

# *The Messenger*

*June 2026*



**The Monthly Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church  
32 Pascack Road  
Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey**

The Rev. Marc A. Stutzel, Pastor  
Argine Safari, Director of Music  
David Scance, Contemporary Musician  
Evie Salerno, Parish Administrator  
An ELCA Congregation  
Summer Sundays at 10:00 am  
201-391-4224 [office@clc4u.com](mailto:office@clc4u.com)

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## PASTOR'S NOTE

On May 30th, the New Jersey Synod held their annual Synod Assembly. Pastors, deacons, and leaders from 143 different congregations gathered at a hotel in Somerset to be the church together. One of the blessings that come with living in New Jersey is how we're connected to different kinds of communities. Not every church is living a suburban lifestyle. We exist alongside communities who serve farmers, recent immigrants, and those living in high rises. Some churches are celebrating their third year as an organized faith community while others have been around over 250 years. We are connected to churches who conduct services in a variety of languages, those who meet in Home Depot parking lots, and churches adapting to a changing neighborhood. Some churches are mourning their smaller size while others are growing in leaps and bounds. And while we all are dealing with rising costs, smaller budgets, and less volunteers, there is grace knowing our sharing the good news of Jesus Christ doesn't depend only on us. The churches at the Synod Assembly believe faith matters. And we have a mutual commitment to showing others how God is for them too.

During the assembly, we passed a resolution encouraging communities to engage in a conversation challenging Christian Nationalism. The assembly also asked our denomination to craft a faithful social statement on Artificial Intelligence. Those gathered approved a 2027 budget for the synod increasing support for 12 congregations under development and to start a new one. The assembly took time to recognize the work of Luann Barnes who served as the executive assistant to the bishop for nearly 25 years. She worked with three different bishops and was the first person people connected with when they called the office. Luann's impact at CLC was subtle but when an issue arose and the Bishop needed to be involved, it was Luann who made sure the Bishop was exactly where she needed to be.

We often act as if this faith thing relies only on us. We assume our walk with Jesus is the same kind of walk everyone is supposed to have. What I love about the Synod Assembly is the reminder God reaches out to each of us exactly as we need. God trusts each of us can be the faithful stewards of the communities God has called us to. Even on those days when we feel like we're the only ones at church, we're connected to so many people faithfully living God's love out loud. And I'm so grateful we are all part of a wonderful, vibrant, and grace filled community of Lutherans stretching from Cape May all the way to northern Bergen County.

— Pastor Marc

## **TRASH AND TREASURE SALE: GETS BETTER EVERY YEAR!!**

Our church and local community helped us to do it again in even bigger and better ways than we expected! Yes, we raised a lot of money to help us serve the world's needs, but we were equally amazed at the number of people who showed up to lend a hand, to prepare and work the day of the sale, provide food for workers... and of course to SHOP!!

Our doors opened at 8 am to the typical long waiting line to get in, but by mid-morning, we still had a waiting line! The word is surely out that not only do we have a well-run sale by a friendly congregation, but that the proceeds help fill needs around the world. We are so grateful that new people have joined to help us each year. It not only makes the work lighter, but it gives us a chance to get to know each other better which is where the fun and fellowship is. We are also grateful that each year we find new groups to donate our left-overs to so that very little ends up in a land-fill, allowing us to be the mindful stewards of our Earth which God calls us to be.

There are so many people to thank...

- All the people who set-up, sorted, cleaned (and cleaned!) during the sale, worked day of sale, provided food for workers, and broke everything down and packed up after the sale
- Thrivent for helping with expenses
- The Buldo Company, who once again donated the large dumpster so we had a place to toss out the unsaleable items
- The Breast Center who picked up most of our left-overs to resell and raise \$ for Breast Cancer Research and Support
- The Old North Church in Dumont who also took some items to resell at their own monthly thrift ministry
- New Hope Inc, in Westwood who graciously accepted items for single moms and their babies

With your help, this year we raised over \$17,500 (and still counting!). A small portion from what is raised will be designated for capital improvements at our church, including helping to fund the renovation of the former Youth room, update the church's kitchen and accessible bathroom. The majority of the money raised will go to outside organizations including:

- ELCA Disaster Relief
- Center for Food Action
- ELCA World Hunger Appeal
- Lutheran World Relief
- Triboro Food Pantry
- Camp Koinonia
- Meals on Wheels North Jersey
- ELCA Good gifts program-providing necessary items for people in underdeveloped countries to help them become self sufficient.

