

# *The Messenger*

*December 2019*



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

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

## ***Pastor's Message: "Re-Re-Learning This Advent Season"***

For the last two years, CLC has been participating in an initiative by the New Jersey Synod called "Equipping for Vitality (E4V)." This initiative connects us with other congregations in our area to find new ways to live out our faith in our neighborhoods. Over the last two years, leaders from CLC have been involved in workshops touching on hospitality, sharing the faith, ministry to people in the first third of their lives, the practice of generosity and more. The conversations, prayers, worship and Bible study that was part of these workshops will fuel our ministry into the future.

At our last workshop, the E4V team shared a fun video called: The Backwards Brain Bicycle. It was the first time I saw this video even though it has almost 24 million views on YouTube. I want you, if you can, to go watch the video right now at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFzDaBzBIL0> or by googling The Backwards Brain Bicycle - Smarter Every Day. Once you're done, come on back and read the rest of my message for this month.

I know not everyone can ride a bicycle or lived in an area where learning to ride a bike was safe and easy to do. But I'm going to imagine you've heard the phrase "like riding a bicycle" once or twice before. Like the video says, we say that whenever we want to talk about a life skill we, in theory, never forget. The idea is that once we click into a habit, the habit stays with us - forever. We might not use that habit every day or even for years at a time. But we trust that the habit will always be a part of us and that we'll be able to access it whenever we need it in a future.

Now when you think about your time with Jesus, how much of it depends on habit? Habits aren't a bad thing, and I encourage you to have faith practices that are things you do over and over again. I invite you to pray when you wake up in the morning and before you go to bed, before meals, and to make reading the Bible part of your daily routine. But when life gets busy like it might be this month, how much do we let God sit in the background while we take care of the other priorities we have in our life? And when our life suddenly ends up being different, like a bicycle that turns right to go left, is our faith up to the new challenge we find ourselves in?

The season of Advent is, for me, a season rooted in expecting God to do a brand new thing. God's faithfulness and love are always present but it isn't, I think, merely a habit. Jesus' presence in your life is a radical relationship that is dynamic, passionate, and full of unbelievable grace. Can we, as we light candles on Christmas Eve during our 5:00 pm and 10:30 pm worship, re-re-learn just how amazing God's love is so that we can grow into being who God knows we can be?

See you in church!

Pastor Marc



## *Kids and Adults: Education and More!*

### *Sunday School in December*

We are blessed to have three amazing classes of Sunday School students this year. The faith, commitment and creativity of all the kids have made each class period filled with joy. As we move into December, here's important information for all.

Christmas Program will be introduced Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> during our regularly scheduled class.

Christmas Pageant rehearsal (for all kids who are available) will be December 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:45 am.

The Christmas Program will take place during the 9:00 am worship service, Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>.



### *Train Station Caroling*



It's been a few years since we've sung Christmas carols at local train stations, but we're ready to bring back this fun tradition. All ages are invited to gather at a train station and sing carols as people return from daily commutes. We hope our joy will enliven the lives of all who hear our voices. We're starting to organize and will pick a date soon. More details will be shared in our bulletin and online shortly!

### *A Visit to the Elizabeth Immigrant Detention Center*

Our relationship with Iglesia Luterana Santa Isabel (Santa Isabel Lutheran Church) continues to grow beyond our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Thankoffering. Twice a week, Pastor Ramon Collazo visits the facility to lead worship with detained migrants. He has invited us to join him on one of his visits. He's also working with the warden of the facility to see if we can join him in a different kind of Parranda (a Puerto Rican Christmas tradition where carols visit people's homes). The Christmas caroling at the facility would be a unique experience, letting us visit seven different sections of the facility to see how migrants live. At press time, we're waiting to hear back from the warden to see if that event would be possible. More details will be shared in our bulletin and online shortly!



