

# *The Messenger*

J U N E 2021



The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church  
Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey  
An ELCA Congregation

The Church: Proudly Proclaiming Christ since A.D. 33

# Pastor's COLUMN

I've noticed that, for me, creativity is becoming harder and harder. When I play pretend with my kids, my storyline suggestions suspiciously sound like old sci-fi TV shows they haven't seen yet. When I doodle while

listening to a webinar, I no longer draw dragons and interesting patterns. I find myself just tracing the same old circle over and over again. And, when I look for sermon illustrations, I often wonder if the pile of mulch in my driveway would get repetitive if I used it every week. I know I need to refresh my creative juices, but it's hard to take time to do that. But I wonder if there's a way we can do that together because I'm sure I'm not the only one who needs to refresh their creativity. Rev. Kirk Byron Jones, pastor of Zion Baptist Church in Lynn, Massachusetts, recently reminded me that our very first picture of God is filled with creativity: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). We meet God while God is busy creating a brand new thing. And God doesn't stop there. God continues to create, making new things and making people brand new. In baptism, we are given new life – created in a brand new way for this world God loves. This new purpose allows us to participate in God's creative work in the world. As Rev. Jones writes, *"We are all expressions of a Spirit of creativity in whom freedom and joy have their playful way. Creativity is not just what God does. Creativity is who God is. Therefore, the power to create is in us all. Each of us is not just a precious creation of God; we are powerful creators with God. We have holy authorization to use our sacred power to create in every area of our lives: sculpting new ideas, framing new attitudes, and building new relationships."* In other words, we get to be as creative as God because we are part of the body of Christ.

So starting this June, we're going to get creative. Each week, we'll spend time in worship nourishing our creative juices. As we move into a new stage of this pandemic, we have an opportunity to let the Spirit's creativity shape us into the community God wants us to be. And when we trust in God's creative act, we can trust that we are part of that new creation too.

See ya in church – either online, over the phone or in-person.

Pastor Marc





Worshiping at Christ Lutheran: There are three ways to worship at Christ Lutheran Church on Sunday mornings:

- 1) Worship in the sanctuary, 10:00 am:** Please wear your mask and refrain from greeting one another in the narthex (church lobby). Special markers on the pews will show you how to sit six feet distant from those around you. Worship materials will be available on a table in the narthex: wine or grape juice and a brown paper bag with a bulletin and wafer.
- 2) Worship on Facebook, 10:00 am,** visit <https://www.facebook.com/clc4u/live>
- 3) Listen to worship** via Conference Call: dial 646-558-8656, enter meeting id: 827 672 730 and then #. Hit # to ignore participant id and then enter the password 195901.

**We Need You!** If you are available to be an usher or service coordinator during our summer schedule, let Doris Crouse in the church office know.

**A Note About Live-Streaming:** We are currently going through options to see what equipment will work best in our space. Until live-streaming is in place, Pastor Marc will continue to create and post a worship video on Facebook and YouTube. We have a long history of making worship accessible, and we will continue to do that.

**Celebrating All Graduates:** We're honoring all graduates, Sunday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am during worship. We're proud of you and want to celebrate your hard work. We'll 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](mailto:pastormarc@clc4u.com)) three or four pictures of them from infant to today. We'll include them in a special slideshow that we'll show at worship.

**Calling all Our Four-footed Friends:** Come to church on June 27<sup>th</sup> (bring your owners) for the Blessing of the Animals during the worship service held outdoors in our main parking lot at 10:00 am. Pets should be in a cage or on a leash and will receive a special blessing. If your pet can't make it, bring a photo of them instead. Treats for our furry friends will be available after the service.

**Mid-Week Worship - What's in a Creed?** This midweek online worship series is digging deep into the Apostles' Creed. Every word in the creed has meaning for our life of faith. During June, we'll continue our look at Jesus: his past, present, and our future with him. These 30 minute mid-week worship evenings will include confession, prayer, music and communion. They'll premier on Facebook at 7:00 pm and be available on YouTube throughout the day.

