

# *The Messenger*

*May 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  
Sundays at 9:00 am & 10:30 am  
201-391-4224 [office@clc4u.com](mailto:office@clc4u.com)

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## PASTOR'S NOTE

How do we honor our past?

At our last council meeting, I asked folks if they remembered the process behind why certain spaces in the building are named the way they are. We have, for example, the “Sonshine” room between the fellowship hall and the church offices. This room is our library and main meeting space for our committees, Bible Studies, Sunday School, and more. It’s a large room where the light of the Son and the large windows illuminate the ways we are called to care for one another. There’s also our fellowship hall is known as the “Opsal Hall.” That space is named after our founding pastor. In the late 50’s, Pastor Opsal was called by the American Lutheran Church to form a church in Northern New Jersey. CLC’s began by organizing a Sunday School that met at Woodcliff Lake Elementary before holding our first worship on January 7th, 1959. Pastor Opsal served at CLC for 10 years. And we can’t forget the Mitchell Commons named after Pastor Mitchell who served at CLC for over 25 years. When members of the church council at the time wanted to honor Pastor Mitchell, they named the space outside the church offices after him. It took a few years before the congregation grew used to calling that space Mitchell Commons but it’s now part of our communal language. When we name a part of our building based on its use, we’re proclaiming the kind of community we choose to be. And when we name spaces after specific people, we’re remembering our faithful ancestors who laid the groundwork for us to proclaim the good news of Jesus in meaningful ways.

We announced last month that the former youth room (last renovated nearly 20 years ago for CLC’s youth group at the time) is now updated. Plans are still being made on how to furnish this new meeting space. There has been talk about changing this space’s name and so the church council discussed it at their last meeting. We wondered if the space might remember the generosity that allows us to focus on serving God and all our neighbors. The church council thought naming the room after Anna and Dominick Ricci whose foundation supports us in life-giving ways would honor them more than the small plaque hanging in our narthex. “The Ricci Room” would invite the next generation after us to keep telling their story. I’d love to hear your thoughts about this possibility. Feel free to contact me or join us at our next church council meeting on May 21st.

— Pastor Marc

**TRASH AND TREASURE SALE**  
**SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2026**  
**8:00 AM - NOON AND 1:00 PM - 4:00PM**

Doors open at 8 am but a line forms earlier. We will break for lunch at 12 noon and reset with even more amazing prices at 1 pm. The bag sale begins at 3:30 pm. Tell your friends and we'll see you there!



**IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO HELP!**

**If you can work a few hours, let us know. We need help during clean up at 4 pm. Please see Carla Hoenigman, Kim Kearns, Lynn Lesko, or Janet Post to volunteer.**

**GROWING IN GENEROSITY**

**Feeding Your Neighbors One Tomato at a Time:** It's almost time for another season of our Genesis Garden! We had an amazing season last year, delivering 1,750 lbs of fresh produce to the Tri-Boro Food Pantry. Rich Harrison and Bill Henshaw have already weeded the garden and we'll be planting soon. This outdoor activity is great for families of all ages. Contact the church office to join our Genesis Garden specific email list and pay attention to our weekly email newsletter for when planting will begin.



**The Mission Endowment Fund:** A number of years ago we established a special fund to generate income that supports ministry outside our congregation. The church council recently selected the organizations and people who will receive money this year. Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) and Debbie Krueger will split whatever income the fund makes. YAGM is an ELCA ministry encouraging young adults to serve as missionaries all over the world. Debbie Krueger (who grew up at CLC, is a missionary with Wycliffe Bible Translation. She is currently studying languages in Israel. At the end of March, the Fund was at \$65,226 and we expect the fund to generate approximately \$2,000 this year.

**United We Serve - Bergen County and 250th USA:** We began celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence by participating in Bergen County's week of service. From April 18th through April 24th, volunteers make a difference across the community. Under the leadership of County Commissioner Tracy Zur, Pastor Marc and Councilwoman Jennifer Margolis organized an event at the Senior Center at Tice's Corner. Fifty kids, teens, and adults made blankets for kids in tough situations, packed laundry kits for local food pantries, and made USA themed placemats that will be given out by Meals on Wheels. Let's keep finding ways to give ack to our community this year!



**CLC-Women and School Kits:** Last fall you donated all kinds of school supplies during CLC-Women's annual school kit drive. The organization they work with wanted this kids made in the spring. A few volunteers gathered in early April to spend an afternoon making 90 schools kits full of notebooks, crayons, pencils, erasers, and more. Thank you for helping every kid have the supplies they need to learn and grow.



## 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, May 16th from 10 am - 12 noon** in the Sonshine/library. *We usually meet the 2nd Saturday of the month but we're moving the date due to Mother's Day.* 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:** We're taking a break in May from our monthly education event. We'll be back in June with a special event to commemorate Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness month.