### ***A Reverse Advent Calendar: Supporting Valley Hospital's NICU***

We invite you to join our Sunday School families as we do a **Reverse Advent Calendar** to support the work of Valley Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Many families have been blessed by the care, dedication and medical services provided by Valley's NICU. The amazing care they give their patients sometimes requires patience and time on behalf of parents and grandparents. We would like to give families who are spending their time waiting at the NICU family lounge little things to let them know that they are loved. We invite you find a large cardboard box and decorate it in a festive way. Then, each day in Advent, place one of the following items in the box: snacks (such as granola bars, pretzels, gum, lifesavers, trail mix, chocolate, nuts, allergy-free items); hygiene kits; tissues; lavender sachets; pads and pencils; books of comforting quotes (that are inclusive to all faiths and backgrounds); activity books (crosswords and similar puzzles); water; and other items that you know a family could use while they wait for their new baby to be healthy enough to come home. Bring your Reverse Advent Calendar back to church on Christmas Eve, and we'll deliver everything to Valley Hospital.

### ***Interested in Joining CLC as a Voting Member?***

Interested in joining CLC as a voting member? We're a blessed community of faith filled with amazing people. We could not be who God wants us to be without you being a part of it. As a federal non-profit, our decision-making process is governed by people who decide to be "voting members" of this congregation. As we look towards 2020, make your voice known by becoming a voting member. Speak to Pastor Marc ([pastormarc@clc4u.com](mailto:pastormarc@clc4u.com)) if you're interested in becoming a voting member.

### ***Care Committee Schedules Gab Session***

The next Gab Session is scheduled for Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 am in the Sonshine Room. These potluck events are times to get to know members of CLC better! If you would like to join us, please RSVP with Debbie Louis by calling 201-358-6435 or [gundheaven@aol.com](mailto:gundheaven@aol.com).

### ***Announcing the CLCW Annual Meeting—Sunday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020***

The meeting will start right after the second worship service. We invite all confirmed female members of the church to come and enjoy a delicious lunch and fellowship. Come join us as we review Trash & Treasure 2019, the recipients of our donations and discuss plans for 2020!

## *Stewardship and Generosity*

*Thank  
You*



... to everyone who filled out your stewardship pledge for 2020. Your commitment of money, time and talent will be an amazing gift you give to God. We pray that your faith will grow as you discover how Jesus invites you to live differently in the world.

During the month of November, people who do some of the behind-the-scenes work that make CLC the amazing place it is spoke during worship. Below are a few remarks David Scance, a member at CLC and our musician at the 9:00 am contemporary service, shared with all of us on how he uses his gifts at church:

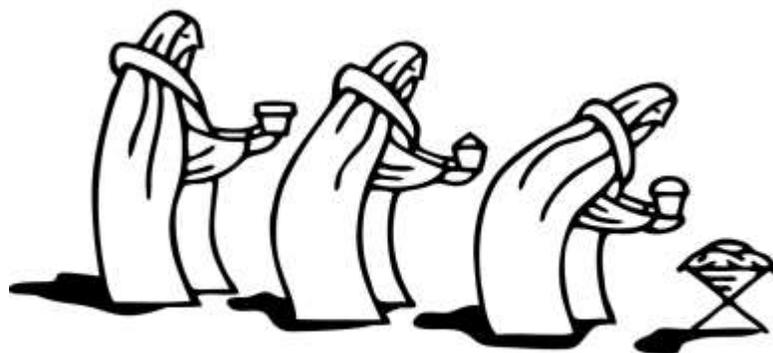
The songs we sing are licensed by the church and licenses cost money. All the songs that we do at 9:00 am I get through a company called Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI). That lets me print out a copy of the music and gives us permission to sing it. It lets us put a copy in the bulletin that is very easy to follow, if you have a master's degree in music. I know we could just print the words but where would the challenge be in that?

What CCLI doesn't do is provide backing tracks. That is something that I have to create in my studios on my computer. It takes about six hours usually to do one song (though I usually hear a song and think I can knock it out in an hour – somehow it never works out that way). You have to lay out the format intro, verse, chorus, etc. Then I'll usually put down a rough piano so I can hear the song. Then I'll do the drums, bass, guitars, vocals, and anything else that I feel the song needs...and if I bring in a singer like we had in November]?...he attends CLC and is a great example of how one can give of their talents.

