

Christ Lutheran Church

Germantown, Maryland

Epistle To the Saints

August, 2026

Service at 10:30 AM each Sunday

Sunday, August 2nd – Holy Communion

Refreshments after service hosted by Sarah Shriver

Sunday, August 16th – Holy Communion

Church Council Meeting

We are collecting Canned Tomatoes for **Damascus HELP**
through the month of **August**.



Welcome!

To view the livestream of our services, go to the church Facebook page (Christ Lutheran Church AALC) or go to our website (clcmd.org) and click the link at the bottom of the first page. Once on the FB page click the "videos" tab. Bulletins for our services are on the website.

PRAYER AND PRAISE

AUDREY STAPF: *Thank you, Lord, for your continued healing in Audrey. Thank you for your constant presence and assurance.*

MERYL BENENATI: *Lord, we praise and thank you for your continued healing in Meryl.*

SARAH SHRIVER: *We thank you Father, for your continued love for Sarah and please comfort her.*

REVEREND DR. CARY LARSON: *Heavenly Father, we thank you for Reverend Larson. We pray that you keep him in your care and bless his work in Your name.*

VICAR CHRIS: *Lord, we ask that you bless Vicar Chris and his family as they faithfully serve You.*

FOR OUR CONGREGATION: *Father, we ask for your merciful goodness in providing us with the wisdom, discernment and courage to do your will. We thank you for providing each of our members, visitors, friends, and family. Each and every one is a true blessing.*

FOR OUR CHILDREN: *Lord, keep each of them strong in you each day. Protect them and guide them in the plan that you have for each of them.*

FOR OUR PASTORS: *By the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, please uphold and help them stand firm in the truth of Your gracious word.*

FOR CAROLYN SHRIVER: *Father, please comfort Carolyn with Your mercy and bless her with the full healing of Your love.*

FOR THOSE SERVING AWAY FROM HOME: *Father, please guide them in Your mercy and bless them with the fullness of Your love.*



Christ Lutheran Church AALC

Our Facebook page is looking great! Lots of wonderful information about our church, congregation, and news.

Every week the service's video is posted. AWESOME!



Like us on Facebook!



*We are collecting canned tomatoes for Damascus **HELP** during the month of August.*



ANY CANNED TOMATO PRODUCT

christlutheranofgermantown.org

We encourage you to provide Jeane with your comments and things that you think would add additional value to the site.



Emphasizes faith as a gift of grace rather than personal achievement.

Ephesians 2:8-9

An Observation - The Spirit of God – Pastor Stapf

Recently we shared the memorial service for our dear friend Bob Petersen. One of the things we pointed out was that even though Bob was in a great deal of pain and failing rapidly, He said that he had a deep sense of our Lord's presence. This Spirit was testified to by a few others when even nurses felt the joy when being in his hospital room.

I mention this to call attention to the active presence of God, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity. I think we are often unaware of what God is doing around us.

Let me give you a little story from Church history. Especially since these summer months are all part of the liturgical Pentecost Season pointing to God's work in Act's Chapter two, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the first Apostles. That outpouring spread throughout the world within a few generations. When God is active He can move many hearts. This should be our daily prayer.

There was a small prayer meeting on Azusa Street in Los Angeles in 1906. People began to gather for prayer and worship, but primarily centered in prayer. The Holy Spirit began to do a powerful work.

They occupied a building that had been a church, but later used for a livery stable. There was nothing fancy about the Azusa Street Mission. Much that went on there was spontaneous. It is even said that the two main leaders prayed earnestly with their heads sheltered in a box to block out all distractions. It was an outpouring of the Spirit marked by a deep conviction of sin, speaking in other tongues, healings, and other manifestations of the work of God. It was also an unusual gathering. It crossed racial lines, most unusual in the segregation era. It also crossed all social and economic lines. The well off, and not so well off, the educated, and the common laborers, the blacks and the whites, all worshipped together in unity. A marvelous picture, and definitely a work of God's Spirit.

