

The Messenger

September 2020

... all things
are possible
with God.

Mark 10:27, NIV



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

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

Pastor's Message



Every month I end my note in the *Messenger* with the same four words: see you in church. But that phrase sounds a bit different today. The last time I wrote those words, we were gearing up for the season of Lent, Easter, and whatever shenanigans spring break would bring. I wasn't planning for March 8th to be the last time we gathered for worship in the sanctuary. Since then, our outward expression as the church has also changed. We shifted our worship to being an online only experience before returning to in-person outdoor worship in mid July. We had to cancel some of the ways we serve the wider community, rescheduling our Genesis Garden and Trash and Treasure Sale for next year. Confirmation, baptisms, and even memorial services were rescheduled and moved to different settings. And, I have continued to see the amazing ways you've served each other during this difficult time. Instead of seeing you in church, I've seen you be the church even while the sanctuary doors have been closed. The church has always been more than just the building. You, as living followers of Jesus Christ, are what CLC is all about. Thank you for being the church, no matter what.

This edition of the *Messenger* is a little smaller than usual. Our hope is to provide a snapshot of where we are as a congregation. In this issue you'll find an update from our Finance Committee (spoiler alert: your generosity has been faithfully awesome), our Education team, and a word from the Choir. We also have a few online surveys for you to fill out as we make plans for the fall. For the most up-to-date information about the happenings at CLC, make sure to follow our Facebook Page (facebook.com/clc4u), Instagram (instagram.com/clc4u), and sign-up for our weekly e-newsletter (www.clc4u.com/SignUp) or you may call the church office, 201-391-4224, if internet capability is not available.

One question I've been receiving lately is about when we will return to worshipping in the building. We are entering the fall season, and the weather will be an issue while worshipping outdoors. The Church Council and staff have been in constant conversation about this since the pandemic began. Keeping each other safe and faithfully following Jesus are not mutually exclusive. One of the beautiful things about CLC is how intergenerational our community is. Our worship attendees range from being only a few months old to their mid-90s. We will continue to use the best guidance available, from the CDC and other sources,

to keep each other safe. This involves making sure we have the right procedures in place that work for our specific congregation. We are not a faith community that wasn't impacted by the coronavirus, and the risks are very real to us. One of our current benchmarks is to see how our local schools handle in-person gatherings. The church council will discuss this topic at our next council meeting in late September and will keep you informed every step of the way. We will return to in-person worship in the sanctuary, but there's no current timetable in place.

Many of my colleagues, as well as myself, have found comfort during this time in the writings of Martin Luther. In 1527, the plague was going from town to town, and he was asked if one might flee from a deadly plague. The central question in Luther's writing was about our calling in the midst of a crisis. As beloved children of God, claimed by Jesus who lived and died for us, we respond to a crisis by asking: what is in the best interest of our neighbor? Through grace, we become the entire focus of God. And since God has focused on us, we are called to be like God and focus on others. We do this by using the tools of our faith: prayer, Bible reading, gathering over the phone or online and through service. In other words, we model what Luther wrote almost 500 years ago when he wrote:

Therefore I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others.

If you have any questions, thoughts, or concerns—please know that I'm available. You can reach me at any time on my cell phone at 607-227-8761 (text messages work too!) or via email at pastormarc@clc4u.com.

And I know that I will see you in church because I keep seeing you be the church every day.

Pastor Marc

From Our President

To my fellow members of Christ Lutheran Church:

I hope that you are all safe and healthy during this time of the pandemic. We are living through a time where our faith and resolve are being tested. We are all looking forward to that time when we can all worship as we remember it to be.

As we wait for that time, the Council is working to ensure that Christ Lutheran Church continues to be the cornerstone of our faith experience.

With guidance from the Synod, we applied and received funds from the Payroll Protection Program. The funds that we received helped to ensure our financial stability.

The Redeemer Lutheran Gift Committee is working on projects to improve our office and building.

Most important is your continued support of our ministry. Your generosity sustains us as the Church. On behalf of the Council, Thank You, and I hope that you will continue to support our ministry.