One of David's amazing gifts is his willingness to try new things. When Pastor Marc started at CLC five years ago, the 9 am service didn't use backing tracks. David used his gifts to make our weekly time with Jesus more musical, intentional

and faith-filled. As a church, we can (and do) grow and change through the gifts you bring into this community. If you haven't filled out your pledge card and time and talent sheet, there is still time. Please return to the church office or drop in the offering plate. And if there's something God is calling you to do at CLC, speak to the church council or Pastor Marc and let's make it happen.

Stewardship Generosity December 2<sup>nd</sup> marks the close of our fall Stewardship season. It is important that you take the time to prayerfully fill out your green pledge card and "2019 Time and Talents sheet." If you need these forms, extra copies are in the Narthex. Please bring those forms to the church office or place in the offering plate. Your gift, combined with everyone else's, is how we love God, our neighbors and each other. And we'll be more intentional about sharing just how generous this church is. We'll do more than just include thank you letters in The Messenger. On the third Sunday of the month, a blue envelope will be in the offering plate, reminding us of the benevolences (the 10% of your financial gift that supports other organizations) which help us be the church in the world. We'll list in the bulletin how that gift is making a difference locally and in the world. Generosity builds community, changes the world and is one way we respond to Jesus' love for each of us. Let's keep being generous and, on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, we'll share with each other how generosity has changed us.



**And they brought him gifts!**

## *Worship Notes*

***Christmas Poinsettia*** envelopes are available in the narthex. The plants are \$8.00 each and checks are to be made out to the church marked poinsettias. All orders must be received in the church office by **Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>**. They may be taken home after the 10:30 pm Christmas service. To pick up your plant later, let us know. Also, let us know before Christmas if you can help deliver to our shut-ins.

***The 2020 Flower Chart*** will be out during December. Sign up early!

***Christmas Week:*** Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup> we'll have one worship service at 10:30 am. Note that the Church Office will be closed Christmas Day to January 1<sup>st</sup>.

### ***The Prayer Experiment Continues Each Month***

On the third Sunday of this month (December 15<sup>th</sup>), you will be handed a piece of green paper. Please write your name on that paper and place in the baptismal font during worship. On the next Sunday (December 22<sup>nd</sup>), we'll choose a name from the font and commit ourselves to praying for that person through the month of January.

***A "New" Advent Wreath:*** We hope you linger in the narthex to take a look at the Advent wreath on the table. This wreath was gifted to us by Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer in Dumont. We hope that its light helps you shine bright this holiday season.

### ***Speaking of Wreaths – Why Do We Use Them?***

From the ELCA's FAQ: *As Christians, we use symbols to express visually the basic tenets of our faith and as reminders of the pilgrimage of our life in Christ. Symbols can have heightened meaning for us when associated with particular seasons of that journey. One such symbol is the Advent wreath.*

The Advent wreath has its roots in the pre-Christian practices of northern Europe. People sought the return of the sun in the dark time of the year (at the winter solstice) by lighting candles and fires. As early as the Middle Ages, Christians used fire and light to represent Christ's coming into the world. Using this same symbolism, the Advent wreath developed a few centuries ago in Germany as a sign of the waiting and hopeful expectation of the return in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The wreath, a circle, came to represent the eternal victory over death through Jesus Christ. The evergreens were a sign of the faithfulness of God to God's people, even in death, and the lighted candles were a reminder of the light of Christ brought into the world.

As Christians, we use symbols, imagery and metaphors to help nurture our relationship with Jesus. We invite you to celebrate the Advent wreath and all the symbols that proclaim Jesus' love for us and the world.

## ***First Sunday of Advent – December 1<sup>st</sup>***

### ***Advent Star Devotionals begin today!***

The Advent Star Devotional is a daily reading/prayer resource put together by the students, staff and faculty of the United Lutheran Seminar (with Philadelphia and Gettysburg campuses). They are available in the Narthex.



