

THE MESSENGER

November 2023

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

Upcoming Events



Chili Cook-off & Packers Party
Sunday, November 12
11:30 am in the fellowship hall

The Packers game is scheduled for noon against the Pittsburgh Steelers. Sign up if you want to bring a chili.



Deer Hunters' Meal
Wednesday, November 15
5:30-6:00 pm



A sign-up sheet is on the hall bulletin board for the food items to bring.

Following the meal is a worship service at 6:30 pm.


Church Decorating
Sunday, December 3
11:30 am

Everyone is welcome to help **decorate** the church for Christmas.



Midweek Advent Meals & 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. **Advent worship** will be held on **Wednesdays, December 6, 13 and 20** starting at **6:30 pm**. There will be a **potluck meal** before each service starting at **5:30 pm**.



- In this Messenger:
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 - 2) Pastor's Devotion
 - 3) Calendar
 - 4) Connecting our Community
 - 4) Parking Lot Fundraiser
 - 4) Thanksgiving Worship
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 - 5) Outreach Opportunity: Christmas Eve C23
 - 5) Save the Date: Mission Festival 2024
 - 5) Ushers Needed
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Give Thanks to the LORD

“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.” (Psalm 136:1)

The above verse is what many people use in their prayers before eating a meal. It is also a verse repeated over and over again throughout all of Scripture. As we celebrate Thanksgiving this month this is a beautiful passage to remember, not only during Thanksgiving but also during each and every day of our lives.

First of all, **we give thanks to the LORD simply because of who he is.** If you notice very carefully the name LORD is spelled in all capital letters. The reason for this is because this is the proper name of God. The name LORD is a reference to God being faithful to his covenant, his promise, that he made with his people. The LORD made a promise to be faithful to his people, the Israelites, and he kept that promise. The LORD made a promise to send a Savior from our sins, and he kept that promise. The LORD made a promise to forgive our sins and remember them no more, and he continues to keep that promise. The LORD made a promise to bring his believers into heaven, and he will keep that promise to us. Therefore we give thanks to the LORD because of who he is.

Second of all, **we give thanks to the LORD because he is good.** Goodness is the very essence of God. It's who he is. Think of all the good the LORD has given to each of us personally throughout this year. Luther summarized it well, “God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, property and home, spouse and children, land, cattle, and all I own, and all I need to keep my body and life.” We have countless blessings from God. But these are the blessings we easily see. God is also good to us by defending us against danger, and guarding and protecting us from all evil. He does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear. And even the hardships we go through are still for our good because they move us to focus on God, his love, and his goodness.

Finally, **we give thanks to the LORD because his love endures forever.** I would invite you to read Psalm 136 because it is a very interesting psalm. Each verse of the psalm focuses on something the LORD has done, and it repeats the phrase “his love endures forever.” Certainly the LORD could have cut off his love from the Israelites because of their stubbornness and their constant refusal to repent and give thanks to the LORD. Certainly the LORD could cut off his love from us for the same thing. But the LORD didn't and doesn't do that because his love for us is eternal. Scripture says that nothing on earth, neither death nor life, neither the present nor future, neither hardship, and not even the devil himself can separate the LORD's love from us.

Therefore as we celebrate Thanksgiving let us give thanks to the LORD because of who he is. Let us give thanks to the LORD because he is good to us. Let us give thanks to the LORD because his love endures forever. **Let us give thanks to the LORD today and every day of our lives.**

- Pastor Neal Behm

November 2023

View the most up to date calendar at christmerrill.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Catechism Class 6:30 pm Choir	2 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	3	4
5 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion) 10:20 am Children's Group Time 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Teen Bible Study 10:30 am Adult Bible Study	6	7	8 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Catechism Class 6:30 pm Choir	9	10 WELS/ELS Singles Retreat @ Camp Phillip (Fri – Sun)	11 9:00 am Men's Bible Study
12 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 11:30 am Chili Cook-off & Packers Party	13	14 2:00 pm Worship @ Bell Tower 6:30 pm Council Meeting	15 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Catechism Class 5:30 pm Meal 6:30 pm Worship (Holy Communion) 7:30 pm Choir	16	17	18 Twenties & Thirties Retreat @ Camp Phillip (Fri-Sun)
19 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion) 10:20 am Children's Group Time 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Teen Bible Study 10:30 am Adult Bible Study	20 6:00 pm Board of Elders Meeting	21	22 6:30 pm Choir	23	24	25
26 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	27	28	29 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Catechism Class 6:30 pm Choir	30		

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

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

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY We're looking for you! Our last directory was done just less than ten years ago. Individuals will be personally contacted during the month of November if they have not submitted a form or photo. We are also looking for people to contact and encourage those who have not yet had their photo taken and/or completed a form. If you are interested, contact Colleen S. as soon as possible.

PARKING LOT FUNDRAISING A box for donations to help pay for the parking lot will be available in the church narthex starting in November. If you wish to have your donation recorded with your other church offerings, please write your name or envelope number on an envelope with cash or check inside.

