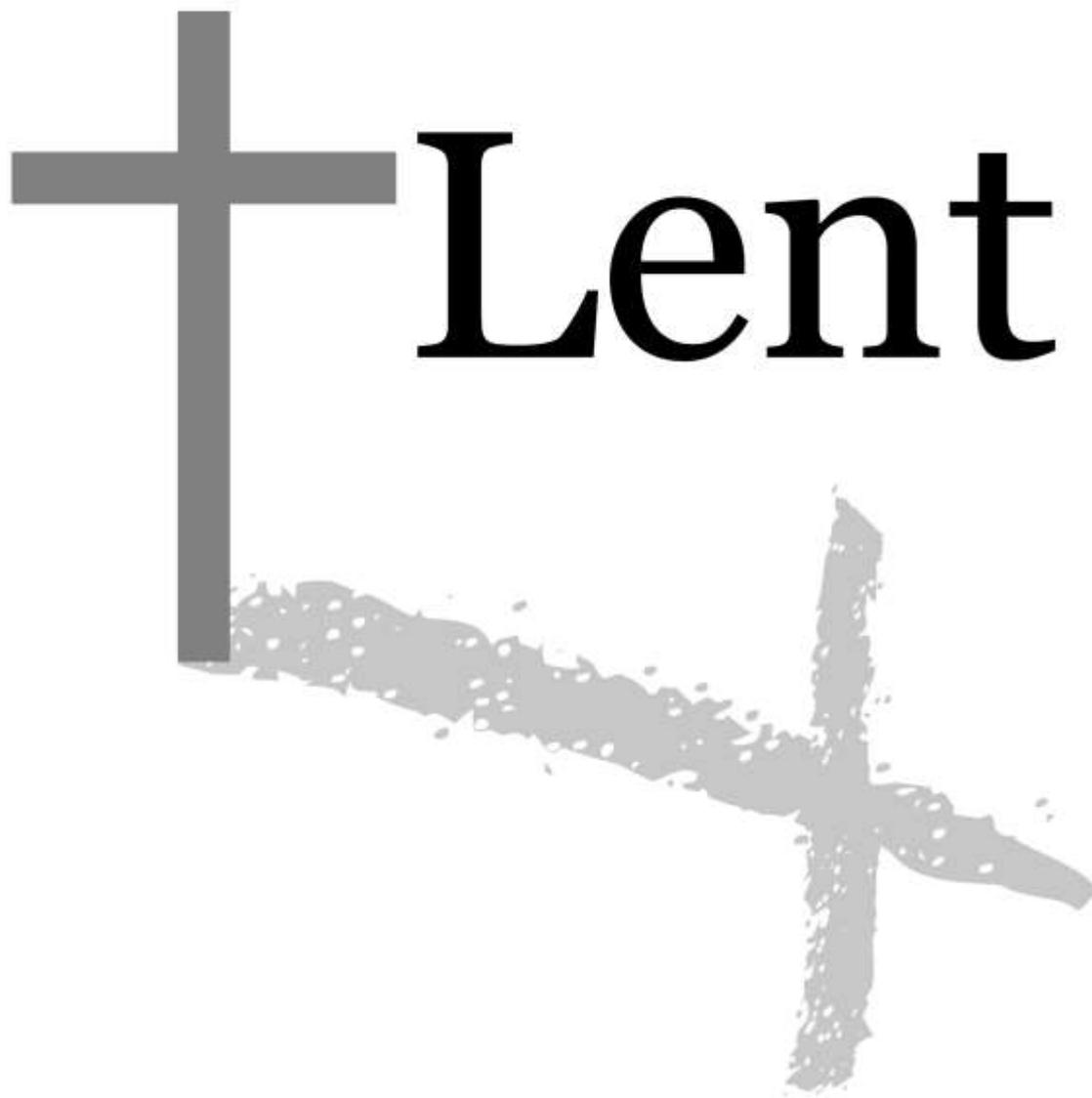


The Messenger

March 2021



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

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

From the Pastor

As I write this, snow banks along the curb by my home have finally started to shrink. On the lawn, an old football has reappeared after being left unprotected and there's no icicle dangling from a downspout near my patio. It feels as if the current blast of winter is finally starting to break, which is good news for those who do not own snow blowers. Yet I'm also curious what the world outside my window will look like once the snow is gone. The ground has been covered for so long that my mind expects a snowy landscape to be a default state of things. Instead of getting ready for flowers sprouting, I keep wondering if I should invest in more bags of salt for the driveway. I know spring will come, but I'm so used to winter that it's hard to imagine there being anything else.

