

# *The Messenger*

*March 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

I'm writing this note at the start of our Lenten series on learning how to express the Gospel in fifty words or less. It began with my sermon on the first Sunday of Lent after we listened to Jesus being tempted by the devil in the wilderness. This story is a powerful one, bearing witness to how Jesus overcomes those forces that do all they can to split us from God. Yet, I was reminded how the temptations he faced in the wilderness were the same kinds of temptations he would face throughout his ministry in Galilee and beyond. To me, Jesus does more than overcome these temptations—he lives through them and shows us how, through Jesus, we can live through them, too. One of the ways I experience the Gospel is by being wrapped up in this Jesus who lives all the way through the Cross and beyond.

The good news that speaks to me is rooted in the living I do every day yet I know that's not the entirety of what the Gospel is all about. In the words of Bishop Craig Satterlee, the Jesus we preach, teach, and share can, at its best, "bring people from death to new life." That's a bold statement to say and I don't mean that your sharing of Jesus will bring anyone back to life. But the Jesus that I know is One who notices the struggles, lost, fear, worry, anxiety, frustrations and fear that we carry every day. Jesus knows how far we will go to cling to anything that claims we are not as vulnerable, fragile, or as human as we actually are. We run as fast as we physically, spiritually, or emotionally can, often leaving a long trail of broken relationships, broken hearts, and emotional upheaval in our wake. We can't imagine that there might be a different way or a different reality where we are not, somehow, on top. And then this Jesus has the chutzpah to show up in our lives, declares we are loved, and how the Crosses we build for ourselves and others are not the limit of who we are with God.

So what's your good news? How has the gift of faith changed your life? These are big questions that aren't always easy to answer yet I hope this Lenten sermon series helps you discover the good news you've been invited to share. It's a story rooted in your own life, experiences, sorrows, and joys. It's an experience that notices how Jesus becomes most real to us in the moments we would never describe as a blessing. The fifty word gospel you compose might not sound as faithful or as poetic as you might like it to be. But it will be very personal and very special because it's showing others who Jesus is to you. And you might be surprised to see how the gospel you share brings life to those around you.

Blessed to be the church with you, Pastor Marc

## STORIES OF A WORLDWIDE LUTHERAN CHURCH: RWANDA

The construction of Rwanda's first Lutheran seminary is sparking excitement amongst church leaders, but with an important government deadline looming ahead that excitement has been coupled with anxiety. In 2018, the government of Rwanda proposed a law that all ordained pastors, across denominations, must have the equivalent of a Bachelor's or Master's degree in theology or education to continue to serve their congregations. Part of the pastoral emergency stems from the difference in how Rwandan churches are led, said Evalister Mugabo, Bishop of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda. "You call them pastors," Mugabo said. "Here, we have evangelists and pastors. Evangelists are the people who are serving in their [congregations], but not ordained as pastors."

Right now, the LCR has 39 pastors but the church primarily is led by non-ordained evangelists, many of whom have been trained at Rwanda's Bible school, known as Theological Education and Leadership Development (TELD). In 2017, the ELCA agreed to monetarily support the Bible school, and TELD's leadership development program swelled. A 3-year program culminating with a certificate in biblical studies was quickly established that year, and in 2019, one graduate was able to join Iringa University in Tanzania to pursue a bachelor's degree in theology. In the Rukira Parish, membership jumped from 469 to 753 members after evangelists who had received training at TELD came back, said Ntidendereza David, a pastor and principal of TELD. Similarly, the Kirehe Parish saw its membership grow from 424 to 689 members. While growing TELD has been a primary goal for years, word of the government's new regulations led the LCR to plan an expansion of its education system. Building and staffing a seminary - the Lutheran Theological and Leadership College - is now of the utmost importance, said Mugabo.

In October 2019, a commemoration stone was laid on the land secured for the Seminary. Soon after, an administration building was completed, and the foundation of a four-story classroom building was laid. Through your Mission Support dollars, the ELCA shares funding for these projects. As the ELCA, we come alongside LCR through support for their Bible school, seminary scholarships and other programs to help the church be at the center of community life. It's a perfect example of our emphasis on theological education aligning with theirs.

## **TRASH AND TREASURE IS COMING....LET THE COLLECTING BEGIN!**

Christ Lutheran Women will hold our annual Trash and Treasure sale on Saturday, May 6. We are hoping you have all saved some of your best “trash” over the past year, to be turned into “treasures” for others.

