

THE MESSENGER

October 2024

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church



Men's Bible Study

Join us for Bible Study in the entry on **October 3** at **6:30 pm**! It's an opportunity to read Scripture, discuss it, and see how it relates to our lives today.

All men are welcome, no matter your age or previous Bible Study experience. We'll be starting with Genesis 3.

Women's Discipleship Group

We'll gather on Thursday, **October 3** at **6:30 pm** in the west end of the church's lower level.

We will be using the *Time: It's a Gift* Bible study which provides a rich foundation of Scripture, both law and gospel, to guide us as we open up and look into using God's gift of time. The goal is to equip us in the midst of a "no limits" society to make wise decisions in scheduling each day; to live biblically in all the seasons of our lives.

God speaks clearly saying "Live in peace and be content." We say, "How is that possible?" We'll look at those possibilities. Even in the midst of full schedules or time-on-our-hands schedules, may we say with the Psalmist David "My times are in your hands" (Psalm 31:15).

All women are invited!



In this Messenger:

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The Five Solas of the Reformation

“I did nothing; the Word did everything.” These are famous words that Luther said during a sermon, and what he said was exactly true. Luther was just a man that God used to bring the light of the gospel back to the people. God could have used anyone, and that’s the point of the five solas of the reformation. Let us briefly look at each one.

Sola Gratia (by grace alone): This sola focuses on how everyone is saved purely by God’s grace. It was God’s grace that sent his Son to be the world’s Savior. It was God’s grace that Jesus gave up his life for our salvation. It is God’s grace that he does all things for us because we earn nothing from God.

Sola Fide (by faith alone): This sola focuses on how everyone is saved purely by faith. Faith is a gift from God that by his Word and Sacraments the Holy Spirit entered into our hearts and is dwelling inside of us. It is faith that connects us to Jesus and his righteousness. All of our works have not earned this gift of faith. In fact all of our good works are still corrupted with sin. But through faith God accepts what we do because he can read our hearts and see that what we do is done out of love for him.

Sola Scriptura (by Word alone): This sola focuses on how it is the Word alone that saves. We need God’s Word for salvation. Although by nature and conscience everyone knows a god exists, they don’t know who the true God is or about our Savior. It is the revealed Word of God, truly inspired and without error, that shows us our Triune God and Jesus Christ as our only Savior. It is the Word that strengthens our faith and guides us in Christian living. It is the Word that comforts us, gives us hope, and reveals to us what God has prepared for us in heaven.

Solus Christus (by Christ alone): This sola focuses on Christ alone. A favorite recent hymn is the one called “In Christ Alone”. In that hymn we focus on how Christ, our glorious, eternal, almighty God, took on human flesh and made his dwelling among us. We focus on how Christ gave up his life for us. We focus on how Christ rose from the dead for our justification. We focus on how Christ rules our lives. If we remove Christ, his perfect life, his death, and his resurrection from Christianity then we have nothing. Without Christ God wouldn’t be gracious to us because we wouldn’t have a Savior. Without Christ believing in him would be futile. Without Christ the Word would be pointless because the Word focuses on Christ. Without Christ Christianity is nothing. But with Christ Christianity is everything.

Soli Deo Gloria (glory to God alone): This sola focuses on how all glory is due to God alone. Since we are saved by God’s grace alone, by faith alone, by the Word alone, and by Christ alone, everything we do is to glorify God. No matter what calling we have in life, and we have multiple callings in life, we serve God and give him praise. To God be the glory!

- Pastor Neal Behm

October 2024

View the most up to date calendar at christmerrill.com/calendar.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 4:30 pm Board of Christian Education Meeting	2 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 5:30 pm Catechism Class 6:30 pm Choir Practice	3 6:30 pm Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm Women's Discipleship Group	4	5
6 10:30 am Worship (Holy Communion) 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Open Forum	7	8 2:00 pm Worship @ Bell Tower 6:00 pm Council Meeting	9 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 5:30 pm Catechism Class 6:30 pm Choir Practice	10	11 7:30 pm Swing Dancing	12
13 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Welcome Home Fellowship Meal <i>Bring Clothes Closet donations</i>	14	15	16 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 5:30 pm Catechism Class 6:30 pm Choir Practice	17	18	19 Teen Retreat at Camp Phillip (Fri – Sun)
20 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion) 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Teen Bible Study 10:30 am Adult Bible Study 5:00 pm WELS Youth Night	21 6:00 pm Board of Elders Meeting	22	23 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 5:30 pm Catechism Class 6:30 pm Choir Practice	24	25	26 Wilke's Corn Maze & Hay Ride
27 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Voters' Meeting	28	29	30 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 5:30 pm Catechism Class 6:30 pm Choir Practice	31		

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

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

SUNDAY EDUCATION SCHEDULE:

Sunday School (PreK-Grade 5) will be held every Sunday this month except October 13.

Teen Bible Study (Grades 6-12) will be held October 20.

