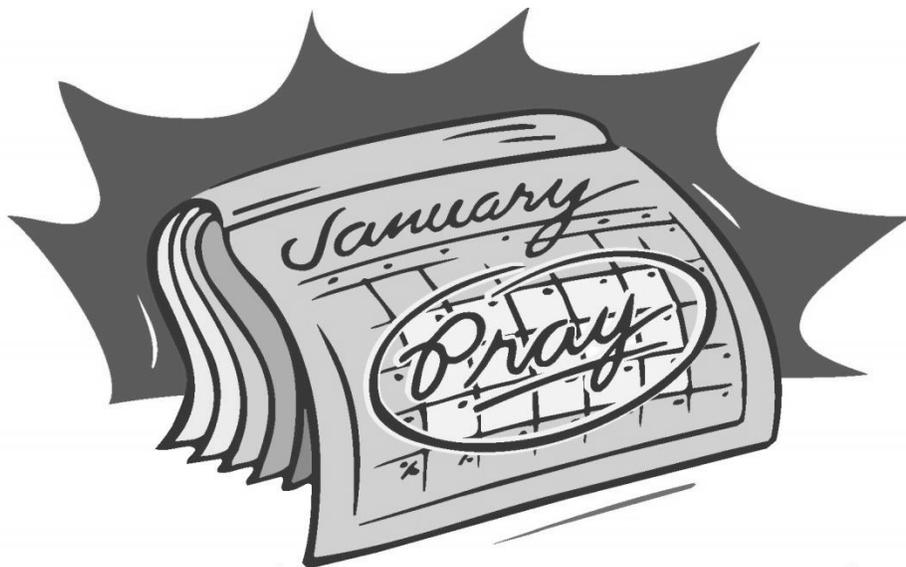


The Messenger

January 2023



Start the New Year with
Prayer

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

I was recently reminded in an article by Rev. Kathryn A. Kleinhans, dean of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University, of a hymn from Luther that we don't sing very often. It's known as "Out of the Depths I Cry to You (ELW 600)" and is a musical setting for Psalm 130. He wrote it in 1523, and it was the first in a project designed to re-imagine the Psalms for its context. He remarked to a colleague that someone starting such a project would probably begin with Psalm 1. Yet he chose to put to music "a psalm that expressed deep despair, deep longing, and deep faith."

For Luther, hope and despair are opposites. In Romance languages, the words are intertwined. For example, in modern French, the word for hope is espoir, and the word for despair is désespoir with the prefix dés indicating lack of something. For Luther though, the relationship between hope and despair is not just a linguistic one but a theological one. He saw this relationship as dynamic because it is precisely in the midst of despair that hope is created! Luther saw this as vividly expressed as hope changing the one who hopes into what is hoped for. That's not necessarily an easy phrase to break down, but we can think of hope as a kind of mechanism merging the thing we hope for with the one who hopes. Hope is a verb, an activity that shouldn't be confused with optimism. If we make hope into simply "I hope the Denver Broncos pick the right head coach," it feels a bit too transactional. If we use Luther's sense of what hope is, we realize that merging my well-being with the state of the Denver Broncos isn't entirely healthy. That kind of hope is outside ourselves and often deepens on what might be fleeting and disappointing. Each one of us can list all the hopes we have that were never fulfilled even though some of those hopes (as minor as they might have been) chose to center ourselves instead of the people around us. A deeper, more life-giving, and more Christian kind of hope seeks a relationship with the One who claimed us in our baptism. It's a hope that moves us away from being the center of our universe. As we move into this New Year, I hope that we can continue to grow in our own relationship with God. I hope that we can feel more clearly the love Jesus has for each of us. I hope that we can embrace our calling to love and serve and be the kind of people our community needs. And I hope that Jesus will cross through your despair, fear, worries, and anxieties to let you know that you matter, no matter what.

*We rest our fears in your good Word and trust your Holy Spirit.
Your promise keeps us strong and sure;
we trust the cross, your signature,
inscribed upon our temples.*

*My soul is waiting for you, Lord, as one who longs for morning;
no watcher waits with greater hope than I for your returning.
I hope as Israel in the Lord,
who sends redemption through the Word.
Praise God for grace and mercy!*

Blessed to be the church with you, Pastor Marc

ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Sunday, February 5
One worship at 10:00 am
Meeting at 11:00 am

Make plans to attend our Annual Congregational Meeting! Calling all voting members and interested parties. Our Annual Congregational Meeting will take place on Sunday, February 5 at approximately 11:00 am. We will have one in-person/streaming worship that day at 10:00 am. This meeting will be hybrid meaning you can attend via ZOOM or in the sanctuary. ZOOM is an online meeting tool you can access via your smartphone, tablet, laptop, computer or landline phone. The ZOOM link will be open as soon as worship is over.