## ***Second Sunday of Advent – December 8<sup>th</sup>***

Do you love how beautiful our sanctuary looks at Christmas? Help make it happen! Following the 10:30 am worship service on December 8<sup>th</sup>, it's all hands on deck to decorate. We need many "elves" of all ages to create our Christmas magic. A light lunch for decorators will be available in the Narthex.

## ***Third Sunday of Advent – December 15<sup>th</sup>***

Church School Christmas Pageant rehearsal at 9:45 am.

Handchime Choir will meet for rehearsal following the 10:30 am worship service. See Argine Safari if you wish to be a member of this choir.

## ***Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 22<sup>nd</sup>***

Come and celebrate with the youth of our congregation during their Sunday Church School Christmas Pageant during 9:00 am worship.

Handchime choir will rehearse again today following the 10:30 am worship service.



*Christmas Eve  
Candlelight  
Services*

*Christmas Eve – December 24<sup>th</sup>  
With Holy Communion and Christmas Music*

*5:00 pm Worship for Families and Kids!*

*10:30 pm Worship with Chamber Orchestra and Chorus*

***Help Create the Magic of our Christmas Worship***

Volunteers are needed to fill candles, act as ushers, serve as communion assistants and do all the assorted jobs that make Christmas Eve so special. If you can help during either the 5:00 pm or 10:30 pm service, let us know.

## *Growing in Generosity*

### *CLC's Annual Grocery Bag Project*

Thank you to all from CLC who participated in our annual grocery bag project. This special event is funded by our Special Gifts Fund. Over 50 boxes and bags of grocery items were purchased by CLC volunteers, assembled into bags and boxes and delivered to the Center for Food Action Saddle Brook distribution center in time for Thanksgiving. Thank you for sharing the love of Jesus through the generous gift of your time.



### *Seafarers Project*

For our annual Seafarers Christmas At Sea project, we assembled 25 satchels, each filled with a hoodie, T-shirt, socks, along with homemade scarves and hats by the Knit 1 Crochet Too team, chocolate bars and a Christmas card from the church. These satchels will bring Christmas Eve joy to a crew sailing the seven seas. Thank you to everyone who worked on this project and for the funds from CLC's Special Gifts for making this a successful event.

### *Christmas Gifts for Local Families in Need*

We're excited to share that we're expecting our gift list from Westwood Social Services (Westwood/Hillsdale) before November 24<sup>th</sup>. Keep your eye out in the bulletin, Facebook and our weekly newsletter on how you can sign up. Like last year, children and adults will be on our list, and we recommend a \$50 price range. The gifts should be unwrapped in a bag tagged with the person's associated number. Please deliver your gift to church no later than December 8<sup>th</sup>.

If you would like to contribute but don't like to shop, donate gift cards (T.J.Maxx) or cash, and we will shop for you! See Ann Christensen or Kate Stutzel with questions. Your generosity will make this Christmas better for someone else. Thank you!

### *Care Committee News*

Thank you for a great October! Our "Care Month" made a big difference. The items created by Knit 1, Crochet Too that you purchased raised hundreds of dollars for the Center for Food Action. We're still sending blankets through Church World Service and will be sending scarves, hats and other winter gear to the Tri-Boro Food Pantry and other organizations.



*The Love Tree* is how you can send a Christmas greeting to everyone in the congregation instead of sending each family a card. Please consider donating the amount of money you would spend on postage to the Care Committee. Look for the red cut-out hearts in the narthex (church lobby). Write your greeting on the heart and place on the Love Tree. Your donation will enable the Care Committee to continue its mission to help needy families in our congregation and the surrounding communities.

### ***Generous Giving for School Kits***

Wow! Wow! Wow! Great big THANK YOU for watching the sales and buying the needed items. You filled the collection basket week after week! 😊 But, there still is a needed item to complete the project—**boxes, copy paper size**. If you have any and would like to donate them, please drop them off in the Sonshine Room.

