

The Messenger

December 2017



**The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church
Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey
An ELCA Congregation**

The Church: Proudly Proclaiming Christ since A.D. 33

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Pastor: The Rev. Marc A. Stutzel
Director of Music: Argine Safari
Director of Youth Choirs: David Scance
Musician: Fred Messner
Administrative Assistant: Doris Crouse



One of the gifts the November time change gives us is a gift I don't usually embrace. The sun is setting earlier which gives me an opportunity to see something vibrant and colorful. But the sun sets at the same time when my day is transitioning. I race from the church to two different schools to pick up my kids. I

take them home, unpack bags, feed cats and try to figure out what's for dinner. In the middle of this daily busyness, I rarely notice the sky turning orange and red as the sun sets. I miss the best sunsets. Once my night calms down, at the moment when the sky turns a deep blue, my social media feeds are filled with pictures of the beautiful sunset I just missed. I experience the reds, oranges and golds that just happened in the deep blue moment before night begins. I try to remind myself to take a break and make time to look out the window tomorrow. But that reminder rarely sticks. My experience of the vibrant color-filled sky is limited to those moments when the sky is a deep blue.

The season of Advent is a season of blue. The cloth and fabric decorating our church mimics the blue color in the sky right before dawn breaks. But I think that blue matches the color that appears right after a sunset. Both of these moments are when we have just enough light to see. We remember the beautiful colors of the day that we just experienced and we look forward to dawn that's about to come. It's at these moments, I think, when our hope in Christ feels very real. We might be experiencing our own moments of being blue, waiting for something life-giving to come. We might feel as if the best moments of our lives are in our past, and we are in the sunset of our lives. We might long for the vibrant colors we have never seen or wish for a return to a past that, in hindsight, always looks better than they truly were. The deep blue moments in our lives can feel very long. But the story of Jesus is a story where the moments of deep blue are overcome by a love that shines bright. As followers of Jesus, we know Jesus has come. He walked on earth, gave hope to the hopeless and conquered death itself. There were times in his story when it looked like the sun had set, but a sun that sets is also a son that will soon rise.

This year Christmas Eve is on a Sunday. We will celebrate with our traditional evening worship at 5:00 pm and 10:30 pm (note the new time). But we will also mark the final Sunday of Advent that morning with one service at 10 am. Christmas is exciting, but Advent reminds us that we are people always rooted in the hope that the deep blue in this world is not God's final word. I invite you to attend church twice this 24th. Spend the morning knowing that Jesus is with you even in the deep blue moments of your lives. And then celebrate that evening with all of God's people because, in Jesus, a new day for the entire world has broken.

See you in church! Pastor Marc

The Good News

It's hard to believe that the Advent season is almost upon us. It feels like we just finished the God's Work- Our Hands Project (October 8th) and the hosting of the inspirational Reformation Sunday service (with three congregations and a huge combined choir on Oct. 29th.) Did you see all the media coverage we received, both online and in The Record? What a nice surprise!

Our Stewardship drive for 2018 is still in full swing. We'd like your pledges in by November 19th, but we'll always take them!! If you have already made your pledge, I thank you. If you haven't done it yet, there is still time. We use our pledges as the basis for our annual budget just as you would at your own home. The more information we have, the more accurate the budget becomes. Every bit helps! Now is the time to show how you will help us pay for our operating costs.

The Raise the Roof Committee is also working to generate enough funds to pay for our Roof project. Construction began in early November but the capital campaign is for two years; so please consider donating to that very worthy cause. Without a roof we can't do much else here at church.

Now is also a great time to ensure that your 2017 pledge is up to date and perhaps think about some additional year end giving. If the stock market has been good to you, please consider sharing some of that gain with Christ Lutheran. Giving is currently running behind our budget and last year, so we could use the extra help. Now is the time for all of us to consider how we can help CLC continue to do God's work (and still pay our expenses).

