Christ Lutheran Church

Germantown, Maryland

Epistle To the Saints

November 2026

Sunday School at 9:30 AM
Service at 10:30 AM each Sunday

Sunday, November 1st Daylight Savings Time ends (set clocks back 1 hour on Saturday)

Wednesday, November 11th-Veteran's Day

Sunday, November 15th-Shoeboxes due!!

Sunday November 22nd Church Council Meeting

Thursday, November 26th-Thanksgiving

Saturday, November 28th - 10 AM Decorate Church for Christmas

Sunday, November 29th-First Sunday in Advent

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 and BOB PETERSEN: *Thank you, Lord, for your merciful love to have given us Audrey and Bob. They enriched our lives for having known them.*

PASTOR STAPF and VICAR CHRIS: *Thank you Lord for giving us Pastor Stapf and Vicar Chris to nurture our faith and follow You!*

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.*

PASTOR SCOTT YOUNT: *Lord, we ask that you bless Pastor Yount and his wife, Lena, as they faithfully serve You and spread the word of the Lord.*

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 OUR SEMINARY STUDENTS: *Father we ask that you be with Chris Clarke as he prepares to join the ministry.*

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!

DAMASCUS HELP

In November, we are focusing on providing

FLOUR (2 lb bags)

SUGAR (2 lb bags/boxes)

christlutheranofgermantown.org

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

Audrey Morgan Stapf

Oct 13, 1940 — Oct 5, 2026

Audrey Stapf, a faithful servant of God, a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and longtime resident of Mount Airy, MD, was called to her heavenly rest on October 5th, surrounded by the love of her family. She was 85.
Born on October 13, 1940, Audrey grew up in Violetville, Maryland and was a proud graduate of Western High School. Her life was one of fierce love and devotion. First and foremost to her Lord Jesus Christ, and then to her family, friends, her sports teams, and her community. She served alongside her pastor husband, Irvin, at Christ Lutheran Church in Germantown for over 40 years. She was the music director, church secretary, Sunday School teacher, Bible Study leader, and hostess of countless church dinners and events.
Audrey and Irv raised their 5 children in Mt. Airy where she was very active in the Business Association, Chamber of Commerce, and a frequent attendee of town council meetings. She was also heavily involved in her children's schools, was the loudest cheerleader at all sports games, and served as a substitute teacher for
many years.
Audrey was the heart of her family. She loved playing boardgames and doing puzzles, and watching her Baltimore teams, the Colts and later the Ravens, and always the Orioles. As her 13 grandchildren and later 2 great-grandchildren came along, her greatest joy remained being surrounded by the loving chaos of her large family.
She took her role as matriarch very seriously in making sure that every one of them knew their Bible as well as the Raven's stat-line.
Audrey was preceded in death by her older sister Dorothy and twin sister Alice. She is survived by her brother Roland Morgan; her devoted husband of 60 years, Irvin F. Stapf Jr.; her children, Jenny Czajkowski, Steve Stapf, Becky Stapf, Daniel Stapf, and Grace Gorevin; her beloved grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and many dear friends whose lives she touched with her warmth and kindness.

October 2026

My very dear family and friends,

I wanted to write to you individually for the wonderful cards, flowers, food items, and so much more that you sent in celebration of my wife, Audrey's, home going. Please know that I mean this as a personal and sincere thank you. It was so good to talk with you on Sunday, October 11th, at the Funeral Home or through cards, text messages, and emails. Your expressions of love and care were most appreciated.

How can I convey to you the depth of all that has taken place in these last few weeks? Audrey and my life, along with our family, has always been centered in the living Lord Jesus Christ. He has worked in so many ways before and throughout our 60 years of marriage. A time of death, while very hard emotionally, does not change the care and continued actions our Lord provides. We have seen His hand even in all the details associated with the funeral.

It was a great sorrow for me to have to miss Audrey's funeral. But that Monday morning I was taken to the hospital with pneumonia. I watched the service on a cell phone in the Emergency Room. But even here the love of Jesus was present. That love has enveloped all our family, congregation, and those attending the funeral that Monday. It was a love and joy that was felt, even in the midst of tears. Please know, dear ones, that that love is real, and is for you personally.

I'm on the mend, getting used to being alone in the house. My family is close, and my two dear caregivers will continue to watch out for me each day. The Lord is so good.