Watch for the date when we'll assemble the kits. Many hands lighten God's work. Again, thank for all you do, JoAnn Sallo

### ***60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Thank Offering Update***

Continuing our tradition of supporting a developing ministry whenever we celebrate an anniversary, we've raised \$6,340 for Santa Isabel Lutheran Church in Elizabeth. Santa Isabel provides worship for detained immigrants and works with partner organizations to assist them in navigating the complex immigration system. At press time, the church Council is looking to discern what other funds can be used to support them. A final presentation of our gift to Santa Isabel will be arranged soon.

### ***The Special Gifts Disbursement Committee Needs Your Help!***

We have received a check for \$58,620 from the Dominick and Anna Ricci Foundation and need some new ideas for spending it. So, download an application from the CLC website ([clc4u.com](http://clc4u.com)) or pick one up from the mailboxes near the office and return the completed form to the Committee's mailbox by the end of November.

The Committee will review all applications and present the recommendations to Council. The Council's approved recommendations will be presented to the congregation for a vote at the Annual Meeting.

Your recommendation can be for any one of the categories listed below. The Committee charter calls for an allocation of at least 10% of the monies received from the Ricci Foundation to be spent on each of these areas.

1. Outreach Ministry or Benevolences to the local community or worldwide
2. Special Congregational Ministries
3. Capital Improvement or Asset Replacement.

Bill Hoenigmann, The Special Gifts Disbursement Committee



## ***Letter of Gratitude from President of Lutheran World Relief***

*Lutheran World Relief is one of our benevolence partners. A portion of every financial gift you make to Christ Lutheran supports their amazing work.*

*Dear Friends,*

*We recently received your gift to Lutheran World Relief. Thank you! I'd like to share a story of the great work your gift will support.*

*Kapinga Eudoxi, 43, lives in a village in the Democratic Republic of Congo that is plagued with water-borne disease like typhoid. Children and adults were getting sick – and the community needed help.*

*With your support, villages like Nsange-Nyembwe are receiving access to safe water. Your gift made a world of difference in reaching over 271 villages in the region – that's 244,964 people impacted!*

*On behalf of LWR, our partners and those we serve, please accept my thanks for your generous support and partnership. May God bless you!*

Warm Regards,

Ambassador Daniel V. Spekhard, President and CEO

## ***Special Days to Celebrate with Our Church Family***

### **December Birthdays**

Argine Safari

JoAnn Sallo

### **Anniversary**

Mike and Lois Hainsselin

*[You are invited to contact the church office to update our records on your important upcoming celebrations, i.e., birthdays, anniversaries, baptisms.]*

## *Financial Summary – As of October 31, 2019*

General Fund	Income	Expense	Difference
January	\$16,743	\$23,770	-\$7,027
February	\$16,477	\$23,297	-\$6,820
March	\$22,390	\$23,249	-\$859
April	\$24,041	\$20,375	\$3,666
May	\$17,553	\$17,343	\$210
June	\$19,827	\$19,802	\$25
July	\$18,829	\$22,085	-\$3,256
August	\$17,435	\$16,419	\$1,016
September	\$18,162	\$19,677	-\$1,515
October	\$19,164	\$22,674	-\$3,510
<b>Year to Date Total</b>	<b>\$190,621</b>	<b>\$208,691</b>	<b>-\$18,430</b>



At the end of October, total expenses out-paced total income resulting in a loss of \$18,430. Giving compared to last year is down .3%. Our expenses compared to last year are down over 3.2%. As we enter the final month of our financial year, we prayerfully ask you keep up with your pledge and continue giving so that we can eliminate this shortfall and can keep up God's amazing work that we do here.

Thank you very much, The Finance Committee

### *Restricted Funds Update*

We regularly send updates about how much of our current 'restricted funds' are being used. This is in accordance with the congregational-approved motion on June 3, 2018. The change in available funds is related to our monthly spending (by taking income minus our expenses) and the market value of our investments at the end of each month.

Approved amount:	\$50,000.00
Previous Amount of Total Funds Used:	\$4,562.00
<u>Amount accessed from approved funds:</u>	
Amount used for October 2019	\$2,560.00
Total amount of remaining available funds	\$42,878.00

### *Raise the Roof Update*

Our three year capital campaign is almost over! This is our final month collecting for our Raise the Roof campaign. We've currently raised \$75,675 out of the \$104,063 we set aside to help pay for the roof. Please continue to close your pledge.

