

The Messenger

February 2020



**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

As a person who preaches every week, I'm always on the lookout for sermon material. What I'm looking for is some activity, experience or observation that can reveal a little of what the Holy Spirit wants us to hear. As you might already know, much of my material is autobiographical. But, I don't usually seek this material out. Rather, I live my life and then notice what might be helpful is this week's sermon. Not every one of these notes ends up in a sermon, and many that are in the first draft of my sermons do not make it to Sunday morning. Yet, I've discovered that the more I share my faith, the more sermon material I can recognize in my every day life. And this sermon material is not merely a good hook to make you think I'm a good preacher. Instead, the material is way for me to see how the gospel of Jesus Christ is with us every day of our lives.

We're currently in the "season after Epiphany" and will be in that season until Ash Wednesday on February 26th. The word epiphany means "appearance or manifestation" and describes what happened to the magi when they visited Jesus. God revealed to the magi that Jesus was here and how the presence of Jesus made a difference in their lives. When the magi returned home, I do not believe they were the same people they were before they saw Jesus. Instead, the fact that Jesus was in the world invited them to see their world (and their lives) in a new way. The month of February is a good month to look for the epiphanies of Jesus in our everyday lives. These epiphanies can seem small, but they are a symbol of the relationship we have with God. One epiphany that I like to invite people to use is to see how the washing of your face can remind you of the baptism you've experienced. The water on your face can feel simple, but the remembrance can change everything.

One of the things I've noticed about searching for epiphanies is that it gets easier the more you do it. The noticing of Jesus does not mean that Jesus is suddenly doing more for you. Rather, Jesus is already there – we just need to work our epiphany-seeing muscles a bit to see how God's love is all around us. As your epiphanies grow, I hope you'll take a chance to share those moments with your family and friends. You never know how your epiphany might help others find Jesus, too.

See you in church,
Pastor Marc



Annual Meeting Notice

We will have our Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, February 2nd. There will be **one worship service at 9:30 am, and our meeting will start at 10:30 am**. We will review the highlights of each committee from the last year and make plans for 2020. Agenda items include voting on the 2020 budget, electing new members for our church council, voting to distribute \$60,000 from our Special Gifts fund, selecting members to attend the NJ Synod Assembly, selecting members to work with Camp Koinonia and supporting Santa Isabel with a financial gift. We plan for Annual Reports to be available for pick-up on January 26th and emailed out as well.



It's Not Too Early to Think About Summer: Camp and Employment

Camp Cross Roads is preparing for their amazing summer: From Generation to Generation.

Children encounter God in nature, in worship and in relationships during youth camp. Cross Roads certified staff members provide a safe and loving space for each camper.

- Faith formation strengthened through camp activities, song and worship
- Healthy, homemade, delicious food
- Weeklong experiential and active programming
- Positive adult role models
- Lasting friendships and connections outside of the electronic world

Visit <https://crossroadsretreat.com/summer-programs/> for more information and, if you're a college student or a recent high school graduate, consider applying for a summer position: <https://www.crossroadsretreat.com/employment/>.

Education and Events for Children, Youth and Adults

Sunday School News

Twice a month we meet after 9:00 am worship to learn more about Jesus, God and why Christ's love changes everything. Each session starts in the sanctuary, singing songs with David Scance, before splitting into our three classes (one for pre-k, one for K-1st grade, one for 2nd grade and up). Our younger students are spending more time with the stories around Jesus' birth and meeting characters like Anna and Simeon. All classes will soon start on their memory work for the Spring. We'll meet again on February 9th and February 23rd.

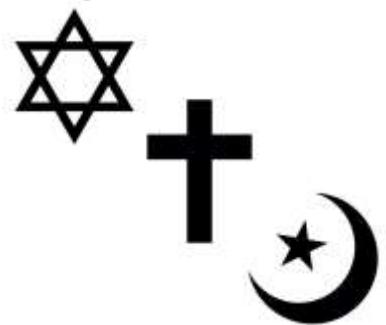


Confirmation

Our partnership with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church continues with an exciting, informative and meaningful Confirmation program. Eight youth meet twice a month to tackle what makes us who we are. This year we're covering the Bible and moving into the Christian Scriptures (aka the New Testament). Our February sessions will meet on February 9th and 23rd.

