

# THE MESSENGER

June 2020

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church



An exciting opportunity for all congregation members!

Read more about the *Transformed* workshop on **pages 5 and 6**.

**JOIN THE CHRIST LUTHERAN FACEBOOK GROUP:** This group is a place for members of the congregation to interact, ask questions, participate in Bible studies and build each other up as the body of Christ. To join, go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/christmerrill>

**DEVOTIONALS:** Five-minute devotions from a son of our congregation, Pastor Jake Schram, who currently serves Salem Lutheran Church (WELS) in Stillwater, MN are shared online. Please go to <http://salemlutheran.org/devotions> or <https://www.facebook.com/groups/christmerrill> to access them.

**Free Spiritual Resources** at [nph.net/free-resources](http://nph.net/free-resources):

- *Forward in Christ* magazine for May and June
- *Meditations Daily Devotions* for May 31-August 29

**GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST** is an ongoing congregational Bible study. The summer lessons will be on the book of Galatians. To get an electronic copy in your email, sign-up at [ChristMerrill.com/email](http://ChristMerrill.com/email). To get a copy of the lesson in your church mailbox or to have lessons mailed to you, please send an email to [ChristMerrillEducation@gmail.com](mailto:ChristMerrillEducation@gmail.com) or call/text 715-921-5132.

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## Lutheranism's Birthday

*“I will speak of your statutes before kings and will not be put to shame.” (Psalm 119:46)*

If I were to ask you to name an important date of the Lutheran Reformation, you would probably mention October 31, 1517 when Luther posted the 95 Theses speaking out against the sale and abuses of indulgences. Certainly, this event is important for us Lutherans because it started the Reformation. In fact, every year around this date we have a special Reformation service.

But here's the thing: when Luther wrote the 95 Theses he had no intention to break away from the Roman Catholic Church. Also, Luther was still learning from God's Word, so even what Luther wrote in the 95 Theses we wouldn't completely agree with. But throughout the next thirteen years things changed. **June 25, 1530 is known as the official establishment, or birthday if you will, of Lutheranism. On this day the Lutheran princes of the government presented the Augsburg Confession, an official statement of their beliefs,** to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. These princes refused to back down from what they believed. The above passage is the first thing mentioned in the Augsburg Confession.

**This year we celebrate the 490<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this event.** But you may be wondering why I'm even mentioning this to you. How does all of this even apply to us today? First, **let us simply appreciate our Lutheran heritage and what the early reformers went through to support the Gospel of our Lord,** even risking their lives for it. Second, **let us learn from them.** The Lutheran reformers never rebelled against their governing authorities. In fact, they greatly appreciated the Holy Roman Emperor for giving them a chance to proclaim their faith. And even when the Emperor rejected their confession, they still never condemned him but held him in high regard. Let us do the same with our governing authorities. Regardless of a past situation, current situation, or future situation **let us show respect and honor to our governing authorities and rejoice that we have the freedom to practice our religion.**

And even if that ever changes, let us follow the example of the Lutheran reformers who were willing to speak their faith even though their lives were at stake. God calls us to speak our faith, and the reason we have the confidence to do that is because God promises that we will not be put to shame. Even if we are rejected and put to death for our faith, we are still not put to shame because our faith is in God who justifies us in Christ alone and rescues us from death for eternal life.

That was the focus of the Lutheran Reformation and the point of the Augsburg Confession. **Let us rejoice that through the Lutheran Reformation the truth of God's Gospel was brought back to light. Let us rejoice in our Lutheran Reformers who were willing to stand up for the Gospel. Let us rejoice to learn from them and follow their example in our lives with Christ serving as our motivation and guidance.**

- Pastor Neal Behm

## **COVID-19 RELATED UPDATES**

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

Pastor Behm will continue to post a weekly **sermon** by Sunday morning at 9 am to the church's [YouTube channel](#) and [Facebook page](#).

Sermons will continue to air **Sunday mornings through the month of June at 8:00 am** on 96.3FM, 730AM, stream at [bluejay963.com](http://bluejay963.com), Alexa, and TuneIn (for mobile streaming).

From **11 am to 1 pm each Sunday**, people may **drive up** to the church to deliver their offerings and to pick up paper copies of the sermonette, Men's Bible Study guide, and *The Messenger*. Offerings may also be mailed to Christ Ev. Lutheran Church, 1204 N. Sales St., Merrill 54452.

