

THE MESSENGER

January 2023

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

Open Forum

On **Sunday, January 15**, there will be an open forum in the basement of the church starting at **10:30 am**. An open forum is an avenue to have an informal discussion on various topics. Some of the **items to be discussed include midweek Advent service structure feedback and the *A God-Lived Life* (clothing drive, member baskets, etc.) program**. Additionally, participants will be asked to **provide feedback on a recommendation to use a \$2500 offering designated for the purchase of Christian Worship '21 related items**. No Sunday School or Bible Studies will be held. All youth and adults are welcome to attend.

Annual Voters' Meeting

Sunday, January 29 at 10:30 am

Elections will be held for the following positions of the church council (**two-year terms**): President, Treasurer, Board of Christian Education, Board of Elders, Stewardship & Finance Committee, and Technology Committee.

The following positions will also be up for **election** for a **term of one year**: Secretary and Evangelism Committee.

A slate of nominees will be posted on the bulletin board near the elevator.

Other agenda items will be posted on the bulletin board by the elevator when they become available.

In this Messenger:

- 1) Open Forum & Annual Voters' Meeting
- 2) Pastor's Devotion
- 3) Calendar
- 4) Tuition Applications
- 4) CW '21 & Digital Display Demonstration Updates
- 4) Prayer Requests
- 4) Shut-in Visits
- 4) Benevolence Fund
- 4) Birthdays/Anniversaries
- 4) Financial Update
- 5) WELS Youth Night
- 5) *Richer Marriage* Workshop
- 6) *Men of His Word* Men's Rally
- 7-8) Advent & Christmas at Christ Lutheran:
Pictures & Service Links



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Nothing Really Changes

“I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty. Malachi 3:6-7

“3...2...1...HAPPY NEW YEAR!” If you had the energy on New Year’s Eve you probably said these words to usher in the new year. A lot of people like to celebrate New Year’s, but why is celebrating it all that special? When you really think about, **nothing really changes** from December 31st to January 1st. A lot of people get excited for the new year because they view it as a new year full of possible changes. This is why many people make new year resolutions in order to change something about their life such as: being healthier, traveling more, etc. But you know what usually happens with new year resolutions; they don’t come true. Therefore **nothing changes**.

In these words from Malachi **we notice something that never changes, and it’s the Lord**. But also notice **what never changes according to Malachi: how sinful we are**. Malachi was sent to preach his message to the Israelites around the year 400 B.C. The Israelites have returned from exile, they have rebuilt the temple, and they had promised to be faithful to God. But guess what happened? The Israelites began to be unfaithful to God once again. They were acting just like their forefathers who disobeyed God. So once again **nothing changed** for the Israelites.

Do you see yourself acting just like the Israelites? Just like the Israelites you may have promised to be more faithful to God. Perhaps even with the new year beginning you wanted to change your lifestyle by staying away from certain sins and living a more God-pleasing life. But no matter how hard we try, guess what happens? We can fall back into those same sins again and again. Just like Paul, we too have to say, “For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing” (Romans 7:19). The reason we do this is because of our sinful nature that makes us not to be faithful to God. No matter how hard we try not to sin, **it seems like nothing changes**.

But praise be to God that he never changes! God promised to send us a Savior, and **he never changed his mind** about that. What Christ has accomplished for us, **God will never change his mind** about that. We will always be saved by grace through faith in Christ our Savior. And when it comes to repentance, **God never changes his mind** about that. Therefore when we return to God with a broken and contrite heart asking for his forgiveness, God will return to us to bring us his grace and forgiveness. **And it is his grace and forgiveness that truly changes us to live a more God-pleasing life**. Therefore when you struggle with sin and want to change that, go to God so that he will motivate you to live a Christian life not only during this new year but for every day of your life.