We are so thankful for God's blessings of our volunteers and shoppers. We could not have done it without you! Thank you again for all your donations and your help!

Please consider attending Christ Lutheran Church Women's monthly meeting where we discuss distribution of benevolences from proceeds of the sale, and suggestions for additional outreach activities throughout the year. **Our next meeting is on June 15th at 11 am in the Sunshine Room.**

Janet Post , Christ Lutheran Church Women

## **SAVE THE DATE FOR 2027 TRASH AND TREASURE SALE**

**SATURDAY, MAY 1ST, 2027**

**8 AM - 12 NOON, 1 PM - 4 PM**



*Photo by Joseph McCallister*

## GROWING IN GENEROSITY

**Feeding Your Neighbors One Tomato at a Time:** Our garden is in the ground! Over 450 plants (including 82 peppers, 98 tomatoes, 88 egg plants, 44 zucchinis, 26 yellow squash, 32 onions, 50 cucumbers, 30 green beans, and more) are growing comfortably in the space between the Opsal Hall and Church Offices. A big shoutout to our garden team who turned over the soil, put down hundreds of feet of weed barrier fabric, dug hundreds of holes, and installed an updated watering system. Once the plants grow a little bit more, we'll begin our weekly work nights. To receive the most up to date news about our garden, contact the church office ([office@clc4u.com](mailto:office@clc4u.com)) to get on our garden-specific email list. Last year, 1,750 lbs of fresh produce from our garden went to the Tri-Boro Food Pantry in Park Ridge. Let's see how many of our neighbors we can feed this year!



### THRIVENT FINANCIAL AT CLC

Our friends at Thrivent Financial will be visiting CLC twice in June. **On Sunday, June 7th, they'll be hosting a coffee hour after church.** Cooper will share a bit of the work Thrivent does as well as share about a dinner we're hosting at CLC in just two weeks.

**thrivent**<sup>®</sup>

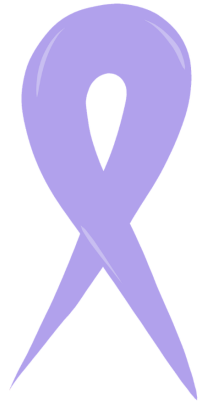
**On June 15th at 6:30 pm,** Thrivent is inviting you to be more intentional with your financial planning. This educational seminar will talk about estate planning, charitable giving opportunities and strategies, and how the financial landscape has changed with recent legislation. No products will be spoken about or sold at the event. Thrivent will also be supply dinner. RSVP by reaching out to the church office ([office@clc4u.com](mailto:office@clc4u.com) or 201-391-4224.)

### THE ANNA AND DOMINICK RICCI ROOM

A special thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts about renaming the former Youth Room. The church council at their May meeting officially renamed the youth room as "The Anna and Dominick Ricci Room" (aka the Ricci Room).

## ALZHEIMER'S EDUCATIONAL EVENTS AND SUPPORT

**The Caregiver Coffee Break - A Support Group:** Support groups provide a safe, confidential environment, and a community for both current & previous care givers, and those who have suffered the loss of loved ones or are living with Alzheimer's. **We'll meet on Saturday, June 13th from 10 am - 12 noon** in the Sonshine/library. Let's provide one another a chance to educate, inform, and help one another through the struggles and challenges we face. Coffee, tea, cookies and muffins will be provided. RSVP by contacting the church office (201-391-4224) or [office@clc4u.com](mailto:office@clc4u.com).



**Next Educational Event - Living with Alzheimer's Series:** Two-thirds of Americans have at least one major risk factor for dementia. Join us as we explore the latest research and how building brain-healthy habits can help you live well now while supporting your memory and thinking for the future. Community Educator Terry Ciulla will lead our conversation. Marymae Henley (MA, CALA, LPC, CDP) from The Clinical Research Center of NJ (Ridgewood Office) will be our guest speaker. The Clinical Research Center provides clinical trials aiming to provide diagnostic, treatment, and supportive resources to people affected by Alzheimer's disease.

