

The Messenger

January 2022



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:

Most days, my route to and from the sanctuary takes me over the dam. That stretch of roadway isn't very long, but it is a place where people speed by. The sign announcing how fast people are actually going rarely matches the 25 mph speed limit. I've always wondered what it would take for the traffic over Church Road to slow down. The speed limit sign, the police officer sitting in our parking lot and the occasional flock of turkeys swarming over the road never seemed to do the trick. Going slow over Church Road was a pipe dream for those of us who go over it almost every day. But three weeks ago, the impossible happened. For a few strange days, every car drove below the speed limit while on that road. No one rushed down the road or tailgated the car in front of them. Every driver and passenger took the time to look out their window. And when they did, they slowed down because the reservoir was full of ducks.

I never thought a raft of ducks would be needed to encourage everyone to slow down. The water by the dam is usually pretty empty, with only a handful of swans or a heron keeping watch. Yet on those chilly December days, ducks from all over made that part of Church Road their home. Those ducks were so unexpected that everyone driving by had to slow down to see what they were. Instead of being focused on where they are going, everybody stared at the ducks. Since the drive over the dam was so quick, people couldn't see this strange sight for very long. But everyone who drove by saw something that caused them to wonder.

As we enter a new calendar year, I hope we all get a chance to wonder. There are still many challenges facing us that require us to always be nimble, faithful, and innovative. That need to always be "on" is really exhausting. Yet God also provides opportunities for us to slow down. We can choose to drive a few miles per hour below the speed of life and gaze at the grace, love and beauty that are all around us. May 2022 be a year when we can lose ourselves in wonder and notice all the unexpected ducks swimming next to us.

Let's keep being in the church in 2022
Pastor Marc

GOING VIRTUAL JANUARY 2 THROUGH JANUARY 16 (estimate)

Starting on Sunday, January 2, worship will be online and via conference call. The executive committee for the church made this decision due to the rise of COVID cases in our area. We heard from many folks within the congregation who either tested positive for COVID, are quarantined, or waited nearly a week for test results to return. Many of the local government facilities and hospitals have closed to visitors and some local business are going all virtual through the middle of the month. We also have staff who work regularly with other people, increasing their chance for an exposure. When we added up all of what's happening around us, including the number of young kids and immunocompromised individuals in our community who cannot receive a vaccine, the executive committee decided to take the first 3 weeks to gather safely in our homes and other places. Part of why we gather in person is to safely pray together. For these next three weeks, we can do that better when we are at home.

Worship will take place at 9:00 am and 10:30 am. Our livestream equipment was installed the last week of December and is ready to be used. It will take time for us to learn how to use it well. We'll need you to watch, engage and provide feedback on video quality, sound and more. One of our gifts as a community is that the music at both worships are very different. The sound mixing for our contemporary music might need to be tweaked for our organ-led music and vice versa. We want to know how worship works for those who are calling in and for those using YouTube or Facebook. We also want to know what your experience was like if you worshipped later on in the week. This will be very important since we are a community that receives and expects visitors. It is part of our spiritual DNA not to let ourselves get in the way of God's love. We might not be in the building, but we will worship wherever we are. And your feedback will help the entire community keep worship safe, accessible, and open to all who need Jesus' presence in their lives.

Worship for the rest of January will be reassessed after the 9th. Please stay up to date by connecting to the church via social media, our weekly Thursday email newsletter, or by calling the church office. This isn't how we wanted to start 2022, yet you continue to show that the church is more than a building. The church is a community living out God's love through worship, care and service. Let's continue to be who God knows we can be.

GROWING IN GENEROSITY

Christmas Gifts for Children and Families in Need: Your generosity was amazing! In December, we delivered 52 gift cards (starting in value at \$25 each) to support families and individuals through Westwood Social Services. You then promised to bring Christmas cheer to the homes of 20 young people through a young woman working on her Girl Scout gold award through the Tri-Boro Food Pantry. We know not everyone got to participate in the ways they wanted to this year, but we're so grateful for your willingness to take care of your neighbors. CLC-Women are anxious to host this amazing event again next year.

