

# THE MESSENGER

January 2024

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

## Mission Festival

Pastor Jeffrey Mahnke from St. Peter, Schofield/Wausau, will be our guest preacher on **January 21**, for a mission-themed worship service.

An opportunity to support home missions will be made available at the end of the worship service and in the fellowship hall.

No Sunday School or Bible studies will be held this day so that everyone can attend the mission presentation.

After fellowship time, Pastor Mahnke will give a presentation about home missions and the newly established Kronenwetter mission. What questions do you have for him?

A meal will be held following the presentation.



### In this Messenger:

- 1) Mission Festival
- 2) Pastor's Devotion
- 3) Calendar
- 4) Open Forum & Annual Voters' Meeting
- 4) Church Directories
- 4) Shut-in Visits
- 4) Attendance & Financial Updates
- 4) Birthdays/Anniversaries
- 4) Prayer Requests
- 5) Game Night
- 5) Lord's Prayer Input
- 5) Tuition Applications
- 5) WELS Youth Night
- 6) *Mysterious Marriage* Workshop
- 6) *Men of His Word* Men's Conference
- 7) Our Church's Online Presence
- 8) Advent & Christmas Pictures



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“Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” (Lamentations 3:22-23)

With the beginning of every new year, we look back at everything that happened in the previous year: the joys, the challenges, the grief, and everything else. Also, with the beginning of every new year we look forward anticipating that things will change and become better. In some ways this can happen, but very likely we are going to have joys, challenges, grief, and other things. **But no matter what happens in the new year, one thing never changes: the Lord’s mercy, love, and compassion are new every morning.**

We see how the Lord’s mercy, love, and compassion are new every morning in the above passage, but it’s interesting to see the context when this passage was written. The book of Lamentations may not be the most familiar book of the Bible, but the book was written by someone who saw the temple in Jerusalem destroyed, the city of Jerusalem left in ruins, and the Israelites taken into exile by the Babylonians. Did the Israelites deserve this? Yes, they had sinned against God, refused to listen to his prophets who warned them about this destruction, and never changed their ways. So, when Jerusalem is destroyed and many were put to death, the book of Lamentations laments and weeps for the sins they had committed.

Yet, at the very center of this book, is this message that the Lord’s mercy, love, and compassion are new every morning and the people were not completely consumed by the destruction. But how could the writer of Lamentations say that since the temple was destroyed, the city of Jerusalem was in ruins, and the people were in exile? The writer could say this because the Lord hadn’t removed his love from his people. The Lord promised that he would bring his people back from exile. The Lord promised that the temple and Jerusalem would be rebuilt. And most important the Lord promised that a Savior of all mankind would come from the Jewish people. Therefore the Lord’s mercy, love, and compassion were still with his people and that mercy, love, and compassion would be new every morning.

The same applies to us as we start a new year. We too lament and weep for all of the sins we committed against God this past year. We lament and weep for those times we didn’t listen to what God and his messengers had to say to us. We lament and weep for how we refused to change our lives and turn away from sin. And as we start this new year we lament and weep for the sins we will commit in thought, word, and deed. We deserve to be completely consumed in God’s wrath and justice.

Yet the Lord’s mercy, love, and compassion are ever with us. He has promised not to remove his love for us. He fully, freely, and daily forgives us our sins. No matter what we go through in this next year, whether it be times of joy and laughter or times of sadness and grief, the Lord is with us to bless and help us in every way. And most important the Lord has given us a Savior who has taken away our sins and will take us from this world of sin into heavenly bliss. **So, as we journey through this new year, let this be our confidence that the Lord’s mercy, love, and compassion are ever with us, and his mercy, love, and compassion are new with us every morning.**

- Pastor Neal Behm

# January 2024

View the most up to date calendar at [christmerrill.com](http://christmerrill.com)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 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	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 2:00 pm Worship @ Bell Tower 6:30 pm Council Meeting	<b>10</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Catechism Class	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 7:30 pm Swing Dancing	<b>13</b> 9:00 am Men's Bible Study
<b>14</b> 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Open Forum	<b>15</b> 6:00 pm Board of Elders Meeting	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Catechism Class	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion) 10:30 am Missions Presentation 11:30 am Meal	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Catechism Class 6:30 pm Choir	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 5:30 pm Meal 6:00 Game Night
<b>28</b> 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	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Catechism Class 6:30 pm Choir			

8:00 am Sundays - worship service on the radio (96.3FM, 730AM)  
 9:00 am Sundays - worship service online at [youtube.com/@christmerrill](https://youtube.com/@christmerrill)

**OPEN FORUM** On **Sunday, January 14**, 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. No Sunday School or Bible Studies will be held. All youth and adults are welcome to attend.