Lent is a time for reflection and truth-telling—an opportunity to look in the mirror and look for the cross of Christ that has already been placed on our forehead. We get to gaze into ourselves and seek the image of God that is a part of who we are. And as we look at ourselves, we then look outwards to see if our communities are living as if Jesus Christ actually matters. Lent is not an easy season, but it's a necessary one because we can intentionally re-tune ourselves to what God is already doing in the world. But what does Lent look like when we've already spent the year living through a Lent that didn't end? When the pandemic exploded and we stopped gathering indoors last March, the typical ways we ended Lent weren't available to us. We didn't listen to trumpets blare Easter morning or start preparing for our annual Trash/Treasure Sale. Instead, we jumped into a new way of doing church that none of us planned or expected. We learned technology we never used before. We got used to worshipping from our couch rather than our usual pew. We reflected on what it means to be followers of Jesus during a crisis that has gone on and on. As the days stretch on, new cases continue to be high in our area. It is amazing that many people are getting vaccinated, but the virus continues to spread. In some ways, it looks like a new day is coming when gathering indoors will be safe again. But after a year of doing a new thing, will the old thing we long for be exactly what it used to be?

I believe this pandemic has changed who we are as a church and how we will do church into the future. I believe that we've all re-learned what our faith values are all about. We know that serving each other in deep, meaningful and healthy ways is part of who we are. As the pandemic thaws out, we're going to bloom into a CLC that treasures our distant past but doesn't forget our current history. We will get to see the CLC community blossom once it is safe to do so. And what makes me hopeful and thankful for the new life that is coming is I get to live through this brand new thing with you. As a community, we lived through a year full of loss, grief, fear, worry, and anxiety. And as a community, we'll get to see the last year of Lent turn into a Resurrected morning. See ya in church! Pastor Marc

The Pandemic

Vaccine Update

A lot has happened over the last month! The supply of vaccines has gradually increased, and several of you have already received your first dose. A small team of individuals at CLC has been busy getting individuals connected with appointments in our area. If you need help getting a vaccine, contact Kate Stutzel at kate.stutzel@gmail.com. Over a dozen appointments have already been made!

COVID Cases in the Pascack Valley (at press time)

Twice a week, the county government releases the total number of positive COVID Cases in our area. We take that data for the towns in the Pascack Valley (Emerson, Hillsdale, Montvale, Park Ridge, River Vale, Washington Township, Westwood, Woodcliff Lake) and calculate the number of current new daily cases in our area.

	2/2	2/5	2/9	2/12	2/16	2/19
Total Cases	3960	4019	4133	4224	4300	4371
New Cases	105	59	114	91	76	71
Avg. New Cases Per Day	26	20	29	30	19	24
Avg. New Cases Per Day Per 100,000	35	26	38	40	25	31

Metrics for a Return to Gathering in the Sanctuary

The Church Council has been using the following metrics as they re-evaluate returning to indoor worship: < 4 new cases per day per 100,000 people (low community spread) as well as a statewide R-value < 1.

The R-value at press time was .86 and has been below 1 since early February. As you can see in the chart above, the number of new cases in our area is still very high (but has dropped 33% since early January). The numbers are trending in the right direction, but Bergen County remains a hot spot in New Jersey. The Church Council will continue to monitor our specific context. You can help get those numbers lower by practicing physical distancing, staying home, wearing your mask and getting vaccinated as soon as you can. Don't do these things only for yourselves (which is important!). Also do it for everyone in your faith community and neighborhood.

In this together!

Congregation Annual Meeting in Review

Thank you to the 50+ members who attended our online annual meeting on February 7th! Thank you for keeping each other safe while doing the business of the church. The following is a short list of action items accomplished at the meeting:

- The election of 3 council members.
- Passage of the 2021 budget.
- Heard an update on utilizing the gifts from Our Redeemer Lutheran Church.
- Check-in on financial health of the church. Your generosity has been amazing!
- Funding of several Special Gifts projects including finishing the Raise the Roof Campaign. The congregation decided to close out the Raise the Roof campaign. Using the Special Gifts Fund, we paid ourselves back \$9,177. Thank you everyone who contributed to the campaign over the last 3 years, supporting the Seafarer's Christmas at Sea program, creating hygiene kits for Passaic, providing meals to seniors at Easter, groceries for CFA and school backpacks filled with supplies for kids. We supported work at church including cleanup of property trees and initial funding to add air conditioning at the church.
- We elected 2 delegates + 2 alternates to work during Camp Koinonia reopening.

