

The Messenger

June 2023



The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church
Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey
An ELCA Congregation
The Church: Proudly Proclaiming Christ since A.D. 3

PASTOR'S NOTE

On May 18, members of the Finance Committee, Property Committee and Church Council met to think about our future. We were, for the first time since COVID, taking a strategic inventory of our finances, the current needs of our building and our mission as followers of Jesus Christ. The meeting wasn't filled with fear, anxiety or worry. We were, instead, noticing the abundance God has given us and how we, together, can be the faithful people God calls us to be.

The meeting began with prayer and study. We read the story of what the early church was doing in the book of Acts after Pentecost had come. We noticed the ever expanding kingdom of God and how these initial followers of Jesus were content with "enough." They gathered for prayer and fellowship. They took care of each other's needs. They proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ to all. And they trusted that Jesus was, and would always be, with them.

After spending time in God's story, we looked at our personal stories too. We remembered what it was like to live with scarcity and with abundance. We admitted how difficult it is to know when we have "enough." We thought about all those who introduced us to Jesus and the tremendous opportunities we have had to share Jesus with others too. And we wondered how our mission, our lives and our church have lived into being the people God knows we can be.

From there, we took a look at our property. One of the big projects we are currently saving up for includes replacing our entire parking lot. Some additional projects include refreshing the brass piping in the furnace room, replacing windows in Opsal and Sonshine rooms, replacing the floor in the Opsal kitchen, replacing panels on different parts of the building, some tree work, as well as making our fellowship hall more hospitable by renovating the men's bathroom. The list was long but projected to be less expensive than the big projects we have already done (such as replacing the roofs and the boilers). You have done an amazing job keeping the facility accessible, welcoming and available to those who need to experience God's love. And our work on the property is to keep that hospitality going into the future.

After the property, we moved to our finances. We continue to run a deficit but make up for it through generous gifts from the Ricci Foundation. We reflected on our mission as a community in Woodcliff Lake and what would we need, as a congregation, to feel less anxious about money. We want to see if we can make our own personal experiences of money not interfere with being the body of Christ in Northern New Jersey. We didn't talk about raising money but rather how the congregation will keep living out the kingdom of God. Initial ideas - or financial targets - included increasing our reserve for operating deficits to 3x the average of our last 3 years of losses (which would be approximately \$60,000), keep our Emergency Fund at \$30,000, and re-building our Asset Replacement Fund by setting aside \$5,000 into it every year (with a cap of \$25,000). This led us to ponder our current investments and "why" we have the money that we do. Much of our investments are from the sale (25 years ago) of the parsonage. At the time, pastors wanted to own their own home to build equity for themselves. But with the price of housing in our area so high, future clergy would be looking for churches in our area with their own parsonages. Should we consider re-thinking how we use and engage with our investments? How does our Special Gifts charter tie into our current reality as a congregation? A church's budget is one way a church expresses its values, and these questions invite us to think about our own. The group didn't try to come up with any answers. Instead, we raised them up so that, with the Spirit, we can discern who God is calling us to be.

I am thankful God has brought us to a point where we can think about our future. This was a different kind of process that wasn't focused on solving an immediate financial need or issue with the property. It was about taking a breath, celebrating where we are at as a church, and leaning into the God who will always be with us. As Lutheran Christians, we can embrace our Reformation heritage by not being afraid to change. We are always reforming: intentionally holding onto what is life-giving from our past but not afraid to see the new thing God is already bringing to life in our community. We, in faith, will journey with Jesus so that our neighbors know that God's love is lived out at Christ Lutheran Church. We, together, will honor our past, live in the present, and move into a future that Jesus promises to carry us through.

Blessed to be the church with you, Pastor Marc.

Much of our conversation was rooted in CLC's mission statement which we have reprinted on the next page.

Our Mission Is to Be People of God:

- To worship God, study God's Word and communicate the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ.
 - To provide facilities and a pastor so people may gather for spiritual growth, worship, education, fellowship and sharing of joys and concerns.
 - To offer hospitality and care to all in our congregation, our community and world.
- Every member, young and old, is an integral part of the body of Christ. Each one has time, abilities and treasure to offer in order that God's will may be accomplished.



TRASH AND TREASURE: WHAT A SALE – \$11,100!