### KIDS AND ADULTS: EDUCATION AND MORE!

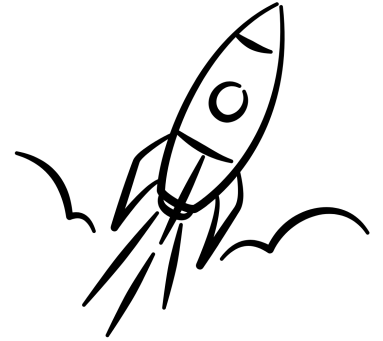
**Bible Study:** Our Wednesday Bible Study is exploring the gospel according to John. We'll meet on June 3rd, 17th, and 24th at 11 am. Let Pastor Marc ([pastormarc@clc4u.com](mailto:pastormarc@clc4u.com)) know if you plan to attend so he can inform you what the readings will be.

**Sunday School and Confirmation returns in the Fall:** If your young person is interested in learning how to make their faith their own, please reach out to Pastor Marc. Our Confirmation program runs two years for kids in 7th grade and up. Sunday School is for pre-k through 6th grade.

**Bulletin Art Project for Kids:** We had a lot of fun showcasing the artistic skills of some of our younger disciples in our bulletins a few months ago. If you're interested in making art for our bulletins, please speak to Pastor Marc. We can use art made for school, home, or scribbled during worship itself.

**Interested in a Summer Book Club:** We know several of you love to read and regularly participate in book clubs. Would you like to read a short sci-fi book and discuss it with Pastor Marc? If interested, please reach out and we'll schedule a time to meet. The book he interested in is "The Man" by Ray Bradbury. Below is a spoiler free introduction of the book by Philip Jenkins.

*Ray Bradbury's "The Man" tells the story of a spaceship exploring unknown realms, boldly going in order to make first contact with alien races and civilizations. By any standard, such a connection would be an exciting and even explosive moment for any race, any people. But in the instance of this one planet, nobody seems terribly concerned, because they have better things to do. Fortuitously or otherwise, the spaceship from Earth has arrived at the time when a mysterious stranger has also arrived at that same planet, preaching amazing doctrines and performing miracles. By whatever name you might want to call him, he is Christ, the Messiah, and it is that planet's turn to receive him. The Man is faithfully following his promise to tend to the other sheep he has, that are not of his fold – or indeed, of this planet. Why would the aliens bother to divert their attention to anything as trivial as these Earth people in their silvery spaceship?*



If sci-fi isn't your thing but you'd like to discuss how faith shows up in the books we read, let Pastor Marc know.

## **WORSHIP WITH YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY!**

**One Worship at 10:00 AM - Summer Schedule:** We are now in our summer worship schedule. We gather in the sanctuary or online on Sundays at 10 am. During the month of June, David Scance and Argine Safari will lead worship together when possible.

**Worship in the sanctuary, at home, work, or anywhere else on Sundays via**  
Facebook [www.facebook.com/clc4u/live](https://www.facebook.com/clc4u/live) , YouTube [www.youtube.com/@clc4u](https://www.youtube.com/@clc4u)  
and our website [www.clc4u.com](https://www.clc4u.com)

**Confirmation June 14:** We're excited to officially confirm Minka and Oliver on June 14th! After completing two years of classes with Pastor Marc, we will be affirm the love God shows them everyday. They will be formally welcomed as voting members of the congregation which means they can vote at congregational meetings, serve on council, and more. Please make a plan to be in the building on June 14th to celebrate them!

**Celebrating Graduates June 21 at 10:00 am:** We will honor all graduates during worship in just a few weeks. If you have a graduate this year, send Pastor Marc ([pastormarc@clc4u.com](mailto:pastormarc@clc4u.com)) a picture and let us know what their next steps will be!

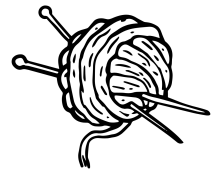
**Summer Lemonade and Coffee after Worship:** Starting June 21st, you're invited to sponsor a coffee hour after worship. Bring a small treat and make a plan to stick around. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex. On Sundays when no one volunteers to host we will skip coffee hour on that day.

**Calling all Our Four-footed, Furry, Fuzzy, Scaly and Feathery Friends!** Come to church June 28th (bring your owners) for our annual Blessing of the Animals at 10:00 am. The special blessing will be included within our regularly scheduled worship service. We ask you (the lovely animal) to please stay in your cage or on a leash while in worship. If you can't make it, send your owner/roommate with a picture of you on their phone instead. We look forward to celebrating Jesus with you!