Adult Bible Study will be held October 20.

OPEN FORUM: Join the Conversation! On Sunday, **October 6**, at **10:30 am** in the church fellowship hall, we'll be holding an open forum for all members. This is a great opportunity to share your thoughts, ask questions, and engage in informal discussions on important topics like the 2025 budget, ministry fair, before/after school care, and the free sale. Whether you're a youth or an adult, your voice matters, and we welcome your input! Please note, there will be no Teen or Adult Bible Study that day, so we encourage everyone to attend and be part of the conversation. Ask a council member for information on how to attend if offsite.

CHURCH CHOIR SINGERS WANTED:

Do you like to sing for the Lord? Join the church choir! No experience needed. Most practices are Wednesdays at 6:30 pm. Talk to Jennifer H. for more information.

QUARTERLY VOTERS' MEETING

Mark your calendars for Sunday, **October 27**, at **10:30 am** in the sanctuary for our quarterly Voters' Meeting. We encourage all voting members to attend. Ask a council member for information on how to attend if offsite. Key agenda items include:

- Election of two Camp Phillip representatives
- Appointments to the Nomination Board
- Consideration of the 2025 budget



Welcome Home Sunday: The Blessing of "Home"

There's something about home. Home is where you relax after a long day of work. Home is where you can let your hair down, because you know the people there will love you, even with your quirks and flaws. Home is where you feel most safe, in a world which is anything but.


Jesus intended for his church to be more than a school where we learn about God's Word. He intended it to be more than a cathedral where we praise our Creator. Jesus intended for church to be a home, a place where we gather with Christian family and enjoy all the blessings of home.

On October 13, we are celebrating *Welcome Home* Sunday. We will talk about the importance of having the support of a Christian community. One major goal for this Sunday? We want to have 100% of our members in attendance. Let's pack the house! Let's see what that looks like, when *every* member comes together. Please do everything possible to set that date aside so you can join your brothers and sisters in Christ.

***Welcome Home* Sunday** will have other things going on in addition to the **9:00 am worship service**. There will be a **meal after worship**. (When family gets together, there tends to be food!) We'll also be celebrating Pastor Behm's first 10 years of ministry and our volunteers. So, plan on sticking around for a while!

Please join us! Need a ride? We have people ready to pick you up. Contact Joe, Ellen or an elder for ride information.

FREE SWING DANCING CLASSES: Friday, **October 11** free swing dancing for anyone in the community will be held in the fellowship area. Classes start at **7:30 pm**; open dance until 10:00 pm. No partner is needed. Classes will continue the second Friday of each month until spring.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:

Do you like to ask questions?

Two or more volunteers are needed to research the feasibility of beginning a “wrap-around” (before and after school) daycare at church. Talk with Rusty for more information and to volunteer.

DONATIONS WANTED: Clean, folded, sorted clothes for the Clothes Closet can be dropped off in the coat room on the second Sunday of each month. Thanks for all the past donations. Community members took home many clothing items at the September Free Sale, and in turn, donated over \$275 for the Merrill Food Pantry.

FUN AND FELLOWSHIP: Everyone is welcome to attend the Wilke’s Corn Maze, Hay Ride, and Pumpkin Patch fun day on Saturday, **October 26**. See the Fellowship & Service sign up bulletin board for more information.

CHILI COOK-OFF: Sunday, **November 10** at **11:30 am**. You may enter your best chili in the competition or come be a taster to determine this year’s best chili. Attendees are asked to bring a dish to pass.



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| 2 Jackie M. | 10 Chris R. | 22 Delainy S. |
| 2 Bill W. | 14 Janet P. | 24 Brittany F. |
| 6 Rusty G. | 15 Jerry N. | 29 Mary T. |

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 9 Terry & Danielle F.
 10 Phil & Jackie M.
 27 Lee & Dottie K.

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.

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Brad B. | Laurene H. | Tom L. |
| Phil M. | Lorna P. | Kathleen P. |

<i>Spiritual Growth Weekly Averages</i>	August
Sunday & Monday worship/Online	64/3

CHURCH FINANCIAL UPDATE

- Our Offerings to the Lord (as of 8/30/24)
 Anticipated offerings: \$108,514
 Actual offerings: \$89,777
 Actual expenses: \$95,177
 General Fund balance as of 9/8/24: \$15,161

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.

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

CAMP PHILLIP DOOR OFFERING

This October, we invite you to participate in our special door offering to support Camp Phillip. Offerings result in 10% discounts to corporation congregation members each year that make use of the different programs that are offered. Our congregation is a corporate member.



UPCOMING CAMP PHILLIP RETREATS:

Visit CampPhillip.com for more information and to register.

Teen Retreat: October 18-20 For those in grades 8-12. *Glow in the Dark!*

20's & 30's Retreat: November 8-10. We invite YOU (well, those of you in your 20's and 30's) to come to Camp for our 20's and 30's Retreat! Join us for a weekend of fun, playing games, relaxing, and growing closer to your friends and your Savior.



