

# THE MESSENGER

July 2020

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

## QUARTERLY VOTERS' MEETING

is scheduled for Sunday, July 12 at 10:15 am.



## FAMILY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

We are currently planning Family VBS to be held at Christ in August. Our theme this year will be "Dive In!". Each week, our lessons focus around a different sea creature. While more details will be provided in mid-July, the dates and topics are listed below.

- **Wednesday, Aug. 12th** - "Black Dragonfish":  
God promises a Savior from sin
- **Wednesday, Aug. 19th** - "Porcupine Fish":  
Jesus says no to the devil
- **Wednesday, Aug. 26th** - "Dolphin":  
Jonathan serves God by helping David

To register, call (715) 536 – 4180 or visit [www.ChristMerrill.com/FamilyVBS](http://www.ChristMerrill.com/FamilyVBS).



## TRANSFORMED

Workshops were held at Christ Lutheran and online June 20 and 27. To learn more about transforming youth ministry within the church, watch this 55 minute overview video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=7&v=AwUUam812XM&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=7&v=AwUUam812XM&feature=emb_logo).

There is a study guide available at: [https://www.menofhisword.org/uploads/1/1/0/8/11083539/5/guide6\\_transformyouth.pdf](https://www.menofhisword.org/uploads/1/1/0/8/11083539/5/guide6_transformyouth.pdf).

**The article on pages 5 and 6 of this month's Messenger also explains more about Transforming Youth Ministry.**

### In this Messenger:

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- 4) Men's Bible Study
- 4) WELS Social Media
- 4) WELS Campus Ministry
- 4) Birthdays
- 5-6) Article:  
Transforming Youth Ministry



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## Christian Freedom

***Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king. (1 Peter 2:13-17).***

As Americans we love freedom. On July 4<sup>th</sup> we celebrate how we became an independent nation and in the Declaration of Independence we were given certain freedoms. We have the freedom to say what we want. We have the freedom to pursue any job or lifestyle as long as it isn't illegal. We have the freedom to practice our religion and spread the message about Jesus without being arrested or killed, which is not allowed in many other nations.

As Americans we are free, but as Christians are we free? Martin Luther once said, "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." **As Christians we are free. The greatest freedom we have received is that we have been set free from sin, death, and the power of the devil.** We have free forgiveness through Jesus' blood shed on the cross. We have the promise of eternal life through faith in Jesus who rose from the dead for us. We have the ability to resist the devil and his temptations for we are no longer under his control and God gives us strength to fight against the devil and his temptations.

As Christians we are free, but what are we to do with our freedom? Peter in the above passage tells us what to do with our freedom. **Since we are free, we are now free to serve. In our freedom we submit to our government, not only to our president, but also to our local authorities. In our freedom we show love for our fellow believers and help them in any way we can. In our freedom we show proper respect to everyone so that our light for Christ can shine to them. In our freedom we fear, love, and respect God above all.**

As Christians we are free to serve, but do we use our freedom as a cover-up for evil? We all do. We can be selfish. We can be conniving. We can be divisive. We can use our freedom to enslave ourselves to sin which only leads to death. And what is worse is the fact that we know this and yet we still use our freedom won by Christ for these things.

As Christians we can use our freedom for sin, but what has God done for us? He still loves us. He hasn't removed what Christ has done for us. He continues to reach out to us. He strengthens us to serve him and others freely. Let Christ, the one who freed us, be our motivation to be free to serve. It is God's will that we do good. **So let us live as free men to be servants of God who honor the government, show proper respect to everyone, love the brotherhood of believers, and fear God.**

- Pastor Neal Behm



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 6:30 Worship (Holy Communion)	3	4
5 9:00 Worship (Holy Communion)	6	7	8	9 6:30 Worship	10	11 9:00 Men's Bible Study
12 9:00 Worship  10:15 Quarterly Voters' Meeting  2:00 Softball	13 5:00 Special Board of Christian Education Meeting	14 6:30 Council Meeting	15	16 6:30 Worship (Holy Communion)	17	18
19 9:00 Worship (Holy Communion)  2:00 Softball	20	21	22	23 6:30 Worship	24	25
26 9:00 Worship  4:00 Softball	27	28 6:30 Worship Aids	29	30 6:30 Worship (Holy Communion)	31	

**COVID-19 RELATED UPDATES:** Visit [www.christmerrill.com/covid19](http://www.christmerrill.com/covid19) for the most up-to-date information.