Last but not least, in mid-October, I attended another meeting of the NJ Synod Council as a northern representative. I promised to share some of the contents with you. It was led by our NJ ELCA Bishop Tracie Bartholomew and Rev. Scott Schantzenbach. On Friday night, we discussed "Excellence in Ministry, Unleashed". This is a program that is led by Rev. Schantzenbach and focuses on the financial aspects of church stewardship, pastoral financial health, and congregation and synod vitality. It is a tough topic, but one we need to face as the greater church. How do we continue to move forward generously and not retreat and look inward? For if we look inward, we will surely diminish in size and in effectiveness. On Saturday, we discussed the synod budget, the synod staff (which has been downsized) and the new supply policy for pastors (whether for churches looking for a pastor or for those seeking vacation help) among other topics.

I found it interesting that due to the reduced headcount and the reduced number of retired pastors willing to supply preach, they will no longer arrange vacation supply. That is up to us. They made some interesting suggestions as how to do this- partner with local churches, (both Lutheran or Episcopal), have someone deliver a prewritten sermon or use a video sermon service. These were interesting and thought-provoking solutions to this issue. We'll see how it progresses in 2018. We have another meeting in January and then will host the Council here for the April 2018 meeting.

We will be needing a few new people to join the Church Council for next year beginning in February. Please, please consider joining the council. We need a variety of ages and experience to adequately represent our members and move our church forward. We meet eleven times a year (off in July), usually for two hours- and refreshments are served! It's a great way to learn more about the actual running of the church and to influence our future.

The Nominating Committee will be getting together soon and will start asking for candidates. Please consider saying "YES" to their request!

Lastly, I thank you again for your participation and support this past year. I'm looking forward to an inspiring Advent season, led by Pastor Marc and our wonderful musicians and singers.

Yours in Christ, Carla Hoenigmann
carlah716@cs.com, 201-391-7843



Hi all,

Our Stewardship drive is underway. If you didn't get your information, please let me know. You can reach me at bill.daub@gmail.com or 201-669-7526. On a regular basis I will give you updates on where we are toward achieving our goal. Remember the goal is \$270,000 (the amount required to keep the church operating) and 65 pledges.

Also, Stewardship and Raise the Roof are two different drives. So please don't reduce your Stewardship Pledge to fund the Raise the Roof.

Cheers, Bill Daub
Stewardship Chairperson



Temple Talk 2017

Hi, my name is Coleen Daub. I was born into this congregation. I was baptized into this congregation. I was confirmed into this congregation. My financial connection with Christ Lutheran church began in preschool. We would meet before Sunday School, and I would bring my own envelope every week with \$1 in it. It may have only been \$1 but I was always so excited and so proud of that weekly envelope. Fast forward 10 years. I got confirmed and became an official member of THIS congregation. My next proud moment came the day MY envelopes showed up in a bundle at my house. Those fancy envelopes my parents always got now had my name on them with my own number—Coleen Daub, number 159. My contribution increased a little and probably still came from my parents most weeks, but it was MINE. Fast forward to today. Those fancy envelopes continue to come every month, but now my proud moment is taking a part of my hard earned money and putting it every week into my envelope. It may have only increased by a small amount, but it's what I have and what I can do to contribute. These eight walls may hold up the building, but they hold up this congregation as well. In these walls we worship, we pray, we teach, we support, we love.

As a child in this church everything just seems to run so smoothly. However, as an adult I've learned and watched how much energy, support, time and volunteering goes into running this church. The church running smoothly is because of US. And it can only run because of US. It has been such an honor to volunteer and help the church continue to grow. I encourage everyone to do the same. God has blessed us all by bringing us here—to this very church, together. It is up to each of us to help keep this church running. We've each been sent a time and talent sheet and a pledge card by the Stewardship Committee. Somewhere on the time and talent sheet you will be able to find a voluntary position that relates to a talent that God has blessed you with.