**Donation drop-off to Opsal Room entrance begins April 16, and ends May 2.**

We will collect and sell housewares, toys, holiday items, books, and clothing accessories, like scarves, pocketbooks, belts, jewelry and shoes. No other clothing will be accepted. We will post a more complete list of what we will be collecting next month.

Proceeds from the sale benefit local and world-wide ministries as well as ministries within our church. Last year our sale raised \$11,700 for these ministries, and all because of the generous donations of goods and volunteer hours from our congregation and friends.

If you are curious about how you can help make our Trash and Treasure sale a success, or how we can make our sale even better, please join us for a brief organizational meeting on **Sunday, March 12 at 11:30 am in the Sunshine Room.**

Hope to see you then. . .Until then keep collecting!

The Christ Lutheran Church Women

### **YOUR 2023-2024 CHURCH COUNCIL**

The following individuals have been elected to serve as the “board of directors” for the church. They oversee, manage, and steward the business and ministerial activities of CLC. These 10 individuals will meet monthly to manage budgets, coordinate activities with our various committees and prayerfully discover where God is taking us as a congregation.

|                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Kim Kearns - Vice President  | Janet Post - Education  |
| Martin Thalmann - Treasurer  | Mary Zeigler - Care     |
| Lynn Lesko - Secretary       | Nancy Kerber - Council  |
| Ed Bailey - Worship/Missions | Heather Henry - Council |
| Brian Conboy - Property      | Pastor Marc A. Stutzel  |
| Carla Hoenigmann - At Large  |                         |

## **CAMP KOINONIA ANNUAL MEETING ROUND-UP**

On Sunday, February 26, 2022, Pastor Marc, and Tom and Kim Kearns participated in Camp Koinonia's hybrid annual meeting. Camp Koinonia is an outdoor camp located in Highland Lake, NY. CLC is a founding member of the camp and elects delegates every year to serve as voting members to the Camp's annual meeting.

The mission of Koinonia is to be a place "where God transforms and prepares people in an outdoor environment to love and serve one another." Much of this annual meeting reflected on a successful 2022 and looking forward to the 60th anniversary that will be celebrated this year. There was much to be thankful for as this camp located in Highland Lake, NY embraced its first full year of operation since before COVID.

During 2022, a number of goals were reached for. A goal of generating \$100,000 in revenue in the Conference Center was almost reached (a 70% increase from 2021) and a similar increase in revenue generated by renting out the other buildings at the camp. Nearly \$200,000 in general fundraising as well as \$227,000 in gifts related to the capital campaign were received. The camp ended the year with a gain of nearly \$60k in a year when they hired additional staff and launched a number of new programs.

The board has worked to re-establish connections to member congregations as well as expand their online presence through a new website and a more robust experience on Facebook/Instagram. We're pleased to report that the Executive Director, Dr. Kathleen Kristin Ruen will be visiting CLC's church council in April of this year.

2022 also involved the launching of a \$1 million dollar capital campaign. That initial goal was met with initial and planned gifts. The board then launched a stretch goal of an additional \$500,000 that is being worked on now.

During 2022, Koinonia launched a new summer camp program for kids in their local community. The late summer/fall was filled with a number of congregations and groups staying at the camp. Advent continues to be a big hit at the camp with 4 straight weekends of programming.

The year 2023 marks the 60th year Camp Koinonia has been in existence. The Camp is planning 4 events to mark the occasion. On June 10th from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, congregations, pastors, bishops, board members, and congregants will re-dedicate Koinonia and recommit to Koinonia for our NEXT 60 years of partnership. On August 6th, Koinonia will host a Community Day/Day Camp Reunion with the local community. On August 11th-13th, the official 60th Anniversary Celebration will include the dedication of a new floating bridge, the unveiling of an updated waterfront area, and more. Finally, on August 19th, Camp Koinonia will be hosting a special Saturday to celebrate family camp. We're looking forward to celebrating Koinonia for the next 60 years! You can learn more about the camp by visiting [www.koinoniany.org](http://www.koinoniany.org) or speaking to Pastor Marc, Kim and Tom Kearns.

## **GROWING IN GENEROSITY**

**Souper Bowl Sunday Sponsored by the Care Committee:** Wow! Thank you for generously donating 200 cans of soup and \$533 in pocket change to support those in need. The cans of soup were delivered to the Tri-Boro Food Pantry in Park Ridge and the money sent to the Center for Food Action based in Englewood. We came out ahead of Advent Lutheran in Wyckoff who collected 150 cans of soup.