Yours in Christ, Noel Ulanday

A Note from the Chancel (Adult) Choir



How do we keep singing during the middle of the pandemic? Our Chancel (adult) Choir is figuring that out! During the spring, the choir figured out how to participate in our online worship, and they're making plans for the fall. If you are interested in learning more about the choir - or interested in seeing how you can participate even from home—reach out to Argine Safari at arginesafari@gmail.com, or you may call the church office, 201-391-4224, if internet capability is not available.



Since February 2020, Koinonia's transition board and the management team have been working together on planning for the future of Koinonia, while tending to building repairs and remediation and day to day operations.

The mold remediation on all buildings was completed at the end of June, and the NY State mold assessor completed his testing during the middle of July. All buildings are free of mold. Roof repairs and replacement of sheetrock and insulation has been completed, but there is still much more to do. Painting and other repairs are to be completed by professionals or with volunteer labor. Repairs requested by the NY Department of Health and by Koinonia's insurance company are also being completed.

In May, the transition board of directors launched a five year \$500,000 capital campaign. By the end of August, a total of \$203,000 has been pledged and/or donated towards the capital campaign. Plans are moving forward with the capital campaign, and fundraising will begin in earnest soon. In July, with assistance from the Metropolitan NY Synod, the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA approved a loan to Koinonia of up to \$300,000. The loan is still in process and should be received by the end of September.

As of the end of July, Koinonia had \$23,000 in cash. Average monthly operating expenses were \$6,000. Monthly obligations to remediation contractors are \$5,000, and building repairs have averaged \$4,000 per month.

There is more work to be done, but the Koinonia board in their last newsletter wanted to thank all for your ongoing support as they move forward.

To learn more about the camp, visit their website at <https://www.koinoniany.org/>. Please keep Koinonia in your prayers, and prayerfully consider supporting Koinonia financially.

Kim and Tom Kearns

The Financial Health of the Congregation

The Finance Committee wanted to present a snapshot of CLC's current financial situation. Back in March and April, as the pandemic began to impact our congregation, the Finance Committee and Church Council made a plan to handle the financial health of the congregation. The plan addressed our short term needs and the possibility of a difficult summer and fall. We did what we could to live through this uncertain time in a faithful way. None of us can predict what the rest of the fall and winter will be like, but your faithfulness to your faith community has been amazing. The financial health of CLC is good, and that's because of your generous contributions. Below is a short snapshot of how our finances looked at the end of August compared to last year and our approved budget.

	Thru August 2020	Budged Thru August 2020	Thru August 2019
Financial Contributions	\$144,943	\$149,900	\$144,710
Additional Income	\$5,820	\$7,430	\$8,584
Total Income	\$150,763	\$157,330	\$153,294
Expenses	\$168,227	\$184,490	\$166,340
Net Loss	\$17,464	\$27,160	\$13,046

As you can see, our loss through the year is slightly greater than last year. This is due to a loss of additional income caused by the shuttering of our building. However, our loss continues to be well below what we expected, and your financial gifts are on-par with last year. Your generosity is what lets us be generous with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thank you for your commitment to being the body of Christ in our corner of Northern New Jersey. If you are looking for additional information about increasing your pledge or donating electronically, please visit the Stewardship section of this *Messenger*.

We also wanted to share two additional things about the financial health of the congregation.

In June 2018, we created what can be thought of as a line of credit with ourselves that allows us to use some of our temporarily restricted funds (stored in investments and managed by the Finance Committee) to help pay operating expenses. The amount available to use fluctuates depending on the value of our investments and our net income but is capped at \$50,000. Every month, we report how much is available that we can use. As of August 31st, we have \$50,753 available to pay our expenses.

In May, the congregation applied and received a PPP loan of approximately \$31,000 to pay staff salaries. The church council has oversight over the loan and is making sure we are following the rules necessary to have it forgiven. The numbers listed above do not include the PPP loan. We are currently working with our bank to apply for loan forgiveness at the earliest opportunity.