I've always believed that my financial contributions and the amount of time I give are between me and God. I pray for his help in deciding what is right, and to help me to give to my full potential. I ask that you do the same. WE need to be the ones to continue the traditions that were started here over 50 years ago and create new ones for the next generations to come.



Campus Ministry: Supporting Rutgers Protestant Campus Ministry

The air is getting that snap. Leaves are finally starting to turn. You have soooooo many pumpkin spice options . . . and this means ADVENT is just around the corner! And the best kick off is the annual RPCM fundraiser!

Jazz Christmas Cabaret and Kind Shoppe

Sunday night, December 3rd

Doors open at 6:00 pm – Concert begins at 7:00 pm

\$10.00 to enter

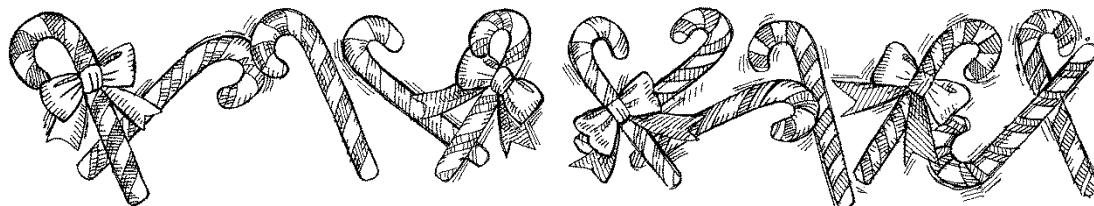
Livingston Presbyterian Church

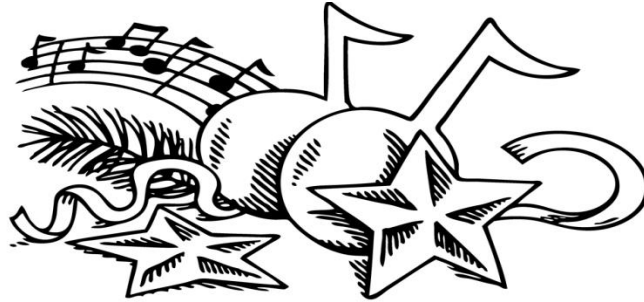
100 Livingston Avenue

New Brunswick NJ

- *The awesome music of the Michael Bond Trio
- *An amazing fair trade holiday shopping from around the globe.
- *Fabulous desserts and charcuterie plates available.
- *Exotic and ordinary hot cocoa!
- *A chance to show off with some Christmas Karaoke.

Don't miss this fun night to support the mission to young folk at Rutgers!





Worship Notes

Advent worship booklet: This year's edition has been written by well-known author Frederick Buechner and is titled "Moving Toward the Manger." Copies will be on the table in the narthex. Feel free to take one.

Want to ring chimes? No experience necessary. First rehearsal is Tuesday, December 5th at 7:00 pm. Everyone is welcome.

Christmas poinsettia envelopes will be available very soon in the narthex. They are \$8.00 each and checks should be marked Poinsettias. They can be taken home after the 10:30 service. If you would like to help decorate our sanctuary with a plant, but don't want it, they will be delivered to our shut-ins.

Speaking of decorating, join us for a light lunch after the 10:30 am worship service on December 3rd for a light lunch and then keep the "hanging of the greens" tradition alive by helping to decorate the sanctuary. All ages are welcome, and if we have many helping hands, it only takes a couple of hours.

The 2018 flower chart will be out shortly. Be sure to sign up early if you have a special date in mind.

Ushers needed: We appreciate that many of you have signed up on the Time & Talent sheet last year. We hope you will consider signing up again on the 2018 Time and Talent. Janine Capone will contact all volunteers to fill out her ushering schedule. Your response to help will be appreciated. Also, if you did not sign up to help, just e-mail her with your availability at TC1JC2@aol.com.

From the library: We are taking inventory starting in January. If you are finished with a book from our library, please bring it back so we have an accurate record.