**ANNUAL VOTERS' MEETING**

**Sunday, January 28 at 10:30 am**

Elections will be held for the following positions of the church council (two-year terms):

- Vice President,
- Secretary,
- Board of Church Properties,
- Fellowship Committee, and
- Evangelism Committee.

The following positions will also be up for election for a term of one year:

- Treasurer,
- Board of Christian Education, and
- Technology 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.

**CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY** New church directories are now available. This resource includes members' names and contact information. To get your copy, sign up on the green paper on the bulletin board in the hallway.

**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.**

**THANKS** to all who donated church cleaning supplies.

<i>Spiritual Growth Weekly Averages</i>	November
Sunday worship, Wednesday midweek	67
Men's Bible Study	7
Sunday Adult Bible Study	14
Sunday School & Teen Bible Study	6
Wednesday Bible Study	11
Women's Bible Study	8

**CHURCH FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Our Offerings to the Lord (as of 11/30/23)

Anticipated offerings: \$145,212

Actual offerings: \$128,576

Actual expenses: \$132,265

General Fund balance as of 12/10/23: \$21,637

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.

**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

- |              |               |             |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 Decylin C. | 5 Tom 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.
- 22 Dave & Donna P.
- 29 Scott & Colleen S.



**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.

**GAME NIGHT** Saturday, January 27. Everyone is welcome for a meal at 5:30 pm (ham sandwiches provided) and games to start at 6:00 pm. Bring a game to play or just bring yourself for a fun evening.

### **We want to hear from you!**

Throughout our journey to adopt the new *Christian Worship: Hymnal*, your input has been invaluable and helped shape the way we approach worship as a family of believers. With full-time use of the new hymnal now upon us, there is one last item we'd like to hear from you about - the Lord's Prayer.

Some of your fellow members have expressed interest in using the "new/contemporary" version of the Lord's Prayer. Others have said they prefer the "traditional" version. Still others don't have a strong opinion and would use either version of the prayer. God has not prescribed a specific version of this prayer for our use. Instead, he leaves the decision to our Christian freedom and judgment.

Starting in January, there will be an opportunity to use and discuss the "new/contemporary" version of The Lord's Prayer at the conclusion of the Sunday Adult Bible Study. Additional conversation about this version of the prayer is planned for the April Open Forum. The forum will be a space for all members to share their perspectives, ask questions, and contribute to the ongoing dialogue about this subject. We encourage you to share your opinions at this meeting or at any time with an elder or with the Pastor.

### **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.



**Sunday, February 4 from 5:00-8:00 pm**  
**FREE BOWLING! FREE FOOD! FUN PRIZES!**

#### **Marathon City Sports Center**

1200 WI-107  
Marathon City, WI 54448



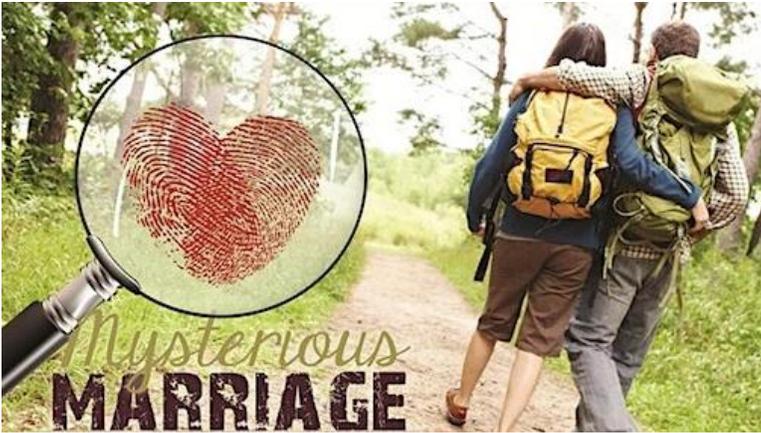
#### **TEENS GRADES 8-12**

No ball, shoes, or experience are required to help us take over the entire bowling alley for a night of fun and fellowship!