## *Community Events in December*

### *Woodcliff Lake Annual Tree Lighting*

December 8<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm

Located on the corner of Werimus Road and Woodcliff Avenue. Festivities will continue at the Tice Senior Center (411 Chestnut Ridge Road)

Santa will be there!

### *Holiday Cheer with the Lakeside Choraliers*

December 10<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm

Music helps each of us emotionally connect with the joy at the heart of the holiday and Christmas season. Join the Lakeside Choraliers, a community choir, and their 50 friends from River Dell High School for an amazing concert:

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

4 Woodland Road

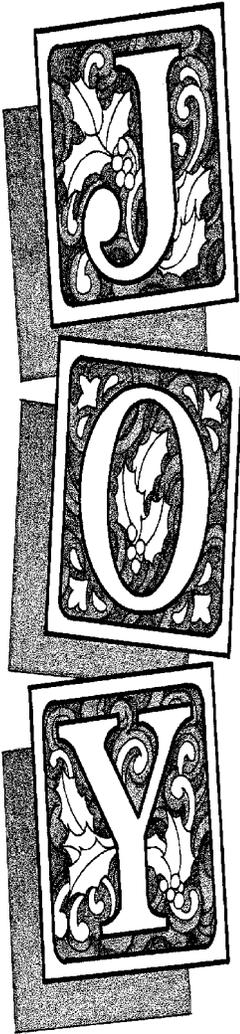
Montvale, NJ

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased by calling 201-573-1672.

### *Holiday Concert: Pascack Valley High School Choir*

Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm

Join our organist (and Pascack Valley's High School Choir Director) Argine Safari at Pascack Valley's annual Holiday Concert. Performances by the various musical groups at the school will include the Valley Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, Bro Squad, Concert Choir and more. The concert will be held in the Auditorium at Pascack Valley High School (200 Piermont Avenue).



**2019**

*December*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <b>ADVENT 1</b>	2	3 Worship Committee Mtg. 8:00 pm	4 Chancel Choir Rehearsal 8:00pm	5	6	7
8 <b>ADVENT 2</b> <u>Worship With Holy Communion</u> Contemporary 9:00 am Sunday Church School, 9:45 am Traditional 10:30 am Church Decorating Noon Confirmation 6:30 pm	9 Mary Circle 7:30 pm	10 Care Committee meeting 9:30 am  Finance Committee Meets 8:00 pm	11 Handchime Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm  Chancel Choir Rehearsal 8:00pm	12	13  January Messenger articles due	14
15 <b>ADVENT 3</b> <u>Worship With Holy Communion</u> Contemporary 9:00 am and Traditional 10:30 am Handchime Choir Rehearsal Noon Confirmation 6:30 pm	16	17  Chancel Choir Rehearsal 8:00pm	18  Gab Session 11:30 am	19  Congregation Council Meeting 8:00 pm	20	21
22 <b>ADVENT 4</b> <u>Worship With Holy Communion</u> Contemporary 9:00 am with Sunday Church School Pageant Traditional 10:30 am Handchime Choir Rehearsal, Noon Confirmation 6:30 pm	23	24  Worship with Holy Communion and Special Music 5:00 pm and 10:30 pm	25 CHRISTMAS DAY  Church Office Closed 	26  Church Office Closed	27  Church Office Closed	28  Church Office Closed
29 CHRISTMAS 1 <u>Worship With Holy Communion</u>  ONE WORSHIP SERVICE 10:30 am	30  Church Office Closed	31 NEW YEARS EVE  Church Office Closed				

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***Stay Up-to-date with CLC Online***

We have been organizing a lot of amazing events this Advent season. Make sure you are up-to-date on the most recent information by following us on Instagram ([www.instagram.com/clc4u](http://www.instagram.com/clc4u)), Facebook ([www.facebook.com/clc4u](http://www.facebook.com/clc4u)), and sign-up for our weekly email newsletter at <http://eepurl.com/bFWdgb>.

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