

THE MESSENGER

December 2022

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

Advent & Christmas Worship

Midweek Advent Worship

This year, midweek Advent worship services will be held in the fellowship hall in the lower level of the church. Services will be in an informal, modified Bible Study format and will include: confession and absolution, opening and closing hymns, and a Bible study. Advent worship will be held on **Wednesdays, November 30, December 7, and December 14** starting at **6:30 pm**. There will be a potluck meal before each service starting at 5:15 pm.

December Communion Schedule

Holy Communion will be celebrated on December 4 and 25 (first and fourth Sundays) this year.

Special Services

December 11 worship will include several choir selections.

December 18 worship will have participation by the youth of the Sunday School.

December 24 Christmas Eve worship begins at 6:30 pm.

December 25 Christmas Day worship begins at 9:00 am.

In this Messenger:

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***“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”
(Isaiah 9:6)***

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree...” “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son...” “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you...” “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.” There are so many passages about Christmas that we cherish. Although there are many passages we could focus on, let us take a close look at the above passage from Isaiah.

First, Isaiah mentions that a child is born and given. Think of how much Jesus truly humbled himself for us. He shared in our humanity in every way. Jesus, our almighty God, became conceived and born as a helpless little child. Jesus, our all-knowing God, grew up in wisdom and stature. Jesus, our ever-living God, suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. This is why we celebrate Christmas because Jesus came as one of us and to live and die for us and our salvation.

But Jesus is just not truly human, but he is also truly God. For after three days in the grave Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven where he is seated at the right hand of God. From there he rules over all things, and that’s the next point that Isaiah brings up that the government will be on his shoulders. Sometimes it can feel like this world is falling apart, sin seems so rampant, and the love of most has grown cold. But remember that Jesus is in control of all his creation. Everything happens according to his good and gracious will for the benefit of his believers. And just as Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, he will do everything for his Church so that people are brought to faith, will rise from the dead, and ascend into heaven with him.

And for this we praise Jesus and ascribe to him various titles. He is our Wonderful Counselor. As our Prophet Jesus speaks to us in his Word that counsels us in many ways. He counsels us by pointing out our sin so that we may repent of sin and receive his forgiveness and turn away from sin. He counsels us by comforting us, picking us up when we are down, giving us joy when we grieve, and removing all worries from us.

Jesus is our Mighty God. By the power of his Word God created all things that exist, whether seen or unseen. By his power he has created us, body and soul. By his power he gives us all that we need to keep our bodies and lives. And whatever is harming us, whatever is weighing us down, whatever is causing us to grieve, whatever is bothering us, we can go to our Mighty God in prayer to help us in all things, and he will use his mighty power to help us according to his will.

Jesus is our Everlasting Father. By the power of his Word Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to create faith in our hearts that connects us to our Father in heaven. Since he is our Father he cares for us. This relationship with our Father is everlasting. Nothing can or will separate us from his love.

Finally Jesus is our Prince of Peace. He has brought us peace because he is our Redeemer. He has bought us back and set us free from all sin (its guilt and power), from death (its eternal consequences and fear), and from the devil (his control and accusations). This is why this passage is so fitting for Christmas for on Christmas we celebrate Jesus being born as our Savior. He is Christ our Lord. And because of him we join with the angels and praise God saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

- Pastor Neal Behm

December 2022

View the most up to date calendar at christmerrill.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6:30 pm Catechism Class	2 1:45 pm Worship @ Bell Tower 6:00-8:00 pm Journey to Bethlehem live nativity @ Christ, Eagle River	3 6:00-8:00 pm Journey to Bethlehem live nativity @ Christ, Eagle River
4 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion) 10:30 am Children's Service Practice 10:30 am Adult Bible Study	5	6	7 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 5:15 pm Meal 6:30 pm Advent Worship 7:30 pm Choir Practice	8 6:30 pm Catechism Class	9	10 9:00 am Men's Bible Study
11 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Children's Service Practice 10:30 am Adult Bible Study	12 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	13 6:30 pm Council Meeting	14 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 5:15 pm Meal 6:30 pm Advent Worship	15 6:30 pm Catechism Class	16	17 5:00-9:00 pm The Greatest Gift live nativity @ NLHS
18 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Adult Bible Study 3:00 pm Northland Lutheran High School Christmas Concert	19 6:00 pm Board of Elders Meeting	20	21 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm Catechism Class	22 5:30 pm Youth Activity Night	23	24 6:30 pm Christmas Eve Worship
25 9:00 am Christmas Day Worship (Holy Communion)	26	27	28	29	30	31

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

9:00 am Sundays - worship service on **Christ Ev. Lutheran Church :: Merrill, WI :: WELS** YouTube channel



A GOD-LIVED LIFE: A life lived shrewdly

While stewardship of our finances isn't the only part of stewardship, it is a part of it. God's Word encourages us to use all of the financial gifts God has given us with an eye on our purpose.

Our challenge card this month will focus on *living shrewdly* with the blessings and treasures that God has given us. But what did Jesus mean when he encouraged us to be *shrewd*? Who is someone you know that is a positive example of shrewdness? In what ways are you already shrewd? In what ways are you not shrewd? How can you honor God by managing with intention the gifts he has given you?

The God-Lived Life program includes opportunities for personal growth centered around each monthly topic in the form of "challenge cards." The challenge cards are an anonymous way for us to consider how we can identify and set individual goals for our Christian lives.

May God bless us and strengthen us as we live a God-lived life—a life lived shrewdly!

PRAYER SUPPORT: Are there things going on in your life, or the life of others, that you would like your church family to pray about at a church service or during the week? Contact Pastor with a prayer request.

MEAT is available in the basement kitchen freezer for anyone that would like to take some home. Feel free to take what you need.

YOUTH ACTIVITY NIGHT: Thursday, December 22 from **5:30-8:30 pm** at Christ Lutheran. There will be mixers, devotion, and dinner at church followed by bowling at Les & Jim's Lincoln Lanes. For youth in grade 6 and above. Please **RSVP** to Willi H. by **December 10**.

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.

Laurene H.	Tom L.	Phil M.
Lorna P.	Kathleen P.	

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 Julie M.	13 Kennedy G.	21 Scott S.
4 Rick K.	16 Joy K.	22 Annie K.
6 Abby R.	16 Tom L.	29 Marsha B.
9 Leah G.	17 Adeline H.	29 Cindy W.
9 Sarah W.	21 Jerome B.	30 Melissa S.
12 Paxton K.	21 Pamela P.	30 Eli B.

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARY

17 Larry & Lois W.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE
 October average: 67 2022 average: 66

CHURCH FINANCIAL UPDATE

Expected (budgeted) expenses through 10/31: \$128,513.63
 Actual expenses through 10/31: \$114,972.93
 Actual offerings through 10/31: \$112,596.69

Our offerings for the year continue to trend below budget, but our expenses are also trending below budget. While our actual offerings are approximately \$15,985 below budgeted offerings, we are carrying a positive amount of approximately \$21,600 in the general fund.

For more information see the Treasurer Report on the bulletin board by the elevator.

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