CHRISTMAS



Week

Sunday, December 24th Morning Worship

Fourth Sunday in Advent

10:00 am with Holy Communion

Celebrate the Birth of Christ

Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24th

5:00 pm for families of all ages

Holy Communion

10:30 pm Candlelight Worship

Carols, Orchestra and Holy Communion

New Year's Eve Sunday, December 31st

10:00 am Joint Interfaith Worship at

First Congregation Church

Park Ridge, NJ

(Note—no service at Christ Lutheran)



Remembering . . .



We will remember Dominick and Anna Ricci at our worship services on December 10th. Two roses will be placed on the altar in their memory by the Care Committee. They were an important part of Christ Lutheran Church and were loved by all. We are ever thankful and grateful for their generosity. December 7th would have been Dominick's 104th birthday. Happy birthday in Heaven, Dominick.

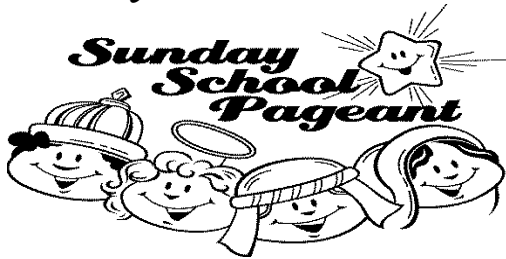
June Rudie, The Care Committee

Genesis Garden: 1682 lbs!

Our Genesis Garden had a great year. The new fence and new weed control methods made a big difference. Every vegetable was donated to the Center for Food Action in Englewood. Thank you to all our volunteers who planted, harvested and drove our gifts to the CFA. A big thank you to Anne and Jim Christensen for their oversight, Christensen Landscaping for tilling the land, and Sunden's Stone Pointe Farm for the plants. We'll see you again next May. And remember: this garden happens because of our volunteers. You can make a difference and feed our neighbors next year.



Sunday Church School Happenings



November and December are bringing colder weather, shorter days and the wonderful holiday season. During November our Sunday School classes met on November 5th and November 19th. On November 19th we will combine our younger and older classes to dive into a service project. We will be working together as a team to make cards and ornaments for those in need—a way to brighten their day and put a smile on their faces! During December, Sunday School is scheduled to meet December 3rd and again December 17th. Stay tuned for information about a Sunday School Christmas Pageant to take place December 17th during scheduled class time. Peace and love to all of you and your families!

Darleen Castellano

Christmas Gifts for Local Families in Need

Hopefully you have seen either the Sign Up Genius email or the list in the Narthex for our Christmas gift drive. We will be providing gifts to local families through the Tri-Boro Family Assistance Program in Park Ridge. They serve families in Park Ridge, Montvale and Woodcliff Lake and are affiliated with The Tri Boro Food Pantry. There are both children and adults on the list this year. We recommend a \$50 price range; the gift should be unwrapped in a bag tagged with the person's associated number. Deliver gifts to the church no later than December 10th.

For those of you who don't like to shop but want to contribute, you can donate gift cards (Kmart, TJMaxx, Target, Shop Rite or Acme) or cash, and we will shop for you! See Ann Christensen or Christine Badame with any questions. Remember to look in the Narthex or for the Sign Up Genius email and in your bulletins for updates on how we can help make this Christmas a better one for those in need. Your generosity is always very appreciated by these families.

Save the Date!