## KIDS AND ADULTS: EDUCATION AND MORE!

**Bible Study:** Our Wednesday Bible Study is exploring the gospel according to John. We'll meet on May 6th, 20th, and 27th 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 in May:** We're nearing the end of our programming year exploring why we pray the way we do in worship. We'll meet again on May 10th and the 17th. We hope to see you there!

**Confirmation Class** is wrapping up for the year! Our final classes for the year will take place May 10th and 17th. Two of our confirmands will have finished their classes and will be confirmed either on Pentecost or shortly after. If you're interested in participating in Confirmation in the fall, please speak to Pastor Marc.

**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.

## WORSHIP WITH YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY!

**Two Worships on Sunday at 9 am and 10:30 am until Memorial Day Weekend:** At **9:00 am**, worship is approximately 45 minutes long and uses contemporary guitar-led Christian music led by David Scance. At **10:30 am**, worship is led by Argine Safari on the organ/piano and supported by our Chancel Choir.

**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](http://www.clc4u.com)

**Red Geraniums for Pentecost:** Geraniums to decorate the altar on May 24th will be on sale in throughout May. Envelopes to place your order will be available in the narthex or you can contact the church office. Each 6" plant will cost \$8 and orders are due by May 15th.



**Summer Worship Begins Memorial Day Weekend:** Our new tradition of starting our summer worship on Memorial Day weekend is almost here. **On Sunday, May 24th, we'll have one worship at 10 am.** Music during June will include a mixture of musical styles. Please update your calendars and if you have any questions, reach out to Pastor Marc.

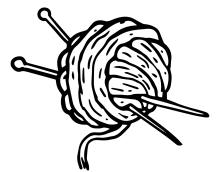
**Baptism on May 17th:** On May 17th we'll publicly welcome Ronan into the body of Christ at the 10:30 am worship. Please join us if you can.

**Why Pentecost:** The day of Pentecost is an old religious festival that took place 50 days after Passover (pente is greek for 5 and pentecost means 50). We're told in the book of Acts that fifty days after Easter, a mighty wind blew through where the disciples were gathered. Tongues of fire (like the fire burning on top of a candle) appeared above their heads. The disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit to go and share Jesus to all the pilgrims who were in Jerusalem. Those who heard the disciples were shocked to hear God's story in their native tongues. We'll decorate the church on Pentecost in red (and we invite you to wear red as well) to remind us of God's presence and our call to help others experience Jesus too.

**Hearing Assistance:** A few months ago, we noticed our hearing aid system we use in church wasn't working. The problem has been fixed. In the usher room in the Narthex are small headphones with battery packs. Feel free to pick one up and use during worship. If you have any issues, please see Pastor Marc or another worship leader.

## 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 **April 13th 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 are due on May 15th. We expect the trustees to reach out to the beneficiaries after that date.

**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 April, our total income was \$61,922, and our expenses were \$70,470. We're still dealing with the increase costs associated with snow plowing, heating, and electricity. Financial giving is up 3.4% compared to last year and we're very close to our budget plan for 2026.

**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 April! The broken toilet in the Narthex has been replaced and the dishwasher in Opsal was repaired. Some of the original wallpaper in the Narthex was taken down. We are hiring a contractor to repair the broken drywall and put a skim coat over the remaining wallpaper. In early May, we expect the AC units in the sanctuary to be fixed. 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 you home, pick one up in the Narthex.

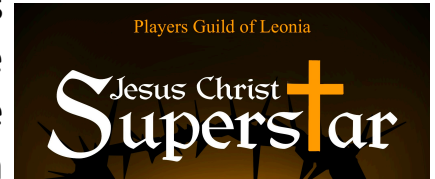
## COMMUNITY EVENTS, PARTNERS, & NEWS

**Orpheus Club Men's Chorus - Spring Concert:** On Saturday, May 2nd at 3 pm, the Orpheus Club Men's Chorus will be *Celebrating America in Music*. Argine Safari is the club's musical director. They'll be at Pascack Hills High School (225 Grand Ave, Montvale). Tickets purchased in advance cost \$20 (\$25 at the door). If that price is an issue, Argine does have some comp tickets available as well. For more information visit [www.ridgewoodorpheusclub.org](http://www.ridgewoodorpheusclub.org).



**First Congregational UCC's Annual Plant Sale:** Our friends at First UCC in Park Ridge will be having their annual plant sale on Saturday, May 16th, from 9 am to 2 pm as well as Sunday, May 17th, from 11 am to 2 pm. A wide variety of organically grown vegetable plants and native perennials will be available. All proceeds will go to benefit their community garden.

