The Messenger

November 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 and 10:30 am

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Pastor's Note

The future is essential to who we are.

Our weekly Bible study is working through the book of Ezekiel, a prophet whose ministry took place between 593 and 571 BCE. He lived through an incredibly tumultuous time for ancient Judea. The community's struggle against the Babylonian Empire led to a series of wars, the destruction of the Holy Temple, and the forced deportation of Jerusalem's population into exile. For those who found themselves living far from home, it must have seemed as if their world had turned entirely upside down. They probably felt abandoned, isolated, and as if their God had turned on them. Their future appeared bleak was called by God to share God's word with them. This almost impossible task could have been focused on grief, sorrow, and blaming the community for what had happened to them. Ezekiel's book, however, began with an image of hope. He described fantastical divine creatures, a chariot that can move in any direction, and a field full of colors more intense than any rainbow. For a people feeling lost, Ezekiel's vision of the divine was an assertion they were not alone. Their future was still being written and their God was with them. There truly is nothing that will separate them from God's love and Ezekiel's trusts that a different kind of future will surely come.

November is a month full of a new future bubbling up We'll close out our church year and begin a new one in the gospel according to Mark. We'll remember all who rest in the Lord and also publicly welcome a child into the body of Christ. We'll cover our alter in fresh produce, give thanks for God's abundance, and share it with others. The leaves outside the church will turn gold and sunsets will come way too early. Yet we will continue to worship, share in the sacrament, and live as if God's future of grace, compassion, mercy, and hope is very real. We'll live this truth out in the care we show one another as we as through several initiatives that will take place over the next few months. In our weekly newsletter and in other places, you'll be invited to participate in this future together through your pledge of time and money and helping to discern where God is leading this community. The church council has been in discussion about forming a "visioning team" at CLC to dream who God is inviting us to be. Your engagement in our annual stewardship drive as well as this visioning process (which we expect to begin in earnest in early 2027) will be how we, together, will live into the future God is already bringing about.

—Blessed to be living in faith with you, Pastor Marc

Enter the Time Warp

A quick reminder: we'll "fall back" on Sunday, November 1st at 2 am. Daylight savings time will end so turn your clocks back one hour before you go to bed. Make sure to also a prayer for your smartphone updates too!

Growing in Generosity

Genesis Garden - Thank You! We wrapped up our harvesting in mid-October after delivering 1,150 pounds of fresh produce to the Tri-Boro Food Pantry. Thank you to all our garden leaders including Brian Conboy, Lynn Lesko, Karen Pasch, Carla Hoeningmann, Bill Henshaw, and everyone who delivered the produce on Thursday mornings. Even if you could only help once this season, you made a difference in the lives of our neighbors. The vegetables we provide enabled the pantry to spend its money on toilet paper, paper towels, cleaning supplies, and other items instead. You're amazing! We'll have a clean up day soon to prep the garden for the winter.

Care Committee Blanket Drive - Blanket the World in Love: When a crisis comes, an intentional loving response can make all the difference. The church World Service Blanket program (cwsblankets.org) provides a blanket to those who are living through awful disasters.

These blankets come in two styles - fleece and wool. The fleece are designed for warmer climates. They are water-repellent, durable, warm, soft, and doesn't add bulk to whatever items a person is carried. The wool version is water-resistant, flame retardant, durable, warm, for frigid temps and extreme weather.

When our neighbors are in need, even $10 for a single blanket goes a long way. The Care Committee will be collecting any financial donation in the narthex on Sunday mornings starting on October 4th.

Alzheimer's Support and News

Brain Health Seminar: It's not always easy to know what's normal and what's not when it comes to aging and the brain. On Sunday, November 1st at 12 noon (after the 10:30 am worship), Marymae Henley, a clinician who works Clinical Research Center of New Jersey, will present on how to keep your brain healthy. She'll also share more about clinical trials and how you can participate. Feel free to invite your friends. This is a community event.

The Caregiver Coffee Break: Our monthly support group will be meeting on the second Saturday of November (November 14th) at 10 am to learn more about how we can take care of ourselves through breathing. Sydney Struble from the Center of Mind Body Balance will show us what breath work can do. These techniques will help us to reduce stress, enhance our vitality, and increase our ability to take care of those around us. Please contact the church office at 201-391-4224 or office@clc4u.com if you plan to attend.