We live in a broken world, but Almighty God came into the midst of this world in human flesh. That brokenness, all that you see of trials, pains, and evil of this world, are caused by our sins, by our rebellion from the perfect will of God from the beginning of time. But Jesus came to provide the means that all might find forgiveness, life and hope. Through faith in Jesus Christ we can know love, joy, peace, and hope even in the midst of life's trials. And above all, that life in Jesus has no end.

Audrey's body lies in a cemetery grave plot behind our church. But her soul and spirit are more vitally alive than ever before. The promise of Scripture is that one day we will be given new and incorruptible bodies that will live in Christ's Kingdom eternally. This is the hope in which we live each day. And a hope that I desire you to have unwaveringly.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

With my love,

Irvin Stapf

Editor's Note: Although Joe and I have been members of Christ Lutheran for many years. Reading this interview that Vicar Chris had with Pastor Irv provided so much depth and appreciation. Thank you Vicar Chris for sharing it with us**.**

From Chris Clarke –

As part of a class that I am attending for seminary, I was asked to interview the pastor of our church. So below is the transcript of my conversation with Pastor Stapf on, Saturday, October 17th, 2026. Between 4:30pm- 6pm.

Interview Questions

1. How many years have you served in the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and how long have you served in your current call?

I was ordained in 1971, 55 years. Christ Lutheran is my second parish. Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in 1971 was my first call. I graduated in 1971 from Gettysburg Seminary in Pennsylvania. My home congregation paid for my seminary studies. I grew up in Catonsville, and I went to the University of Maryland, my Engineering Degree took me 5-years. The Lutheran Church in America (LCA) congregation at church where he met Audrey was called Second English Lutheran, on the Western Side of Baltimore (it's a Baptist church now). His background was Evangelical and Reformed, which is now the United Church of Christ (UCC). As a boy from 5 to 10 or so I didn't like the formal worships service with the German pastor. But because of the way the women of the Alter Guild carefully handled the altar ware after the service I had a real sense of the holiness of God in that altar area. That sense of holiness has never left me.

2. Do you live in the community where the congregation is located? If not, how far away do you live?

Yes, about 10 miles away and most members live about the same distance. Another parishioner, a widower, lives about 16 miles away.

3. Provide a brief history of the congregation.

Since we came out of Redeemer, the congregation had to have a committed beginning. There were struggles at Redeemer which centered around his insistence on Scripture, there were 34 charges that were brought against him. He was grilled for an afternoon by Maryland Synod of the Lutheran Church of America (back in 1975). There were a number of issues, including "he advocates prayer before doing anything practical". That was 50 years ago and I don't remember others, but I held to the fact that I hadn't done anything wrong and wouldn't resign. I was preaching the Gospel and not doing what the congregation wanted me to do. The Maryland Synod removed me from the congregation and put me on their status of "on leave from call". A long trial was over and I took my family to Rehoboth Beach for a rest. A sizable group of Redeemer left at the same time and began worshipping in one of the family's homes. After I returned, the group that had left called and asked if I would serve them - I agreed. Pastor Stapf decided to affiliate with the American Lutheran Church, but they wound up merging with the LCA, and they formed the ELCA. This was very disappointing because he felt as though the ALC had similar views, but their president/presiding pastor caved to the pressure and merged with the ELCA. Pastor Stapf was determined not to have an independent church, but he felt the need for the covering. They were in the ALC from 79-87 (when ELCA merged) and then he joined the AALC in 1988, shortly after the AALC formed in 1987 (12 original churches the Pastor Stapf's church is probably #13).

4. What are two or three things you most appreciate about the congregation you serve?

Their faithfulness has been personally supportive, but also their hunger. They have wanted bible study and prayer groups, and they have been able to initiate things at times. So, they have a spirituality which has been great. And it comes out of their background from Redeemer. People came in because they found a depth that they didn't have before. It has enabled him to do the teaching and so forth.

5. What are two or three things you would like to see changed or strengthened within the congregation?

I would like to redevelop community relationships. We had a great community fellowship (in years past), and I knew the other Pastors in the area. There was Faith Connections which did a lot of service in the community. I'd like to develop the outreach to the other Pastors. Iwould like to see community prayer group that has started up from other congregations. I would like to investigate what is there and would like to see more outreach and grow our congregation.

6. Describe the congregation's leadership structure, including the respective roles of the pastor, board of elders, church council, committees, and other leaders.

We have a church board, short of board members. We don't use the term elders. Pastor Stapf is on it to help. Pastor's role is normally to advise the board, not be on it**.**

7. Is the congregation's current budget adequate to meet its ministry needs and respond to needs within the surrounding community? Please explain.

