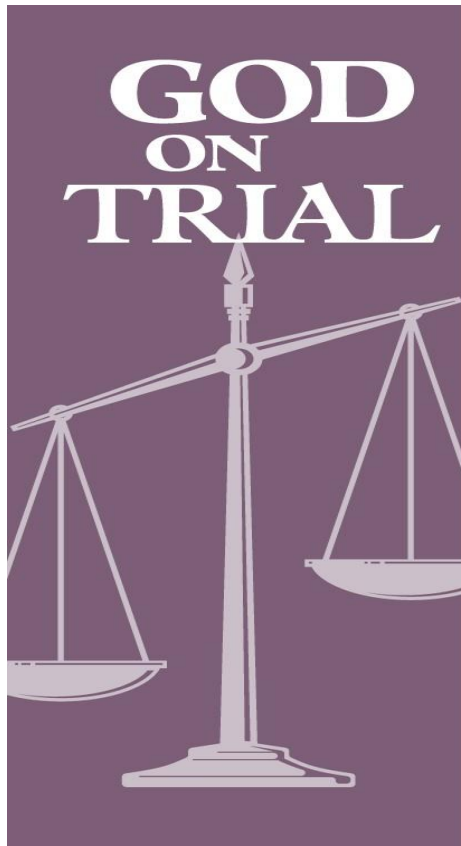


# THE MESSENGER

March 2024

The newsletter of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church



## Lenten Worship

*Note: There will be a potluck meal at 5:30 pm before the Wednesday services.*

Wednesday, March 6 at 6:30 pm  
"Truth" Pastor from Medford

Wednesday, March 13 at 6:30 pm  
"Sympathy" Pastor Willitz

Wednesday, March 20 at 6:30 pm  
"Accusations" Pastor DeGier

Thursday, March 28 at 6:30 pm  
Holy Thursday Worship with  
Holy Communion

Friday, March 29 at 6:30 pm  
Good Friday Worship

### In this Messenger:

- 1) Lenten & Easter Worship
- 2) Pastor's Devotion
- 3) Calendar
- 4) Women's Bible Study
- 4) Swing Dancing
- 4) Softball Signup
- 4) Attendance & Financial Updates
- 4) Birthdays/Anniversary
- 4) '93 CW Hymnal Copies
- 5) Bowling & Meal
- 5) Clothes Closet
- 5) Church Cleaning Help
- 5) *Holy Thursday* explained
- 5) Easter 2024
- 6) *Forward in Christ* Bible Studies
- 6) Connecting our Community
- 6) *Time of Grace* Women's Event
- 7) Our Church's Online Presence
- 8) Game Night Pictures

Sunday,  
March 31

9:00 am  
Worship

Followed by  
Easter  
Breakfast



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1204 N. Sales Street | Merrill, WI 54452



## *Called by God to Serve*

*Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."*

*So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:21-26).*

Just recently I received a divine call to serve as the pastor at Faith Lutheran Church in Radcliff, KY. I returned that call to remain here as your pastor. This got me thinking about this account of Matthias. Matthias was not originally a part of the twelve disciples. But after Judas betrayed Jesus and hung himself the remaining eleven apostles decided to fill Judas' place with someone else in order to fulfill Scripture.

Notice how seriously the apostles took this task. They did not choose someone randomly. They had certain requirements that this replacement needed. He needed to be with Jesus during his whole ministry, and he must have seen Jesus' resurrection. There were two men who fit those requirements: Barsabbas and Matthias. In order to determine whom they should pick, the apostles prayed to God and they cast lots. The lot fell to Matthias and he became an apostle. This is the only information that is provided about him in Scripture.

Even though Scripture doesn't give us any more details about Matthias there is a lot we can learn here, specifically about the calling process. Although our calling process today is a little different than when Matthias was called, there are similarities. Our synod does not allow just anyone to be a called worker. There are credentials that a person must have in order to be a called worker. For instance, the apostle Paul gives us a detailed list of what a pastor should be in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Our called workers go through years of training and instruction. Another similarity is that our pastors and teachers are called by God. Just like the apostles here, we pray to God during our calling process, and it is God who sends out his workers where he desires.