**MEN'S BIBLE STUDY:** The Men's Bible Study continues **online or at church Saturday, July 11 at 9:00 am.** Please plan to do a little preparation work in advance:

- Get a copy of the Bible study:
  - Click here for [study guide](#)
  - Pick one up from church by the narthex mailboxes.
- Read the book of *Zephaniah*.

There are two different ways to participate in the live study:

- 1) Come join the study in person in the church fellowship hall (basement)
- 2) Join using Google Meet link or address below.

**Join with Google Meet** at [meet.google.com/rea-rzbf-dyp](https://meet.google.com/rea-rzbf-dyp)

**CONNECTING WELS MEMBERS:** The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod offers many ways to connect members through social media.

Join the WELS online community at  
[facebook.com/welslutherans](https://facebook.com/welslutherans)  
[twitter.com/welstweets](https://twitter.com/welstweets)  
[instagram.com/welslutherans](https://instagram.com/welslutherans)  
[vimeo.com/wels](https://vimeo.com/wels)

**WELS CAMPUS MINISTRY:** celebrates 100 years: In 1920, the first campus ministry program began at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. For 100 years, thousands of young adults have found spiritual comfort, community, and encouragement through WELS campus ministries around North America. WELS Campus Ministry, a ministry of WELS Home Missions, continues that legacy by providing resources and support to congregations that serve these college students during a critical transition point in their life. WELS Missions will have a special emphasis on campus ministry in 2020, encouraging congregations and WELS members to get involved or support campus ministry through their special gifts. **For more on the anniversary celebration and to get involved, visit [wels.net/cm100](http://wels.net/cm100).**

### JULY BIRTHDAYS

1 Patrick Kleinschmidt	15 Vicki Lindstrom
3 Ariana Raddatz	16 Ken Cerney
3 Kayoda Raddatz	19 Brian Stockowitz
4 Kathy Schuch	20 Deana Jankowsky
6 Derek Sawczuk	22 Del Jaeger
9 Larry Woller	23 Peggy Boehm
10 Lynda Kropp	25 Jennifer Heisinger
13 Seth Line	29 Gerald Johnson
13 Nikki Stockowitz	29 Bonnie Huth
13 Cynthia Varnum	30 Nick Cordova
14 Carl Christian	30 Lisa Schmidt

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

**P-16 TUITION ASSISTANCE FUND:** The P-16 Tuition Assistance Fund, designed to financially assist those who attend WELS preschools, grade, middle and high schools. Please consider contributing to the fund.

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.

# Transforming Youth Ministry

***WELS youth ministers are recognizing the importance of Christian mentoring and working to create meaningful relationships with young adults.***



It all started two years ago at a conference at St. Croix Lutheran High School, West St. Paul, Minn. Approximately 40 WELS youth workers from around the country met to talk about their ministries. “We spent a weekend talking about what’s going on with our youth,” says Kory Henkel, member at Rock of Ages, Madison, Tenn., and one of the presenters for the new WELS School of Youth and Family. “We found out that regardless of where we are in the country, we are all having the same issues and the same challenges with youth ministry.”

## **Reaching the youth**

Those challenges include youth members becoming disconnected with the church after they are confirmed, particularly in high school and college. “We’re living in a post-truth society, and we see how all of this is impacting youth ministry as well,” says Henkel. “Faith priorities are made by the time you’re 18. If you’re not actively involved in a church, the chances of you becoming involved are very slim. It’s a very important, formative time. As a church, we have a great opportunity to reach people who are forming their opinions and their entire lives.”