**Book Bin in our Parking Lot!** We'll be collecting books for Trash and Treasure Sale so feel free to hold onto them until April. Then, post May 6th, let your friends know about the Book Bin in our parking lot. Books with ISBN barcodes (that you would scan at the store) can be dropped off in the bin. New Legacy Books will re-sell what you donate, and 15% of any sales will return to CLC. We receive, at a minimum, \$40 a month from New Legacy Books. Last month, a check for over \$50 arrived at the church which means books collected in our bin were sold by New Legacy.

## **YOUR CHURCH COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**An Update from the Finance Committee:** At the end of January, our total income was \$17,439 and our expenses were \$21,603. We are not currently utilizing any temporarily restricted funds to fund our operations. Both of these numbers beat our expectations for the month. Thank you for being generous and we'll have more to share once the February numbers are complete.

**Ricci Foundation Update** At press time, there is no update since our annual meeting in regards to our ongoing conversation with the trustees of the Ricci Foundation. An agreement was reached between many of the beneficiaries and the Trustees but not all the necessary legal documents have been signed by all concerned parties. We expect this paperwork to be completed soon and will let you know once that happens.

**The Care Committee's** mission is to care for Christ Lutheran Church and the surrounding community. During Lent, please enjoy a special coffee hour after each worship. Coffee and tasty treats (bagels, coffee cake, fruit, and more) will be available for you to enjoy. A free will offering will be collected to support ELCA World Hunger and a local food pantry. Learn more about the committee by visiting us after worship and then visiting our next meeting on March 14, at 10:00 am.

**Knit One Crochet Too:** Do you wannabe knitting or crocheting? Join us at CLC on the 4<sup>th</sup> 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 welcome! Some of the ideas we make will be available for purchase during the Care Committee's Lenten Coffee Hours. Come and learn how you can make gnomes, dinosaurs, blankets, and more! See you on March 24th at 10:00 am.

**Make a Difference in Their Lives:** We are currently working on a project to help make Easter special for families and seniors in affordable housing, under the umbrella of Lutheran Social Ministries of NJ. Donations of grocery store gift cards (ShopRite, Acme or Walmart) to the church office will be very appreciated.

### **WORSHIP AND MORE!**

**Devotion for Lent:** *Water and Spirit* provides daily devotions for each day from Ash Wednesday to the Resurrection of Our Lord/Vigil of Easter (traditionally known as Holy Saturday). Devotions begin with an evocative image and a brief passage from the Gospel of John. The writers then bring their unique voices and pastoral wisdom to the texts with quotations to ponder, reflections, and prayers. As you read the daily devotions, pause to think about how John describes water and the Spirit, and how water and the Spirit are at work in your life. Copies are available at the church or contact the office to have one mailed to you.

**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](http://www.facebook.com/clc4u/live)), YouTube ([www.youtube.com/@clc4u](http://www.youtube.com/@clc4u)), and our website ([www.clc4u.com](http://www.clc4u.com)).

Listen via Conference Call, dialing 646-558-8656. 9:00 am worship: enter meeting id: 843 2757 3572 and then #. 10:30 am worship: enter meeting id: 827 672 730 and then #. For both worships, hit # to ignore participant id and enter password 195901. Call the church office to request a copy of the bulletin/sermon mailed to your home!

**Looking Towards Holy Week and Easter:** Our Holy Week schedule is as follows:

**Palm Sunday**, April 2—9:00 am & 10:30 am

**Maundy Thursday**, April 6—7:30 pm \* **Good Friday**, April 7—12:00 pm & 7:30 pm

**Easter Sunday**, April 9—9:00 am & 10:30 am

**“Preaching and Teaching ‘With Love and Respect for the Jewish People’”:** Our denomination, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), was charged at its 2019 church wide assembly to create resources to guide our ministry with other faiths and religious traditions. They recently released a resource to pastors and educators in the church to explore challenging topics that show up in our worship. This often appears in the contrasts we make between Jesus and other religious, specifically Jewish, leaders. These contrasts can be unfair to those we declare to be in the wrong. Common stereotypes of Jews and Judaism can distort the Christian message we share. These stereotypes often operate unconsciously, even among people who explicitly reject them, so we need to be aware to what they are. The church treasures Scripture, tradition and confessional theology as both sources and norms in its ongoing life and work. We cannot simply remove from our heritage the images and formulations that have given rise to these troubling legacies. By understanding more fully and clearly what is essential to the heritage and what has attached to it or grown out of it in troubling ways, we can fashion more generous, constructive, gospel-informed patterns of theology to guide our thinking and practice in the church and in the world. This new resource informs our Christian preaching and teaching so that we can respect the integrity of Jewish tradition and avoid anti-Jewish interpretation of New Testament texts. View at: <https://elca.org/Faith/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Inter-Religious-Relations>.