**ONLINE GIVING OPTION:** Christ Lutheran has recently gone live with online giving to provide a safe (physically and financially), efficient, and simple way for members to give their offerings directly from their checking/savings account or with a credit card. To participate in online giving, go to [www.christmerrill.com/giving](http://www.christmerrill.com/giving). You can also give through the GivePlus app available from the App Store or Google Play. You will be given the options to give to your preferred church fund and choose to pay directly from your checking or savings account or use a credit or debit card. You will also be able to do one time giving or set up recurring giving. There is a small cost to the church to use the service; there is an option available for you to offset the processing fee when using a credit/debit card.

Your gifts will be automatically deposited in the church bank account; your giving details imported directly into Church 360 will be tracked the same way as regular giving. If you are using the app please confirm that you are giving to the correct Merrill church, **Christ Ev. Lutheran Church**.

Go to <https://youtu.be/2KGZ4-WOaWw> to view a demonstration of the online giving.

### **Men's Bible Study**

The Men's Bible Study continues **online or at church Saturday, June 13 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 during Sunday drive-through time (11-1)
  - Call/text 715-921-5132 to be mailed or emailed a copy
- Read the book of *Habakkuk*

Looking ahead, our schedule is as follows:      July 11: *Zephaniah*      August 8: *Haggai*

**There are only NINE seats available at church, so IF YOU WANT TO ATTEND AT CHURCH PLEASE [complete this form](#) or call/text 715-921-5132.**

**There are two different ways to join the online study:**

- 1) Call **1-408-418-9388** and enter the meeting number **622 095 837** and password **6367**.
- 2) Go to <https://globalpage-prod.webex.com/join> or click the Join meeting button below. Enter in the meeting number **622 095 837** and meeting password **Mens** (case sensitive) to join the class.

[Join meeting](#)

**CAR WASH:** Sunday, June 7th at Church from 11am till 1pm. For a free-will donation, the Youth Group will wash your car. Sign up to reserve your car wash time by calling 715-536-4180 or at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BA8A922A1FD0-youth>.

**YOUTH GROUP FUNDRAISER:** Candy bars are for sale for \$2.50 each in the church entry.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

**Caleb Kleinschmidt**, Merrill High School Graduate

**Ethan Rasmussen** and **Katelyn Schult**,  
Confirmants of Christ Ev. Lutheran Church

## UPCOMING MEETINGS:

June 1: Board of Christian Education @ 5 pm  
June 2: Elders @ 10 am  
June 9: Council @ 6:30

**WORSHIP AIDS MEETING** is planned for **Wednesday, June 24** at 6:30 pm. All are invited.

**There are two ways to join the live meeting:**

- 1) Call **1-408-418-9388** and enter the meeting number **126 311 1370** and password **24747824**
- 2) Go to <https://globalpage-prod.webex.com/join>  
Enter in the meeting number **126 311 1370** and meeting password **ChristAids** (case sensitive) to join the meeting.

**NEW FAMILY DEVOTIONS:** WELS Commission on Discipleship is offering devotions developed for the entire family to use. The devotions coincide with the previous Sunday's Bible readings. Each devotion is complete with a set of questions for different age groups, a prayer, and hymn verses that can be sung or spoken. Downloadable printable versions are available at <https://wels.net/serving-you/devotions/family-devotions/>

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.

## CAMP PHILLIP UPDATE: Family Fest - cancelled.

The campgrounds will still be open for camping, but there will be no staff led programs, nor food service. For more information on camp offerings, visit <https://www.campphillip.com/> or call 920-787-3202.

## JUNE BIRTHDAYS

1 Megan Cordova	19 Tiffany Braunel
4 Sullivan Revie	19 Michael Kropp
9 Ruth Kriewald	20 Leon Marheine
12 Nicole Zeinert	23 James Dehnel
13 Brad Dehnel	23 Katelyn Schult
15 Bob Secora	25 Alan Zimmerman
	26 Jim Borelli

## SHEPHERDING MINISTRY

*"Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.'" (Matthew 26:36,38)*

In the final hours of Jesus' life he asked his disciples to keep watch with him and pray for him since his soul was so overwhelmed with sorrow. Although Jesus was true God who needed no one's help, he was also true man who needed encouragement and help. Jesus did receive that help from God as he sent an angel to give him strength. If Jesus our Savior needed this, we also need this. **We all have hardships, struggles, and loneliness. We also have joys, happiness, and blessings in life that we want to share with others. This is why we are implementing a Shepherding Ministry.** Every member will be assigned a shepherd who will work with Pastor Behm to help and encourage each other. We encourage everyone to become associated with their shepherd and share any concerns, blessings, or interesting things happening in each other's lives. Ultimately, we all look to God for our help, but God also gives us each other to build one another up. May this Shepherding Ministry be a blessing to us all as we continue to serve our God, each other, and our community.