Abraham's Table: An Interfaith Dialogue Series Coming Soon

Peace Islands Institute, Congregation B'nai Israel and Christ Lutheran Church invite you to a Muslim-Jewish-Christian dialogue series connecting our lives of faith. Learn from three experts and take part in a participatory interfaith dialogue! Through our practice of interfaith dialogue, we hope to further the path of peace, understanding and collaboration. At each session, we'll be collecting non-perishable food items for the Tri-Boro Food Pantry in Park Ridge. Make sure to save the following dates on your calendar!



Sunday, March 22 at 2:00 pm: Inner Peace

Peace Islands Institute, 777 Terrace Avenue, Unit 109 in Hasbrouck Heights

Tuesday, May 19 at 7:00 pm: Fasting (with an Iftar dinner afterwards)

Congregation B'nai Israel, 53 Palisade Ave in Emerson

Sunday, June 14 at 7:00pm: Prayer and its Daily Practice

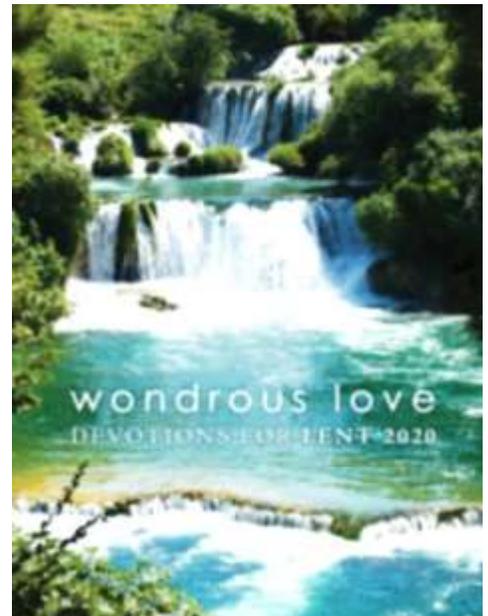
Christ Lutheran Church, 32 Pascack Road in Woodcliff Lake

Wondrous Love: Devotions for Lent 2020

Our at-home devotions for Lent will be available for pickup this month and will begin with Ash Wednesday on February 26th. Here's the description from the publisher:

This beautiful, full-color Lenten devotional highlights readings from the gospel of Matthew with 46 entries, one for each day from Ash Wednesday to Easter. Each reading is accompanied by a photo, a quote to ponder, a reflection, and a prayer. This accessible and colorful format makes it easy to incorporate a simple Christian observance into your Lenten journey.

Wondrous Love explores Jesus' journey from baptism to the cross and the empty tomb, as depicted in Matthew (the gospel focus for 2020, year A in the Revised Common Lectionary). Jesus predicts that he will be betrayed, arrested, abandoned, and put to death, yet he continues on to Jerusalem and the cross. The wondrous love shown by Jesus on this journey guides us on our baptismal journeys and inspires us to sing, serve and share God's love with others.



We encourage you to pick up the devotion and spend time with it this Lent!

A Workshop By Thrivent Financial: Retirement and Estate Strategies

Managing your estate in retirement takes careful planning and understanding of an ever-changing landscape of financial considerations. **Retirement and Estate Strategies** is a free workshop from Thrivent that will help you learn:

- How to accumulate and distribute money for retirement
- Different strategies to retire confidently
- How to efficiently pass on money to heirs or your favorite charity

This session will be led by William O'Doherty, ChFC, FIC, CLTC Financial Consultant of Thrivent Financial. It will take place **Tuesday, February 11th, 6:30 pm**. Dinner will be served. Please call 201.505.4940 ext. 103 or email madeline.keville@thrivent.com to reserve a place for yourself and a guest. You may also contact the church office to RSVP if that is easier for you.