## YOUR CHURCH COMMITTEE UPDATES

**Knit One Crochet Too:** We meet weekly on Tuesday at 10:00 am in the Sonshine/library room to knit, craft, and chat. All skill levels welcome! Just stop by until 2:30 pm to talk shop and form deeper friendships. Please speak to Debbie Louis and Diane Lintner for more information.



**The Care Committee's** mission is to care for Christ Lutheran Church and the surrounding community. Our next meeting is **June 10th at 11:00 am**. Learn how you can make a faithful difference by participating in our prayer chain, visiting members, cooking a meal, and more. Contact the church office for more info.

**Ricci Foundation:** The taxes for the foundation were due on May 15th. We expect the trustees to reach out to the beneficiaries sometime in June or early July.

**Need to email the church office?** Don't forget to use our new email address - [office@clc4u.com](mailto:office@clc4u.com) rather than the @verizon.net address.

**An Update from the Finance Committee:** At the start of May, our total income was \$86,400, and our expenses were \$93,913. Financial gifts to the congregation are up 2% for the year but we are running about \$1,000 below expectations. Please keep up your pledge during these summer months!

**Online Calendar on our Website:** The online calendar is our master calendar at the church. Check it out ([www.clc4u.com](http://www.clc4u.com)) and contact the office ([office@clc4u.com](mailto:office@clc4u.com)) to get your event on the calendar.

**Property Update:** Our property team had a busy May! The stove in the Opsal Hall kitchen was removed and sold to the Old Tappan Fire Department. Their stove was the exact same model as ours. The fire department removed it from CLC and had it up and running for an event at their firehouse the same night. The AC units in the sanctuary leaking since they were originally installed were also replaced. We're still planning to update the vinyl wallpaper in the Narthex (church lobby) and have begun to update some of the lights throughout the building. If you notice any property issues, please speak to Brian Conboy.

**Need a carbon monoxide detector?** At our last fire inspection, we learned our new CO2 detectors did not meet code. They have been replaced. If you need an updated detector for your home, pick one up in the Narthex.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS, PARTNERS, & NEWS

**First Congregational UCC - the Rev. Dr. Mark Suriano is retiring:** Pastor Mark at First Congregational in Park Ridge is retiring. His last service leading that community will take place on June 14th. Pastor Mark moved into the area shortly after CLC's Pastor Marc arrived. And he has joined us during Interfaith Thanksgiving Services, co-hosted dozens of events, and even served as the President of the Tri-Boro Food Pantry for a number of years. Pastor Mark served First UCC for almost 11 years. We'll miss him and pray he has a wonderful retirement.

**Flag Disposal:** Do you have an old USA flag starting to tear or fray around the edges? Would you like to dispose it properly instead of just throwing it in the garbage? As recently shared in the Pascack Press, Nolan Wendrychowicz of BSA Troop 350 installed two flag retirement boxes in Westwood. One is located in the lobby of the Municipal Complex. The other is located outside the Fire Department. We plan to use these boxes to take care of several old USA flags that were dropped off at CLC during Trash and Treasure.

**Supporting A Congregation In Development:** Every year, 5% of money given to our Special Gifts Fund is sent to a congregation in the New Jersey Synod that is new or under redevelopment. The New Jersey Synod recommended this year's gift to St. Bartholomew in Trenton. St. Bart's continues to make an impact in Trenton by feeding 1,000 people a month through its pantry, offering several English as a Second Language Classes, and operating a blacksmith turning guns into jewelry. Thank you for helping God's work grow throughout New Jersey!

**News from Camp Koinonia:** In the middle of May, Camp Koinonia sent the following letter to member congregations and supporters of the camp. We thought it was important to share with you. During this upcoming leadership transition, Camp Koinonia will remain busy. The summer nature camp for local kids is bursting at the seams and the staff house will be full of college-aged kids leading programs and more. Please keep the camp in your prayers and we'll keep you up-to-date with any information that we have.