THANKSGIVING OBSERVANCE This year Thanksgiving at *Christ Ev. Lutheran Church* will be observed on **Sunday, November 26 at the 9:00 am service.** Area WELS churches that offer a midweek Thanksgiving Eve service include:

- Mountain of the Lord*, Rib Mountain 6:00 pm
- Trinity*, Berlin 6:30 pm
- Ascension*, Antigo 6:30 pm
- St. Matthew's*, Marathon City 7:00 pm
- Grace, Maine & St. Paul's*, Naugart – (location and time not yet announced)

P-16 TUITION ASSISTANCE FUND Looking for a way to support those in our church that go to a WELS school? The P-16 Tuition Assistance Fund is designed to financially assist those who attend WELS preschools, grade, middle and high schools. Please consider contributing to the fund as it is currently below its target goal.

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 [youtube.com/@christmerrill](https://www.youtube.com/@christmerrill) to get updates about the live streaming schedule. The videos are available on the channel to watch at one's convenience.



<i>Spiritual Growth Weekly Averages</i>	September
Sunday worship	67
Men's Bible Study	8
Sunday Adult Bible Study	19
Sunday School & Teen Bible Study	9
Wednesday Bible Study	13


Our Offerings to the Lord (as of 9/30/23)
 Anticipated offerings: \$118,810
 Actual offerings: \$102,587
 Actual expenses: \$108,240
 General Fund balance as of 10/8/23: \$25,533

Your offerings help to support the ministry of the congregation. Giving continues to trend below budget. Please consider how your offerings benefit our church, our fellowship events, and our ability to reach our community. For more information, see the Treasurer Report on the bulletin board by the elevator.

2024 BUDGET NEWS A total budget of \$162,770.96 was passed at the October quarterly meeting. It is an overall increase of 2.75% compared to 2023. This is a weekly offering average of \$3,130.21. Financial commitments to Synod missions and NLHS will be primarily driven by earmarked donations given by members and if giving is less than budgeted, then general funds will be used to raise the amount to the committed budgeted level.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3 Phil M.	15 Cody G.
5 Kaylynn Z.	17 Butch K.
7 Kelly V.	21 Wanda K.
9 Paul W.	22 Renee S.
11 Eileen L.	25 James C.
12 Diane Z.	26 Lorna P.



OUTREACH: CHRISTMAS EVE C23

Soon, we will be kicking off a congregation outreach program based on Synod's C23 program. Why another outreach program? First, not everyone knows the good news. In fact, in a recent research poll, it was found that over 80% of people when asked if they thought they would go to heaven if they died today answered along the lines of, "I hope so; I think I was good enough." This response alone should tell us that many don't know the free gift Jesus has won for them.

Second, according to research conducted by our synod, the unchurched are more likely to attend a worship service on Christmas Eve than any other time of year, and if invited by someone they know are highly likely to say yes and attend. Given this opportunity, our church will be promoting our evening Christmas Eve service to the community and all members are encouraged to get involved and invite someone.

So, let's strive to reach the lost with the life-saving message of Jesus who did it all. He already purchased their ticket to heaven for them by going to the cross to die for the sins of the whole world. We have forgiveness, hope, peace, eternal life... in Jesus.; Jesus + nothing = eternal life in Heaven.



MESSENGER SIGN-UP Anyone can get an electronic copy of each month's *Messenger* in their email! Simply go to ChristMerrill.com/email and subscribe to *Messenger*. Paper copies will continue to be available at church.

SAVE THE DATE: MISSION FESTIVAL

Pastor Jeffrey Mahnke from St. Peter, Schofield/Wausau, will be our guest preacher on **January 21, 2024** for a mission-themed worship service. After fellowship time, he will give a presentation about home missions and the newly established Kronenwetter mission. In addition to his duties at St. Peter, Pastor Mahnke also serves God's people as the chairman of the Western Wisconsin District's Mission Board and as a member of the WELS Board for Home Missions.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP '21 TRANSITION UPDATE

Beginning with the first worship service in January 2024, we will switch to full-time use of the new hymnal at all our worship services.

SHUT-IN VISITATION

The Elders welcome help from members visiting our shut-ins: **Laurene H., Tom L., Phil M., Lorna P., and Kathleen P.** Members are encouraged to visit and/or keep them in their prayers. Please reach out to Pastor or an elder for contact information.

USHERS NEEDED

We are looking for confirmed men to provide a warm welcome to our members and guests and to help support the worship service. Want to learn more? Usher procedures have been updated and are posted on the bulletin board next to the elevator or reach out to Dan K. for more information. The sign-up sheet is in the entry on the fellowship and service bulletin board. Find a date that works for you.

COMMUNION REMINDERS

White grape juice is offered as an alternative for those that have a need for it. When the individual cups come around, the grape juice is available on the outside rim of the tray. Gluten-free wafers are also available. Please speak with Pastor, an elder, or an usher before the service to express your desire for gluten-free wafers or with any questions.

Youth Group Leaf Raking



Danielle, Nicole, Kaylynn, Pastor, Sonia, Scott, Derek, Katelyn

Small Engine Session



Rusty G. and Leon M. offer advice on snowblower maintenance



Phase One of the parking lot resurfacing is complete.