But what about you personally? How does this account apply to you? Even though you may not be a called worker, God has still called you to serve where you are. God has given all of us different vocations in life whether it be employers or employees, parents or children, or teachers or students, etc. What a great comfort this is to know that God has purpose for you and has called you to serve in that capacity. Therefore, just as Matthias was called by God to serve him, serve God wherever he has called you to serve.

- Pastor Neal Behm

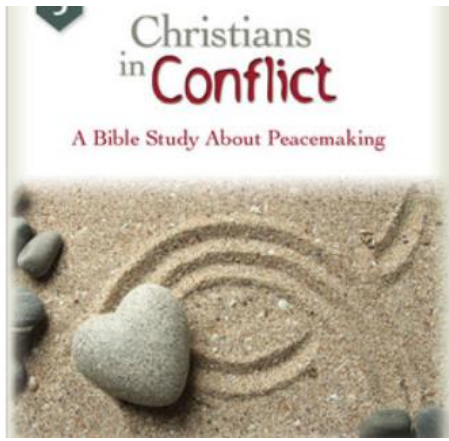
# March 2024

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> 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>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study  5:30 pm Meal  6:30 pm Lenten Worship  7:30 pm Choir	<b>7</b> 4:30 pm Catechism Class  6:30 pm Women’s Bible Study	<b>8</b> 7:30 pm Swing Dancing	<b>9</b>
<b>10</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 Adult Bible Study	<b>11</b> 6:00 pm Board of Elders Meeting	<b>12</b> <b>2:00 pm</b> <b>Worship @</b> <b>Bell Tower</b>  6:00 pm Council Meeting	<b>13</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study  5:30 pm Meal  6:30 pm Lenten Worship  7:30 pm Choir	<b>14</b> 4:30 pm Catechism Class  6:30 pm Fellowship Committee Meeting	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</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>2:00 pm Bowling @ Lincoln Lanes</b> <b>4:45 pm Meal @ Friendship House</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 9:00 am Adult Bible Study  5:30 pm Meal  6:30 pm Lenten Worship  7:30 pm Choir	<b>21</b> 4:30 pm Catechism Class	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</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 Adult Bible Study	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 6:30 pm Holy Thursday Worship (Holy Communion)  7:30 pm Choir	<b>29</b> 6:30 pm Good Friday Worship	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 9:00 am Easter Worship  10:30 am Breakfast						

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)



**WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY** We all experience conflict. This practical course leads us to apply biblical conflict-resolving principles to our own lives and to consider how every Christian can become a vital part of a culture of peace. **The March 7 study will cover the topic "Equipped for Peacemaking"** and look at the conflict resolution and management strategies of arbitration, mediation, and negotiation. Paper copies of the previous studies from the series are available in the display to the right of the bulletin board at the top of the stairs.

**SWING DANCING:** On Friday, March 8 at 7:30 pm everyone is welcome to attend swing dancing in the church fellowship hall.

No experience or partner is needed; lessons will be provided.



**SOFTBALL SIGNUP:** It's almost that time of year again! Church softball is right around the corner. The signup sheet is in the narthex. Please sign up by **March 13** to



get on the initial roster. You may be added after if you miss the date.

<i>Spiritual Growth Weekly Averages</i>	January
Sunday worship	71
Sunday Adult Bible Study	17
Sunday School & Teen Bible Study	8
Wednesday Bible Study	9
Women's Bible Study	6

### MARCH BIRTHDAYS

1 Melisa K.	17 Wayne P.	24 Jenni S.
3 Sveta H.	18 Andrei H.	28 Laurene H.
7 Jacob A.	19 Danielle T.	29 James P.
11 Michael N.	23 Jerry S.	