*In a May 14, 2026 letter to the Board of Directors of the Martin Luther Camp Corporation, Executive Director Kathleen Ruen announced her resignation from Koinonia effective August 28, 2026. Kathleen will be joining the Metropolitan New York Synod of the ELCA as its next Director of Development - a role that reflects the Synod's faith in Koinonia and that promises to strengthen Koinonia's connection with the Synod.*

*Please join me in expressing our deep gratitude to Kathleen for all that she has done in her years as Executive Director to lead and shepherd the transformation of Koinonia to its current point of flourishing and growth, and in congratulating and praying for Kathleen as she takes on this new challenge in service to our church!*

*The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors is already at work on next steps, which will include:*

- *Developing a transition plan;*
- *Establishing an Executive Director search committee;*
- *Connecting with Lutheran Outdoor Ministries for guidance; and*
- *Communicating clearly and regularly with the entire Koinonia community as to this process.*

*As people of faith, we know and trust that "for everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Seasons of transition present opportunities for progress and positive change, but they also bring uncertainty and a host of accompanying emotions, especially when they involve a community so spiritually transformative, rich in memories, and treasured in our hearts as Koinonia.*

*As we enter and move through this season together, the Board of Directors welcomes your questions, concerns, and feedback.*




**Summer Nights in Woodcliff Lake:** Get ready for another amazing season of music, community, and summer fun at the 2026 Woodcliff Wednesdays Summer Concert Series! Join your friends, family, and neighbors every Wednesday evening at 7 pm throughout the summer at Woodcliff Park. Our town will come alive with great entertainment in a beautiful outdoor setting. Whether you're dancing along to the music, relaxing under the summer sky, or enjoying time with your community, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Bring your lawn chairs, blankets, snacks, and your summer spirit — and make Wednesday nights your favorite night of the week! The series begins on June 24 with Teenage GarageBand Palooza and continues on July 1st with Rob's School of Music.



## **ELCA YOUTH GATHERING: IMAGINE MORE**

Every three years, thousands of high schoolers (those who finished 8th grade through recent 12th grade graduates) and their adult leaders from across the ELCA come together for the ELCA Youth Gathering. It's a movement which faith ignites and reminds us we are part of something bigger than ourselves. Through inspiring speakers, experiential learning and transformative connections, young people experience the church in bold and unforgettable ways.

The gathering will be changing its format in 2027. The goal is to make the experience more intentional, immersive, and transformational. The large in-person gatherings will take place in the morning and evening rather than only at night. Congregations and Youth will invest themselves in multiple immersive experiences where they live out their faith in tangible ways. The sharing of stories through high-energy worship and powerful story telling will be how we end each evening. Next year's gathering will be in Minneapolis from Sunday, June 27th through Friday, July 2nd. If you're interested in attending, please let Pastor Marc know. It's an amazing experience!

2026	June					2026
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1 <u>SCA Fencing</u> 7 pm	2 <u>Knit One, Crochet Too!</u> 10 am	3 <u>Bible Study</u> 11 am  <u>Choir Rehearsal</u> 4:30 pm	4	5	6 
7 <u>Summer Worship</u> 10:00 am  <u>Coffee Hour</u> <i>Sponsored by Thrivent</i>	8	9 <u>Knit One, Crochet Too!</u> 10 am	10 <u>Care Committee</u> 11 am  <u>Choir Rehearsal</u> 4:30 pm	11	12	13 <u>Alzheimer's Support Group</u> 10 am
14 <u>Summer Worship</u> 10:00 am  <i>Confirmation</i>  	15 <u>CLC-Women Board Meeting</u> 11 am  <u>Thrivent Dinner</u> 6:30 pm  <u>SCA Fencing</u> 7 pm  <u>Finance Committee</u> 8 pm	16 <u>Knit One, Crochet Too!</u> 10 am	17 <u>Bible Study</u> 11 am	18 <u>Church Council</u> 7:30 pm	19	20 
21 <u>Summer Worship</u> 10:00 am  <i>Graduates Sunday</i>	22	23 <u>Knit One, Crochet Too!</u> 10 am	24 <u>Bible Study</u> 11 am	25 <u>Alzheimer's Education Event</u> 5:30 pm	26	27
28 <u>Summer Worship</u> 10:00 am  <i>Blessing of the Animals</i>	29 <u>SCA Fencing</u> 7 pm	30 <u>Knit One, Crochet Too!</u> 10 am				4th of July 