Tri-Boro Food Pantry: A Fall 2020 Update

The Tri-Boro Food Pantry, located in Park Ridge, has kept Northern New Jersey fed for over 30 years. Housed in the Pascack Reformed Church with its entrance in the parking lot for Park Ridge High School, the pantry provides families with fresh milk, eggs and other staples. Due to an amazing leadership team and dedicated volunteers, the pantry continues to expand its work in the area. We've partnered with local school districts to address hunger needs during the summer months. And we're working to expand our relationship with other pantries in the area to make sure all needs are met. Back in January, the board made plans to increase our foothold in the community and expected to serve roughly 30-35 families a week. Our budget for the year at the time was around \$20,000 that comes from grass root fundraising and local faith communities. The pantry is supported by donations from people like you and receives no formal funding from the government. As the treasurer of the Tri-Boro Food Pantry, I was excited to see how our partnership with the wider community could help fight food insecurity among families, seniors, and all who are in need.

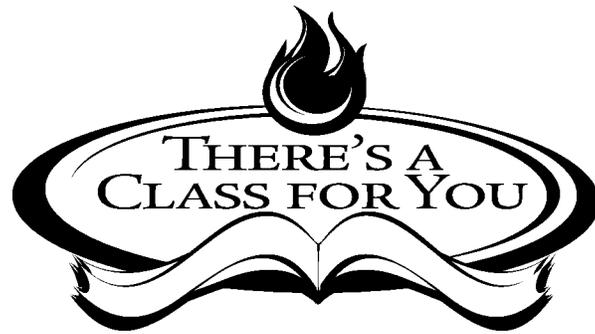
When the pandemic struck in March, the focus and mission of the Tri-Boro Food Pantry grew more intense, but its mission did not change. We established protocols to keep all clients and volunteers safe. We made the choice to increase the amount of food we give to families as job furloughs and layoffs grew. Rather

than serving 30-35 families a week, we now serve 110. The milk, eggs, and 2 bags of groceries that we used to give families has increased to five bags - with the addition of fresh produce and cleaning supplies when they're available. Our budget for the year grew from \$20,000 to \$110,000. And in the midst of this increasing need, your contributions and your support grew too. The wider community stepped up and contributed in large ways. People are hosting neighbor food drives and bringing bags of groceries to the pantry every week. I spend several nights a week depositing checks, writing thank you notes, and using your gifts to pay all our bills. We've partnered with a few local businesses to help them provide hot meals and other items to families in need. And I continue to see people in our community use their passions and energy to feed their neighbors. Last month, Park Ridge High School student Richie Weissenborn hosted a "meals of miles" fundraiser. For every mile he ran, family members and friends donated money to the pantry. He raised over \$5,000 dollars which provided approximately 250 hot meals that serve a family of four from a local deli. Demarest Farms, Bergen Restaurant Supply, Rotary of Park Ridge, Montvale Education Foundation, Peace Islands Institute, Pascack Reformed Church, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church, First Congregational Church, Park Ridge Elks, and the American Legion are just some of the organizations that are regularly contributing to the pantry. Without the community's support, the Tri-Boro Food Pantry could not feed our neighbors who are in need. Thank you for making a difference in Northern New Jersey.

If you would like to learn more about the pantry, visit www.triborofoodpantry.org. If you need food, give the pantry a call at (201) 573-9083. The pantry can feed you, and you won't be taking food from other people. If you would like to contribute financially to the pantry, you can mail a check to the Tri-Boro Food Pantry, 65 Pascack Road, Park Ridge, NJ 07656 or use Venmo @Triboro-Pantry. We're also running a monthly food drive. If you plan to attend in-person worship, bring any of the following to the church: mac and cheese, dish soap, paper towels, bags of black beans, household cleaners, or boxes of cereal. Your generosity will help your neighbors thrive!

Pastor Marc, Treasurer





Education for Kids, Youth, and Adults!

Sunday School News

We're busy creating new opportunities for kids this fall! Starting October 4th, we'll re-launch our twice a month Sunday School sessions. Details are still being worked out, but you can help by registering your family in advance. Fill out the form online here: www.clc4u.com/SchoolReg.