Growing in Generosity

60th Anniversary Thankoffering

Pastor Marc, Noel Ulanday and I had the privilege of attending Santa Isabela church in Elizabeth, NJ to present them with our 60th anniversary pay-it-forward gift of \$7,070. The congregation consisted of young families and a majority of men. No organ, no piano, no choir director, but they sang their hearts out, even the liturgy. The sermon was in English and Spanish, and during the sharing of the peace one very small boy made it his mission to make sure he greeted us. We left there with the feeling that we



made the right choice in choosing them as the recipients. It's my hope we can continue reaching out to this enthusiastic group of Christians.

Dot Dohrmann

Souper Bowl of Caring: February 2nd

Keep bringing soup to church! Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this year's annual Souper Bowl of Caring event benefiting the Center for Food Action in Englewood. The giant plastic football cooler in the narthex is overflowing with your generosity. Also, collect your pocket change and bring everything (at the latest) to church on February 2nd.



**"SOUPER BOWL"
HEARTY SOUP DRIVE**

Trash and Treasure is Coming!

Here we are in the midst of winter, dreaming of a warm spring to come . . . and for some of us, those thoughts make us think about the Trash & Treasure & Clothing Sale for this year! If you're looking for something to do, how about cleaning out your closets and/or basement and putting things away for the sale? Here are the important dates for you to know:

→ Trash & Treasure Sale date: **Saturday, May 2th from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm**

→ Clothing Collection begins: **Monday, April 6th**

→ T&T Household items collection begins: **Sunday, April 19th**

More details about work days and meals will come in later *Messengers*.

The Tri-Boro Food Pantry:

Stop & Shop Community Bag Program Beneficiary for February!

On January 1st many towns in our area banned plastic bags in retail stores. You might need to stock up on a few reusable bags to leave in your car. Your reusable bag purchase will not only help the environment, but it can also benefit the Tri-Boro Food Pantry. During the month of February, the Stop & Shop located at 600 Kinderkamack Road in Emerson will sell special Community Bags for \$2.50. Every \$1 from a Community Bag sale will benefit the Tri-Boro Food Pantry. That dollar will support the pantry and its work providing fresh milk, eggs, food staples and cleaning supplies to our neighbors. In 2019 up to 30 clients and families visited the pantry every week. Your purchase can make a difference!



You can learn more about the Tri-Boro Food Pantry by visiting www.triborofoodpantry.org. For more information on the Stop & Shop Community Bag Program, visit stopandshop.bags4mycause.com.

Supporting Valley Hospital's NICU

Several families took on the Reverse Advent Calendar challenge 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. Pastor Marc delivered dozens of items in mid-January to support families as they wait for their new baby to be well enough to come home. The NICU team at Valley was very grateful and thankful. We're planning to continue our support of the NICU during Lent. Stay tuned for more information.

The Care Committee Presents: Our Next Gab Sessions

Want to know more about the people you sit next to in the pews? Join us on Wednesday, February 19th for the next Gab Session at 11:30 am. We share a lunch (typically potluck style) socialize, have fun and discover the amazing lives of the people at CLC. If you would like to join us, please RSVP with Debbie Louis, 201-358-6435.

Letters of Gratitude

The Center for Food Action

Thank you for your very thoughtful gift! This year your generous supported helped provide emergency food packages to thousands of your low-income neighbors, and it provided funding to help keep a roof over their heads and the lights on for so many. In addition, your gift will enable us to restock food and pantry shelves ahead of the cold winter months. Thank You!

The holidays are a time of joyful celebration, yet also a time of reflection. As the new year approaches, it is a time to reflect with gratitude on the blessings and bounty that we've received. Thank you for considering those who are less fortunate.

At CFA we are committed to providing assistance to needy families and individuals - not just during the holidays but throughout the year. We certainly couldn't help people who are in crisis without your kindness.



From Iglesia Santa Maria en el exillo

The Care Committee sent a financial gift to Pastor Gus Vinajeras and the faith community he leads in Irving, Texas. Below is the letter he wrote:

We just received your check to help the less fortunate. Your gift is a reminder of God's CARE for people in need. We have undertaken a new ministry with refugees in the border and we will use your funds for that purpose.

Needless to say, it is joyful to hear from you. The process of recovering our building is in its final phase. Pray that the transition would not be as stressful as I anticipate.

Blessings and all my love to the people of Christ Lutheran Church.

