

# THE MESSENGER

March 2025

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

## Bowling & Fellowship Meal

**BOWLING:** There will be an afternoon of bowling, and you are welcome to invite your family and friends. Lanes have been reserved on **Saturday, March 15**, from **2:00-4:00 pm** at Lincoln Lanes in Merrill. A sign-up sheet is posted at the back of church, so we can make sure we have enough lanes reserved.

**DINING OUT:** Plans are to also eat at Casa Amigos after bowling for those who wish to continue to join us or just to join for the eating around **4:30 pm**. A sign-up sheet is posted at the back of church, so we can make sure we have enough tables reserved.



## Youth Group Sledding & Campfire Night

Join us for an evening of winter fun! On Thursday, March 27, from 6:30 – 8:30 pm we'll kick off the night with sledding on Memorial Drive and then warm up by the campfire at church.

Meet at the Jack Pines Park sledding hill to start and bring your sleds! After some downhill excitement, we'll gather around the fire for fellowship, devotion, warmth, and smores.



Invite your family and friends, and dress for the weather. We hope to see you there!



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# Turn to God

“When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. ‘I have sinned,’ he said, ‘for I have betrayed innocent blood.’ ‘What is that to us?’ they replied. ‘That’s your responsibility.’ So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.” (Matthew 27:3-5)

Let’s be honest: out of the people to focus on in the Bible, Judas is one of the last people we would pick. But there are things we can learn from him. As we enter into the season of Lent this month, a major focus about Lent is about repentance. In one sense Judas was repentant. He felt remorse for what he had done. He confessed that he had betrayed innocent blood. Being contrite is one aspect of repentance.

But in another sense Judas was not repentant. Another aspect of repentance is to trust that God can and will forgive sins. Judas did not believe that God could have forgiven him for what he had done. Therefore Judas killed himself.

The topic of suicide is another thing we can learn from Judas. People commit suicide for various reasons. Sometimes people commit suicide because they have severe mental conditions. Sometimes people commit suicide because they have done something horrible and it seems like there’s no way out. Sometimes people commit suicide because they are hurting and they are tired of waiting for Jesus to take their lives. In the end suicide is done because of a lack of trust in God.

Perhaps you have had suicidal thoughts before or maybe you are having suicidal thoughts right now. And even if you have never had these thoughts, you might know someone who does. Therefore let us learn from Judas. **We can always turn to God in repentance trusting that he will forgive us for there is no sin that Jesus did not die for. We can always trust in God to help us when we are suffering.** And even if God will not remove some sufferings remember that Scripture says, “Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). Therefore let us not turn away from God like Judas did, but let us always turn to Jesus in repentance, in times of suffering, and in every other aspect of our lives.

- Pastor Neal Behm

# March 2025

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Catechism Classes To Be Determined			1
<b>2</b> 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion) 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Teen Bible Study 10:30 am Adult Bible Study	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 5:15 pm Potluck Meal 6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Worship (Holy Communion) 7:30 pm Choir Practice	<b>6</b> 6:30 pm Women's Discipleship Group 6:30 pm Men's Bible Study	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <b>WELS            National            Band Fest            (Fri-Sun)</b>
<b>9</b> 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Teen Bible Study 10:30 am Adult Bible Study	<b>10</b> 6:00 pm Council Meeting	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 5:15 pm Potluck Meal 6:30 pm Lenten Worship 7:30 pm Choir Practice	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 7:30 pm Swing Dancing	<b>15</b> <b>2:00-4:00 pm            Bowling @            Lincoln Lanes</b> <b>4:30 pm            Fellowship            Meal</b>
<b>16</b> 9:00 am Worship (Holy Communion) 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Teen Bible Study 10:30 am Adult Bible Study	<b>17</b> 6:30 pm Fellowship Committee Meeting	<b>18</b> <b>2:00 pm            Worship @            Bell Tower</b>	<b>19</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 5:15 pm Potluck Meal 6:30 pm Lenten Worship 7:30 pm Choir Practice	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Teen Bible Study 10:30 am Adult Bible Study	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 5:15 pm Potluck Meal 6:30 pm Lenten Worship 7:30 pm Choir Practice	<b>27</b> 6:30 pm Youth Group Outdoor Event	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>Spring Teen            Retreat @            Camp Phillip            (Fri- Sat)</b> </div>	
<b>30</b> 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Teen Bible Study 10:30 am Adult Bible Study	<b>31</b>					

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

# Lent 2025

Before each Wednesday Lenten service, a potluck supper will be held in the fellowship hall beginning at 5:15 pm.



