

The Messenger

February 2023



The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church
Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey
An ELCA Congregation
The Church: Proudly Proclaiming Christ since A.D. 33

PASTOR'S NOTE

In January, I attended and helped to lead the New Jersey Synod's annual Candidacy Retreat. When someone in our Synod desires to formally discern if God is calling them to serve as a pastor or a deacon in the church, the New Jersey Synod Candidacy Committee journeys with them through the multi-year process. Every January candidates for ministry and committee members spend 36 hours together at Camp Cross Roads for fellowship, learning, worship and prayer. The theme for this year's retreat was centered on what it means to be Lutheran and how to share the Gospel in 50 words or less.

The word "gospel" means "good news", but the word means more than what we see in the last 2 minutes of every nightly newscast. In the ancient world, this good news was associated with proclamations made by the Emperor even if what was shared wasn't really good for all it was directed to. The early followers of Jesus saw and experienced in Jesus a different kind of good news that they felt compelled to share with all. This is why the first four books of our Christian scriptures, often identified as the New Testament, aren't simply "Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John" but rather "the Gospel according to Matthew, the Gospel according to Mark, the Gospel according to Luke and the Gospel according to John." This good news is meant to be shared and becomes clearer when we hear someone announcing that "Christ is your own with his life, teaching, works, dying and rising." Good news is good news when it does something to us and for our world.

So if you had 50 words to express the gospel to others, what would you say? How would you share with others how Christ is for them? This isn't as easy as it might seem especially if we don't use "church" words that are hard to explain. Yet as we see in our Bible, there's more than one way to share the good news of Jesus to others. This Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22nd, we'll work on developing our own 50 word gospel as a way to share our faith with others. It will be a bit of a challenge, and the words we use to proclaim the gospel won't all be the same. But the Jesus who loves, serves and comes to us through worship, prayer, bread, drink, grace and mercy is a Jesus we get to offer to all.

Blessed to be the church with you, Pastor Marc

ANNUAL MEETING REWIND: THANK YOU!

Thank you to the 40+ members and non-members who attended our Annual Meeting on February 5th! The meeting lasted approximately 1 hour and twenty minutes due to the extensive list of business we needed to attend to. We appreciate the patience and grace you showed to each other while we connected with each other through the gift of the internet.

The following is a short list of action items accomplished at the meeting:

- Reflected on the challenges of the last year and looked forward to the new possibilities brewing in our community.
- Celebrated the ways you support your faith community in 2022 (with a 1.6% increase in giving) and passed our 2023 budget that's built on your generosity.
- Elected and re-elected 3 leaders to serve on the Church Council (the board of directors for the church).
- Nominated 2 delegates and 1 alternate to attend Camp Koinonia annual meeting later this month.
- As we continue to navigate our ongoing back-and-forth with the trustees of the Ricci Foundation, we still funded 19 projects through our Special Gifts fund. We invested in our future while also sharing God's generosity with other churches and non-profits in our area. A detailed list will appear later in this *Messenger*.
- Updated our Constitution (the document that governs how we function as a church and as a non-profit) to reflect the changes implemented by our denomination.
- Took the first step in our constitution to change the number of voting members necessary to have a congregational meeting. The language that passed was "A quorum will consist of the lesser of 35 voting members or 10% percent of the voting members." We will need to vote on this again at our next congregational meeting for the change to take effect.



Thank you for the ways you share Jesus' love through your faith community.

SPECIAL GIFT PROJECTS FUNDED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

We continue to be in active engagement with the trustees of the Ricci Foundation to find a solution to the impasse in receiving our annual distribution from the Foundation. As shared at our Annual Meeting, a solution has been reached, and we are waiting for some paperwork to be signed and notarized. As we wait for that work to be completed, we chose to set aside over \$51,000 to be given out at a future congregational meeting. Even with this large amount of money set aside, we still dictated over \$66,000 to fund projects at the church and all over the world. Here is a list of projects we're supporting at the church (total: \$117,267.)

- Portable A.C. and air filtration system for the rooms that don't have such a system
- New shed doors and roof for the shed outside the church
- Special music for our special church worship events
- A reserve for future deficits and possible legal fees in our work with the Ricci Foundation
- Set aside additional money to replace our parking lot

Here's a list of what we're supporting outside the church:

- Donation to Tunnels to Tower Foundation
- Donation to the Lutheran Mission among the Navajo at Rock Point, AZ
- Donation to Meals on Wheels of North Jersey working to replace their food delivery van
- Donation to Camp Koinonia to support their capital campaign
- Supporting a water well through ELCA World Hunger
- Donation to a redeveloping church to have special music at their church
- Supporting Easter dinners through Lutheran Social Ministries of NJ
- Backpacks of school supplies for Kids
- Supporting Center for Food Action's Thanksgiving project
- Christmas satchels for Seafarers' Ministry
- Scholarship for a Lutheran seminarian
- Donation to support a church under redevelopment

If you filled out the application for one of the above projects, please fill out a Special Gifts financial form (a purple half-sheet of paper located in the church mailboxes outside the office) and place in the Treasurer's mailbox.