The Rev. Gus Vinajeras

Message about 2019 Financial Statements from Pat Daub

The 2019 annual Financial Statements for contributions to Christ Lutheran Church were sent out this last week. Please look for them. If I have your email address, you received an email from CLC Finance Committee on Saturday, January 18th. If I print the statement they were mailed on Tuesday, January 21st.

A few notes: If it's possible please provide me with an email address. Sending these statements by email is preferable because printing and getting envelopes ready takes hours of time, is more expensive and less reliable.

It's not too late to send a pledge for 2020. Automated giving through YOUR bank works really well. I set it up originally so I wouldn't have to remember my envelope each Sunday morning! If you have questions or any corrections you can reach me by email at pddaub@aol.com or phone at 201-930-9584.

From the Finance Committee: Donating to CLC

A new year means a new opportunity to look at how we give and see if there's another way that works for us. CLC has electronic giving! It's easy to set up, safe and confidential. You control donations from your checking account, and you can give weekly, monthly or make a single payment. Here's what to do:

- 1) Go to the CLC webpage, click on the tab at the top that says Give
- 2) Click on the green button that says Give Online
- 3) Next, Create your Online Profile. You'll need an email address. Then, provide a password, your name and the address.
- 4) The donation page will ask for the amount, how often you would like to donate, when to start and then information about your checking account (routing # and account number.
- 5) That's it! You'll receive an email confirmation when your account is set up and a donation is given.

Vanco is the eservice payments company chosen by Thrivent Financial to manage this automated giving. Many CLC people have been using this option for the last few years, and it's proven to be safe and secure. Fees are nominal (20 cents per transaction), and CLC pays all fees so your gift counts at 100%. You will receive an email every time funds are withdrawn from your account. You can view the history of all giving on the summary page. And, viewing or making changes is easy.

On Sunday morning, we offer special yellow "giving cards" in pews. Place one of those in the offering plate as a sign that you are an electronic giver. If you'd like help with setting up your account, please get in touch with CLC's Financial Secretary Pat Daub at 201-930-9584 or pddaub@aol.com.

Restricted Funds Update from Finance Committee

In accordance with a congregational approved motion on June 3, 2018, 'Restricted' funds approved for use are the following:

Approved amount	\$50,000.00
Previous amount of Total Funds used	\$4,458.00
<u>Amount accessed from approved funds:</u>	
For December, 2019	+\$19,794.00
Total amount of current available funds	\$65,336.00

Did you notice the big jump in available funds from last month? Here's how that happened: In November 2018, the church council established a new guideline called "dire emergency." Every December, the church council will review the financial position of the church and look at two metrics to determine the current financial health of the congregation. If current available funds (the cash that is available to pay day-to-day bills) are less than \$50,000 dollars (approximately 3 months of current expenses) or the projected year-end deficit is greater than \$10,000, the council can declare a financial "dire emergency." When a dire emergency is declared, our Emergency Fund can be used to cover our year-end deficit. In December 2019, our projected deficit was approximately \$16,000 and current available funds less than \$50,000. The church council declared a "dire emergency," allowing money from our Emergency Fund to cover the year-end deficit. Due to your good stewardship and a rising stock market, our year-end deficit was approximately \$10,000. A single payment at the conclusion of December from the Emergency Fund to operating expenses zeroed out the operating loss for 2019. If you have questions before the annual meeting, don't hesitate to contact head of finance Martin Thalmann (mlthalmann@gmail.com) or any church council member.

Raise the Roof Update

Our Capital Campaign officially ended in December. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Raise the Roof over CLC. We hope you have seen how these new roofs have enhanced and strengthened our ministry over these last two years. At our annual meeting, we'll vote on using some of the Special Gifts funds to continue paying the loan we made to ourselves to pay for these roofs.





Change in Worship for February 2nd: One service at 9:30 am

Due to our Annual Congregational Meeting, there will be one worship service on Sunday, February 2nd, at 9:30 am. Our meeting will begin at 10:30 am.

The Prayer Experiment Continues Each Month

On the third Sunday of this month (February 16th), 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 (February 23rd), we'll choose a name from the font and commit ourselves to praying for that person through the month of March.