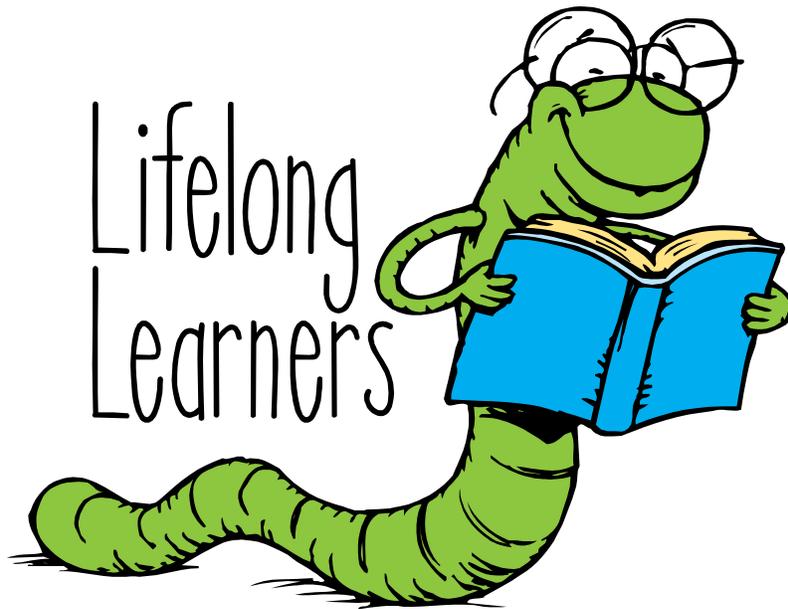
**Flowers for Our Altar:** Now that we're back to worshipping indoors, we would love fresh flowers to decorate the altar. You can sponsor two bouquets, dedicated to whomever you want, take one home or have them both delivered to someone who needs to know their faith community is thinking of them. The flowers cost \$50.00. You can check out the flower guide in the church lobby (narthex). Sign up today and you will be contacted. Check with the church office for more information.



### ***COVID Update***

New cases continue to drop in our area and are so low that cases in our towns are no longer being reported on a weekly basis. This change happened because you got your shot, wore your mask and kept your distance. Vaccines are now being distributed at local pharmacies and stores such as Target and Costco. If you need help to schedule your appointment, contact Kate Stutzel ([kate.stutzel@gmail.com](mailto:kate.stutzel@gmail.com)) or the church office.

In late May, the State of New Jersey lifted their indoor mask mandate and social distancing requirement. Unvaccinated individuals are still in danger of contracting COVID-19 if they do not wear a mask or practice social distancing. Prior to our return to indoor worship, the Church Council affirmed we would follow state and local health guidelines. Those guidelines at the time included wearing masks and sitting six feet apart. The Worship Committee and Church Council will revisit the guidelines during their June meetings. As one of the few places where up to 4 generations of people who are not related to each other gather to sing, worship and serve one another – we cannot think of these guidelines as if we were a business, school or other organization. We are a community of faith led by a Savior who drew all people – old, young, healthy and suffering – together. We will continue to be mindful of those who cannot receive the vaccine (including children, the immune-compromised and others) and practice worship that is safe.



## ***Kids and Adults: Education and More!***

### **Sunday School**

Our last session of Sunday School for the programming year will take place on Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am! Thank you to all the families and kids for being flexible this year and utilizing online tools to make Sunday School happen this year. Pastor Marc is especially grateful for the ways you prayed together even while physically apart. We're making plans for the fall and will share them as soon as we can.

### **Vacation Bible School**

The Education Committee made the decision to not hold Vacation Bible School this year. We're hopeful that the health situation in our area will continue to improve, enabling us to engage in in-person education events in the fall.