GROWING IN GENEROSITY

Turkey-Syria Earthquake News: Nearly 5000 people have been killed, and thousands of buildings collapsed. Your generosity will help by making a gift to “Middle East Crisis.” Donations may be sent to Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Gifts Processing Center P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009. You may write on your check memo line “Where needed most” or “Middle East Crisis”.

YOUR CHURCH COMMITTEE UPDATES

The Care Committee’s mission is to care for Christ Lutheran Church and the surrounding community. Church World Service thanks the congregation for the generous donation of \$390. to the Blanket Fund. These blankets are distributed in the United States and worldwide to help people survive natural and/or man-made disasters. The Committee will meet again Tuesday, February 14th, at 10:00 am.

Announcing the Annual Trash and Treasure Sale! It has been scheduled by Christ Lutheran Church Women for Saturday, May 6, 2023. All non-clothing donations (and clothing accessories) will be accepted starting Sunday, April 16th. We will begin working on Friday, April 21st. Please consider donating items and your time to help make Trash and Treasure successful. More detailed information will follow in the next Messenger, bulletins, and Thursday e-mails.

Knit One Crochet Too: Do you wannabe knitting or crocheting? Join us at CLC the 4th Tuesday of each month, 10:00 am. Supplies and instructions are available. Work on something for one of the church projects, or make something for yourself. All skill levels welcomed! Want to try something different, we have looms. Socialization is the name of the game. Come, have fun! See you on February 28th, 10:00 am.

Lord, Hear Our Prayer! The congregation has a team of volunteers who are committed to raising to God your prayers. These prayers range from thanksgiving for new joys to urgent prayers for an immediate crisis. Contact the church office (201-391-4224 or clc4u2@verizon.net) with concerns/celebrations.

WORSHIP AND MORE!

Two Sunday Worships: 9:00 am contemporary worship is approximately 45 minutes long with music led by David Scance. 10:30 am worship is led by Argine Safari on the organ and supported by Chancel Choir. You can access worship from home, work or anywhere. Information on how to connect is available on our website (www.clc4u.com).

Lent Begins Ash Wednesday, February 22: You are invited to meet in our chapel space 12:00 Noon for spoken word worship (will not be displayed online) or meet in our sanctuary at 7:30 pm. One of our traditions on Ash Wednesday is to reveal the mark left on our forehead at our baptism using ash. The making of an ashen cross on our forehead is a sacramental act that does not require an ordained person to make the mark. When we bless one another, make the sign of the cross, and hold our hands in prayer, we are practicing sacramental acts. They allow us to bodily express the divine love God has for us while preparing us for the acts of grace Jesus gives us every day.

Devotion for Lent: *Water and Spirit* provides daily devotions from Ash Wednesday to the Resurrection of Our Lord/Vigil of Easter (traditionally known as Holy Saturday). Devotions begin with an evocative image and brief passage from the Gospel of John. The writers bring their unique voices and pastoral wisdom to texts with quotations to ponder, reflections, and prayers. As you read the daily devotions, pause to think about how John describes water and the Spirit and how water and the Spirit are at work in your life. Copies are available at the church or by request from church office.

KIDS AND ADULTS: EDUCATION AND MORE!

Sunday School meets February 12th and 26th! We're looking forward to a great 2023! We'll meet twice this month after the 9:00 am worship. On the 12th, we'll meet in our classes, and then have a joint group on the 26th.

Bible Study on Paul's Letter to the Corinthians will continue reading Paul's letter to the community in the Greek town of Corinth during February. We meet Wednesdays, 11:00 am. We ask you to read a few chapters before we meet, and those may change depending on how much we discuss during a session. Let Pastor Marc know (pastormarc@clc4u.com) if you plan to come, and he will tell you what to read.

COMMUNITY NEWS

2nd Annual Woodcliff Lake United Community Day March 19th, 1:00 pm–4:00 pm: Let's continue to foster a sense of neighborliness in Woodcliff Lake. Our new annual event will be in March at Tice's Corner for a day of service and connection. New activities are planned with favorites like a touch a truck, religious and cultural crafts, and service projects. Groups from all over WCL will share who they are and how they foster a sense of connection during a time of divisiveness. You don't have to live in Woodcliff Lake to attend. Pastor Marc hopes to see you there!

2023	February					2023
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Worship Committee Meets, 10:00 am Bible Study 11:00 am Chancel Choir 3:30 pm	2	3	4
5 <u>Streaming and Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship with Communion</u> 10:00 am ANNUAL MTG. 11:00 am	6	7	8 Bible Study 11 am Chancel Choir 3:30 pm	9	10	11
12 “Souper Bowl Sunday” <u>Streaming and Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship with Communion</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am Sunday School 9:45 am	13 Finance Committee Meeting 8:00 pm	14 Care Committee Meeting 10:00 am 	15 Bible Study 11 am Chancel Choir 3:30 pm	16 Council Meeting 7:30 pm	17	18
19 <u>Streaming and Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship with Communion</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am	20	21	22 ASH WEDNESDAY Bible Study 11:00 am Worship Noon & 7:30 pm	23	24	25
26 1 LENT <u>Streaming and Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship with Communion</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am Sunday School 9:45 am	27	28 Knit 1 Crochet Too 10:00 am				

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www.clc4u.com

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