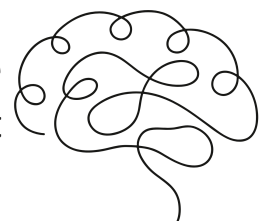
**Jesus Christ Superstar:** The Players Guild of Leonia presents *Jesus Christ Superstar* from May 8th through the 24th. Argine Safari is the music director and choir member Joseph Pierone is Pontius Pilate. The theater is located at 130 Grand Ave in Leonia. For more information and to purchase tickets visit [www.leoniaplayers.org](http://www.leoniaplayers.org).



**Adult Care Brief Drive:** In honor of Older American's Month in May, the Bergen County Department of Human Services Senior Services is collecting adult briefs. Donations will go to Bergen County Meals on Wheels, CHEER, Bergen Volunteer Center, and Center for the Food Action. You can drop off your donation to One Bergen County Plaza in Hackensack through May 31st. If you have any questions please email [seniors@BergenCountyNJ.gov](mailto:seniors@BergenCountyNJ.gov) or call 201-336-7400.

**Public Hearing on the Needs of Older Adults:** On Tuesday, May 12th, from 8:30 am to 11:30 am, Bergen County will be holding a hearing on the needs of older adults. Verbal testimony will be accepted (limited to five minutes). Written testimony can be submitted via email to [seniors@BergenCountyNJ.gov](mailto:seniors@BergenCountyNJ.gov). If you plan to attend the hearing, it will be held at the County Administration Building - One Bergen County Plaza, 5th Floor, in Hackensack.

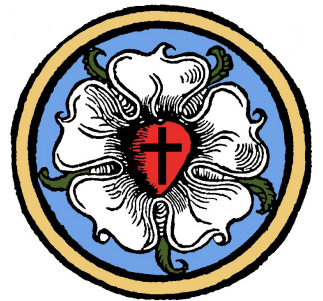
**May is Mental Health Awareness Month:** West Bergen Mental Healthcare is inviting you to a variety of events in May to raise awareness. On Friday, May 1st from 5:30 pm-8:30 pm, RAM Fest (Ramsey Agrees Mental Health Matters) will take place at Ramsey High School. This event will promote mental health awareness and reduce stigma in our community. They will have food trucks, vendors, live music, and activities for all ages. On Wednesday, May 6th from 5 to 8 pm, there is a Scoop Night at Ben and Jerry's in Ridgewood. Tuesday May 12th will have a Wine and Spirits Tasting by the Ridgewood Rotary to benefit West Bergen. And Wednesday May 27th there will be a Dine & Donate at the Panera in Ramsey.



**Cross Roads Day Camp at Christ Church, Ridgewood:** Camp Cross Roads partners with churches all over New Jersey to lead and host day camps during the summer. They'll be at Christ Church in Ridgewood from August 3rd through August 7th. This K-6th grade camp is a faithful way to spend summer break. Learn more by visiting [christchurchridgewood.org](http://christchurchridgewood.org).

**Tri-Boro Memorial Day Parade:** Montvale, Park Ridge, & Woodcliff Lake will host the annual Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 25th. It will start at the Montvale Fire Department and end at the Woodcliff Lake Fire Department. The official kick-off of the parade in Montvale is 10:30 am.

**Reformation: Then and Now (October 26 - November 5, 2026):** Interested in exploring our Lutheran roots in Europe? The New Jersey Synod is hosting an 11 day pilgrimage this fall! We will remember our baptisms in Saints Peter and Paul Church in Eisleben, where Martin Luther himself was baptized; remember ordination vows in Erfurt where Luther was ordained; visit where Luther translated the New Testament from Greek into German; and spend Reformation Day in Wittenberg where it all began with Luther's posting of the 95 Theses in 1517. The Rev. Dr. Kathryn "Kit" Kleinhans will help us think deeply about the implications of this history. Together we will ask that familiar question from Luther's Small Catechism – "What does this mean?" – as we consider how we are called to live our faith in an increasingly chaotic and divided world. Learn more (including costs) at [www.njsynod.org/germanytrip](http://www.njsynod.org/germanytrip).



## LOOKING AHEAD

**Graduates' Sunday - June 21:** If you are graduating from High School, College, Graduate School, trade school, or other advanced studies, we want to bless you on Sunday, June 21st. Send Pastor Marc a recent picture and where the Spirit is taking you next.

**Blessing of the Animals - June 28:** Calling all our beloved friends (and their humans too). We'll be blessing the dogs, cats, hamsters, guinea pigs, snakes, chickens, and even plushies. Join us for a barking good time in the sanctuary as we give thanks for the fuzzy (and not so fuzzy) friends God has given us.

## FAITHFUL THOUGHTS

*We wanted to share a few reverent (and not so reverent) things that recently come across our desks.*

Mary, exhausted, having just gotten Jesus to sleep, is approached by a young man who thinks to himself: what this girl needs is a drum solo.