There was another aspect reported that fits our current subject. It was said that some people even within blocks of the building felt the presence of God and came under conviction. All of this was the beginning of what we know as the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches today. There were other "awakening" around the nation, but this was the beginning of a work that would touch more than seven hundred million souls worldwide.

All of this is an important reminder that we not discount the power and presence of God, the Holy Spirit; that we pray for His work in our midst; that we look for places He is active; and we take advantage of opportunities as our Lord opens them for us.

The Gifts of the Spirit are available and active today, but we don't have to speak in tongues to do God's work. Pray for that friend or neighbor. Look for an open door to speak God's word. Don't feel self-conscious. Don't feel that you don't know enough of the Bible. Just be willing to step out and speak. Jesus told us not to take a thought before hand what we are to say. (Mark 13:11) The Spirit will give us word. And don't second guess afterwards. "Oh I wish I had said such and such." As with the words, the results are up to our Lord. He is the one who opens hearts.

Vicar Chris and I had lunch at a local restaurant after church a couple weeks ago. A layman from another Damascus church saw Chris's clerical collar and came over to our table. He engaged us in conversation, then took our hands and prayed for us. It was a joy and a blessing.

Yes, it took some guts, but that is what God is calling us to do. Our concern is not what others think about us. Our only concern is to do what we believe our Lord directs.

In the Book of Revelation chapter three, letters are written to two churches, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. These both present characteristics of our modern times. Philadelphia was a persecuted church with little power, but they were faithful in their witness. Laodicea was called the lukewarm church, neither hot nor cold. Jesus said that He will spew them out of His mouth. Not a good picture. Let us pray, seek God's Spirit, and live as Philadelphia.

Grace be unto you now and always in Christ our Saviour.

Picture the Azusa Street Mission:



The following article was presented by Vicar Chris during a pre-service talk. I can assure you that much of the information was relatively new or poorly remembered in detail by many of the congregation. However KUDOS to Christopher and Will who knew each of the Five Solas

The FIVE Solas of the Protestant Reformation

The Core Conflict: What Happened? Where did these ideas come from?

- **The Spark (1517):** Martin Luther protested unbiblical practices in the Roman Catholic Church. He wasn't trying to start a new religion, but to reform the existing one.
- **The Core Question:** *Who has ultimate authority?*
 - **The Catholic View:** Authority rests on the Pope, church tradition, and the Bible combined.
 - **The Protestant View:** Ultimate authority rests on God's Word alone.

The Five Pillars (The Five Solas)

The core beliefs of the Reformation are summarized by five Latin phrases meaning "**Alone.**"

1. Sola Scriptura — Scripture Alone

- **The Principle:** The Bible (66 books) is the final, infallible authority for all Christian faith, doctrine, and practice.
- **The Shift:** Church traditions and papal decrees must align with Scripture; if they conflict, the Bible wins.
- **Key Verse:** *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching...* (2 Timothy 3:16)

2. Solus Christus — Christ Alone

- **The Principle:** Salvation is found in the person and finished work of Jesus Christ alone.
- **The Shift:** Rejected the idea that priests, saints, or church rituals act as necessary mediators between humans and God.
- **Key Verse:** *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6)

3. Sola Gratia — Grace Alone

- **The Principle:** Salvation is an entirely unearned gift from God, driven completely by His mercy.

- **The Shift:** Humanity is inherently sinful and cannot earn safety from God's judgment through good deeds or religious merit.
- **Key Verse:** *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God...* (Ephesians 2:8)

4. Sola Fide — Faith Alone

- **The Principle:** A person is justified (declared righteous by God) solely by trusting in Jesus Christ's sacrifice.
- **The Shift:** Good works are the *result* of being saved, not the *cause* of it. Christ's perfection is credited to the believer's account through faith.
- **Key Verse:** *...to the one who does not work but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.* (Romans 4:5)