We are asking everyone to pre-register by visiting this link www.clc4u.com/AnnualMeeting or calling the church office. Please register by Wednesday, February 1.

When you register online, you will be sent a link that is unique to your registration. If you were planning to attend the meeting in the sanctuary but something changed at the last minute, you can use that link to join virtually. Please provide your name and the name of all voting members who will be joining you.

A special letter will be sent to all voting members of the congregation with details about the agenda and procedures for the meeting. We will have several important topics to discuss and vote on, including the 2023 annual budget, new church Council members, Koinonia delegates, Nominating Committee members, and Special Gifts distributions. The church Council will also be forwarding to the congregation two slates of changes to our congregational constitution. The first change is to update the number of voting members representing a quorum during a congregational meeting. Currently that number is hardcoded into our constitution at 35 members. The Council is proposing to change that to a percentage of the voting members on our membership rolls. The proposal is to set the quorum at 10% voting members which is approximately 33 members at the current moment. We will discuss such a change, and if it is approved, we will need to vote on this change again at a future congregational meeting before it will take effect.

The second slate of changes includes many that reflect constitutional changes implemented at the church-wide assembly. Our denomination meets every 3 years in a much larger version of a congregational meeting. At every one of these sessions, changes to congregational constitutions are proposed. We have not updated many of these sections since 2013. More details about what that will look like are below. The second change to the constitution involves updating the number of voting members at a congregational meeting that will represent a quorum. The number in our constitution is hard-coded meaning that we need 35 members at a congregational meeting to legally do our business. The council is proposing changing that number to a percentage of actual voting members in our membership rolls. The proposal is that quorum will be met if 10% of our voting members gather (which is, currently, approximately 32 members).

Our Annual Report will be available approximately week before the meeting. A copy will be emailed out but you can request a print-out by contacting the church office (201-391-4224 or clc4u2@verizon.net).



DETAILS ON CONSTITUTION CHANGES RECOMMENDED BY THE ELCA CHURCH-WIDE ASSEMBLY

Each of this church's expressions—congregations, synods and the church-wide organization—has a constitution. As a congregation, we have our own constitution that is based on provisions established by the ELCA. The highest legislative authority in our denomination is the “Church-wide Assembly” that meets every three years (Imagine it as a giant congregational meeting for all 10,000+ ELCA congregations that make up the ELCA). Every time the Church-wide Assembly meets, the model constitution has been changed. It is recommended that ELCA congregations review the adopted amendments for their constitutions as soon as possible after each church-wide Assembly to incorporate the required changes and to consider the recommended changes. The Church-wide Assembly last met in August, 2022. The church Council has reviewed and recommended making a large number of adjustments to reflect the changes to the constitution from the last three Church-Wide assemblies (2016, 2019, 2022). The provisions being recommended to you have a * next to them because they are necessary changes.

Below is an example of what these changes look like:

Chapter 4: Statement of Purpose

*C4.02. To participate in God’s mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
[...]

d. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and powerless oppressed and committing itself to their needs.

Rationale: This amendment was proposed on the assembly floor during the 2019 Church-wide Assembly; consequently, no rationale was provided prior to the assembly.

Due to the extensive number of changes that are being recommended for review, we will be posting them online at www.clc4u.com/updateconstitution. Voting members will receive a document sharing the rational for the changes (for example: *C9.31. Inclusive language). Pastor Marc will be available on January 15 at 9:45 am and January 29th at 11:30 am to answer your questions about these changes. You can also reach out to him at any time for more information.

GROWING IN GENEROSITY

Christmas Gifts for Children and Families in Need: Your generosity was amazing! In December, we delivered 37 gift cards (\$25 each) to support families and individuals through Westwood Social Services. You then brought Christmas cheer to the homes of 35 young people connected to the Tri-Boro Food Pantry. A big shout out to CLC women for organizing and running this annual event.



Christmas Thinking of You Baskets were created by the Care Committee to let folks know we're thinking of them. The basket contained a few sweet treats and other goodies. After assembly, the baskets were hand-delivered to many in our community. 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 20 shower caddies to Waterfront filled with body products and a gift card. The gift cards were for stores to which they could walk. It's just one of the ways the church shows how we are invested in the well-being of every one of our neighbors.