— *Printed on a coaster that was donated to our Trash and Treasure Rummage Sale*

One should thus realize that there is only one gospel, but that it is described by many apostles. Every single epistle of Paul and of Peter, as well as the Acts of the Apostles by Luke, is a gospel, even though they do not record all the works and words of Christ, but one is shorter and includes less than another. There is not one of the four major gospels anyway that includes all the words and works of Christ; nor is this necessary. Gospel is and should be nothing else than a discourse or story about Christ, just as happens among men when one writes a book about a king or a prince, telling what he did, said, and suffered in his day. Such a story can be told in various ways; one spins it out, and the other is brief. Thus the gospel is and should be nothing else than a chronicle, a story, a narrative about Christ, telling who he is, what he did, said, and suffered—a subject which one describes briefly, another more fully, one this way, another that way.

— *From Luther's A Brief Instruction on what to Look for and Expect in the Gospels. When we talk about the gospel, we're talking about the good news of Jesus and not one of the first four books in our Christian scriptures (the New Testament).*

Let us bless the bread  
that gives itself to us  
with its terrible weight,  
its infinite grace.

Let us gather  
around these gifts  
simply given  
and deeply blessed.

Let us bless the cup  
poured out for us  
with a love  
that makes us anew.

And then let us go  
bearing the bread,  
carrying the cup,  
laying the table  
within a hungry world.

—*Blessing by Jan Richardson*

## THANK YOU NOTE FROM CAMP KOINONIA

When it comes to Camp Koinonia in Highland Lake, NY, we're more than just a member of that community. A portion of every financial gift you give to CLC supports their amazing work. They recently sent us a "Thank You" note and we'd like to share what they said.

*Thank you so much! Your support is a blessing and plays a vital role in helping Koinonia thrive as we continue to grow and serve our community. This year, there is so much to celebrate at Koinonia. Nature Camp registrations are soaring - over 50 children signed up just in the first 2 weeks. We are so excited to relaunch Family Camp at the end of summer and welcome even more families from near and far. Because of friends like you, we closed 2025 with a budget surplus and recently reached our \$2 Million Capital Campaign goal. These achievements are a testament to the vibrant spirit and generosity that define our community.*

*This spring, your support goes even further. Thanks to a matching grant from the Jeanine Heller Foundation, every dollar will be doubled, which will help us reach \$100,000 for our summer ministry. Your commitment ensures we can expand our programs, welcome more campers, and keep our promise that every family can participate, regardless of their ability to pay.*

*We are deeply grateful for your partnership in nurturing, building community, and sharing God's love through life-changing experiences at Koinonia. May this Easter season bring you hope, joy, and the blessings of new beginnings.*

## ELCA YOUTH GATHERING: IMAGINE MORE

Every three years, thousands of high schoolers (those who finished 8th grade to those who graduated 12th grade) and their adult leaders from across the ELCA come together for the ELCA Youth Gathering. It's not just an event but a movement in which faith ignites and community comes alive. Through inspiring speakers, experiential learning and transformative connections, young people experience the church in bold, unforgettable ways. Each night, participants share a unique faith experience through high-energy worship and powerful storytelling. We attended the gathering as a congregation in 2015 and 2018. 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	May					2026
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1 <u>T&amp;T Work</u> 11:00 am - until done	2 <u>T&amp;T Sale</u> 8:00 am - 12 noon, 1 pm - 4 pm
3 <u>Worship</u> 9:00 am & 10:30 am	4 <u>SCA Fencing</u> 7 pm	5 <u>Knit One, Crochet Too!</u> 10 am 	6 <u>Worship Committee</u> 10 am  <u>Bible Study</u> 11 am  <u>Choir Rehearsal</u> 4:30 pm	7	8	9 
10 <u>Worship</u> 9:00 am & 10:30 am  <u>Confirmation Class</u> 9:45 am  <u>Sunday School</u> 9:45 am	11	12 <u>Knit One, Crochet Too!</u> 10 am	13 <u>Care Committee</u> 11 am  <u>Choir Rehearsal</u> 4:30 pm	14	15	16 <u>Alzheimer's Support Group</u> 10 am
17 <u>Worship</u> 9:00 am & 10:30 am  <u>Confirmation Class</u> 9:45 am  <u>Sunday School</u> 9:45 am	28 <u>SCA Fencing</u> 7 pm  <u>Finance Committee</u> 8 pm	19 <u>Knit One, Crochet Too!</u> 10 am	20 <u>Bible Study</u> 11 am  <u>Choir Rehearsal</u> 4:30 pm	21 <u>Church Council</u> 7:30 pm	22	23
24 <u>Summer Worship</u> 10:00 am  <i>Pentecost</i>	25 <i>Memorial Day</i> 	26 <u>Knit One, Crochet Too!</u> 10 am	27 <u>Bible Study</u> 11 am  <u>Choir Rehearsal</u> 4:30 pm	28	29	30
31 <u>Summer Worship</u> 10:00 am						