Why and How Do We Use Ashes on Ash Wednesday?

As we get ready for the start of Lent (this year on Wednesday, February 26th), Pastor Marc will shortly make the ashes we will use on Ash Wednesday. These ashes are made from the palm branches we used last Palm Sunday. These ashes are a symbol of our mortality and our life with God. Below are some notes from our denomination's worship FAQ (see more at <https://www.elca.org/worshipfaq>).

Using ashes as a sign of repentance is an ancient practice, often mentioned in the Bible (e.g., Jonah 3:5-9; Job 42:6; Jeremiah 6:26; Matthew 11:21). The early Christians adopted the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external mark of penitence. Ashes symbolize several aspects of our human existence:

- Ashes remind us of God's condemnation of sin, as God said to Adam, "Dust you are and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:19)
- Ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. They were used anciently in the absence of soap. Even on Ash Wednesday, this most penitential day, we receive ashes in the form of the cross, the same symbol placed on our bodies with water in our baptism. Even in this ashen mark of death, we anticipate the new life of Easter.
- Ashes remind us of the shortness of human life, for it is said as we are buried into the ground or as ashes are placed in a columbarium (see "What are columbaria and memorial gardens?"). "We commit this body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."
- Ashes are a symbol of our need to repent, confess our sins and return to God.

So, if we've never been to an Ash Wednesday worship before, how are the ashes received?

Those who desire to receive ashes come forward and stand/kneel at the rail (in the sanctuary) or the altar (in the chapel area). Ashes are applied with Pastor Marc's thumb in the form of a small cross on the forehead of each person with the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." During worship, Pastor Marc will verbally let you know when it is time to receive ashes. People of every age are welcome to receive ashes and it's our custom to give ashes to anyone who asks (from infant to 100). After worship is over, we invite you to leave those ashes visible until you go to bed in the evening.

Missed a sermon? They're online!

Every week, Pastor Marc posts his weekly bulletin reflections and sermons online. You can read his writing by visiting www.clc4u.com/Reflections and listening to sermons at www.clc4u.com/Sermons.

Leaving a Legacy with CLC

Your commitment to CLC has already made an impact in the world. As a member of this part of the body of Christ, your commitment to God and to your neighbor has reverberated in ways you can hardly imagine. The church is always more than a building; the church is the people who gather together to experience Jesus in our midst. Your support has been essential for your church. As you look towards the future, having a strong estate plan in place can help ensure you leave a legacy for those you care about most. Consider including CLC in your plan. If you need help with your estate planning, we recommend Thrivent Financial. They have an office in Montvale and we continue to strengthen our relationship with them. You can contact them at [201-505-4940](tel:201-505-4940).

Our Celebrations in February!

Birthdays

Heather Henry

JoAnn Sallo

Lorraine Sadlon

Wedding Anniversary

Argine and Tigran Safari

Baptisms

Sarah Christensen

Brenna Collins

Patrick Herlihy

Dana Sladovich

[You are invited to contact the church office to update our records on your important upcoming celebrations.]

News from Camp Koinonia

Camp Koinonia is an outdoor Christian camp we have supported for almost 60 years. We continue to support the camp weekly with our benevolences. We are also a shareholder in the camp as well. In August of 2018, the Camp closed down due to unsafe building conditions at the camp. Since then, the camp has been working to create a new board, develop a new plan for ministry and is discerning where God wants this ministry to go. A few months ago, the shareholders of the camp created an Advisory Task Force to bring recommendations to the shareholders at the next Annual Meeting on February 9th. One of the Task Force's recommendations is to empower a new board that will serve for one year. The current board is made of mostly appointed members and the Advisory Task Force believes a new board will be more effective discerning what the Holy Spirit is doing with Camp Koinonia. Below are a few paragraphs from the letter the Advisory Task Force sent to shareholders and friends of Camp Koinonia.

The Advisory Team did not/does not make any judgement about the competency of the now current board. However, we think we do have to consider that with exceptions the current board was not elected by the Corporation and that this creates a disconnect with members of the Corporation. Clearly, we do have competent people on the current Board.