WELS church membership not required. Invite your friends!

Find a link to sign up on the Members of Christ Lutheran Facebook group page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/christmerrill>) or RSVP at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040A48AEAF22AAF94-46670136-bowling?fbclid=IwAR1PmbaUXqSuLyR5IDBVD7bBhKecFeGHXvXr4twMwaQuD89iu3wNVeFrfSI>

## Mysterious Marriage - One Day Marriage Enrichment Event



Trinity Lutheran Church, Town of Berlin, invites all married couples to a marriage enrichment event, Mysterious Marriage, on **Saturday, February 3**. The event will take place at Trinity (137801 County Road FF, Merrill WI 54452) and last from **9:00 am to 4:00 pm**. The cost of this one-day marriage enrichment event is \$80 per couple and includes continental breakfast, beverages and snacks throughout the day, lunch for two, and all the Mysterious Marriage resources. Space is limited, so sign up soon.

You can register by going to [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) and searching for "Mysterious Marriage" or by clicking the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/.../mysterious-marriage...>



### 2024 Men of His Word Conference – Built to Serve

This year's theme is based on Galatians 5:13 *You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.*

Do you ever wonder if you're the right man for the job? I think I've spent most of my life trying to figure out what I'm good at doing. We all want to be good at something. Whether we realize it or not, God has given each of us the exact abilities we need to do the work he has planned out for us. And, Galatians 5:13 reminds us that Christ has set us free so that we can use those abilities to serve one another in love. Join us at Men of His Word to learn how you are Built to Serve in all the different vocations to which God has called you.

The 15th Annual MOHW Conference will be held at the Best Western Premier Waterfront Convention Center in **Oshkosh** on **Saturday, February 17**. Additional details and online registration are available at [www.menofhisword.org](http://www.menofhisword.org). The registration fee is \$60 for adults and \$30 for youth – these rates increase to \$75 and \$37 respectively after January 29th.

Please join us for a day of worship, praise and fellowship in God's Word!

# Our Church's Online Presence

By Ken C., Technology Committee Chairman

Since 2020 we have been recording and livestreaming our services for members and others to watch from wherever they are. This can be downstairs with your crying baby, in another town, around the world and even in war zones. Wherever you are, you have an alternative if you can't be here to join in person.

Of course, if you can be here in person that is favorable for many reasons - spiritual, physical, and emotional. But... if you can't make it then please join us through our YouTube channel which is also linked through our Facebook page. Follow these steps to get there through your favorite browser.

1. Go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com),
2. Type in the search bar at top - [@christmerrill](https://www.youtube.com/@christmerrill)
3. Press "Enter" you should see our Christ Ev. Lutheran Church channel, with our logo, at the top of the results.
4. Click on the logo or title and you will go to the Christ Ev. Lutheran Church channel
5. Scroll down and click on the "live" link below the logo for a list of services with the date and sermon topic. Click on the one you wish to watch. Note - Some are scheduled for future dates.
6. Also hit the subscribe button if you would like to get notifications.



Next month I will explain how you can share or bring our services and church to others.

**WORSHIP LIVESTREAM:** Christ Ev. Lutheran Church provides an internet livestream broadcast during many of the **Sunday services (9:00 am)**. The service is **simultaneously streamed to a TV in the lower level of the church for anyone not able to be in the sanctuary.**

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.



**VISIT OUR CHURCH WEBSITE** at <http://www.christmerrill.com>



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

# Advent & Christmas at Christ Lutheran

Thank you to everyone who helped decorate the church for the holiday season!



L to R: Danielle, Nicole, Henry, Sully, Kaylynn, Derek, Katelyn

## Children & Choir Song Service

Sunday School Youth read Scripture passages and sang a song.

Back row: Nicole, Kaylynn, Danielle  
Front row: James, Henry



Pre-service music was provided by Sonia (flute), Derek (saxophone), and Katelyn (clarinet).



Choir members sang several anthems.



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