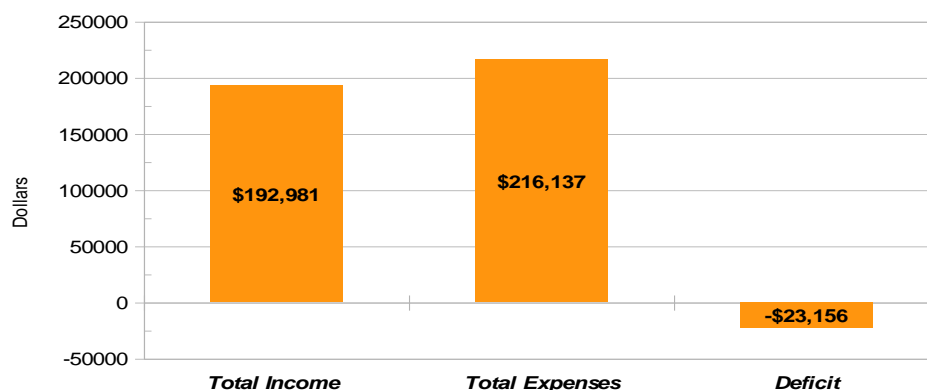
CLCW Annual Meeting, Sunday, January 21st, 2018

We will be starting right after the second service. We invite all confirmed female members of the church to come and enjoy lunch and fellowship. Once again, a delicious buffet of soups and desserts will be our lunch. Come join us as we review Trash & Treasure 2017, the recipients of our donations and discuss plans for 2018!

Christine Badame

Financial Update from the Finance Committee

Financially year-to-date, things are not looking good. Total expenses have outpaced total income considerably, and we have a \$23,155 loss through the end of October. We prayerfully ask you keep up with your pledge and continue giving to help us eliminate this shortfall so that we can keep up God's amazing work here. Thank you very much.





Update

You are Raising the Roof! We are so grateful for everyone who has donated and pledged to financially support this campaign.

Work began November 7th on the Opsal (Fellowship Hall). The tar on the roof was removed, and a new pitched roof was placed on top. In only a few short days, shingles were on the roof. Our builder is working fast and efficiently. A big thank you goes to Tom Kearns, the chair of the Property Committee, for overseeing this work. We expect the roof over the 2nd story Sunday School classrooms to be worked on the week of November 13th. Our timeline is for all of the work to be completed before Christmas. New roofs will make an awesome Christmas present for all of us! Visit www.clc4u.com/RaiseTheRoof for up to date information and check out our www.instagram.com/clc4u for daily photos.

Through the end of October 2017, \$11,551 has been raised for the campaign. That's amazing. We know that many of you are making decisions about your end-of-the-year giving. We are grateful for all the ways you support Christ Lutheran Church. If you have extra giving available, please consider making a donation to the Raise the Roof campaign. We are community planning committed to following Jesus and being His people in Northern New Jersey. Let's Raise the Roof for a new and vibrant ministry here at CLC for decades to come.

KOINONIA

A Lutheran camp in Highland Lake, New York

www.koinonianyny.org

Camp Koinonia is an outdoor camp owned by Lutheran congregations in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Christ Lutheran Church has been part of this partnership for decades which means Camp Koinonia is your camp! Michael Suarez is a member of Camp Koinonia's board. Pastor Marc, Tom Kearns, and Kim Kearns represented Christ Lutheran Church at Koinonia's annual meeting on November 5th.

Highlights from the Annual Meeting

2017 was a busy year at Camp Koinonia! Joanne Knudson was named Executive Director, and additional staff were brought on board. The board believes that 2017 will have the highest attendance at the camp in over 7 years. With some effective cost cutting and growing attendance, the Camp is expecting an operating surplus for the first time in a decade. The Memorial Day 5k at the camp raised over \$47,000 and the 2017 Day Camp was a success. The strong financial position is letting Koinonia plan for the future. Christ Lutheran Church continues to provide the largest financial support to the camp. Two percent of everything you give goes to support the life-giving ministry at Camp Koinonia. A new maintenance plan for the camp is being developed, and they are starting to make plans to bring back sleep-away camp for families and youth during the summer. The future is looking bright at Camp Koinonia.

Our Annual Congregation Retreat – January 26-28, 2018

Relax. Renew. Reconnect.