Your 2021-2022 Church Council

The following individuals currently serve as the "board of directors" for the church. The church council oversees the business and ministerial activities at CLC. These 12 individuals meet monthly to manage budgets, coordinate activities with our various committees and prayerfully discover where God is taking us as a congregation. During 2021, the role of president (organizing and chairing the meetings) will be handled on a rotating basis.

Council Members

Ed Bailey Brain Conboy (new) Coleen Daub Meredith Drobinske Heather Henry (new) Carla Hoenigmann	Kim Kearns Lynn Lesko, Secretary Jerry Miano, Treasurer Martin Thalmann, Vice President Mary Zeigler Pastor Marc A. Stutzel
---	--

We are grateful for Bill Daub, Noel Ulanday, and Kyle Ritter who completed their terms on Council. Your faithfulness and commitment to Christ's church was a gift to the entire community. The last year has been a challenge – yet you were exactly what God wanted in leadership during this time. Thank you for being a good shepherd for this part of the body of Christ!

Kids and Adults: Education and More!



Sunday School

We're continuing our partnership with Camp Cross Roads in New Jersey! Every two weeks, we meet for a 30-35 minute session with fun videos, a Bible story and other activities. This year, we're examining the seasons of the church year. We'll meet on February 28th, March 14th and March 28th. Contact Pastor Marc if you have any questions.

Confirmation

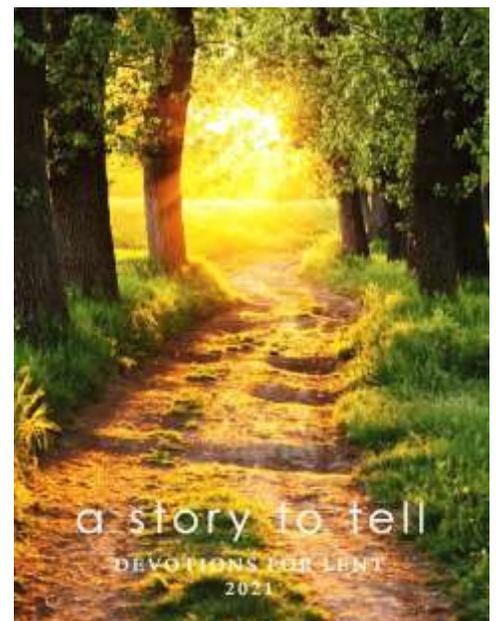
Our partnership with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church continues! This year we're digging deeper into the Small Catechism. Luther wrote the Small Catechism as a tool to help parents sow seeds of faith in their children. We're covering the Sacraments in March! We'll meet on February 28th, March 14th and March 21st.

A Story to Tell: Devotions for Lent 2021

Our at-home devotion for Lent is available for pickup or mailing! Here's the description from the publisher:

A Story to Tell focuses on texts from the Gospel of Mark that show Jesus' journey from baptism to the cross. The gospel writer has a story to tell, moving quickly from one scene to the next. The urgent tone of the story grabs us and pulls us in, but all the action comes to a halt when those who see the empty tomb tell no one about this. Is this the end of the story?

Contact the Church Office to receive one!



Worship and Missions



Holy Week begins on March 28th! We plan to resume outdoor worship—weather permitting. Make sure you are signed up for our weekly newsletter, like us on www.facebook.com/clc4u, follow us at www.instagram.com/clc4u and check www.clc4u.com for the most up-to-date information available.

Palm/Passion Sunday – March 28th

Worship Online at 10:00 am

Worship Outdoors (Weather Permitting) at 10:00 am

Maundy Thursday – April 1st

Online Prayer Service at 12 noon.

Worship Online at 7:30 pm

Good Friday

Worship Outdoors (Weather Permitting) at 3:00 pm

Worship Online at 7:30 pm

The Resurrection of Our Lord

Sunday, April 4th

Worship Online at 10:00 am

Worship Outdoors (Weather Permitting) at 10:00 am

Alleluia!