The Special Gifts Disbursement Committee Needs Your Help

The Committee needs your ideas as we honor the memory of Anna and Dominic Ricci while living out the kingdom of God. Applications are available on our website (clc4u.com) or picked up in the "special gifts" mailbox by the church office. Your recommendation can be for any one of the categories listed below:

- Outreach Ministry or Benevolences to the local community or worldwide (Examples include hygiene kits, school kits, disaster relief, hunger support, and supporting non-profits.)
- Special Congregational Ministries (Examples include special worship music, worship equipment and new ministry projects at church.)
- Capital Improvement or Asset Replacement (Examples include roofs, parking lot, and physical equipment at the church.)

The Committee will be meeting in November so please get your ideas to us ASAP.

Kids and Adults: Education and More!

Bible Study: Our Wednesday Bible Study is starting the book of Ezekiel. We'll meet on November 4th, 18th, and 25th at 11:00 am. Let Pastor Marc (pastormarc@clc4u.com) know if you plan to attend.

Sunday School on November 1st, 15th, and 29th: Sunday School is wrapping up the church year by exploring God's love for us. This program is open to kids aged 3 to 11 years old. We meet in the sanctuary at 9:45 am to sing songs before moving to our large group lesson. If you have any questions, please reach out to Pastor Marc.

Confirmation Class is exploring the Bible. We're learning the different books of the Bible, how to find specific chapters and verses, and getting used to this library of holy words. We'll meet on November 8th and 22nd. If your child would like to participate, there is still time for them to jump in. We're still near the beginning of our year together.

Worship With Your Faith Community!

At 9:00 am, worship uses rock/pop Christian music led by David Stance. Our 10:30 am worship includes traditional hymns led by Argine Safari on the organ 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 , YouTube www.youtube.com/@clc4u and our website www.clc4u.com.

All Saints' Sunday November 1st: We will gather to remember and honor those who have died and rest with Christ since All Saints' Day 2025. The Remembrance Table will be set up at each worship inviting you to light a candle in the memories of those who now rest in God. For those joining at home, we invite you to light your own candle when you worship.

Honoring Veterans November 8th: We will be honoring the veterans who made a difference in our lives. Pastor Marc will show a visual slideshow full of photos. If you have any new pictures of yourself or a loved one that you would like to share, please email a copy to Pastor Marc (pastormarc@clc4u.com) by November 5th.

Baptism on November 8th: We're excited to publicly welcome William into the body of Christ on Sunday, November 8th, at 10:30 am worship. We expect a lot of guests and your presence to welcome our visitors will be a blessing. Please make a plan to be there.

Harvest Altar November 22nd: The Sunday before Thanksgiving is when we ask worshipers to bring winter fruits and vegetables to decorate our altar. The produce will be given to the Tri-Boro Food Pantry. *Can you bring carrots, onions, potatoes, hard squash like butternut, apples or oranges this year?* If possible, drop off at the church prior to that Sunday date so that altar space is overflowing in vegetables on Sunday morning.

Sanctuary Christmas Decorating on November 29th: We'll be decorating the sanctuary for the holiday following the 10:30 am worship. Lunch will be provided to decorators.

Comfort and Joy - Advent and Christmas Devotions: Jesus is coming; Jesus comes to us at Christmas and in each day; and Jesus will come again. These are the "tidings of comfort and joy" ("God rest ye merry, gentlemen") that we proclaim throughout Advent and Christmas. Drawing on centuries of Christian tradition, Comfort and Joy draws attention to God's surprising presence and action as we prepare for Jesus' birth during Advent, rejoice at his arrival throughout the twelve days of Christmas and the day of Epiphany, and anticipate his future return. Copies are available at church. We can also mail one to your home - just let us know.

Your Church Committee Updates

The Care Committee's mission is to care for Christ Lutheran Church and the surrounding community. The Committee will meet in the Sonshine/Library room on Wednesday, November 11th, at 11:00 am.

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. We also have items for purchase in the church's narthex. Please speak to Debbie Louis and Diane Lintner for more information.

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

An Update from the Finance Committee: At the start of October, our total income was $186,426 and our expenses were $191,034. Expenses are outpacing income by a little more than $4,600 but is under what we expected at this point in the year. As we move into our stewardship season, please prayerfully consider what your faithful giving can look like. If you have any questions, please speak to our Treasure Martin Thalmann or our Financial Secretary Rich Kerber.

CLC-Women's Next Monthly Board Meeting: CLC-Women will meet on November 9th at 10:45 am in the Sonshine Room or via Zoom. If you would like a Zoom link, please contact the church office by November 5th at office@clc4u.com. All are welcome to attend!