Our budget is fine, and our building is paid for, and the people have been faithful in giving and we don't' pass the plate. They take responsibility for that themselves.

8. Describe the worship life of the congregation, including its usual worship schedule, preferred hymnal, and primary Bible translation.

Sunday worship at 1030, Sunday school at 930, Men's Bible Study on Tuesdays and Women's on Wednesdays. We use the Service Book and Hymnal, and we use ESV for the translation in our bulletin, but our bibles are either NIV or KJV.

9. Does the congregation have an active Sunday school program? If so, approximately how many people participate?

There is a Sunday School program, 3-4 Adults and approximately 10 for the children's Sunday School.

10. What other programs or ministries are offered for children and youth? Approximately how many people participate in each?

We don't have any other programs for children or youth ministry.

11. How many Bible studies, small groups, or other regular opportunities for Christian education are active within the congregation?

There are two bible studies, one for women, one for men. We also conduct "Service Opener" teachings, this is a 5-minute, per-service teaching on any topic of interest.

Aside statement: Pastor Stapf does not regret his vocation as a woodworker, it has given him an additional opportunity for outreach. It was difficult to manage at the time, but they figured it out as a family.

12. Does the congregation have an organized women's ministry? If so, describe its activities and participation.

Yes, they have an active Women's ministry - Janice Delagrange leads that. They use the AALC's Women of Life ministries for their curriculum. They have about 8-9 wome n who attend and have a blanket ministry - which prays over blankets and provides them to people who are sick. They have provided over 350 blankets to people with special needs. They also support the Crisis Pregnancy Center in Frederick and the Samaritan's Purse Shoeboxes and the Damascus Help Food donation.

13. Does the congregation have an organized men's ministry? If so, describe its activities and participation.

Not a Men's Ministry - but a Men's Bible Study, usually about 5 men, (2 of the men from outside the church.)

14. Approximately how far from the church building do most members live? How far away does the most distant regularly participating member live?

About 10 miles on average, Helen Gibson might be about 16 miles**.**

15. What partnerships or working relationships does the congregation have with other churches, schools, civic organizations, charities, or community institutions?

We would like to have close fellowship with other churches, such as Bethesda United Methodist. We also used to have a close relationship with Damascus United Methodist and Friendship United Methodist (traditionally African American Church that split from the Damascus United Methodist). It has been about 15 years since he's had a close meeting or touchpoint with these churches. Saint Paul's Catholic Church was also one that he had regular interactions with.

Aside statement: Pastor Stapf thinks that closer fellowship with the Catholic Church (and others) is going to be necessary given the changing nature of society. Speaking largely about conservative denominations, not liberal. Openness and sharing and learning from them might be a way to closer fellowship with them.

16. What do you perceive to be the most significant spiritual needs of the surrounding community?

Deepening the sense that Christ is present in our midst very much. The need for the sense of the presence of God in all things and realizing that God put His hands on everything. A sense of "re-enchantment" with God (Rod Derher said that). That's what Pastor Stapf is trying to convey in his messages on the board outside of the church.

Aside statement: recommended a book called "Against the Machine" By Paul Kingsnorth – how things have been 'towers of babel' for society (new technology comes along and changes the nature of humanity) and how do we get around it.

17. How do you think the congregation is perceived by people within the community?

I Think that the perception is positive, but we haven't had a community of bonding like we should so it's possible his view is a little skewed. We could use a little more visibility coming south on Route 27.

18. What are the congregation's principal evangelism, outreach, and mission efforts?

Tanzania outreach is probably our biggest effort. Otherwise, our local outreach is largely financial, we're not able to present in the sense that we really want to be. We donate to efforts in the community, but not able to be present at them. We are a congregation of less than 30 people, so there's that.

19. What are two or three additional programs or ministries you would like the congregation to develop in order to serve the community more effectively?

Growing into the community prayer group might be good, broad and active, but would be worth checking out. It's a matter of age and energy, but being involved in the Damascus Parade, community fair and having a booth there. Damascus is a close community, so we can be aware of that and be more involved. Our address is Germantown, but we're really connected to Damascus.

20. How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect:

a. You personally and professionally?

b. The congregation's worship, finances, membership, ministries, and community relationships?

Restrictions on worship were really hard; we lost one family because of it. One husband wouldn't wear a mask, and he decided not to come back. They weren't really members, but the wife still comes to women's bible study. Doesn't seem to have adversely affected us otherwise, we already had a small congregation.