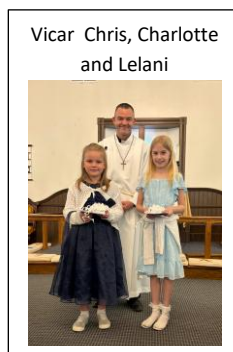
5. Soli Deo Gloria — To the Glory of God Alone

- **The Principle:** Because God does 100% of the work in saving humanity, He deserves 100% of the credit and praise.
- **The Shift:** Erased the divide between "sacred" and "secular" work. Every everyday task—baking, farming, parenting—can and should be done to honor God.
- **Key Verse:** *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* (1 Corinthians 10:31)

 **The Big Takeaway:** The Reformation was a historic course-correction that stripped away human traditions to bring the Church back to the basics of the Gospel: **Saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, according to Scripture alone, for the glory of God alone.**

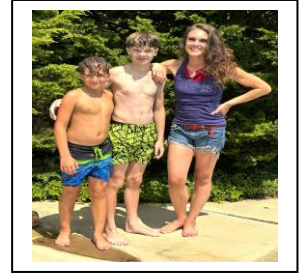
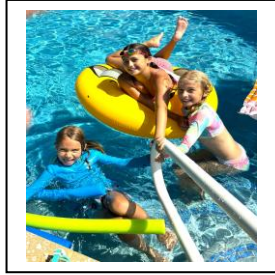
PHOTO GALLERY

Left to Right – Our acolytes – First Communion – Communion Gift – Becoming a Member



July Breakfast – Thank you Becky and Jazzy



PICNIC and POOL PARTY – Thank you Bruce and Carolyn

See the Bulletin Board in the Narthex for
more pictures

WOMEN OF LIFE – BIBLE STUDY LADIES

We have been meeting for many years. Over time, new members have joined and others have dropped out. We get together on Wednesday mornings at 10 AM in the Adult Sunday School Room at Church. Our studies are based on God's Word as well as Bible figures and events and how it is relevant in our lives. Our meeting is more than a study group – it is a peaceful and comforting time to discuss issues of concern or share events of joy. We listen, laugh, and sometimes cry – whatever support is needed. The time we spend together is a blessing for each of us. We fondly call ourselves the "Bible Babes." As Lutherans, there is always food at our meetings. Please know all women are welcome to join us.

-Pastor Irvin Stapf:

I have often mentioned the Breakpoint Commentaries. They provide several daily paragraphs of insightful thoughts about our life and world from a strong Christian perspective. You might consider adding your email address to their daily mailing.

As a sample, the Commentary for July 22nd was writing on Artificial Intelligence and what it means for our human nature. You can copy this link. https://breakpoint.org/built-to-agree/?utm_campaign=Product%20-%20Breakpoint%20Daily%20BPD&utm_medium=email&hsmi=429496611&utm_content=429496611&utm_source=hs_email

Or just write to Breakpoint.org

-Vicar Chris:

Good morning, Brother's and Sister's in Christ,

I have a special request, I enjoy doing the service opener teachings, but I must admit that sometimes I run out of ideas. That's where I need your help. If there is a topic or question that interests you, I would love to talk about it and help shed some light on the topic - could you send me any ideas that you have?

I would greatly appreciate it and would enjoy talking about things that the congregation is interested in. Feel free to send them at any time. Just let me know, thank you everyone!

Yours in Christ, -Vicar Chris

We are fortunate to have members of our congregation that are kind and gracious to share their memories of our congregation from its beginning. This offering is by Pastor Emeritus Irvin Stapf.

A Brief History of Christ Lutheran's History The Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration - 2026

Ancient History

On a February Sunday in 1976 a group of families gathered in the club room of Ellis and Carol Schlossnagle's home. They met for worship and discussion of their future plans as Lutherans worshipping in this area.

They had chosen to leave their former congregation, The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Damascus, a congregation of the Lutheran Church in America. There were a number of doctrinal issues, and Pastor Stapf had been removed from the pastorate of that congregation, causing a serious split. These families began to chart their own course to begin a new congregation.