We are excited to have our next Youth Night at St. Peter - Wausau Campus. **Teens grade 8-12** are welcome to come Sunday, **October 20** from **5:00 to 8:00 pm** for free food and fun. WELS membership not required; invite your friends! If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Kevin Schnake at 715-348-2075 or pastors@mysaintpeter.org. Register at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040A48AEAF22AAF94-51505734-october>.



Approximately one in four pregnancies end in miscarriage. Stillbirths, which occur later in a pregnancy, are far less common but still happen today despite medical advances. Many women report experiencing intense sadness or depression. October is Infant Loss Awareness month which provides us a natural opportunity for us to reach out with the love of Christ. We are gathering to look at loss in light of God's Word and to acknowledge the heartache of such a loss while finding comfort in the promises of Jesus.

SEEKING YOUTH GROUP LEADER(S)

We are looking for an adult, or adults, to lead our church youth group for grades 6-12. This role provides opportunities to help build teens up in their faith, equip them for a life of service to God and the church, and offer mentorship to guide them through life's challenges—all in a fun and loving environment. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Scott for more information. Training and support are offered.

LUTHERAN BOY AND GIRL PIONEERS

Our Savior's, Wausau and other sister churches offer this ministry for young boys and girls. *Lutheran Boy Pioneers* is a program offered to help nurture and train boys in the Lord, so that they will remain faithful to Him and faithfully serve Him throughout their lives. *Lutheran Girl Pioneers* encourages girls and leaders to do all things according to God's Word and out of love and respect for God. Contact Scott or visit the websites below for more information.

<https://www.lutheranpioneers.org/>
<https://www.lgp.org/>

SIGN UP FOR CHURCH TEXT ALERTS

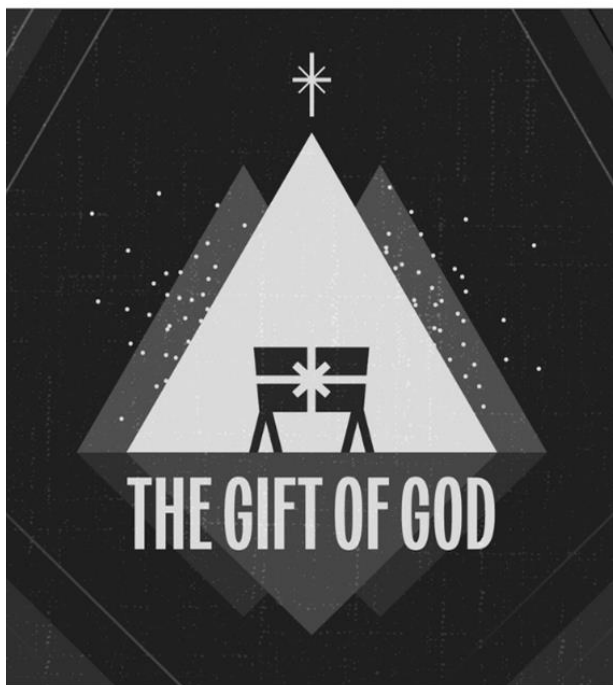
Our church is inviting members to sign up for text notifications about important church information. What does this mean? We don't want you to miss out on anything from church. We want to make sure that quick text updates can be sent to you using our church software, Church360, so you can get notified without having to check your email. In order to do this, you must confirm that you would like to opt-in to these text messages or else we cannot send you these important messages via text. Those 13 years old and up (who have not yet opted in for text messages) that provided the church their email address will receive a message with more information from automail@360members.com. If you'd like to opt-in to the program contact Ken, Colleen, Scott, or Diane Z. or check your email.



CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY

We are getting ready for the 2025 directory! If you would like to update your picture, you will have the opportunity to do so after church on **October 27 and November 10**. Contact information forms will be available by the member mailboxes for any updates. Also, a signup sheet for obtaining a copy is on the bulletin board across from the mailboxes. For more information, please reach out to Diane Z. or Colleen.

BE PART OF CHRISTMAS 2024!



Keeping with our congregational goal to increase our outreach efforts in the Merrill community, we will be undertaking a program called "C24" (short for "Christmas 2024") to share the gospel with souls in our area on Christmas Eve. A simple way to do that—invite them to come with you to our congregation's 6:30 pm Christmas Eve worship service. Each member, young and old, can embrace the privilege and responsibility of sharing Christ with unchurched friends, relatives, and neighbors.

C24 is a program produced by WELS Congregational Services to help churches and members undertake this effort. Christmas Eve has surpassed Easter as the worship service unchurched individuals are most likely to attend. A recent survey found 80% of unchurched adults would seriously consider accepting an invitation, extended by a friend, to attend a Christmas Eve service.

Christmas Eve will be here before you know it. Whom will you reach?

September Open House & Free Sale



Outdoor Worship



Game Winners



Some of the many roadside cleanup volunteers