21. How would you describe your approach to pastoral leadership?

Building relationships with families and being with families. Being free with prayer when needed. He valued a close knit community, not a church based on numbers. He doesn't regret the direction that they came from having split from Redeemer Lutheran Church. He felt it was the right thing. Having the church remain a group of intimately connected has always been more important than going larger and inpersonal. Separately, Pastor Stapf enjoyed his recent time in the Hospital, because he had a chance to joke and talk with people, nurses, and an opportunity to share God's Word with people who otherwise may not have been able to hear it. That's what he enjoys doing and what he wants to continue, those close interpersonal relationships so we can share the Love of God with others.

22. What do you consider your principal strengths as a pastor and congregational leader?

Interpersonal relationships are his strengths, but he doesn't claim to be a scholar. Being there when people need me and being able to pray with them and support them in whatever their need is.

23. What opportunities for evangelism and mission do you believe the congregation should pursue during the next three to five years?

Finding a way to participate in the community prayer opportunities in Damascus perhaps find touchpoints with Bethesda United Methodist church. We have a lot of families with relatives who attend there. We're not a mission for members, but for finding congregations to share God's Word and Presence in the community.

24. What obstacles or challenges might prevent the congregation from pursuing those opportunities?

Many of our members have been in the same positions for years and could probably use swap out with someone. Other issues are the lack of time and personnel, we're an older congregation, but active and enthusiastic, but limited in energy.

25. In what ways are members currently being encouraged, trained, or organized to bear witness to Christ in their daily vocations and within the community?

We believe that they are being equipped well in their faith, but the evangelistic nature of our church is harder. Go with Christ and let him do the work; living through our vocations as Ambassadors for Christ. We have the bible studies, Sunday Schools, service opener teachings, Children's sermons, etc. and I think we do a decent job equipping folks to have a strong understanding and trust in their faith. We (Pastor Stapf and Vicar Chris) recently started luncheons with our parishioners after churches once a month. This is good for our fellowship and hopefully it motivates people to reach out to other people as well.

Memorial Garden

Please join us on Sunday, November 1st as our Memorial Garden is dedicated to the Glory of God to honor and remember those loved ones that have preceded us to Heaven. Our Garden was created to have a resting place for Bob Petersen. Bob wanted to always be near to the church which he loved and supported so diligently.

On the black bench there is a Luther Rose plaque. The Luther Rose, also known as the Luther Seal, was designed by Martin Luther in 1530 to symbolize his theological beliefs and the essence of the Gospel. ***It features a black cross in a red heart, surrounded by a white rose and a blue field, representing faith, love, and hope***.

History and Symbolism of the Luther Rose

The Luther Rose carries deep historical and theological significance.

- Design Origin — The seal was created at the request of John Frederick of Saxony while Luther was at the Coburg Fortress during the Diet of Augsburg in 1530.
- Symbolic Elements — The black cross represents faith in Christ, the red heart symbolizes love, the white rose signifies joy, and the blue background reflects hope.
- Theological Summary — The rose serves as a visual summary of Luther's teachings, encapsulating the core message of salvation through faith.
- Cultural Impact — It has become a widely recognized symbol of Lutheranism, representing the Reformation's enduring legacy.

On our plaque are three of the five Solas: *Sola Fide* (By Faith Alone) – *Sola Gratia* (By Grace Alone) – *Sola Scriptura* (By Scripture Alone). The two not on the plaque are *Sola Christus* (By Christ Alone) and *Sola Deo Gloria* (By God's Glory Alone). These five statements lay at the center of what is the theology of the Reformation.

The FIRST Sunday of Advent

OPERATION CHRISTMAS
SAMARITAN'S PURSE

Samaritan's Purse sends gift-filled Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes to children in need around the world together with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
By filling ordinary shoeboxes full of toys and other fun items, you can be part of giving boys and girls what may be their first gift ever! Local churches in more than 100 nations hand out these Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts at festive outreach events where the Gospel is presented in a child-friendly way. Each box bursting with items such as a soccer ball, doll, or stuffed animal becomes a tangible expression of God's love to the child, their family, and their community. Many shoebox recipients also participate in our 12-lesson follow-up discipleship program, The Greatest Journey.

ALL BOXES DUE BY NOVEMBER 15TH.

Epistle To The Saints

November 2026

Christ Lutheran Church

Church Address: 23425 Davis Mill Road
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