### **KIDS AND ADULTS: EDUCATION AND MORE!**

**Sunday School meets March 12 and 26!** We’re looking forward to a great 2023! We will meet twice this month after the 9:00 am worship. On the 12th, we’ll meet as a group and we will be in our classes on the 26th.

**Bible Study on Paul’s Letters to the Corinthians:** We continue reading through Paul’s letter to the community in the Greek town of Corinth throughout the month of March. We meet on Wednesdays, 11:00 am. We 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 ([pastormarc@clc4u.com](mailto:pastormarc@clc4u.com)) know if you plan to be there and he’ll inform you of what chapters to read.

**Let’s launch an evening Bible Study:** Pastor Marc recently received a request to organize an evening Bible Study from someone who can't meet during the day. If you're interested in reading books in the Bible, start a book group, or discuss media events like *Chosen*, let Pastor Marc know by emailing him at [pastor-marc@clc4u.com](mailto:pastor-marc@clc4u.com).



**Book Study with the Bishop:** Join Bishop Tracie Bartholomew and additional staff members on March 7th or March 9th for a conversation around the book "All That She Carried" by Tiya Miles. Copies of the book are available at your local library. A short blurb about the book is below.

*Sitting in the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture is a rough cotton bag, called "Ashley's Sack," embroidered with just a handful of words that evoke a sweeping family story of loss and of love passed down through generations. In 1850s South Carolina, just before nine year old Ashley was sold, her mother, Rose, gave her a sack filled with just a few things as a token of her love. Decades later, Ashley's granddaughter, Ruth, embroidered this history on the bag--including Rose's message that "It be filled with my Love always." Historian Tiya Miles carefully follows faint archival traces back to Charleston to find Rose in the kitchen where she may have packed the sack for Ashley.*

Register for this online book study by visiting the NJ Synod's website at [njsynod.org](http://njsynod.org).



## COMMUNITY NEWS

### **2nd Annual Woodcliff Lake United Community Day March 19 1:00 pm - 4 pm:**

Let's continue to foster a sense of neighborliness in Woodcliff Lake. Our new annual event will take place in March at Tice's Corner for a day of service and connection. New activities are being planned along with favorites like a touch a truck, religious and cultural crafts, service projects, and more. Groups from all over WCL will share about who they are and how they foster a sense of connection during a time of great divisiveness. You don't have to live in Woodcliff Lake to attend. Pastor Marc hopes to see you there!

### **A Report by Lutheran Disaster Response : The War in Ukraine - One Year Later:**

On Feb. 24, 2022, the world watched in horror as Russia invaded Ukraine. As devastation spread, millions of people, mostly women and children, fled to neighboring countries in Europe in search of safety. Amid one of the worst refugee crises in recent history, Lutheran Disaster Response's partners in the region gathered food, clothing and other supplies and opened their doors wide to the traumatized people who began to arrive. A year later the impacts of the war continue to be felt around the world. There's a fuel shortage in Europe, and existing food shortages have been exacerbated. As the situation evolves, Lutheran Disaster Response and partners continue to accompany people affected by the war. You and other supporters responded with

incredible generosity, sharing over \$12 million to help our neighbors in Eastern Europe whose lives were so suddenly disrupted, and showing them that they are not alone.

The seven page report includes many stories and details. Here's the start of one: A holistic approach to refugees—As the war in Ukraine has progressed, support for refugees has evolved. In the first months of the war, our partners welcomed refugees with food, clothing and other daily necessities. They provided temporary shelter in churches, community centers and their own homes. As the war raged on, it became clear that refugees would be in their host communities long-term, so organizations adapted to the new needs of refugees. They helped people learn languages, obtain jobs, find permanent housing and integrate into their new communities. Read the entire report online by visiting:

[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/  
Ukraine\\_1\\_Year\\_Anniversary\\_Report.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Ukraine_1_Year_Anniversary_Report.pdf)

**Pascack Valley Council for Special Education:** This Council represents seven school districts in the Pascack Valley area (Emerson, Hillsdale, Montvale, Park Ridge, Pascack Valley Regional, River Vale, and Westwood Regional) and provides a variety of services. One of the services involves a no-charge evaluation for children (3 to 21) who might be experiencing difficulties in development, communication delays, significant lags in cognitive and/or social and emotional development, learning challenges, and an already identified disability. This evaluation can share appropriate programs and services that might be available for parents and care givers. If your child might need services, you're invited to contact your district's department of special services.