Christ Lutheran Women's Group is grateful to God and all who helped make our Trash and Treasure Sale a success which we measure in terms of fellowship shared by workers who lovingly turned trash into treasures, success that comes in hospitality shown to old and new neighbors who come to shop, and success that goes out as blessings to others through ministries funded by proceeds from the sale. Our sale raised over \$11,000 this year, and we even had items left over that we donated to groups to use for their own ministries. Many thanks are extended to all our volunteers, including those who donated food to feed our workers. We couldn't have done it without many hands, and for that we are all truly blessed!

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." – Colossians 3:17

Save the Date for Christ Lutheran Church's Next Trash/Treasure Sale!
Saturday, May 4, 2024—8:00am—Noon + 1:00pm—4:00pm

2023 NEW JERSEY SYNOD ASSEMBLY RECAP

On Saturday, May 13, 2023, close to 400 people from across the synod gathered at Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton for a day of worship, learning, fellowship and inspiration. The agenda was crafted around the 4 parts of our Lutheran worship: gather, word, meal and sending. Pastor Marc and Carla Hoenigmann joined with all the other voting members and visitors with a spirit of joy! Together we dwelled with the Holy Spirit in hope and love!

Several elections took place. The following people were elected to serve in leadership positions in the synod: Arundel Clarke (Vice-President), The Rev. Blake Scalet (Secretary), The Rev. Jose Escalara, The Rev. Pamela Werner, The Rev. Miles Hopgood, Patricia Espejo, The Rev. Lisa Holliday, Robert Bowden, and Grant Lefchak were elected to serve on the Synod Council.

There was one resolution adopted unanimously during the assembly. The synod is designated as a Stigma-Free Zone in regard to mental illness. Congregations are encouraged to do the same!

A 2024 Spending plan was also unanimously adopted.

During the assembly, a freewill offering designated for Lutheran Disaster Response was taken. We raised \$3,676.00!

The Rev. Dr. Christa Compton led the assembly in a reading of God's Holy Darkness followed by table discussions on bias and discrimination in our language. The Rev. Amy Reumann, Senior Director of Witness in Society for the ELCA, served as our churchwide representative. Pastor Reumann highlighted the work we do together across the whole church and thanked the NJ Synod for its part in it. The NJ Synod's "Go and...!" evangelism team shared stories and ideas for congregations to engage their communities with God's love in Jesus Christ. And displays from mission teams and ministry partners filled the West Gallery offering information and opportunities to become involved.

The livestream of our whole day is on the Synod website. The NJ Synod Assembly 2024 is scheduled for Saturday, May 11, 2024 at Grounds for Sculpture.

GROWING IN GENEROSITY

Feeding Your Neighbors One Vegetable at a Time— The Genesis Garden

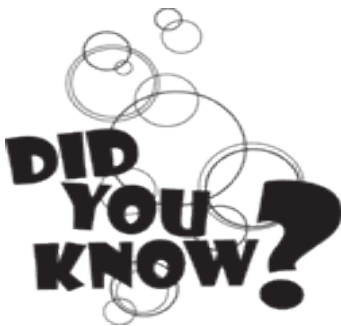


Can you believe that it's time for another season of the Genesis Garden? After raising over 1300 lbs. of produce last year (which was an amazing feat considering a groundhog lived inside the garden for two weeks), we are hoping to do even better this year. The produce we raise is donated to the Tri-Boro Food Pantry in Park Ridge.

The Genesis Garden team is now looking for volunteers who can help make this spring/summer/early fall project happen. We typically meet once a week to plant (on Wednesdays), pick and tend the garden. Our two-day planting will take place Tuesday, June 6 and Wednesday, June 7, 5:30 pm. We will then move to meeting weekly on Wednesday nights at 5:30 pm as well. Make sure you get on our Genesis Garden volunteer list by contacting Tom Kearns at tkearnsnj@gmail.com for more information or to sign-up.



COMMUNITY NEWS



Soccer Shots Bergen County West, a soccer program helping kids 2 through 5 learn new character words, skills, and have fun will be using our field on Saturday afternoons through the early part of June. We are glad to work with them in this life-giving way.

Lakeside Choraliers BROADWAY: Then & Now! Join the Choraliers on Sunday, June 4, at 3:00 pm for a special concert! It will take place at First Congregational Church in Park Ridge (131 Pascack Road).