### **Bishop's Challenge Bible Study**

At the NJ Synod Assembly, the Bishop announced her challenge: to engage in the story of Rev. Jehu Jones and how we can respond faithfully to address the racial inequity and injustice in our world. Part of the challenge will include a special Bible study that will be released soon. If you would like to participate, please contact Pastor Marc at [pastormarc@clc4u.com](mailto:pastormarc@clc4u.com) or 201-391-4224.



### **RIP Medical Debt:**

#### **An Easter Initiative Sponsored by the Northern New Jersey Mission District**

We are all called to help and serve others. We are partnering with RIP Medical Debt to relieve the burden of medical debt for individuals in Northern New Jersey. The organization acts like a collection agency - buying up debt that hasn't been paid back. But instead of seeking repayment, they use money from donors to forgive the debt instead. They help remove this burden from the lives of families while helping repair their credit history at the same time. This is one way we can help grant people the gift of resurrected life of the Easter season. Together we're hoping to raise at least \$15,000 and (at press time) have **already raised over \$9,000**. I know that sounds like a lot, but that amount of money will be able to forgive \$1.5 million dollars of medical debt in northern New Jersey. Learn more and make a donation by visiting <https://ripmedicaldebt.org/campaign/north-new-jersey/>

### **Blood Drive Sponsored by The Park Ridge Rotary Club**

The local rotary club is sponsoring a blood drive for Cole McKeon, a 5 yr. old who has been fighting neuroblastoma for 3 years. It will take place Thursday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 10 am to 3 pm at Park Ridge Mancinelli Center (53 Park Avenue). To make an appointment, visit: [https://donor.cbsblood.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/53858](https://donor.cbsblood.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/53858)

### **The Caregiver Task Force of Bergen County**

The Caregiver Task Force has been charged with a one-year mission to develop recommendations to the legislature to help New Jersey's caregivers. The task force is staffed by the Division of Aging, DHS and consists of a few caregiver representatives as well as representatives from various organizations that touch caregivers including the Alzheimer's Association, The Arc of NJ, Leading Age NJ/DE,

NAMI NJ, AARP, Caregivers of NJ, and the Home Care and Hospice Association of NJ. You can learn more about the taskforce by visiting [www.nj.gov/humanservices/doas/home/caregivertaskforce/](http://www.nj.gov/humanservices/doas/home/caregivertaskforce/).

The survey is online and can be accessed by visiting (in English):

[https://rutgers.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3y4eKyb7i8zURMy](https://rutgers.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3y4eKyb7i8zURMy)

or (in Spanish) [https://rutgers.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_86ddPczUzYhS4Xc](https://rutgers.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_86ddPczUzYhS4Xc).

These links are also available in our weekly online newsletter. Together we can work to make caring for our loved ones easier.

### **"Welcome to Medicare" National Web Event on June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 3:00 pm**

Are you or a loved one new to Medicare? The SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Programs) National Technical Assistance Center is hosting an online "*Welcome to Medicare*" virtual fair on **June 23<sup>rd</sup>** from **3:00 pm** to **7:00 pm**. This event is for people turning age 65 or who are retiring soon or are otherwise eligible for Medicare. You'll need a laptop/desktop with audio to participate (calling from a phone isn't available). There will be an "exhibit" room for each state where residents from NJ can connect with me to chat and/or view information unique to NJ such as info on PAAD and charts of NJ Medicare plans.

Register by visiting <https://www.shiptacenter.org/about-medicare/news>

### **Flea Market**



### **Outdoor Flea Market: St. Paul's Episcopal Church Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup> 9 am – 2 pm**

Our friends at St. Paul's in Montvale (4 Woodland Rd) are hosting their first out door flea market! Funds raised will support St. Paul's church and its outreach ministries. They're looking for home décor, baby items, books, toys, games, clothing, cookware and more. Items can be dropped off at the church Monday through Thursday from 10 am to 2 pm, Saturday 9 am to 1 pm. Contact the church ([saintpaulsmontvale@yahoo.com](mailto:saintpaulsmontvale@yahoo.com) or 201-391-3181) for more information.