**Family Promise Super 50/50 Raffle is back!** Family Promise of Bergen County's Super 50/50 Raffle is back! Family Promise provides both immediate relief and long-term solutions to working families experiencing homelessness through our shelter and support programs. We also address hunger through our Walk-In Dinner Program in Hackensack, which serves up to 200 meals a night to our food insecure neighbors. Proceeds from this year's raffle will directly benefit these programs, so purchasing a ticket will help us continue to offer these essential services to our community while giving you a chance to win big! Our first place winner will receive 25% of the proceeds up to \$25,000, and there are 16 additional opportunities to win a smaller cash prize.

The drawing will be held on Friday, March 31, 2023 at 11:00 am. Tickets are \$100 each and can be purchased with a credit card by calling the Family Promise office at 201-833-8009 or by check using the mail-in order form available at [www.bergenfamilypromise.org/raffle](http://www.bergenfamilypromise.org/raffle). Thank you, and good luck!

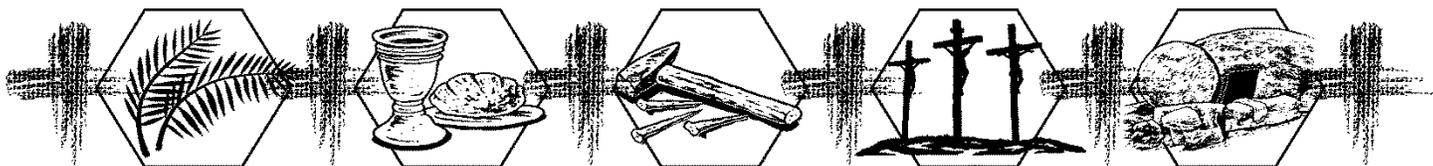
| 2023  | March  |  |  |  |  | 2023  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| Sun   | Mon  | Tue  | Wed  | Thu  | Fri  | Sat   |
|    |  |  | <p>1</p> <p>Worship Committee Meets<br/>10:00 am</p> <p>Bible Study<br/>11:00 am</p>   | <p>2</p>  <p>Chancel Choir<br/>4:00 pm</p> | <p>3</p>   | <p>4</p>  |
| <p>5</p> <p><u>2 LENT</u><br/><u>Streaming and Sanctuary</u><br/><u>Worship with Communion</u><br/>9:00 am and 10:30 am<br/>Care Bagel Sale</p>   | <p>6</p>   | <p>7</p>   | <p>8</p> <p>Bible Study<br/>11:00 am</p> <p>Chancel Choir<br/>This week<br/>TBA</p>  | <p>9</p>   | <p>10</p>  | <p>11</p>  |
| <p>12</p> <p><u>3 LENT</u><br/><u>Streaming and Sanctuary</u><br/><u>Worship with Communion</u><br/>9:00 am and 10:30 am<br/>CLCW Mtg. 11:30am<br/>Sunday School 9:45 am<br/>Care Bagel Sale</p>  | <p>13</p> <p>Finance Committee Meeting<br/>8:00 pm</p> | <p>14</p> <p>Care Committee Meeting<br/>10:00 am</p> | <p>15</p> <p>Bible Study<br/>11:00 am</p> <p>Chancel Choir<br/>This week<br/>TBA</p>   | <p>16</p> <p>Council Meeting<br/>7:30 pm</p>   | <p>17</p>  | <p>18</p>   |
| <p>19</p> <p><u>4 LENT</u><br/><u>Streaming and Sanctuary</u><br/><u>Worship with Communion</u><br/>9:00 am and 10:30 am<br/>Care Bagel Sale</p> <p>Woodcliff Lake Community Day<br/>1 - 4 pm</p> | <p>20</p>  | <p>21</p>  | <p>22</p> <p>Bible Study<br/>11:00 am</p>  <p>Chancel Choir<br/>This week<br/>TBA</p> | <p>23</p>  | <p>24</p>  | <p>25</p>   |
| <p>26</p> <p><u>5 LENT</u><br/><u>Streaming and Sanctuary</u><br/><u>Worship with Communion</u><br/>9:00 am and 10:30 am<br/>Care Bagel Sale<br/>Sunday School 9:45 am</p>                        | <p>27</p>  | <p>28</p> <p>Knit One Crochet Too!<br/>10:00 am</p>  | <p>29</p> <p>Bible Study<br/>11:00 am</p> <p>Chancel Choir<br/>This week<br/>TBA</p>   | <p>30</p>  | <p>31</p>  |   |

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**MARCH 2023**

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