Ride Connect Program: A Bergen County Age-Friendly Initiative: The “Ride Connect” program is designed to simplify the process by which seniors request transportation when calling Bergen County Transportation. “Ride Connect” provides Bergen County residents, aged 60 and over, a one-stop travel information and trip-planning service provided by a Mobility Manager to help seniors find information on available transportation options to senior centers, medical appointments, shopping, etc. The process is simple. The Community Transportation operators work with the Mobility Manager to help seniors connect with the most accessible, reliable, and affordable option for their transportation needs. Options include County shuttles, local town buses, EZ Ride, NJ Transit, AccessLink (if eligible) and more. To request this service, call the Bergen County Division of Community Transportation Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, at (201) 368-5955. And if you use this service, let Nancy Ulanday know how it went! She’s collecting feedback from community members to deliver to the County.



From the NJ Synod: Check fraud linked to mail theft has surged across the country, according to a recent alert to banks from the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, part of the Treasury Department. Should you avoid mailing checks? Yes! It is recommended we all use electronic payment methods instead of mailing checks; use Bill Pay or automatic debit (ACH) to make payments. Thieves are targeting mailboxes. If you must mail a check, it’s best to walk into a post office and drop it in the lobby mail slot or hand it to a postal worker. If you have to use a blue USPS mailbox, drop in the check before the day’s last scheduled pickup so it doesn’t sit in the box overnight. Don’t put checks in your home or church mailbox for pickup and raise the little flag to alert carriers; this signals to potential thieves that there’s something inside.

YOUR CHURCH COMMITTEE UPDATES

Meals on Wheels North Jersey: After several conversations, we’re moving forward with Meals on Wheels using our building starting in early July. You will see their van in our parking lot when you drive by, and their office staff will be in the building Monday-Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. We are looking forward to our partnership as we support each other’s mission to feed all our neighbors!

Ricci Foundation Update: At press time, we do not know when the 2022 distribution that is earmarked for spring will be sent out. We will provide news to you as soon as it becomes available.

An Update from the Finance Committee: At the end of April our total income was \$76,263, and our expenses were around \$95,000. At this time of year, we budgeted for a deficit close to \$25,000 but are currently coming in around \$19,000. Financial gifts to the congregation dropped a bit during April, but we are still up 3.4% compared to last year. We are not currently utilizing any temporarily restricted funds to fund our operations. As we move into the summer months, please consider making your gift to the church electronically! Almost 2/3rds of our monthly gifts come from families who utilize the feature. It's a great way to make sure your offering arrives at the church safe and sound. You can learn more by visiting www.clc4u.com/give.

Thank you for supporting your faith community!

The Care Committee's mission is to care for Christ Lutheran Church and the surrounding community. Learn more about the committee by attending our final meeting of the programming year on June 13 at 10:00 am. We'll be visiting a local restaurant afterwards to celebrate how God invites us to care for one another all year long.

Crumb Cake and Iced Tea Anyone? Sounds good? But, there's a catch. During Covid, drawers and closets were cleaned out, and CLC received lots of photos—with no dates, names or events. If a group could get together and sort them by decade—not year—it would be great. Contact Dot Dohrmann, and we can set a time most convenient to all.

KIDS AND ADULTS: EDUCATION

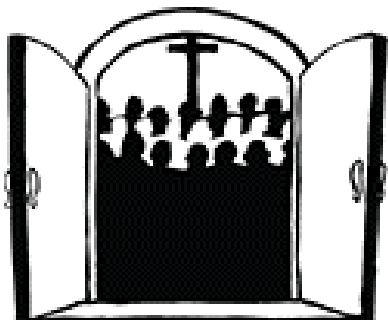
Sunday School: Thank you! A big thanks to Kristine and Jenn for putting together a very fun year of Sunday School! We wrapped up the season on May 21. It was a blessing to watch these amazing kids grow in faith, hope and love.



Bible Study—Paul's Letters and Beyond! We are continuing our journey through letter and sermon portion of Christian Scriptures! We meet 11:00 am most Wednesdays, but check church calendar/weekly newsletter. Let Pastor Marc (pastormarc@clc4u.com) know if you plan to come, and he will inform you on what we're reading.

WORSHIP WITH US!

Sunday Worship Opportunities:



- 1) Our regularly scheduled in-person worship takes place at 9:00 am and 10:30 am (or one worship at 10:00 am starting June 18). Worship materials are available on a table in the narthex.
- 2) Each worship service will be streamed on: Facebook (www.facebook.com/clc4u/live), YouTube (www.youtube.com/@clc4u), 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 (or 10:00 am worship starting June 18th) via Conference Call: dial 646- 558-8656, enter meeting id: 827 672 730 and then #. Hit # to ignore participant id and enter password 195901.
- 5) You can also request a copy of the bulletin and sermon mailed to your home! Call the church office, and we'll be happy to put you on our regular weekly mailing list.