## *Growing in Generosity: Genesis Garden*

After a year off, we're gearing up for a new season of the Genesis Garden. We utilize our own property to grow over 1200 lbs. of fresh produce to support the work of nearby food pantries. This year, our produce will be benefiting the work of the Tri-Boro Food Pantry in Park Ridge which serves 150 families a week.



Planting will begin June 8<sup>th</sup> (weather permitting), and we need your help. We typically put into the ground hundreds of plants that involves a lot of bending, standing and bending of knees. If you can do that kind of work, you can feed your neighbors! And don't worry if you don't have a green thumb. There's a great crew of folks willing to share their knowledge that have been doing this work for decades. Contact the church office or Tom Kearns ([tkearnsnj@gmail.com](mailto:tkearnsnj@gmail.com)) for more information.

### *News from Church Committees*

**The Care Committee's** mission is to care for Christ Lutheran Church and the surrounding community. We manage the prayer chain, organize meals to families in need, send cards, write letters, make phone calls, oversee our prior ministry and include members of our Knit One Crochet Too group. We'll meet again on June 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am. Interested in learning more? Contact Mary Zeigler or the church office.

**The Property Committee** has been busy over the last month preparing the church for indoor worship. They've also been updating the Opsal/Fellowship Room. Next time you visit, you'll notice the ceiling has been repainted as well as the large wooden beams that support the ceiling. Thank you for all our volunteers who made this over-the-top project possible!

**The Property Committee Security System will be installed in June!** At our April 25<sup>th</sup> Congregational Meeting, we approved installing video cameras on the outside of the church, new locks on the doors to the church office and Opsal Hall, and door sensors on every outside facing door. The system will be installed this month. The current keys to the church building will still work. If you have questions, please contact the church office.

**A Reminder: You Can Give Electronically!** The Stewardship Committee reminds you that electronic giving is easy to set up, safe and confidential. As we move into a summer hopefully filled with travel and special events, make sure your financial support to your faith community continues. You choose how much to give from your checking account and when it happens. You can choose a one-time donation or make a pledge to give weekly or monthly. Here's what to do: **1)** Go to the CLC webpage ([www.clc4u.com](http://www.clc4u.com)), click on the tab at the top that says Give. **2)** Click on the green button that says Give Online. **3)** Next: Create your Online Profile: You'll need your email address, password, name and home address. **4)** Online Donation page will ask for amount, donation frequency, a starting date, the routing number and the account number from your checking account. **5)** You're done, and you'll get an email confirmation. Thank you for responding to God's generosity!

### **New Jersey Synod Assembly Highlights**

On May 7-8, 312 voting members from all over the NJ Synod gathered virtually for our annual synod assembly. The theme was **Springing Forth**, with a variety of stories and reports about the new things God is doing in our midst. The synod elected members to the Synod Council (including our own Carla and Maurice Willoughby from Good Shepherd in Glen Rock), elected attendees to the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, forwarded two individuals (Jamie Bruesehoff and Sandy Matsen) to be considered as members of ELCA Council in 2022) and added new members to the Consultation Committee and the Committee on Discipline. Bishop Tracie Bartholomew announced the 2021-2022 Bishop's Challenge called The Jehu Jones Mission, a year-long emphasis during which we will study together how institutional slavery impacts the lives of people of African descent. You can learn more by visiting <https://www.njsynod.org/bishopschallenge>. The synod assembly adopted a \$2.1 million spending plan for 2022 and said farewell to Pastor Kimberly Vaughn who left NJ Synod Staff at the end of May to become the Senior Director of Christian Community and Leadership with the ELCA Churchwide Organization. In her letter sharing these highlights, Bishop Tracie ended with: *"Together, we continue to be church for the sake of the world. That is the mission we all share here in New Jersey."*