Each of the midweek services will be livestreamed on [youtube.com/@christmerrill](https://www.youtube.com/@christmerrill).



Date	Theme	Pastor
Wednesday, March 5	Realizing Our Need for Repentance	Behm
Wednesday, March 12	Recognizing Against Whom We Sin	DeGier
Wednesday, March 19	Revealing Our Sinful Nature	Bittorf
Wednesday, March 26	Remembering God's Perfect Demands	Russow
Wednesday, April 2	Relying on God's Grace	from Medford
Wednesday, April 9	Removing Our Guilt	Willitz
Thursday, April 17	Holy Thursday (Holy Communion)	Behm
Friday, April 18	Good Friday	Behm



WELS Women's Ministry is offering weekly devotions for the 2025 season of Lent. We're used to traveling with Jesus during Holy Week from the upper room to the cross to the empty tomb. But these aren't the only places Jesus visited during his earthly ministry. This Lent, join WELS Women's Ministry as we follow in our Savior's steps through a series of weekly devotions. Subscribe today at <https://wels.net/>.

## Look Ahead – Save the Dates!

**Friday, April 4 – Sunday, April 6: Women’s Retreat @ Camp Phillip.** Cost is \$120. Visit [campphillip.com](http://campphillip.com) to register.

**Thursday, April 10: *The Power of Connecting Women in Christ* webinar** at 7:00 pm sponsored by WELS Women’s Ministry.

**Sunday, April 20: Easter Breakfast** following the 9:00 am worship service. Sign up on the bulletin board to bring food items.

**Saturday, April 26:** Starting at 9:00 am, come help spring clean the church and grounds.

**Summer lawnmowing sign up** will soon be on the bulletin board. The church has all the needed equipment. Talk with Mike K. for more details or for training.

**Saturday, May 10: Highway Cleanup** beginning at 10:00 am.

**Saturday, May 17: Free Sale.** See the full-page flyer at the end of this *Messenger*. Sign up on the bulletin board to help out.

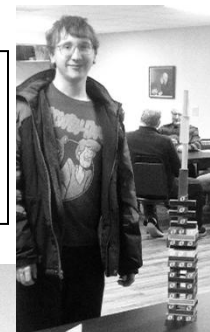
**Friday, May 23 – Monday, May 26: Memorial Day Weekend Camping @ Camp Phillip.**

**Friday, June 13 – Sunday, June 15: Family Fest @ Camp Phillip.**



**1<sup>st</sup> Annual Souperbowl Sunday winners:**

1<sup>st</sup> – Jacob, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Dottie, tie for 3<sup>rd</sup> – Jennifer M. (Henry in picture) & Al



Derek with his block tower

Game Night participants enjoying the evening.



## MEN'S BIBLE STUDY:

Join us on **March 6** at **6:30 pm** for Bible Study in the entry! All men are welcome. The current study is on leadership principles from the Bible.

## WOMEN'S DISCIPLESHIP GROUP:

Women, come join us as we continue to look at spiritual gifts on Thursday, **March 6** at **6:30 pm** in the church library area.

<i>Spiritual Growth Weekly Averages</i>	January
Sunday worship/Online	59/9
Bell Tower worship	--
Sunday Bible Study	18
Sunday School	2
Teen Bible Study	5
Wednesday Bible Study	12
Men's Bible Study	3
Women's Discipleship	5

### CHURCH FINANCIAL UPDATE

Our Offerings to the Lord (as of 1/31/25)

Approved budget: \$14,013

Actual offerings: \$10,925

Actual spending: \$18,088

Our offerings support the gospel ministry here and around the world. For more information, see the Treasurer Report on the bulletin board by the elevator.

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

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

1 Melisa K.	12 Kendra K.	19 Danielle T.
3 Sveta H.	17 Wayne P.	28 Laurene H.
7 Jacob A.	18 Andrei H.	29 James P.
11 Michael N.		