Besides the Schlossnagles, were the Shrivvers, the Gladhills, the Bealls, the Laymans, the Gibsons, the Diggs, the Keiblers, the Eisels, the Benenatis, and a few others. They had no pastor at the time. Pastor Stapf had taken his family on a much needed rest to Rehoboth Beach that February. He still maintained his ordination, but was considered "On Leave From Call". Upon his return the families contacted him and asked if he would continue to serve them. He joyously agreed.

The new church needed a name. Ruth Beall was instrumental in the naming. She said that they were a group centered in Christ. They believed in the Lutheran Confessions. And they were a Fellowship of believers. So the name of the new congregation became Christ Lutheran Fellowship, which is it's officially chartered name to this day.

Church Locations:

We were with the Schlossnagles for a little over a year, but it was evident that the new congregation would need another place to worship. Search was made and regular worship began at Clarksburg Elementary School. We remained there for a little over a year. Ken and Hilda Diggs found us a new location in sharing the Damascus Seventh Day Adventist Church building. We were there from July of 1977 until the Fall of 1992.

In the beginning we had no church furnishings. Ralph Keebler stepped in and made an altar, a reading stand, and communion trays. Because we had to be portable, the altar was on wheels. We always joked that the church was wherever we rolled our altar. (Our Altar still has wheels today.)

In late '92 we heard that the Upper Seneca Baptist Church was building new building and their old building became available. We began renting the vacant church and have been in this location ever since. With the gracious help of a number of our members, we were able to purchase the building from the Baptists in 2003.

We made a number of changes in the sanctuary by removing the baptistry and platform, and providing an altar and chancel area. Pastor Stapf rebuilt the altar, made the chancel rail, the lectern, and the baptismal font.

Affiliation:

A lot of things went on in those early years. Pastor Stapf's "on leave from call" status lasted for three years which helped in the beginning. But he was committed to our not being an independent congregation. So we looked for another Lutheran body with whom we could relate. Lutherans, like others, can't fully agree on doctrinal issues. Consequently there are about 20 separate Lutheran denominations in the U.S. In 1980 we chose to join with the American Lutheran Church, one of the big three along with the LCA and LCMS. We remained with them until there was to be a merger of the ALC and the LCA which we had left. We knew we couldn't stay with this new merged group. So the search began again. We investigated many of the separate Lutheran bodies.

We found that there were other churches in the Midwest having the same quandary as we were. In late 1987 a group of 12 congregation came together to form The American Association of Lutheran Churches. We joined with this group in February of 1988. We have been with them in a very strong and supportive relationship ever since. Pastor Stapf has held several regional and national positions within this larger body.

People:

Names that may ring a bell with our older members: Sam & Connie Powell; Joyce Ballard; Eddie & Marie Nolde; Don & Nancy Wilhelm; Bill & Brenda Eisel; Don Crate; Bob & Betty Klose; Bill Trent; Dick & Rosie Malone; Roland & Joyce Gonano; Roy & Nelly Fagan; Garland & Wynona Weaver; Bertha Plummer; Gene & Helen Deardorff; Betty & Ray Helvig; Jim & Gloria Fitzgerald. And I'm sure I've missed some that should be here, but I leave that to your memory.

Other names have been added in the last 20 years. Art & Janice Delagrange; Joe & Jeane Flesch; Chris & Jessica Clark and family; Bob Petersen; Robert & Carol Bartels; Brian & Ashley Gray; Bill & Darlene Allen; and then the second generation of families. It is always dangerous listing names because of

forgetting some important ones. Please forgive me If I have, but you are all important, and have been a vital part of our fellowship.

Ministries:

The giving of Prayer Blankets began early on, continuing to this day. Our ladies have made and prayed over more than 300 blankets. These have been given to those suffering sickness or some distress. They have been a blessing to all who have received them.