- Pastor Neal Behm

January 2023

View the most up to date calendar at christmerrill.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion)	2	3	4	5	6 1:45 pm Worship @ Bell Tower	7
8 9:00 am Worship 10:20 am Children's Group Time 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Teen Bible Study 10:30 am Adult Bible Study	9 4:00 pm Board of Christian Education Meeting 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	10	11 9:00 am Adult Bible Study	12 6:30 pm Catechism Class	13	14 9:00 am Men's Bible Study
15 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion) 10:30 am Open Forum	16 6:00 pm Board of Elders Meeting	17 6:30 pm Council Meeting	18 9:00 am Adult Bible Study	19 6:30 pm Catechism Class	20	21
22 9:00 am Worship 10:20 am Children's Group Time 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Teen Bible Study 10:30 am Adult Bible Study 5:45 pm WELS Youth Night at Northland Lutheran High School	23	24	25 9:00 am Adult Bible Study	26 6:30 pm Catechism Class	27	28
29 9:00 am Worship 10:20 am Children's Group Time 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Teen Bible Study 10:30 am Annual Voters' Meeting	30	31				

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

9:00 am Sundays - worship service online at youtube.com/@christmerrill

P-16 & CALLED WORKER TUITION APPLICATIONS DUE FEBRUARY 1

P-16 Tuition Assistance applications for assisting students attending WELS preschool, elementary, secondary, and college level schools are due February 1 for the spring semester. Likewise, called worker applications which assist students going into ministry are due February 1. Applications for both are available in the narthex to the right of the education bulletin board. Please place completed applications in the Board of Christian Education mailbox.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP '21 UPDATE

At the October Quarterly meeting, the voters expressed their support for continuing the demonstrations. During the month of January the demonstrations resume on the third and fourth Sundays.

DIGITAL DISPLAY WORSHIP AIDS

The voters expressed their support for the demonstration of a digital display that will have elements of the day's service. It is anticipated that this will start in early 2023.

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.

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.

BENEVOLENCE FUND

The Benevolence Fund exists to aid those seeking temporary, but immediate help. Offerings to the fund are welcome and may be made with an envelope obtained from on the right side of the narthex mailboxes and placed in the offering plate. If you wish to have your donation recorded with your other church offerings, please write your name or envelope number on the envelope.

NEEDED: toilet paper and toilet cleaners for the church. Contact Larry W. for more details.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1 Decylin C.	5 Thomas M.	28 Mike S.
3 Henry M.	6 Diane T.	29 Corey M.
4 Allie M.	25 Christy C.	29 Riley S.



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

17 Joe & Kathleen P.
29 Scott & Colleen S.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

November average: 70 2022 average through 11/30: 66
Advent mid-week average: 21

CHURCH FINANCIAL UPDATE

Expected (budgeted) expenses through 11/30: \$141,365.00
Actual expenses through 11/30: \$126,068.84
Actual offerings through 11/30: \$122,852.91

Our offerings for the year continue to trend below budget, but our expenses are also trending below budget. While our actual offerings are approximately \$18,500 below budgeted offerings, we are carrying a positive amount of approximately \$26,400 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.



Sunday, January 22, 5:45-8:30 pm the second area WELS Youth Night will be hosted at **Northland Lutheran High School**. Youth who attend will experience an inspiring evening of games, music, prayer, Bible message, small group discussion, and fun with high school youth **(9th-12th grade)** from local WELS congregations in our area. Pizza will be provided! The goal is for our youth to see that they are not alone and to be encouraged to enjoy the faith they share with others. **This event is free, teens are encouraged to invite a friend.** While the event is held at Northland, it is not just for Northland students. We invite teens from all around the area to join us! A sign up can be found at mysaintpeter.org.

RICHER MARRIAGE

Saturday, February 4
9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Trinity Lutheran
Town of Berlin

137801 County Road FF
Merrill, WI

Jesus designed marriage. He can make your marriage richer than you imagined. Spend a Saturday together to find out how. Apply the riches of God's grace to the areas of your marriage in which you're strong...and in which you have room to grow. The result? A richer marriage. *Richer Marriage* is the title of the marriage workshop being held at **Trinity Lutheran Church, Berlin on Saturday, February 4.**

Presented by: Pastor Randy Hunter (longtime WELS pastor and marriage enrichment presenter)

Topics include:

Improve your communication	Move through your conflict
Improve your financial relationship	Grow your sexual intimacy

Cost: \$35 Snacks, refreshments, and a catered lunch will be provided.