## MARCH ANNIVERSARY

16 Dan & Lisa K.

### CURRENT COUNCIL MEMBERS

**President:** Scott S.

**Vice-President:** Chris R.

**Secretary:** vacant

**Treasurer:** Bill W.

**Board of Christian Education** Chairman: vacant

**Board of Church Properties** Chairman: Mike K.

**Board of Elders** Chairman: Willi H.

**Fellowship Committee** Chairman: Alan Z.

**Evangelism Committee** Chairman: Jacob M.

**Stewardship & Finance Committee** Chairman: Leon M.

**Technology Committee** Chairman: Ken C.

See the complete listing of board and committee members on the bulletin board next to the elevator.

### CAMP PHILLIP SPRING TEEN RETREAT

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. Our counselors will not only help create a safe and memorable weekend for you, but they'll also serve as incredible, friendly role models. The spring retreat will be held March 28-30. For more information and to register:

<https://www.campphillip.com/teen-retreats>.



# How Can I Be Happy?



## How can I be happy when I'm crying?

“Blessed are those who mourn.”  
Matthew 5:4

Be happy while you're crying? I don't think so. Most tears come because of sorrow. People usually cry because something important to them has gone horribly wrong. But Jesus says that Christians are happy even when they're crying.

To understand what Jesus is saying, one must first understand why Christians cry. Christians cry for many of the same reasons everyone else cries. They cry at funerals. They cry when someone has been cruel to them. They cry when they hear a very sad story.

Christians can cry when they realize how horribly they have hurt someone. The burden of guilt weighs heavily on their hearts and brings them to tears. Christians can cry when they think of bad things they have done. They know that they deserve nothing from God but a punishment that never ends.

So where is the happiness?

Happiness is in knowing that while we deserve only the worst from God, he has given us only

the best. When we mourn because of guilt, our Savior dries our moist eyes. When hearts are heavy with sadness, Jesus puts his hand under our chins and lifts our eyes to see his cross, where he made all our guilt, and all the sorrow connected to that guilt his own. Jesus looks at you and me and says, “Be at peace. Your guilt is gone.”

Christians still cry, but Christians find comfort in the midst of their tears. This comfort is for you too.

It is a comfort that brings calm in the face of all kinds of tears. Jesus gives you the peace of knowing that death does not mean defeat. Jesus assures you that being mistreated by others does not mean God has abandoned you. Jesus fills you with the sure hope that all the hurt and evil in this world is not the end of everything.

Can there be happiness even when you are crying? Yes, because Jesus is your comfort.

# A CALL TO ACTION: GATHER DONATIONS FOR THOSE IN NEED



## Invitation to Participate in Our Free Garage Sale

Dear Members of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church,

We hope this message finds you well and blessed. As we continue to strive to serve our community with love and compassion, we are excited to announce the upcoming Free Garage Sale event. This initiative is an opportunity for us to support those in need by providing clothing and household items at no cost.

### How You Can Help

We kindly ask you to reach out to your friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors to gather donations for this event. Items that are in good condition and can be donated include:

- **Clothing:** Gently used adult and children's clothing of all sizes.
- **Household Items:** Kitchenware, small appliances, bedding, and decor.
- **Toys and Books:** For children of all ages.
- **Miscellaneous:** Any other items that may be useful to families in need.

### Donation Guidelines

Please ensure that all items are clean and in good working order. This will help us ensure that the donations are ready to be shared and can bring joy and support to those who receive them.

### Drop-off Information

Donations can be dropped off at the church on the following days:

- **Monday to Friday:** Please reach out to Christy Cordova (715-218-8515) or Jackie Marheine (715-218-6301)
- **Sunday:** Before or after 9:00 AM service time

### Your Generosity Makes a Difference

Every donation, big or small, makes a significant impact. By coming together as a church body, we can extend our hands and hearts to those who need it most. We believe in the power of generosity and compassion to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

Thank you for your continued support and for embodying the spirit of giving that defines our church community. We look forward to seeing the wonderful contributions that will bless so many.

With gratitude and faith,

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church Evangelism Committee