

# THE MESSENGER

February 2022

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

## Upcoming Fellowship Events:

### New Member Potluck

**Sunday, February 20** at 11:30 am

Help to welcome new members who have joined our church family in the past couple of years with a potluck meal and fellowship time. Everyone is invited to attend and may bring a dish to share.



### Family Game Night

**Saturday, February 26** at 5:30 pm

Pizza & drinks will be provided; please note on the sign-up sheet how many people will be attending from your household so we have an idea for pizza count. Those attending are asked to bring additional food items or desserts. Attendees may bring along card and board games to play with others.



### In this Messenger:

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# Undivided Devotion

*I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord. (1 Corinthians 7:32-25)*

The month of February is sometimes known as the month of love. February 14<sup>th</sup> is Valentine's Day which couples may celebrate by doing various romantic things. Therefore at first glance it may seem weird that I have chosen this portion of Scripture for us to focus on. This section of Scripture may seem to suggest that being single and unmarried is better than being married. That's not exactly what Paul is saying, and let me explain what he means.

To those who are single you may feel lonely. You may have tried the dating scene and nothing seems to work. Maybe you are feeling pushed by family and friends to get married. Sometimes you may wonder if there is something wrong with you that you aren't married. Or possibly you are very content with not being married. Whatever the case may be, Paul tells you that **you have a unique blessing by being single. You can completely devote your lives to pleasing the Lord without your interests being divided.** The apostle Paul wasn't married and he was able to be concerned with the Lord's affairs during his missionary journeys. Jesus wasn't married and he was able to be concerned with the Lord's affairs of being our Savior. **Therefore we who are single can be concerned with the Lord's affairs in what we do in our lives. And if one day we do become married, let us give praise to God for that blessing.**


But what about those of us who are married? Is Paul saying that being married is somehow a bad thing and we shouldn't desire to be married? Of course not! Marriage is a great blessing from God. God instituted marriage, for he declared that it wasn't good for a man to be alone. **In marriage you have the blessing of companionship. And if it is the Lord's will you may also have the blessing of children in marriage.**

But being married does mean that our interests are divided. **A married man or woman is not only concerned about the Lord's affairs but is also concerned about how to support the spouse.** Is this a bad thing? No, but it is a reality that Paul brings up and he brings it up not to restrict us in any way but to encourage us to **make sure that with undivided devotion we serve the Lord completely in our lives.**

And we, either single or married, can find it hard to serve the Lord with undivided devotion. In fact, we haven't done this perfectly in our lives. But we find forgiveness in Christ and find motivation in him. **Christ is perfectly devoted to us.** He has made us his bride and has laid down his life for us purely out of love. **Therefore with our eyes directed to him, leaning upon him, and trusting in him Christ will move us to serve him with undivided devotion whether as being single or married.** Let us love God first in our lives which will motivate us to love another.

- Pastor Neal Behm

# February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 9:00 am Adult Bible Study	3 6:30 pm Catechism Class	4 1:45 pm <b>Worship @ Bell Tower</b>	5
6 8:00 am Worship w/ Guidelines (Holy Communion) 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion) 10:00 am Fellowship 10:20 am Children's Group Time 10:30 am Education Hour	7	8	9 9:00 am Adult Bible Study  6:30 pm Choir	10 6:30 pm Catechism Class	11	12 9:00 am Men's Bible Study
13 8:00 am Worship w/ Guidelines 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Fellowship 10:20 am Children's Group Time 10:30 am Education Hour	14 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	15	16 9:00 am Adult Bible Study  6:30 pm Choir	17 6:30 pm Catechism Class	18	19 <b>Men of His Word Conference, Oshkosh</b>
20 8:00 am Worship w/ Guidelines (Holy Communion) 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion) 10:00 am Fellowship 10:20 am Children's Group Time 10:30 am Education Hour 11:30 am New Member Potluck	21 6:00 pm Board of Elders Meeting	22	23 9:00 am Adult Bible Study  6:30 pm Choir	24 6:30 pm Catechism Class	25	26 5:30 pm Family Game Night
27 8:00 am Worship w/ Guidelines 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Fellowship 10:20 am Children's Group Time 10:30 am Education Hour	28					

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

**CHURCH SOFTBALL:** Anyone age 10+ interested in playing on the church softball team may sign-up on the fellowship bulletin board in the narthex.

**WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY** will be held **Monday, February 14 at 6:30 pm** and will focus on **Miriam**, the sister of Moses and Aaron.

### FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2 Neil V.	19 Jeff B.
3 Connor M.	20 Emily B.
10 Jenny Z.	20 Jennifer M.
16 Rose S.	25 Lori N.
17 Amanda K.	28 Paul H.
18 Jim Y.	