CLC-Women Thank Yous: CLC-Women used money raised during the Trash and Treasure rummage sale to support a number of ministries and non-profits this year. We received thank you notes from the following: *Center for Food Action* which will use the money to help families facing food and housing insecurity; *Camp Koinonia* who will use this donation to add an emergency generator to their Conference Center; *Lutheran Disaster Response* who bring healing and support to communities suffering through any kind of disaster; *Lutheran World Relief* who is helping communities all around the world grow more resilient; *Church World Service* that provides school kits, blankets, and emergency cleanup buckets to areas in the US and worldwide; and the *Tri-Boro Food Pantry* in Park Ridge that serves 130 families every week.

Christ Lutheran Women Annual Christmas Gift Drive: As we draw closer to Christmas, we have faith we can again count on our congregation to bring a little Christmas joy to local families in need. We typically support 25 kids through the Tri-Boro Food Pantry and additional seniors and families through Westwood Social Services. Details will be in our bulletin as well as our weekly e-mail newsletter.

Take A Leap of Faith at CLC: We're a blessed to be filled with amazing people! As a federal non-profit, our decision making process is governed by people who decide to be "voting members" of this congregation. If interested, please speak to Pastor Marc (pastormarc@clc4u.com).

ELCA Youth Gathering

The ELCA Youth Gathering is a national event that brings high school youth from all 65 synods for worship, interactive learning sessions, service projects, faith formation, and leadership development. It will take place next in Minneapolis, MN from June 28th - July 2nd, 2027 and the theme is *Imagine More.* We plan to partner with Camp Cross Roads who will be bringing youth from all over NJ to the gathering. A high schooler from CLC will be among them. If you're interested in learning more, visit www.elca.org/gathering and then contact Pastor Marc.

Ordination

On October 19th, the NJ Synod celebrated the ordination of Kim Syvertsen and Jason Reed (located in the center of the photo below). Rev. Syvertsen is serving at Temple in Pennsauken. Rev. Reed is severing at Lord of Life in Tabernacle.

Our Past Doesn't Define Our Destiny

ELCA World Hunger is one of the ways our denomination changes lives all around the world. The following is a story from their Fall Newsletter.

Justina Kanyata grew up in a family of fight in a shantytown in Lusaka, Zambia. After her father died, her mother struggled to make ends meet. Even though things were hard, Justina says, "I had dreams of a better life." However, those dreams grew more distant when Justina became pregnant in her 20s. Her baby's father and his family rejected her, and Justina became a single mother struggling to support her son. She began a small business, offering hairdressing services and selling wigs, but in the beginning, she was barely breaking even.

Everything began to change when Justina learned about InfoHut through her church. The program, supported by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger, offers free technology and life skills courses. As soon as Justina heard about it, she says, "I saw an opportunity to change my life."

At the InfoHut facility, Justina found state-of-the-art equipment - provided by your gifts - and a place where she could thrive. She took classes in office technology, information technology and computer management. She also received life skills training that taught her valuable lessons about health and practices for safer sex.

Justina loves being part of the community at InfoHut. "I take pride in our collective learning experience," she says. She helps clean the computer lab every day and looks forward to Thursdays, when she and her fellow students share presentations and talk about what they're studying. She has invited her friend Lillian to take classes with her.

With her new IT skills, Justina found a job as a data entry clerk. That income, combined with the income from her growing beauty business, has enabled her to provide for herself and her son. InfoHut has strengthened not only Justina's professional skills but her sense of self. "I am a changed person," she says. "InfoHut has taught me invaluable lessons: forgiveness, self-love, goal setting and resilience."

Your gifts have helped Justina feel the renewing power of God's grace. "Our past doesn't define our destiny," she says. "Instead we can learn from our mistakes and forge a better path." Through your generosity, you are showing up for Justina and others like her who dream of a better life - breaking the cycle of hunger and poverty and turning more of those dreams into reality.

ELCA Releases Paper on Artificial Intelligence Considerations

This article originally appeared on Covalence, the online magazine of the Lutheran Alliance for Faith, Science and Technology.

The ELCA has released a theological foundation document with the aim of expanding the dialogue on the growing implications of artificial intelligence (AI). According to the authors, the document applies current social teachings to provide insights to the church.

While the paper, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and ELCA Social Teaching, does not represent new social teaching, it does outline ethical concerns surrounding the transformational technology that has found its way into the business world, congregations, laboratories and, increasingly, daily life.

The paper is not the ELCA's final teaching but rather the beginning of a conversation, as Lutheran ethicists plan to explore AI further at the group's meeting in January 2027.