Christmas Thinking of You Baskets by Care Committee: Care Committee put together Christmas baskets to let folks know we're thinking of them. The basket contained a few sweet treats and a special reindeer label created by our Sunday School students. After assembly, the baskets were hand-delivered by many of you. Thank you for showing how the church is bigger than only those who gather physically in our building.



Christmas Gifts for the Waterfront Adult Group Home: Debbie Louis and Nancy Ulanday of the Care Committee organized and delivered 21 shower caddies to Waterfront filled with body products and a gift card. The gift cards were for stores they could walk to. We've been unable to visit the group home for our usual bingo visits and other social gathering due to COVID. But we wanted to bring them a bit of cheer this Christmas season.



Souper Bowl Sunday Sponsored by the Care Committee The month of January is designated as Souper Bowl Sunday Month at Christ Lutheran. Our plan was to collect cans of soup and your pocket change through February 13th (Super Bowl Sunday) to support the Center for Food Action in Englewood. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we invite you to collect your items at home instead of bringing them to church in January. We'll share updates about this food drive in our weekly online newsletter.

NEWS FROM CHURCH COMMITTEES

The Stewardship Committee's 2022 campaign is still on-going! As of December 22, 2021, we had 41 financial pledges for \$162,363. That is close to matching our 2021 total, and we would love to make 2022 even better. There's still time to get your pledges of time, talent and resources to your faith community. If you need a new form or pledge card, please contact the church office.

Care Committee's Annual Blanket Fund Drive will continue through January. Once it is safe to gather in the sanctuary, you're invited to donate funds to Church World Service to support their blanket ministry. These blankets go to support individuals experiencing an extreme crisis such as fleeing from their homes or recovering from a disaster. A sample of the blanket that is used and a box to collect cash donations is located in our church lobby (narthex).

To All Christ Lutheran Church Women: Watch for our letter to approve the 2022 budget and approve the 2022 slate of board officers. Also, watch for information on an upcoming CLCW Zoom meeting on Sunday, January 30th at 7:30 pm. We will invite people to register by visiting this link: for a short update on CLCW and time for some fellowship: <https://www.clc4u.com/CLCW> .

Interested in Joining CLC as a Voting Member? We're a blessed community of faith-filled, 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 2022, make your voice known by becoming a voting member. Speak to Pastor Marc (pastormarc@clc4u.com) if you're interested.

What is the Church Council? The work that God has called everyone at CLC to go on 24 hours a day, seven days a week with the guidance, insights and decision-making of pastors and deacons. The Church Council serves as the board of directors for CLC. Its members relate to the active committees at the church while providing oversight over the church's finances, property and more. Through a collaborative process, the members of the Church Council work to help all of us make the gospel real in this place. If you're interested in learning more about the work of the Council or are feeling called by the Holy Spirit to play a more active role at CLC, please speak to Pastor Marc.

A Financial Update: At the end of November, giving compared to 2021 was up 0.9%. Total Income was \$206,309, and expenses were \$229,574. Our loss through November was \$23,265, which was the same as last year but \$8200 better than budget. Your giving in October and November was amazing. Through April, giving was down approximately 10% from last year. Since then, giving has grown. We also did not have to use restricted funds to cover operating expenses. By pooling our contributions together, we continue to the work of Christ in our neighborhood. Thank you!

Ricci Trust Update: For the last several years, we have been working with other beneficiaries of the Anna and Dominick Ricci Foundation to make sure the fund is being handled in the way we believed the Ricci's would have wanted. The beneficiaries of the fund (which includes CLC and the Care Committee) will meet with the new money managers to go over their "Investment Policy Statement" in early January. An Investment Policy Statement is like a business plan for the fund, laying out its goals and values. As beneficiaries, we have little say in the day-to-day operation of the fund. But we continue to steward the foundation in ways that reflect Anna and Dominick Ricci's faith and values.

CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2021
ONE WORSHIP AT 10:00 AM

Make plans to attend our annual congregational meeting! Annual reports will be available to review prior to the meeting. During the meeting we will approve a budget for 2022, elect new church council members, appoint delegates to the Camp Koinonia annual meeting, and vote on projects to support with our Special Gifts fund. Annual meetings are open to all. However, as a non-profit, only voting members are allowed to vote on items raised during the meeting. At the moment, we are planning for this meeting to be accessible in-person and online. Please note that this situation could change. More information will be shared in the weeks to come.