**WANTED! WEDDING DATES.** In future issues of the *Messenger* we would like to include wedding anniversaries. If you are married, please write down your names and wedding date (month/day/year) and place it in the **Messenger mailbox** or email it to [Messenger@ChristMerrill.com](mailto:Messenger@ChristMerrill.com).

**LENTEN SERVICES:** The **Wednesday evening** Lenten services will be held at **6:30 pm starting March 2** using the traditional format.

**NORTHLAND LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL'S *Together We Shine*** will be held **March 6**. Do you have goods or services to donate which they can auction off? Do you want to participate in their famous Soup Cook-off? Call (715) 359-3400 or email [nlhsoffice@nlhs.org](mailto:nlhsoffice@nlhs.org) to let them know.

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.

**GREAT APPRECIATION** goes out to the congregation for its generosity and helpfulness to fulfill needs for Eileen L. and Tom M. these past months.

**GATHERING FOR WORSHIP:** Feel free to personally, and lovingly, encourage attendance of fellow members whom you may not have seen in worship for a while. Since September 1, the elders have been lovingly addressing individual straying or strayed members with attendance concerns. The following timeline for contacting members is followed, keeping in mind there may be unique circumstances requiring the Elders to assess each individual one-on-one:

- Two months: Elder phone call (or letter) of encouragement.
- Three months: Elder phone call (or letter) of concern.
- Four months: Pastor makes a contact.
- Six months: A visit by Pastor or an elder.
- Eight months: A final letter expressing our heartfelt desire for the individual to return to worship.
- Ten months: A letter informing recipient(s) of impending release.
- Twelve months: A letter of release (sent by certified mail), after congregational approval.

**WORSHIP LIVESTREAM:** Christ Ev. Lutheran Church provides an internet livestream broadcast during many of the **Sunday services** (9:00 am). Subscribe to the YouTube channel (Christ Ev. Lutheran Church :: Merrill, WI :: WELS) to get updates about the live streaming schedule. The videos are available on the channel to watch at one's convenience.



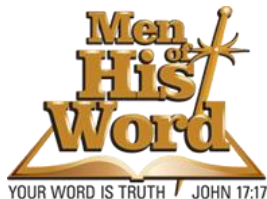
**SERVICES ON THE AIR:** A Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church worship service is on the air **Sunday mornings at 8:00 am** on 96.3FM, 730AM, and streaming at [bluejay963.com](http://bluejay963.com), Alexa, and TuneIn (for mobile streaming).



# Upcoming Conferences and Retreats

## For Men

### Men of His Word Conference



Everyone wants to be a winner, but we often feel like losers. We want to be loving husbands, caring fathers, faithful church members, hardworking employees, good neighbors and so much more. We try, but the devil is constantly attacking us. The world lures us away from God and responsibility. Our sinful natures condemn us. Should we just give up? No! God promises that we are MORE THAN CONQUERORS through him who loved us (Romans 8:37). Join us in **Oshkosh** on **February 19** to find strength for the battles and guaranteed victory through Christ. Additional details and online registration are available at [www.menofhisword.org](http://www.menofhisword.org). Cost is \$60.

## For Teens

### Teen Retreat



**April 29-May 1**

Cost: \$73 (<https://www.campphillip.com/>)

Calling all teens in grades 8-12! Teen retreats offer you the opportunity to connect with other teens about real, relevant issues -- and also have a phenomenal time enjoying our creative activities.

*Christ Ev. Lutheran Church is a Corporation Congregation; our members are eligible for discounts for any Camp Phillip camp/retreat.*

## For Women

### Pathways to Christ Retreat March 4-6 Oshkosh, WI



If you have any questions Email:

[pnimmer@new.rr.com](mailto:pnimmer@new.rr.com) or call Paula at 920-216-0291 or visit <https://pathwaystochrist.org/>

All registrations must be postmarked by February 15. The registration cost is **\$110**. Hotel reservations are separate from the retreat registration.

### Women's Retreat



**Camp Phillip**

**March 25-27**

Cost: \$99 (<https://www.campphillip.com/>)

Ladies, let us provide you a weekend of relaxation for your body and renewal for your soul! Enjoy powerful Bible studies and conversations along with good, clean fun and lots of laughter! Choose the activities you'd like to join in, or read a book -- or take a nap! No pressure -- the weekend is yours!

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# SIGN UP

### Financial support of spiritual growth outside of our church

The Board of Christian Education recognizes the importance of the continual growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For this reason, the BoCE wishes to reduce financial barriers that may be hindering participation in spiritual growth opportunities. The Board is requesting that people seek support ask before they register. Approved support will be given before registration so the attendee can apply the money toward their costs.



## Packers Potluck



Thanks to all those who donated to the Tom M. benevolence fund and to Thrivent for paying for food and supplies.



## Game Night