**Camp Koinonia Update** – Memorial Day weekend, Camp Koinonia officially reopened! This outdoor ministry in Highland Lake, NY has faced a number of challenges during the last few years. Buildings needed to be cleared of mold, infrastructure replaced and new leadership installed. During May, Interim Director Dr. Kathleen K. Ruen was permanently hired, and Melissa McEvoy was hired as the camp's program director. The Conference Center added WiFi, AC and heat (which was needed during the cold Memorial Day weekend). Koinonia announced

8 weeks of Family Camp and a new Port Jarvis Day Camp for young kids. CLC's representatives for the corporation that owns Koinonia (Pastor Marc, Kim Kearns, Tom Kearns, Lynn Lesko and Jim Drobinske) continue to support their ministry. To know more, speak to them or visit <https://www.koinoniany.org/>.

**Camp Cross Roads** – Camp Crossroads, a joint outdoor ministry of the New Jersey Synod and the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, recently engaged in a fundraising challenge supported Zion Lutheran Church in Garfield. When Zion considered their legacy after 100 years of ministry, they chose Cross Roads to be the primary beneficiary of their financial resources upon their closing. Zion's gift made possible a challenge to all their donors. For the first 500 new gifts of any size during the month of May, an additional \$200 will be added to it (up to \$100,000). The camp also challenged donors to become recurring givers by adding \$400 to that gift. By May 24, the camp had received over 300 new financial gifts. We're excited to learn the final numbers very soon. Camp Cross Roads provided our online Sunday School curriculum this year and has served as a retreat site for many synod events. You can learn more about them by visiting <https://www.crossroadsretreat.com/>.

**A Word from the Tri-Boro Food Pantry in Park Ridge**—Thanks to all who have supported the pantry! As we near the 15<sup>th</sup> month anniversary of the pandemic, we continue to do all we can to keep our clients and volunteers safe. Long-time volunteers who are at the highest risk of contracting COVID are now able to work at the pantry after receiving the COVID vaccine. We are happy they are back and we've noticed a slight decrease in the number of families visiting the pantry. At the height of the pandemic, we were serving 150 families a week but now serve around 120. That is a significant decrease but it's still 90 families more than served before the pandemic. We expect the need to remain high for the foreseeable future. And we couldn't help without your support. The late spring and summer months are typically the time of year when food donations to the pantry are at their lowest, but we know hunger doesn't take a summer vacation. Recently we've seen an uptick in organizations and people doing their part to feed their neighbors. An amazing fish n'chips meal hosted by Montvale Landscaping provided funds for the food we give out each week. We've also had kids selling their art and even standing outside Starbucks, collecting your pocket change so that we could buy fresh milk. We are grateful for all the innovative ways you are making sure no one in our area goes to bed hungry. Learn more by visiting [www.triborofoodpantry.org](http://www.triborofoodpantry.org).



2021	J U N E						2021
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
		1  Worship Committee Meeting 7:00 pm	2  AA Meets 7:00 pm	3	4  Outdoor Cub Pack Meeting 6:30 pm →→	5  →→ 9:30 am	
6 Sunday School 9:45 am  <u>Worship with Holy Communion</u> 10:00 am Sanctuary and Online	7	8	9  AA Meets 7:00 pm	10	11	12	
13 <u>Worship with Holy Communion</u> 10:00 am Sanctuary and Online	14   Property Work Night, 7:30 pm  Finance Committee 8:00 pm	15	16  AA Meets 7:00 pm	17  Council Meeting 8:00 pm	18	19	
20 <u>Worship with Holy Communion and Honoring Our Graduates</u> 10:00 am Sanctuary and Online 	21	22	23  AA Meets 7:00 pm	24	25	26	
27 <u>Worship with Holy Communion And Blessing of Animals</u> 10:00 am Outdoors and Online	28	29	30  AA Meets 7:00 pm				

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