions Update Newsletter - Details the work and featuring stories of WELS Home and World missions.

Missions blogs - A weekly blog from one of the many WELS missions fields delivered to your inbox.

MLP Newsletter - A newsletter that highlights the work of WELS Multi-Language Publications.

Nurses Association - Updates from the WELS Nurses Association and WELS Parish Nurses.

ShopWELS Insider - Notification and deals from vendors and companies that provide special savings to WELS organizations and members.

E-Bulletin Board - A monthly update detailing available WELS resources and events.

Being a Welcoming Congregation

The following is an excerpt from a [Forward in Christ](#) article.

As part of its Welcome Home initiative, WELS Congregational Services has released a series of videos to address some of the most common reasons Christians stop attending church and how to show love and minister to these members. Nate Bourman, pastor at Mount Lebanon, Milwaukee, Wis., was featured in the videos discussing how to be a welcoming congregation.

Forward in Christ: What is your definition of a welcoming church?

Bourman: A church where no one stands or sits alone; everyone feels comfortable and safe. A place where everyone knows what is going on and feels that they can navigate the facilities or get information about our congregation. A place where parents, adults, and children feel safe to hear God's Word and can easily participate and are welcome to participate.

FIC: What are some common reasons you've heard from members who felt unwelcome at church?

B: I think the primary reason people don't feel welcome is that no one talks to them. People will walk into a church and no one greets them; they don't know what's going on and are left to feel like they didn't belong there or are clearly the outsider. Members are often so busy in their "holy huddles" that the guest, visitor, and sometimes even other members are left on the outside looking in. It's possible to be a stranger in your own house.

FIC: How can members participate in being a welcoming church?

B: Care and concern for the members of the church is not just the pastor's job. It is not just the elders' job. It is the job of each and every member. Love calls us to participate. None of us sits on the sidelines when it comes to welcoming God's people home. . . . All are coming to church with sin and weakness and brokenness and frustration. Be part of the throng rejoicing to gather for worship with each other.

FIC: What do you hope viewers take away from the videos?

B: Love your fellow members. Deeply. Bend over backwards. Be nice. Do whatever you can to give the gospel the opportunity to be heard. Get into their shoes and try to understand how they feel. Sympathize with their needs, their hurts, and their struggle. Love them!

The four videos and accompanying Bible studies are available at welscongregationalservices.net.

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Where to Find Information at Church: Part 3 – Narthex Mailboxes



Do you have information pertaining to a particular church ministry area to pass along or pick up? This is where it goes!

The top row of mailboxes contains slots for **Friendship Register** pages; **Pastor Behm**; all of the church **Officers, Boards, and Committees**; church **Librarian**; **Youth Education Coordinator**; **Choir Director**; **Youth Group** leaders; and **Messenger**.



Member mailboxes are arranged alphabetically by last name. Each person's mailbox is located above his/her name label.



Regular print and large print *Messengers* as well as other flyers are available on the table.

Current issues of *Forward in Christ* and other publications can be picked up from the table.