A Service of Healing – March 14th

The second weekend of March will mark an unhappy anniversary. On March 15, 2020, we shifted to online worship due to the pandemic. On March 14, 2021, we will take time to pray for healing and to mark this solemn occasion.

Lenten Mid Week Book Study—Wednesdays (through March 24th) at 7:00 pm “One Coin Found: How God’s Love Stretches to the Margins”

This was how I came to know the stories of God; wrapped in color and light, sound and song, tenderness and patience, rhythm and ritual. But Scripture was not just for Sundays; the stories came home with us. My mother invested in picture Bibles and single-issues storybooks that told me the tales of heroines in faith. Hannah was confident in her faith, rejected a powerful priest’s understand of her tears, and praised God with celebration...Mary Magdalene, possessed by several demons that made her scream and shout, was freed by the man Jesus of Nazareth and followed him, even unto death, and because of her courage and loyalty was the first to see him when he rose....This is the Scripture I learned first – stories of strong women who served a God like my mother, tender and caring and unafraid to fight of her children.

Rev. Emmy Kegler is an ELCA Pastor serving Grace Lutheran Church in northeast Minneapolis. *One Coin Found* is a memoir rooted in her experience of faith. Throughout the book, she weaves God’s story with her story – seeing so much grace in the impossibilities of God. During Lent, a short worship service will be posted online at 7:00 pm. At 7:30 pm, we’ll also host a discussion about the book at www.clc4u.com/midweeklent. Contact Pastor Marc for more information.

Come and Zoom!

It’s a new year and as a church we are experiencing many brand new, exciting and meaningful ways to worship and sing praises through Zooming! The Chancel Choir members are amazed with this new way to sing for you, but we would love it if you would sing with us. We still rehearse Wednesday evenings but in the comfort of our own homes. Join us as we prepare for Easter. Contact Argine Safari (arginesafari@gmail.com) for more information.



Community Events

Caregiver Support Group—1st Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm—Online

Are you a caregiver for your spouse or an aging loved one? Take time for yourself. Meet other caregivers and receive educational resources to help you cope. This virtual, informal social and support group not only provides a welcoming and confidential environment for you to share with others in a similar situation, but also serves as an educational forum for caregivers to learn about important topics. Meetings are led by Journey Hospice's Nurse Practitioner, Lynn Durmala, APN, ACHPN*. This support group is presented virtually via Zoom. Attendees may connect by phone or by Zoom conference call. To register, call (800) 458-0651 or email Beth Gebhart (LSMNJ) at bgebhart@lsmnj.org.

Virtual Seminar for Caregivers: Planning Strategies for Overcoming Compassion Fatigue—Thursday, March 18th at 11:00 am

You have a lot on your plate. As a caregiver, fatigue is common. Let us help by offering some tried and true planning strategies. This presentation will help you recognize the signs of caregiver fatigue, share resources and assist in planning for the future. This FREE seminar is presented virtually via Zoom. Attendees may connect by phone or by Zoom conference call. Register online at <http://bit.ly/2MPk9e8> or call (800) 458-0651 or email Beth Gebhart (LSMNJ) at bgebhart@lsmnj.org.

Virtual Seminar on Life Planning: Documents Everyone Should Have in Place Presented by Sarah L. Cranston, Esq. Attorney for ArcherLaw's Estates and Trust Group, Tuesday, April 27th at 12:30 pm

This free virtual workshop will discuss the essential documents every person should have in place: wills, living wills, types of power of attorney, POLST documents, etc. You will leave with an understanding of necessary documents and how to get started in planning for the future. Our presenter, Sarah L. Cranston, Esq. brings a wealth of knowledge as a member of Archer's Estate & Trust, Litigation and Elder. This FREE workshop is presented virtually via Zoom. Attendees may connect by phone or by Zoom conference call. Pre-registration is required. Registered attendees will receive a link to connect. To register, call (800) 458-0651 or email Beth Gebhart (LSMNJ) at bgebhart@lsmnj.org.

Woodcliff Lake School District: Community Conversations

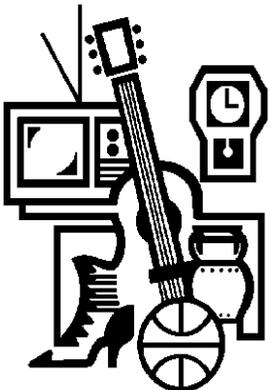
In response to the anti-Semitic and racist graffiti incident in late 2020, the Woodcliff Lake School District is launching a series of “Community Conversations.” The goal is to engage in uncomfortable but meaningful conversations on diversity. Each session in our Community Conversations series will feature a guest facilitator to lead us through these dialogues as we work to better understand the experiences and perspectives of our community members, our children and ourselves.