Souper Bowl Sunday Sponsored by the Care Committee: The month of January is designated as Souper Bowl Sunday Month at Christ Lutheran. Our plan is to collect cans of soup to deliver to the Tri-Boro Food Pantry and your pocket change to support the Center for Food Action in Englewood. Plastic containers in which to deposit your coins will be available on January 8. Please return all cans of soup and coins to the church by/on February 12.



The Stewardship Committee's 2023 Campaign is Still On-going! As of December 5, 2022, we had 38 financial pledges for \$154,062. Last year we received 47 pledges by our Annual Meeting in February with 1/4 of them coming after the beginning of December.

Financial Pledges for 2023 (as of December 5)

<u>Range</u>	<u>Number of Pledges</u>	<u>Amount</u>
\$1-\$500	6	\$1,198
\$501-\$1000	2	\$1,600
\$1001-\$2000	10	\$14,124
\$2001-\$3000	4	\$9,680
\$3001-\$4000	3	\$10,980
\$4001-\$5000	3	\$14,280
\$5000 +	10	\$102,200

There is still time to get your pledge in! If you need a new form or pledge card, please contact the church office. You can also submit your pledge online at www.clc4u.com/2023pledge.

Book Bin in our Parking Lot! The new green bin in the back of our parking lot is getting a lot of attention. If you have any books with ISBN barcodes that you are looking to donate, consider dropping them off into that green bin next time you are in the area. New Legacy Books will re-sell what you donate, and 15% of any sales will return to CLC. Let your friends know about the bin and how we are helping to keep books out of the landfill and place them in the hands of readers.

YOUR CHURCH COMMITTEE UPDATES

To All Christ Lutheran Church Women: Watch for our letter to approve the 2023 budget and approve the 2023 slate of board officers. Also, watch for information on an upcoming CLCW Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 22 at 11:30 am (after 10:30 am worship).

**Christ Lutheran Church Women
Annual Meeting January 22, 2023
We Are Thankful and Want to Celebrate with You!**

Please join us on January 22, 2023 for our annual CLCW meeting and luncheon so that we can share the blessings for which we are thankful, and you are among them! We will meet in the Opsal Room after 10:30 am worship and will be serving delicious soups, sandwiches and desserts at widely spaced tables.

One of our greatest blessings this year was being able to once again hold our Trash and Treasure Sale. Thanks to all the donations and helping hands from many of you, we raised more than \$11,500! Those funds help support the budget by which CLCW can then bless others locally and around the world. We look forward to sharing information about the ministries CLCW has contributed to at the annual meeting. Our donations this year included but were not limited to funding school kits for underserved children, supporting sustainable farming, providing opportunities for educating young women and recent donations of Christmas gifts and gift cards for over 70 local children. . . and so much more!

You will be receiving an invitation to the annual meeting in the mail, along with a ballot to vote for board members in the event you will not be attending the meeting. If you are not attending the meeting, we ask that ballots be returned to the church office by January 19.

While only Christ Lutheran Church members may vote on the board members, all interested women are encouraged to attend the annual meeting, so please help us to extend the invitation to others.

With many thanks, Christ Lutheran Church Women

A New Church Directory is Published! We updated our printed church directory with the most current data we have in the church office. If you would like a copy, please contact the church office at 201-391-4224 or clc4u2@verizon.net.

A Financial Update: At the end of November, giving compared to 2021 was down 0.8%. Total income was \$206,152, and expenses were \$236,100. Our loss through November was \$29,948, which is \$6,000 worse than last year but \$5700 better than budget. We also did not use any restricted funds to cover our current operating expenses. By pooling our contributions together, we continue to do the work of Christ in our neighborhood. A complete 2022 review will be available in our annual report that will be available later in January. Thank you!

Ricci Trust Update Earlier this year, the trustees of the Ricci Foundation (established by Anna and Dominick Ricci when Dominick died) began to adjust some of their practices in regards to the gifts they typically give to CLC and four other beneficiaries every year. At the October, 2022 church council meeting, a lawyer was hired to engage with the trustees. Throughout November and December, our lawyer has been in active conversations with the trustees. As of December 26, we feel these conversations have been fruitful, but no agreement has been reached. We will continue to advocate for the position we believe is visible in Dominick Ricci's will so that we can be proper stewards of his legacy. It is possible a more thorough update will be available during our annual meeting. Please feel free to speak to any council member or Pastor Marc if you have any questions.

The Care Committee's mission is to care for Christ Lutheran Church and the surrounding community. We'll meet again Tuesday, January 10th at 10:00 am.