As shared above, we will be all virtual starting on January 2nd. Worship will happen at 9 am and 10:30 am on January 2nd and 9th. Worship will be reassessed after the 9th to see what our schedule will be for the rest of January. Please check out our social media and website for the most up-to-date information. Even though our worship schedule might change, the following ways to worship will not. Note one addition: you can now call in to worship at 9 am.

Sunday Morning Opportunities to Worship

- 1) Our regularly scheduled in-person worship takes place at 9:00 am and 10:30 am. Please wear a mask and refrain from greeting one another in the narthex. Special pew markers will show you how to sit six feet distant from those around you. Worship materials will be available on a narthex table: wine or grape juice and a brown paper bag with a bulletin and wafer.
- 2) Each worship will be streamed on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/clc4u/live>), YouTube(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaoB8mout3qnMGLGzaOmXng>) and our website (www.clc4u.com).
- 3) Listen to 9:00 am worship via conference call: dial 646-558-8656, enter meeting id: 892 2457 5750 and then #. Hit # to ignore participant id and enter password 195901.
- 4) Listen to 10:30 am worship via conference call: dial 646-558-8656, enter meeting id: 827 672 730 and then #. Hit # to ignore participant id and enter password 195901.

What Goes Up Must Come Down . . . Thank you to the 20+ amazing volunteers who decorated our worship space for the Advent and Christmas season. We announce the date when we will undecorate the sanctuary. Your help will enable us to carefully store these beautiful items so they will be ready to use again next December.

What is the Season of Epiphany?

The church typically celebrates the day of Epiphany on January 6th, twelve days after Christmas. This year, we will celebrate on January 9th – the Sunday nearest to Epiphany. We will recall the story found only in Matthew 2:1-10 when magi (sometimes referred to as wisemen or kings) came from the East searching for a king born under a star. The presence of a new king was a threat to King Herod's authority. He tried to convince the magi to share where they found Jesus, but they snuck out of town before that happened. The gifts the magi brought included gold, frankincense and myrrh: all hints at what Jesus might experience in his life. The magi were not Jewish, yet they knew that this newborn baby would change the world. This was an "Aha!" moment given by God to gentiles. The season of Epiphany is a time when we acknowledge how God invited even those who didn't share Jesus' religion and faith to see how God's love was moving in the world. We will hear many "Aha!" moments in worship and reflect on how God keeps showing up in our lives through grace, love and care.



KEEP SEEKING HIM

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

Church Infrastructure Projects: We want to share updates about projects happening at the church you voted on during our special congregational meeting.

- 1) The Security System** is slowly being installed. Due to equipment shortages, we're still waiting on some vital components.
- 2) Steps by the Boiler Room** will be repaired. A contract has been signed and we're still waiting to schedule an installation date.
- 3) Repair of the Choir Loft:** Water seepage into the sanctuary damaged the elevated platform on which the choir sat. The platform has been completely rebuilt but still needs to be re-carpeted. We're working on a vendor to make that happen.
- 4) Air Conditioning:** We are reviewing bids and making adjustments due to the recent increases in costs for products and supplies. We are working towards installing this in 2022.

KIDS AND ADULTS—EDUCATION, COMMUNITY NEWS AND MORE!

Sunday School Will Be Online in January! Due to the rise in COVID cases, Sunday School will meet online during January. We'll need to be a bit flexible as we figure out how to navigate everything safely. Our first session will be 9:45 am, January 9th. Pastor Marc will send a Zoom link to all families prior to that meeting date. Please contact Pastor Marc or Meredith Drobinske if you have any questions.

Confirmation : Our partnership with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church continues! This year we will be digging into the Bible, providing an overview of all sixty-six books. On January 9th and 23rd, we will meet online at 6:30 pm. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Marc at pastormarc@clc4u.com.

Community Conversations Thank you to everyone who participated in our community conversations with Temple Emanuel of the Pascack Valley. Over the three sessions, we shared our faith stories, what it's like living out our faith, and how we can live well together. Part of the third process involved dreaming up ways we, as two communities, can work together. This could involve participating in a joint coat drive, working together in our Genesis Garden, hosting a refugee family, and more. No ideas are set in stone yet but we're excited to see what the future will bring.