These online sessions will be held at 7:00 pm on March 23rd, April 8th and May 13th. Register at <http://bit.ly/CommunityConversationsWCL>.

Save the Date: Welcome to Medicare

April 7, 2021—3:00 pm to 7:00 pm

The National SHIP Technical Assistance Program is sponsoring a nation-wide webinar for beneficiaries new to Medicare on April 7th. This virtual Medicare fair is for people new to Medicare. Learn about Medicare—and all its parts—to assist you in your initial enrollment decisions. Get trusted, unbiased Medicare education to help you make Medicare choices that best meet your needs. There will be national expert presenters on Medicare eligibility, enrollment and coverage options. There will also be experts from your state health insurance assistance program to answer your individual questions. Visit www.shiphelp.org to learn more.



Trash and Treasure Sale Postponed

Our annual Trash and Treasure sale (typically the first Saturday in May) has been postponed. At the moment, CLC-Women (who run the sale) are hopeful for a possible sale in the fall. Due to the current pandemic, any fall sale will be restricted to Treasures (i.e., no clothing). Stay tuned!



Daylight Savings Time Begins . . .

On the 2nd Sunday of March, get ready for spring forward! Make sure to set your clocks one hour ahead before you go to bed on March 13th.

Lutheran Disaster Response always at work . . .

Disasters occur world-wide, and the ELCA through this agency is always responding. There are many needs in the United States and world-wide! One way to help is through a gift to “U.S. Severe Storms”—100% of money given is used. Checks may be made payable to Lutheran Disaster Response, with “U.S. Severe Storms” on the check memo line, and mailed to Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Gift Processing Center, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.

We celebrate gifts received through the Ricci Foundation . . .

We are grateful to you for approval of the funding recommended by the Special Gifts Committee for new projects, using the funds received from the Foundation. With our first mission, the Easter Dinner Project for seniors living in Lutheran Social Ministries housing, we were able to purchase ShopRite gift certificates using the designated \$550. The certificates enabled the seniors to purchase items of their choice for Easter.

The church office remains closed, however . . .

Doris, the Parish Administrator is available at the church 8:30 am to 3:30 pm weekdays. Feel free to call, 201-391-4224, or e-mail her (clc4u2@verizon.net) at any time with any thoughts, concerns or anything she can do for you. You are free to stop by during her hours; however, a phone call first is appreciated.



BIRDS IN THE WORD

The Bible mentions many kinds of birds. How many have you seen?

Directions: Unscramble the bird names, using the Bible references and pictures as clues. Then insert the final unscrambled bird name to complete the passage below.



VDEO

___ ___ ___ ___ (Genesis 8:8)



LWO

___ ___ ___ (Psalm 102:6)



GEELA

___ ___ ___ ___ (Isaiah 40:31)



TOKRS

___ ___ ___ ___ (Jeremiah 8:7)



APROSWRS

___ ___ ___ ___ ___

“Are not five ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. ... Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many ___ ___ ___ ___ ___.”

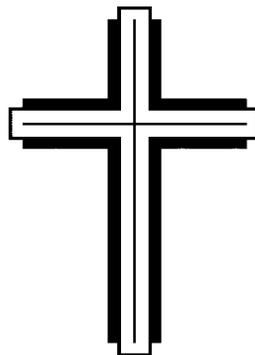
LUKE 12:6-7, NIV

Published by
Christ Lutheran Church
32 Pascack Road
Woodcliff Lake, NJ 07677

**RETURN
SERVICE
REQUESTED**

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Paramus, NJ
Permit No. 596

Dated Material – Please Deliver Promptly



LENT
March, 2021

Like Us
facebook.com/clc4u 

Snap & Tag Us
instagram.com/clc4u 

Follow Us
[@christwoodcliff](https://twitter.com/christwoodcliff) 

www.clc4u.com

Pastor: The Rev. Marc A. Stutzel
Director of Music: Argine Safari
Director of Youth Choirs: David Scance
Administrative Assistant: Doris Crouse