Knit One Crochet Too: Do you wannabe knitting or crocheting? Join us at CLC on 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 are welcome! Want to try something different, we have looms. Socialization is the name of the game. Come, have fun! See you on January 24 at 10:00 am.

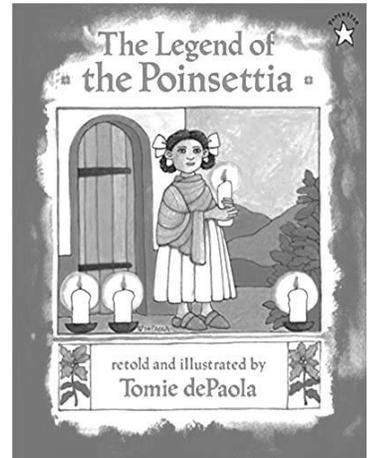
WORSHIP AND MORE!

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 on Facebook (www.facebook.com/clc4u/live), YouTube (www.youtube.com/@clc4u), and our website (www.clc4u.com).

Listen in via Conference Call, dialing 646-558-8656. For 9:00 am worship, enter meeting id: 843 2757 3572 and then #. For 10:30 am worship, enter meeting id: 827 672 730 and then #. For both worships, hit # to ignore participant id and enter password 195901.

You may also request a copy of the bulletin and sermon mailed to your home! Six households worship this way every week. Call the church office, and we will be happy to put you on our regular weekly mailing list.

13th Annual Freedom Shabbat: Congregation B'nai Israel invites people of all beliefs and backgrounds to join them for a meaningful and inclusive evening of prayer, song, learning, and fellowship at their annual event on Friday, January 13, at 7:30 pm. Together we will honor the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel with traditional Shabbat prayers, ecumenical readings, music, and participation by visiting clergy from a variety of faith traditions (including Pastor Marc). Learn more at www.bisrael.com and join at 53 Palisade Ave, Emerson.



The Legend of the Poinsettia On Christmas Day, Pastor Marc read this children's book to share one of the reasons why we decorate the altar during Christmas time with Poinsettias. The synopsis is as follows:

At Christmastime, the flower blooms and flourishes, the quite exquisite red stars lighting up the countryside. This Mexican legend tells how the poinsettia came to be, through a little girl's unselfish gift to the Christ Child. Beloved Newbery honor-winning author and Caldecott honor-winning illustrator Tomie dePaola has embraced the legend using his own special feeling for Christmas. His glorious paintings capture not only the brilliant colors of Mexico and its art, but also the excitement of the children preparing for Christmas and the hope of Lucida, who comes to see what makes a gift truly beautiful.

Check it out at your library. It's a story that is good any time of year!

KIDS AND ADULTS: EDUCATION AND MORE!

Sunday School meets January 8 and January 22! We're looking forward to a great 2023! We will meet twice this month after the 9:00 am worship and begin in the sanctuary before moving to either a group activity or the age appropriate classes.

Bible Study on Paul's Letter to the Romans will continue, reading through Paul's letter to the Romans through the month of January. We meet on Wednesdays at 11:00 am. We do ask you to read a few chapters before we meet and those change depending on how much we discuss during a session. Let Pastor Marc (pastor-marc@clc4u.com) know if you plan to be there and he will inform you of what chapters to read.

2023						2023
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 NAME OF JESUS <u>Streaming Only</u> <u>Worship with</u> <u>Communion</u> 10:00 am	2	3	4 Worship Committee Meets 10:00 am Bible Study 11 am	5 Messenger Mailing	6 EPIPHANY	7
8 BAPTISM OF OUR LORD <u>Streaming and</u> <u>Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship with</u> <u>Communion</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am Sunday School 9:50 am	9	10 Care Committee Meeting 10:00 am	11 Bible Study 11 am	12	13 Freedom Shabbat 7:30 pm	14
15 EPIPHANY 2 <u>Streaming and</u> <u>Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship with</u> <u>Communion</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am	16 MLK Jr. Day Finance Committee Meeting 8:00 pm	17	18 Bible Study 11 am	19	20	21
22 EPIPHANY 3 <u>Streaming and</u> <u>Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship with</u> <u>Communion</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am Sunday School 9:50 am CLCW Meeting 11:30 am	23	24 Knit 1, Crochet Too! 10:00 am	25 Bible Study 11 am	26 Council Meeting 7:30 pm	27	28
29 EPIPHANY 4 <u>Streaming and</u> <u>Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship with</u> <u>Communion</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am with Holy Baptism	30	31				

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