The six-page paper provides a multipronged framework that looks at humanity's innovation, sin, respect for creation, promotion of societal well-being, social justice concerns and wise discernment of AI's use. The work comes on the heels of Pope Leo's first encyclical, released earlier this year, Magnifica Humanitas, which explores the relationship between Catholic social doctrine and the rapid expansion of AI.

"God's creativity is expressed in both the long-standing structures of nature and the contributions humans may make using the gift of innovation," the foundation paper reads. "AI is one means, a breathtaking means, of humanity's power to innovate in ways that may promote the well-being of creation and human society." Yet, the paper cautions that the evaluation of AI's use should include consideration of human rights and the freedoms of individuals, including those in our most vulnerable communities. The inclusion of humans in every application of AI remains important, as does accountability. The paper also touches on the topic of data center buildouts, which have been proliferating as the need for computing power continues to grow amid the increasing use of AI agents and generative AI tools.

The paper concludes, “the ELCA endeavors to limit harm from the use and development of AI even while seeking its potential goods that strive to respect and promote the flourishing of the community of life and its inhabitants.” *To read the paper, click the link above or visit resources.elca.org/faith-and-science/elca-ai-theological-foundations-paper*

Community Events, Partners, & News

58th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Worship November 22nd at 7 pm: The Upper Pascack Valley Clergy Council invites you to attend their annual Interfaith Worship service. ***This years event will be held here at Christ Lutheran Church***. The Interfaith Clergy Council is made up of clergy throughout the Pascack Valley. One of the most faithful things we can do is coming together in hope and peace. We hope to see you there.

Woodcliff Lake Buster Box Launch: On Tuesday, November 10th at 6:30 pm, Woodcliff Lake will be unveiling a Buster Box. The Buster Box will contain free naloxone for anyone to anonymously take and use to stop fatal overdoses. Speakers will share their experiences and also showcase how this Buster Box will make a difference in our community.

Free Benefit Concert to Support the Tri-Boro Food Pantry/Meals on Wheels: An amazing musical event will take place on Sunday, November 29th, at 4:00 pm at Park Ridge High School. Admission is free but donations will be collect to support the work of the food pantry and Meals on Wheels. The concert will feature Tom Chapin, The Chapin Sisters, Joe D’Urso/Seth Saltzman, Jake Thistle and Allie Kenny. Come on out after sanctuary decorating for a great time.

Reformation - Then and Now: 46 participants from New Jersey spent Reformation in Germany! The Rev. Bridget Gautieri, a member of our Synod and Director of the ELCA Wittenberg Center, will preach on Sunday, November 1st, at Castle Church. The Wittenberg Castle Church was where Martin Luther posted his 95 theses (though the doors currently on the church are not the same ones from 500 years ago). Bishop Compton has been sharing pictures and reflections on www.instagram.com/christacompton/.

2026	November					2026
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 *All Saints Day* **Worship** 9 & 10:30 am **Sunday School** 9:45 am **Brain Health** 12 noon	2 **SCA Fencing** 7 pm	3 **Knit One, Crochet Too!** 10 am	4 **Worship Committee** 10 am **Bible Study** 11 am **Choir Rehearsal** 4:45 pm	5	6	7
8 *Remembering Veterans* **Worship** 9 & 10:30 am **Confirmation** 9:45 am	9 **CLC-Women Board Meeting** 10:45 am	10 **Knit One, Crochet Too!** 10 am **Special Gifts** 8 pm	11 **Care Committee** 11 am **Choir Rehearsal** 4:45 pm	12	13	14 **Care Giver Coffee Hour** 10 am *Special Guest: Sydney Struble*
15 **Worship** 9 & 10:30 am **Sunday School** 9:45 am	16 **SCA Fencing** 7 pm **Finance Committee** 8:00 pm	17 **Knit One, Crochet Too!** 10 am	18 **Bible Study** 11 am **Choir Rehearsal** 4:45 pm	19 **Church Council** 7:30 pm	20	21
22 *Harvest Altar* **Worship** 9 & 10:30 am **Confirmation** 9:45 am **Interfaith Thanksgiving** 7:00 pm	23	24 **Knit One, Crochet Too!** 10 am	25 **Bible Study** 11 am **Choir Rehearsal** 4:45 pm	25 *Happy Thanksgiv-ing!*	26	27
29 *Advent Begins Worship* 9 & 10:30 am **Sunday School** 9:45 am **Sanctuary Decorating** 11:30 am	30					