Confirmation

We're excited for our next year of Confirmation Classes to start! Orientation will take place on September 20th at 6:30 pm. This year, we're discussing how our faith interacts with our everyday life. We'll talk about praying, baptism, and what the Ten Commandments are all about. We're also partnering with our friends at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. Pastor Holliday will co-teach. The classes will be online to start. If your 7th grader or up would like to start confirmation class, please contact Pastor Marc at pastormarc@clc4u.com.

Adult Education: Introducing African-American Theological Thought

Last month, ten participants read through *Anxious to Talk About It* which discussed our experience when it comes to talking about race. The book included stories about the experience of racism and how our faith has a vital role to play in the discussion. One story in the book told the story of a poor white college student born in Appalachia who heard the gospel of Jesus Christ when it was expressed in Black theological thought. Several folks in the book study would like to know more about African-American theological traditions. We're going to take some time to explore that as well as re-reading parts of the Hebrew Bible from a womanist perspective. This study group is currently being formed. If you're interested in joining, please contact Pastor Marc pastormarc@clc4u.com. We'll arrange dates/times soon.

***A Word from the Stewardship Committee:
We Can Use Your Help!***



The Stewardship Committee is starting to prepare for our annual fall stewardship campaign. When you sit down and prayerfully consider how you can financially support your faith community, you help your fellow siblings in Christ make plans for the future. None of us expected what has happened in 2020, and we're not sure what 2021 will be like. But we can be assured that Christ is with us and that the Holy Spirit will still be here to guide us. Our budgets reflect our priorities, and sharing Jesus with all people will continue to be our number one priority. As we make plans for the fall, you can help us by taking a short survey online: www.clc4u.com/PreSurvey or you the church office, 201-391-4224, if internet capability is not available. Your answers will be kept confidential and will only be shared with the Committee. We want to know how you would like to make your pledge (either online, over the phone, or via paper forms) and if you expect your pledge might change due to change in employment, retirement, etc. When the fall drive starts, we'll connect with you in a way that works with your current lifestyle.

Hello from Care Committee to Christ Lutheran Church Members,

Hope you are all well. Care Committee unfortunately has had to cancel its usual activities over the past few months, and look forward to resuming events as soon as we can. With that said, we want to let you know that Knit1CrochetToo has continued to work on their projects, so they will be available when things do resume. We were given a \$100 check from Wegmans that we will donate to the Food Pantry. The prayer chain has been ongoing even during the pandemic, so please contact the church office if you have a need for prayer for someone.

Looking forward to seeing everyone real soon. Stay well and God bless.

Mary Zeigler,
Council Representative for Care

A Thank You

One of the ways we live out our faith is by supporting organizations and projects through our Special Gifts Fund. Every year we receive money from the Dominick and Anna Ricci Foundation and use that to make a difference in our neighborhood. We identify projects to support by taking recommendations from you. In next month's *Messenger*, we'll share more about that process. This month, we're highlighting one out of the many projects we supported earlier this year.

Backpacks for Life is a local charity supporting homeless and at-risk veterans struggling to reintegrate back into civilian life. Their initial support involves providing a customized backpack to help these veterans. Each backpack is filled with toiletries, supplies and resources pertaining to supportive services. Follow-up care is provided through mentorship and additional help that fits each veteran. A member of CLC learned about this organization after reading about them in the newspaper. You voted to send them \$2,500 which is enough money to supply dozens of backpacks and extra support services for homeless veterans.

A Reminder: Worship at CLC

When this *Messenger* went to print, there were three ways you can worship at CLC on Sunday mornings at 10:00 am.

- Online: visit <https://www.facebook.com/clc4u/live> or our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/clc4u/>
- 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.
- In-person and outdoors: Worship meets in our main parking lot. Please bring your own chair and wear your mask.

A Prayer To Share and Recite

*I weave a silence on my lips,
I weave a silence into my mind,
I weave a silence within my heart,
I close my ears to distractions,
I close my eyes to attentions,
I close my heart to temptations.
Calm me, O Lord, as you stilled the storm,
Still me, O Lord, keep me from harm.
Let all the tumult within me cease,
Enfold me, Lord in your peace.*

[A traditional Celtic prayer]

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