The Advisory Team is very respectful of what the Board has done and is doing, and will say the same about the volunteers who, as we have learned, have done extensive work to keep Koinonia "on the map." The Advisory Team is appreciative of Board's skills and work. The Advisory Team is hoping that the Transition Board, as recommended, will indeed provide a fresh start, vigorous work, bring creative ideas and be a model for future leadership.

The Advisory Team is very hopeful. We are very hopeful that Koinonia will reopen and flourish. We believe that Koinonia has had important ministry and mission, and that it is important for this ministry and mission to continue. Our prayer is that Koinonia will become a model ministry that supports member and nonmember congregations near and far.

Please know that a member of CLC is on the Advisory Task Force and the church council supports the work the Task Force is doing. We will vote at our annual meeting for delegates to attend the Annual Camp Koinonia meeting. If you have any questions, please speak to Pastor Marc at pastormarc@clc4u.com

A New Experiment: the Boxcar App

One of our callings as followers of Jesus is to be proper stewards of the gifts God has entrusted to us. As a steward, we shepherd the gifts we're given to help spread God's word of grace, love, justice and hope. These gifts include the personal talents each one of us have and our financial resources as well. Yet we don't always think of our church – especially it's building – as something we're called to be a good steward of. The Church Council has been looking at different ways we can be good stewards of our facility while also helping with our financial situation. One opportunity that has come forward is **Boxcar**.

Boxcar is often described as the Airbnb of parking. The app connects commuters with individuals, business and communities that have unused parking spaces that commuters could use. Several churches in the Tri-State area currently use Boxcar to further their ministry goals. We've started the process of making it work for us. You might notice changes in our parking lot and some cars there during the week. We will keep you updated with more information once we officially launch as a user of Boxcar.

Equipping for Vitality: Wrapping Up Two Years of Work

Equipping for Vitality was a two-year program sponsored by the New Jersey Synod to help churches identify why they matter and why they're important. We met with several congregations a few times a year to deepen our spirituality and learn new tools to grow in vitality. We integrated some of these tools in our stewardship drives, our prayer ministry, outreach, hospitality and more. The last formal teaching session was January 11. A vital congregation is one that strengthens people's relationship to God, nurtures our relationships and works to create a strong presence in the wider community. The work of vital congregations is always ongoing because the Holy Spirit encourages us to change. New people bring new gifts to engage with the community in new ways. We will continue to be vital not only in the lives of the members of CLC but also in Northern New Jersey. As you worship, work and serve Jesus through Christ Lutheran Church, we hope you'll see the vitality of God's love moving. And if you think the Holy Spirit is leading you to try something new at CLC, please speak to Pastor Marc at pastormarc@clc4u.com.

2020



F E B R U A R Y

2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 <u>One Worship Service</u> with Holy Communion 9:30 am Congregation Annual Meeting ~10:30 am	3	4 Worship Committee Meeting 8:00 pm	5  Chancel Choir Rehearsal 8:00 pm	6	7	8
9 Sunday School 9:45 am <u>Worship</u> Contemporary with Holy Communion 9:00 am Traditional with Holy Communion 10:30 am Confirmation Class 6:30 pm	10 Mary Circle meets 7:30 pm Property Committee Work Night 7:30 pm	11 Care Committee Meeting 9:30 am Thrivent Workshop 6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 8:00 pm	12 Finance Committee 8:00 pm	13	14  Articles Due For March Newsletter	15
16 <u>Worship</u> Contemporary with Holy Communion 9:00 am Traditional with Holy Communion 10:30 am	17 Church Office Closed In honor of Presidents' Day	18	19 Gab Session 11:30 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal 8:00 pm	20 Congregation Council Meeting 8:00 pm	21	22
23 Sunday School 9:45 am <u>Worship</u> Contemporary with Holy Communion 9:00 am Traditional with Holy Communion 10:30 am Confirmation Class 6:30 pm	24	25 Knit 1, Crochet Too 10:00 am 	26 Ash Wednesday Worship a 12:00 noon and 7:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 8:30 pm	27	28	29

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Director of Music: Argine Safari
Director of Youth Choirs: David Scance
Administrative Assistant: Doris Crouse