We have continually supported local ministries in Damascus, and Frederick. These include Damascus HELP Food Pantry; The Damascus Ecumenical Layman's Association; The Frederick Crisis Pregnancy Center, and The Frederick Rescue Mission. There has been great joy in being a part of these works.

Since 2003 we have also had a relationship with Shiri Lutheran Parish in Tanzania, East Africa. We have been able to provide funds to complete one of their smaller congregations, Matunda Lutheran Church. We also provided a grain mill for this congregation. It has allowed them to grind their maize rather than having to carrying 100 lb. sacks miles away to a facility in the town of Moshi. The church can also earn a little income from this service. Most recently we provided a cook stove for the elementary school at another of the Parish's churches. This has been a wonderful relationship with the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Activities:

We have shared in a variety of activities over the years. We have always continued Men's and Women's Bible studies. Mom Stapf taught the Women for a period of time. Carolyn remarked that the more she learned, she realized how little she knew. I think that is true of us all. One memorable event was an early women's meeting at Carol Schlossnagle's home when little Eric Eisel decided to slide down the laundry shoot.

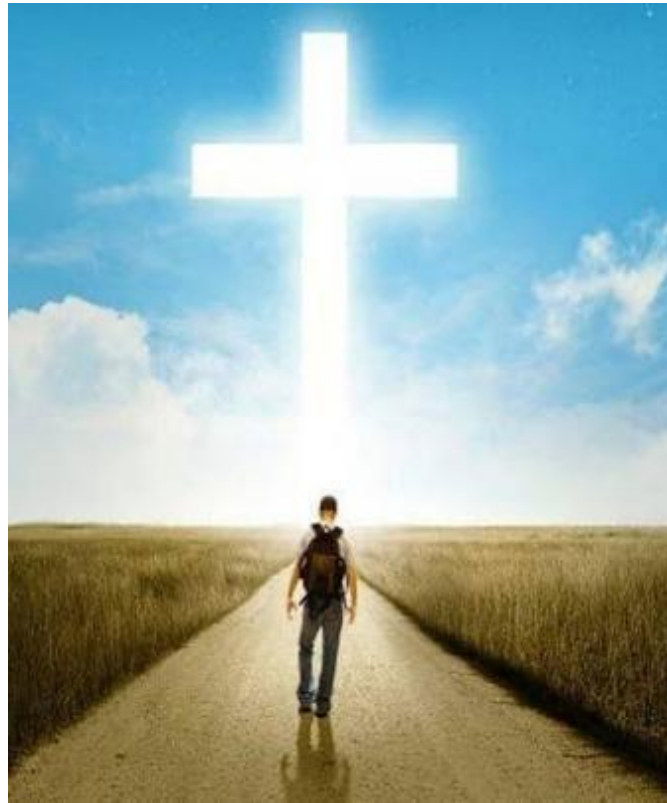
Other memorable events included the weddings of Gene and Helen Deardorf, and Ed and Ruth Williams. These were blessed events we all shared. But there were also Yard Sales to benefit the Crisis Pregnancy Center, Caroling at various shut-in's homes during Christmas, and the time we loaded our worship team in the back of a pickup truck and drove them in the Damascus July 4th parade.

Oh and we can't forget the All-Saints Days Parties where families dressed up as various Bible character to portray different stories. We all laughed when Bruce and Jan came out as the spies for the Promised Land carrying little Lisa on a pole dressed as a bunch of grapes.

Continuing:

As much fun as it is to look back, it is important for us now to look forward. There is much need in our time for a group of committed Christians who are willing to share the gospel in as many ways as possible. We are currently without a full-time pastor, but with the great help from our Vicar, Chris Clarke, Joe Flesch, the President of the Council, and Pastor Emeritus Stapf we continue on with regular worship and holy communion. We look forward to all that our Lord yet has for us until His return. We invite you to join in continuing our exciting journey with our Lord Jesus.

OUR JOURNEY WITH JESUS



Epistle To The Saints

August 2026

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