Summer Schedule Returns June 18: Starting Sunday, June 18, there will be one worship service each Sunday at 10:00 am. The worship will be in-person, livestreamed and via conference call. The call-in information for that worship will match our regular 10:30 am worship. We plan to keep this schedule through the middle of September.

Pop Songs at 9:00 am on June 4: Let's kick off June with something new at 9:00 am worship! David Scance will be adding some pop songs with religious and spiritual vibes for our regular worship on that day.

Celebrating Graduates June 18 at 10:00 am: We will be honoring all graduates during worship. We are proud of you and want to celebrate your hard work. We will have a special blessing for you as you take your next steps in life. If you have a graduate this year, send Pastor Marc (pastormarc@clc4u.com) two or three pictures and let us know what their next steps will be!

Summer Lemonade and Coffee after Worship: Starting June 18, you're invited to sponsor a coffee hour after worship! Bring a small treat and set up the coffee machine and some lemonade as we check-in with each other after our busy summer weeks. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex, or sign up by calling the church office (201-391-4224). On Sundays when no one volunteers to host we will skip coffee hour on that day.

Calling all Our Four-footed, Furry, Fuzzy, Scaly and Feathery Friends! Come to church June 25 (bring your owners) for Blessing of the Animals at 10:00 am. The special blessing will be included in our regularly scheduled worship service. As of press-time, we're still working on where the worship will take place (either in Opal or in the Sanctuary). More information about the location will be shared during worship, on social media and in our weekly e-letter. We ask that your animal stay in your cage or on a leash while in worship. If you can't make it, send your owner/roommate in with a picture on their phone instead. We look forward to celebrating Jesus with you!

A June Wedding and You are Invited! Doug and Lisset will be getting married at CLC on Sunday, June 25 at 3:30 pm. You are invited to attend this special event. It will take place in our air-conditioned sanctuary.

Ushers: We have been blessed with several visitors here at church over the last few months. In the spirit of being a welcoming community, we're relaunching our usher program. Volunteers will sign up to pass out bulletins and help coordinate communion at the rail. A sign-up sheet is located in the narthex (church lobby). If you've never done it before, we'll make sure you're trained before you do! Contact Pastor Marc (pastormarc@clc4u.com) if you have any questions.

Slight Change to Communion at CLC: Over the last few months, the altar guild noticed a drop in people using the individual communion cups and wafers for communion in the sanctuary. We will be discontinuing the process starting in June. If you would like to have the individual communion cups/wafers to commune in the pews, please contact Pastor Marc. We're happy to do so if there is a need!

CAMP NEWS

Camp Koinonia Dedication Day 2.0! We'll celebrate the 60-year commitment between Koinonia and congregations in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania on Saturday, June 10th! Pastors, Bishops (From Northwest Penn, Metropolitan New York and Upstate New York), Board Members (former and current) and congregants will re-dedicate Koinonia and recommit to Koinonia for our NEXT 60 years of partnership. On June 4, 1964 hundreds of enthusiastic people attended a ceremony in the Jubilee Meadow to dedicate the site and its ministry. At this event, we will be enthusiastic again, enjoying a Diamond Jubilee Dedication Service in the Chapel in the Pines followed by a Festival Luncheon in the Rafters. A day not to be missed!

**June
2023**



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 <u>Streaming/Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship</u> 9:00 am and 10:30 am Chancel Choir and Holy Communion	5	6	7 Worship Committee Meeting 10:00 am Bible Study 11:00 am Genesis Garden Night 5:30 pm	8	9	10
11 <u>Streaming/Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship</u> 9:00 am With Pop Songs 10:30 am Holy Communion	12 Finance Committee Meeting 8:00 pm	13 Care Committee Meeting 10:00 am	14 Bible Study 11:00 am Genesis Garden Night 5:30 pm	15	16 Church Council Meeting 7:30 pm	17
18 <u>Streaming/Sanctuary</u> <u>One Summer</u> <u>Worship Service</u> <u>Begins</u> 10:00 am Holy Communion	19	20 Knit One Crochet Too! 10:00 am	21 Bible Study 11:00 am Genesis Garden Night 5:30 pm	22	23	24
25 <u>Streaming/Sanctuary</u> <u>Worship</u> 10:00 am Holy Communion Blessing of the Animals	26	27	28 Bible Study 11:00 am Genesis Garden Night 5:30 pm	29	30	

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Director of Music: Argine Safari
Contemporary Musician: David Scance
Administrative Assistant: Doris Crouse