### MARCH ANNIVERSARY

16 Dan & Lisa K.



### CHURCH FINANCIAL UPDATE

Our Offerings to the Lord (as of 1/31/24)

Anticipated offerings: \$13,564

Actual offerings: \$10,711

Actual expenses: \$16,564

General Fund balance as of 2/8/24: \$15,433

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.

### CHRISTIAN WORSHIP '93 HYMNALS AVAILABLE:

Members have the opportunity to take a copy home with them. The hymnals are located on a cart in the fellowship hall between the elevator and stairwell. Any hymnals not taken by Holy Thursday will find a new home within our synod.



### **BOWLING & FELLOWSHIP MEAL:**

Everyone is welcome to go bowling at Lincoln Lanes (1208 N. Center Ave., Merrill) on Sunday, **March 17** at **2:00 pm**. A meal will follow at Friendship House Family Restaurant (N357 Brandenburg Ave, Merrill) at about **4:45 pm**. Sign up to attend one or both events.

**CLOTHES CLOSET:** There are clothes from our “Free Sale” set aside in one of the classrooms in the church basement. They are available for those in our congregation or others who might have a need for some clothes. We have clothes in sizes from small kids to larger adults (male & female). There are a few household items, also.

Contact Christy at 715-218-8515 to make arrangements to meet with her to check things out.

Going forward, donations for the Clothes Closet may be brought on the first Sunday of any month and placed in the coat room. Items should be clean and organized by size and gender.

The next “Free Sale” will be Saturday, May 18. Any questions can be directed to Christy.

### **CHURCH CLEANING HELP NEEDED:**

Talk to Church Properties Chairman Mike K. if you are willing to help vacuum, dust, sweep, and/or mop a portion of the church.



Currently there are volunteers to clean the church restrooms.



### **HYMNAL HIGHLIGHT: WHY THE NAME CHANGE FROM MAUNDY THURSDAY TO HOLY THURSDAY?**

One reason is that many people no longer understand the meaning of the word Maundy (from the Latin *mandatum*, referencing the new command Jesus gave his disciples on this day; see John 13:34).

Our primary focus that day is on the institution of Holy Communion, which isn’t directly tied to the new command. The Anglican term for this day, “Maundy Thursday,” derives from Jesus’ command in Latin: *Mandatum novum do vobis*. “A new command I give you . . .” (John 13:34). In the CW lectionary, the Gospel with this maundy command only occurs in Year A—hence, Holy Thursday is the name for this occasion.

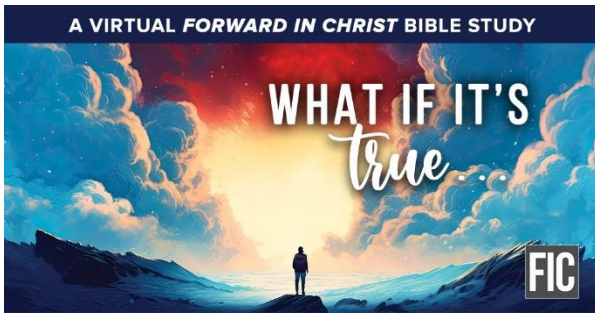
The service for us has always been far more about the **new covenant** than the **new commandment**. The Year C First Reading is Jeremiah 31:31-34. The commentary on that reading ends with these words: “This is the covenant whose terms were put into effect on the day that begins tonight. This is the covenant whose blessings are wrapped up and delivered to us in the meal we celebrate tonight.”

### **Be part of Easter 2024 and the Resurrection Reality**

—LET’S CELEBRATE—  
**EASTER**  
—TOGETHER—  
**resurrection  
REALity**

Why Your Invitation Matters: Studies show that Easter services are one of three worship services that unchurched people are most likely to attend. That’s why it’s so important for us to extend a warm invitation to worship. People are especially likely to attend if invited by an acquaintance. Think of someone and consider inviting them to come to our 9:00 am Easter Sunday worship service.