Get ready for our annual Congregational retreat! Eight rooms in the Conference Center have been reserved. We'll spend time in the hills of New York, connecting with God's creation and with each other. Experience Christ's community in a new place! Go snow tubing, cross country skiing, singing songs around an actual campfire and more. A sign-up sheet will be in the Narthex (lobby) of the church. A \$50.00 deposit is requested when you sign up issued to Christ Lutheran Church..



Dear Christ Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your gift of \$150.00 to Lutheran Disaster Response: Hurricane Relief. With this gift you are providing emotional and spiritual care, supplying emergency relief, and addressing long-term recovery.

With your gifts you are making possible the support of unmet needs, the coordinating of volunteers in the United States through our local affiliates, and the promoting of disaster risk-reduction internationally, expanding knowledge and ability.

Thank you for this gift and all your faithful generous gifts. Thank you for encouraging others to learn, act, pray and give with you. Thank you for living into God's words of justice and mercy and for joining with the whole church to love and serve one another.

In God's grace, The Rev. Daniel Rift

<http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/>

Dear Christ Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your thanksgiving donation of \$500.00. Your generous contribution means that neighbors in need will enjoy a Thanksgiving meal with their family and friends. We are truly thankful for your support.



CFA (Center for Food Action) provides more than 4,600 food packages monthly. And, soon, we will be giving Thanksgiving food packages to more than 3,000 households. Annually, CFA gives out more than \$5,000,000 worth of food, and, aids the most vulnerable of these families and seniors with housing and utility assistance. This year, CFA will pay approximately \$800,000 to landlords and utility companies to ensure they can stay in their homes through difficult times.

None of the services CFA provides would be possible without your compassion and generosity, and, that of others in our community. I truly appreciate your support and am deeply grateful that you are a partner in this important work.

Wishing you and yours a wonderful Thanksgiving,

Patricia Espy, Executive Director of the Center for Food Action

www.cfanj.org

Receive Free Daily Advent Devotions



Sparkhouse, the Sunday School curriculum we use, is offering a free Advent devotional that includes a Bible verse, ideas for family activities and discussion questions. We know this is a busy season, so the devotionals can be completed in 5 minutes or less—or while you are on-the-go with your family!

Sign-up to have these devotionals delivered to your email by visiting <http://info.sparkhouse.org/advent>

Wait Gratefully

"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope". Psalm 130:5

We do a lot of waiting during these weeks of Advent. We wait in long shopping lines. We wait to open presents. We wait for yummy desserts to bake and then wait even longer for them to cool and be decorated and then wait some more before we get a taste. We wait for parties to start (or maybe we wait for them to be over). We wait, wonder and hope.

Advent is the first season of the church year, the kickoff of something new. We begin our church year waiting. We join Mary and Joseph on their long journey to parenthood. It's a long wait for a baby to come—about 40 weeks. This young couple has been waiting since angels came to them with the news of this unique baby they will parent. At the same time, they are on a long journey to Bethlehem for the census. They wait for a place to stay and wait for someone to welcome them. They wait to see what this miracle baby will do to their lives and for all people. They wait, wonder and hope.

What do we do while we wait? We can anticipate, prepare, get ready and remain alert to the signs of change. The waiting causes us to pause, and that's when we wonder and hope about what is to come. Jesus is coming to be among us—Immanuel, God with us. His birth, life, death and resurrection forever change everything, especially us.

Put something yummy in the oven. As you wait for it to bake, answer these questions:

- ❖ What kinds of things do you find yourself waiting for?
- ❖ What do you like and dislike about waiting?
- ❖ How do you use your time when you are waiting?
- ❖ Share stories of waiting. How did you prepare? About what did you wonder? What were your hopes?
- ❖ What can we do during this Advent as we watch and wait for Baby Jesus?

As you wait for Baby Jesus, help others anticipate their coming babies. Gather items for infants and donate them to a women's shelter, the church nursery or a hospital's birthing center. Consider sewing or crafting baby blankets, praying for babies as you work and wait.

Going to Talbots Soon? Shop on December 7th and Make a Local Difference!