On **June 20 and 27** from **8 am - 12 pm** **all** congregation members are encouraged to participate in a workshop entitled: ***Transformed: Equipping Youth Leaders.***



This is a workshop meant for **all** ministry areas in our congregation. The goals of the workshop are for:

- (1) workable and sustainable programs to increase Youth & Family Ministry,
- (2) a one-year plan for Youth & Family Ministry individualized per congregation,
- (3) to set up accountability measures and directors, and
- (4) to create a program to train and sustain congregational youth and family coordinators.

The workshop will be offered virtually and have a limited number of seats available at Christ Lutheran Church. **To reserve a seat at church RSVP through one of the following: Call/text 715-921-5132, [complete this form](#) or email [ChristMerrillEducation@gmail.com](mailto:ChristMerrillEducation@gmail.com).**

Workshop materials may be accessed at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11d3BIfmK2AvU82CbFC7NYZGzEr686YSe?usp=sharing>

**There are two ways to join the live workshop:**

- 1) Call **1-408-418-9388** and enter the meeting number **126 763 6050** and password **96884**
- 2) Go to <https://globalpage-prod.webex.com/join>  
Enter in the meeting number **126 763 6050** and meeting password **Youth** (case sensitive).

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** If you are willing to support the event in any of the following areas, please call 715-539-0250, call or text 715-218-6081 or email [ChristMerrillEducation@gmail.com](mailto:ChristMerrillEducation@gmail.com)

- Send formal invitations to area WELS churches
- Print/Copy Materials
- Help with physical setup (sanctuary, narthex, basement)
- Provide Morning Snacks
- Serve Morning Refreshments
- Welcome Attendees/Monitor Areas
- Be a WebEx Host (sanctuary, narthex, basement)
- Be a WebEx Chat Monitor
- Help with clean-up (sanctuary, narthex, basement)





## Helping Youth Workers Transform their Ministries

“About two-thirds of the young people who are confirmed in WELS churches are still attending church as often as once a month by the time they are 19 years old.” That is one of the findings of a study WELS conducted in the early 2000s about youth membership in our churches. It was also estimated that **less than 20% of WELS young people are retained in the church from the time of their baptism until age 30.**

More recent studies by independent research groups have shown similar trends with youth in other denominations. For example, a 2013 Barna Group survey found that nearly 60% of Millennials with a Christian background have, at some point, dropped out of going to church after having gone regularly.

“**Research shows that youth are falling away from** big, mega churches, just as much as our **churches,**” says Rev. Jon Enter, pastor at Hope, West Palm Beach, Fla., and youth coordinator for South Atlantic District. “We need to do something about this, but many congregations don’t know where to start.”

**That was the impetus for creating the new School of Youth and Family called Transformed: Equipping Youth Leaders, an eight-part video series that includes presentations by youth workers from around the synod and shares ideas and resources to help congregations transform their youth ministries.**

“It all boils down to the spiritual aspect of our kids,” says Enter, who is leading this effort. “If they continue to grow in their faith and they have ownership in our churches, then they stay engaged.” That’s why the videos — which include topics like Christian mentoring, games and activities, youth-driven Bible studies and faith experiences — **focus on helping youth create meaningful relationships with each other, with their churches and with God’s Word.**

“We have done a great job of training our kids in school and in confirmation class,” says Enter. “They have a very informed faith. But they struggle with sharing it and using it. So instead of just a cerebral thing, we want this to be heart and soul thing. We want to completely connect kids into the DNA of their local church and to get them to actively serve. **We want to them to feel like this is my church.**”

Along with the downloadable videos, which focus on the importance of the different aspects of youth ministry, congregations can also access a collection of Bible studies, recommended reading and “how-to” resources for their youth ministries.

“I pray congregations will be excited after watching the videos and, Lord-willing, implement a lot of these things into their ministries,” says Enter. He says that even making small changes or refocusing some time and energy can have a big impact. “We’re not trying to drastically change what we’re doing. We are just looking at things a little differently and then asking God to bless them.”

Author: Alicia Neumann

WELS *Forward in Christ*

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