According to Henkel, one of the biggest thing kids are looking for is affinity. “With social media, we’ve never been more connected, but they’re not real relationships,” he says. “Relationships with their friends, classmates, and peers are oftentimes fragmented and shallow. So we have the amazing opportunity to show the youth of our congregations what real, genuine relationships look like by showing them the love of their Savior Jesus—not just in Bible study, but in everyday life.”

He says the best youth ministry happens when adults grow in faith and live authentic lives with teenagers. “Do normal things; live your life with kids and show them Christ through that,” he says. “Mentor-based relationships are important, and they are missing in the lives of kids today. By equipping families, lay leaders, and pastors to mentor kids through their formative years, we can transform that head knowledge into heart knowledge.”

## **Practicing Christian mentoring**

Tad Schubring, director of youth education at St. Mark, De Pere, Wis., is doing just that. Schubring has been involved with Christian mentoring for the past five years. During that time, he has started a program to provide training and encouragement for other adults who want to start mentoring.

When he first started looking at Christian mentoring, Schubring went to a youth ministry conference that spent a lot of time explaining what it meant to be a mentor. “In Mark 3:14, it says that Jesus appointed 12 that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach,” says Schubring. “Jesus could have had 5,000 people with him all of the time, but he chose not to. He wanted to go deeper with a few. So Christian mentoring is modeled after that—spending quality time with youth and having an intentional relationship with them.”

Schubring says that motivated him to get involved with mentoring, but he didn't know where to start. "I remember sitting down when I first heard about this, thinking, *How am I going to do this? Where do I start? I don't feel qualified. I don't have enough time in the day. How is this going to work?*" he says. "But thankfully the Holy Spirit doesn't give up."

He said a book called *The Be-With Factor* helped clarify some things for him. "I looked at all of the people God had already put in my life; I needed to be intentional with those people and share the gospel with my actions," says Schubring. "It's very clear in James and throughout the Bible that that's what you're supposed to do and that is how we love God—by obeying his commands, by being intentional and being held accountable to those people God has put in your life."

He talked to families in his congregation about the ministry and began looking for young people who were interested in being mentored. One of them was Macario Sierra. "I was up for it," says Sierra. "I thought that it would be good for me to be mentored by someone like Tad because I looked up to him and I saw how happy he was with his life. I wanted to be as happy as he was."

Schubring and Sierra met each week after school for several months. "We'd go out to grab a bite to eat or hang out around the church and discuss what was going on with my life," says Sierra. "Tad would often give me great advice on how to deal with things."

According to Sierra, that was one of the best parts about being mentored. "It was great having someone to talk to, someone who went through what I was kind of going through in high school, and also just having a friend," says Sierra. "Tad was able to lead me in the right directions in choices that I made. It gave me sort of an idea of what I wanted in life and what I should expect from myself."

Sierra says he would definitely recommend mentoring to others. "It's a great thing to be a part of, because it helps both people involved and it helps both of you grow," he says. "It offers a chance to better yourself and to better someone else, creates a new bond, and gives you a friend you can rely on. Same thing for adults who have the opportunity to be a mentor—give it a chance and take the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life."

Schubring says mentoring Sierra and others has made a big impact on him. "The biggest takeaway is remembering that mentoring is being about caught in the act of being a Christian," he says. "Be yourself, have fun, and share the gospel through your actions when you're with them."

Schubring says mentoring has also changed the way he looks at youth ministry. "Jesus gave us the Great Commission and reassures that us that he'll be with us always," he says. "So knowing this, you look at things differently. When I started out doing youth ministry, the measure was the number of people. But now God has given me a new measuring stick. It's not about the numbers anymore; it's about depth with individuals. And what better way to create a deep, meaningful relationship than to be with them."