Join *Forward in Christ* for its first live Bible study series! Bible study author Greg Lyon will lead a study at 7:00 pm on selected Tuesdays of each month until June. The study will examine six scriptural truths in which we, as Christians, put our trust.

#### What if it's true that . . .

- Jan: God made mankind in his image
- Feb: You are a sinner
- March 26: God wants your broken heart
- April 30: You are forgiven
- May 28: You are a child of God
- June 25: You are free

Go to <https://forwardinchrist.net/online-study/> to register for upcoming studies, read the written studies that correspond with the live studies, or watch recordings of the previous studies.

#### CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY

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 that provided the church their email address will receive a message with more information from [automail@360members.com](mailto:automail@360members.com). If you'd like to opt-in to the program contact Ken, Colleen, Scott, or Diane Z. or check your email.

**You also have the option of following our social media channels or subscribing to our email newsletters.**

Like us on **Facebook** at

<https://www.facebook.com/christmerrill>.

Become part of our **member Facebook group** at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/christmerrill>.

Sign up for the monthly newsletter, alerts, and Bible study at

<http://www.christmerrill.com/email>

TIME OF GRACE PRESENTS A  
FIRST-EVER WOMEN'S EVENT:

**unbreakable**

FINDING STRENGTH  
TO FACE THE STORMS

**APRIL 26–27, 2024**

*Unbreakable* is a refreshing two-day break for Christian women to gather together, build friendships, and learn how to find respite from life's daily struggles by leaning on the God of amazing grace. With God at your side, you are unbreakable!

**REGISTRATION FEE: \$199**

The Ingleside Hotel, Pewaukee, WI

For more information and to register, visit

<https://go.timeofgrace.org/unbreakable/>

# Our Church's Online Presence: Preparation for Attending Worship Online

By Ken C., Technology Committee Chairman

1. **Get there early.** Just like when attending in person, getting to our YouTube channel ([youtube.com/@christmerrill](https://youtube.com/@christmerrill)) early is important to help you get in the right frame of mind for worship. Pull up the service early and make sure your internet connection is good. Even if we are not streaming yet you will be able to connect. We can see if someone is waiting for the service to start. We try very hard to go live at least 5 minutes before the start of the service and you will have the same pre-service music we are hearing in person thanks to our organist. If you have the service ready before we go live you will have a placeholder and will know we are live when you hear that music.
2. **Prepare.** You don't have to put on a suit or even comb/brush your hair but be ready to go as soon as we go live or you connect. This makes the service a real priority for you instead of just noise in the background. Of course, dressing up may enhance the worship experience for you.
3. **Put everything else aside.** Speaking of just noise, don't treat the livestream or recording as background to whatever you are doing. Take the time to sit down and participate. Of course, you may have other things going on like babies crying/sick; someone to take care of; or personal needs that need to be met = that is after all why you couldn't be at church in person. But, if possible, make the service what you are doing at that moment the same way you would when you attend in person. Oh, and unlike being in church, the pause button works even when we are live; so if you need to take that break, hit the **II pause** icon and when you get back hit the **> start** button and continue. The service will continue from when you paused it.
4. **Participate.** We stream the text for pretty much everything that is in the hymnal - the liturgy, prayers, psalms, and even the musical notes and lyrics for the hymns so that you can follow/sing along with the in-person congregation. It may seem a little unusual singing by yourself at first, but the more you participate the more you become a part of the service and, hopefully, the more meaningful it will be for you.
5. **Let us know who is watching.** We want to know who is watching simply so that we can better serve you. If we are fulfilling a temporary need, we are so glad to do it. If you watch regularly because you can't be with us in person the church elders would like to know that also. The numbers are also being reported to the synod so that they can better support your needs in the future. Starting in March we will include a link in the description box for you to fill out a quick survey so that we can have a more accurate idea of those to whom we are ministering.
6. **Enjoy.** We hope you enjoy your experience and hope even more that you will be back soon to participate in our worship services in person. In whichever way you participate, please give us feedback as to how we can serve you better.

# Game Night at Christ Lutheran