Find our registration page by going to [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) and searching for "Richer Marriage."

If you have any questions or need help registering, call, text, or email Pastor Andy DeGier (920-471-1770, pastorandydegier@gmail.com).

Calling all WELS Men!

MAN UP

In a Man Down World

*Fear the Lord and serve him
wholeheartedly and faithfully.*
Joshua 24:14

Oshkosh, Wisconsin

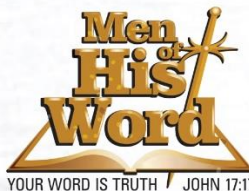
February 18, 2023

**Men of His Word
Men's Rally**

WWW.MENOFHISWORD.ORG



Early Bird
Registration ends
January 29, 2023



The 14th Annual MOHW Conference will be held at the Best Western Premier Waterfront Convention Center in Oshkosh on Saturday, **February 18.**

Speaker, session details and online registration are available at www.menofhisword.org.

Information and paper registration forms are available on the Christian Education bulletin board at the top of the stairs at church. **Financial support is available.** Contact any member of the Board of Christian Education. Approved support will be given before registration so the attendee can apply the money toward their costs.

The registration fee is \$60 for adults and \$30 for youth – these rates increase to \$75 and \$37 respectively after January 29th.

This year's theme states succinctly what Christian men are supposed to do (Man Up!) and how the world/society is treating men (a man down world).

Joshua 24:14a encourages us, "Fear the Lord and serve him wholeheartedly and faithfully" (EHV). Joshua was delivering his "farewell sermon" to the Israelites, encouraging them to "man up" by honoring the LORD, removing spiritual distractions and keeping focused on a life of grateful, devoted service to God. Joshua urged the people to make God-pleasing use of their sanctified freewill by choosing to serve the LORD, not false gods, and by being faithful to the LORD, not foolishly pursuing their sinful whims of the past. Without being prideful, Joshua directed the people to observe himself and his own family as examples, by saying, "As for me and my household - we will serve the LORD!" Join us to learn how you can MAN UP in this man down world.

Advent & Christmas at Christ Lutheran



Back: Derek, Nicole, Kaylynn, Katelyn
Front: Mia, Henry, Sullivan, Avery

Choir Song Service



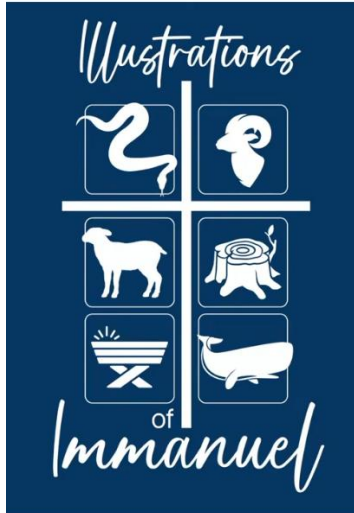
Left to Right: Jennifer, Cindy, Diane, Marion, Renee, Jackie, Leon, Pastor Behm, Bill

The [service](https://www.youtube.com/@christmerrill) may be viewed at
[youtube.com/@christmerrill](https://www.youtube.com/@christmerrill).



Clarinet:
Katelyn

Sunday School Children's Christmas Service



Top: James, Danielle, Nicole, Kaylynn

Bottom: Derek, Mia, Henry, Avery, Sonia

The [service](https://www.youtube.com/@christmerrill) may be viewed at [youtube.com/@christmerrill](https://www.youtube.com/@christmerrill).



Christmas Day Service



Left to Right: Ellen, Katelyn, Scott, Derek, Jennifer



Willi Top: Bill

Scott

The [service](https://www.youtube.com/@christmerrill) may be viewed at [youtube.com/@christmerrill](https://www.youtube.com/@christmerrill).