Jehu Jones Study with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Our six week conversation with Prince of Peace Lutheran church centered on the African-American Experience went really well. We covered topics as wide ranging as Reconstruction, the story of Rev. Jehu Jones, redlining, and the experience of African-Americans in the ELCA. We're looking forward to more joint conversations with Prince of Peace in the future.

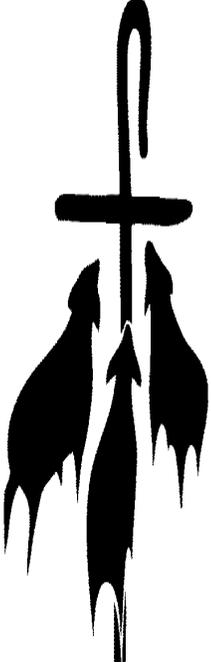
Camp Cross Roads: Register for Summer Camp today! Camp Cross Roads is a year-round camp and retreat center in the heart of New Jersey. Sponsored and supported by the New Jersey Synod and the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, the camp works to sustain, nurture and deepen the faith of all people. In 2022, the camp will return to a Sunday afternoon - Saturday morning camp week. Register by January 31 for a \$25 discount. You can learn more about the camp and its programs by visiting: <https://www.crossroadsretreat.com/summer-programs/>.

Update from Debbie Kruegle, Missionary We wanted to share a recent update from Debbie Kruegle, a missionary who grew up at CLC. For a number of years she's been working in East Africa, and she preached at CLC in October. She was looking forward to continue her work in East Africa after her current stay in the U.S.

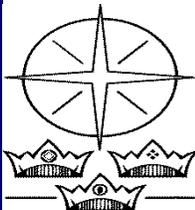
However, the agreement between the organization she works for (Wycliffe USA) and the one providing oversight for the group in East Africa, recently came to an end. She will be unable to return to that work. She's currently looking for a new assignment and requests your prayers through this process. Her most recent note to us ended on this one hopeful line: *I'm reminded at Christmas that, in the words of Clement of Alexandria, "The Lord has turned all our sunsets into sunrise."*

News from Camp Koinonia It's been quite a year at Camp Koinonia. The Board recently shared a list of all that has occurred at the camp which included repairing the Conference Center, hiring a full time executive director, and finalizing a strategic plan (which will be shared at their next annual meeting). One tidbit from their most recent newsletter is worth reporting in full:

During the weekends of Advent I and II I looked around at the full Conference Center, the grandparents and babies and children, and the large tree in the center of the room, and I felt a sense of awe. It had been four years since the last Advent weekend at Koinonia, and we all knew the historic nature of its return. Jean Sandberg planned and led excellent programming with the help of many participant volunteers. The nativity walk was beautiful, families played games late into the night, and the blazing fire invited people to take some time to rest. To begin 2021 with the camp unopen and in need of care, and to end 2021 with a full camp where we could provide programming, food, and clean lodging was indescribable.



**GOOD
NEWS
Go tell it...
EVERYWHERE!**

2022	J A N U A R Y					2022
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 <u>Streaming Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship with</u> <u>Holy Communion</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am	3	4	5  Chancel Choir Zoom Rehearsal 8:00 pm	6  EPIPHANY	7	8
9 <u>Streaming Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship with</u> <u>Holy Communion</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am Sunday Church School Online 9:45 am Confirmation Online Class 6:30 pm	10 CLCW Board Meeting 8:00 pm	11	12 Worship Committee Meeting 10:00 am Chancel Choir Zoom Rehearsal 8:00 pm	13 Finance Committee Meeting via Zoom 7:30 pm	14	15
16 <u>Streaming</u> <u>Sanctuary Worship</u> <u>with</u> <u>Holy Communion</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am	17	18	19 Chancel Choir Zoom Rehearsal 8:00 pm	20	21	22
23 <u>Worship with Holy</u> <u>Communion</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am Confirmation Online Class, 6:30 pm	24	25 Council Meeting 8:00 pm	26 Chancel Choir Zoom Rehearsal 8:00 pm	27	28	29
30 <u>Worship with Holy</u> <u>Communion</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am	31					

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