

The Messenger

September 2021



*Show Love
and Kindness*

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

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

PASTOR'S NOTE

One of the questions that is often unspoken in my home is simply: why do we do what we do? This often comes up when I'm asking my kids to do something new or challenge them to interact with their siblings in a different way. Too often, we don't sit and reflect on why our life flows the way it does. We don't wonder why we like the music we like, why we eat the food we do, or even why we pray in the ways that we do. Many of these ways of living in the world just seem to happen to us, habits that we picked up when we were children. And, even though some of us are very good at telling our kids to "think about what they did," we're sometimes too busy to do the same thing. The question "why" is a good question and one that invites us to do more than simply say "that's just the way it's always been."

Part of our exploration of joy in the month of August invited us to practice self-reflection. Self-reflection invites us to do more than just know ourselves; it also enables us to recognize the different experiences that show up in our life. Self-reflection is a practice that doesn't happen automatically. It is something we work on by learning how to pause our lives and simply wonder: why? Learning how to self-reflect teaches us how to take a breath to notice what really matters to us. And when we take a breath, we open ourselves to the possibility that life can be so much more.

This issue of the *Messenger* includes a few whys for you to digest. In it we share the reasoning behind why our two Sunday worship services will return October 3rd rather than mid-September. We share how the story of Easter inspired us to forgive almost \$2 million in medical debt so that 1200+ families no longer have to ask "why" essential medical care harmed their financial future. We'll also hear from the organization Feeding America, a special coffee hour hosted by CLCW, and the start of our own participation in the Bishop's Challenge. The rise of the delta variant, the uncertainty around the start of a new school year and worry about what comes next invites us to look to God and ask: why? That "why" is sometimes the best and most honest prayer we can make. We won't always receive an answer to that "why" in the way we might expect. Yet, we can lean into the answer to that question God has already given to us. The presence of Jesus in your life is God's answer to all our whys. In the face of daily life, God made the choice to live through life with each of us. We do the things we do because God's love, in Jesus, is God's answer to the whys of our lives. We are loved. We are included. We belong to God. And, we will continue to be a community where God's answer to why, Jesus Christ himself, will be at the center of who we are.

I will see you in the many different ways we are the church! Pastor Marc

GROWING IN GENEROSITY

Our Genesis Garden is Growing! You are making a difference feeding our neighbors in need. As of August 21st, our garden has produced over 300 lbs. of produce. We expect that number to increase now that tomatoes, eggplants and cucumbers are ripening. After one harvest, we dropped off 99 lbs. of fresh produce to the Tri-Boro Food Pantry. Volunteers at the pantry couldn't believe the size and freshness of the vegetables. We will continue to meet on Wednesday nights until the first frost. Make sure to sign-up for our Genesis Garden email list by contacting Tom Kearns (tkearnsnj@gmail.com) or the church office.

Tri-Boro Food Pantry's September Food Drive: Breakfast Items: You're invited to help gather a mountain of breakfast foods to support the food pantry. We're partnering with other churches and organizations to feed families during the start of the school year. If you can, please pick up a few breakfast foods (cereals, hot cereals, pancake mix, syrup and more) and bring them to the church by **September 19th**. Feel free to leave your donation in the yellow box in our narthex. You can also drop off your goods at the church office during the week.

A Note from Feeding America: At our most recent Congregational Meeting, we used our Special Gifts fund to support the work of Feeding America! Feeding America (www.feedingamerica.org) is one of many food organizations working hard to end food insecurity in the United States. They estimate that 1 in 9 Americans (42 million including 13 million children) will suffer food insecurity this year. Feeding America distributes food all across the United States through a nationwide network of 200 food banks which in turn supply 60,000 charitable food agencies (including the Center for Food Action). Our gift was joined with others to provide over 6 billion meals due to the Covid 19 Pandemic and its aftermath, as well as helping distribute 54 million meals to kids during the summer. And, every dollar we gave helped Feeding America secure and distribute at least 10 meals to people facing hunger. Together we turned \$5,000 into at least 50,000 meals. Thank you!

A Note from RIP Medical Debt: During the Easter season, we partnered with other Lutheran churches to help resurrect people's lives through the power of forgiveness. Our friends at RIP Medical Debt identified families struggling to pay their medical debts in Northern New Jersey. RIP Medical Debt then bought that debt and instead of seeking repayment used our financial gifts to forgive that debt instead. Without the burden of medical debt, these families can rebuild their credit and move forward with their lives. Your financial gift (including \$7,000 from

our Special Gifts fund) was used to forgive **\$1,946,935.16 of medical debt for 1221 families**. That was higher than our goal of \$1.5 million in forgiven medical debt. Each family whose debt was forgiven received a note sharing their freedom from this debt and how the Lutheran Churches of the Northern Mission District of the ELCA (i.e. us) donated the funds to make this happen. Thank you for helping so many families through your generosity.

Northern New Jersey Campaign Fulfillment Report

In Bergen County, 1,128 families had a total of \$1,398,431.80 (average of \$1,239.74) debt abolished.

In Passaic County, 93 families had \$548,503.36 (average of \$5,897.89) debt abolished.

Total: 1,221 families had \$1,946,935.16 total debt wiped out.

NEWS FROM CHURCH COMMITTEES

The Care Committee's Mission is to care for Christ Lutheran Church and the surrounding community. After a summer off from regular meetings, we'll meet again on September 14th at 10:00 am. The Care Committee is involved in our prayer chain, visiting members, keeping in contact with people in the midst of a crisis, providing meals, our prison ministry and spreading love throughout. Interested in learning more? Contact Mary Zeigler or the church office.

CLC-Women (CLCW) Hosts an Outside Coffee Hour Sunday, September 26th following worship. The plan is to serve coffee, with the individual creamers and sugar packets, lemonade, water and muffins. Items will be served individually and will avoid communal touching. We can't wait to check-in with each other in this safe and fun way.

A Financial Update: At the end of July, giving this year compared to 2020 is down 8.4%. Income was \$121,986, and expenses were \$146,316. Our loss through July was \$24,331, which is higher than last year and our budget. We have had only one month in 2021 when income was greater than expenses. This loss has been offset by the increase in our investments. We are currently not accessing any of the money out of invested funds (which we call Restricted) to fund our operations. As we enter the fall, your generosity is what allows CLC to do all that it does. Sign-up for electronic giving. Your faithfulness continues to be inspiring! Thank you for the ways you support www.clc4u.com/give.



9/11 Memorial Services

Pastor Marc is scheduled to participate in two 9/11 memorial services and you are invited to attend.

At 11:00 am, he'll pray with American Legion Post 153 at Veteran's Memorial Park in Park Ridge. This event is open to the public and is located across from the train station in Park Ridge.

At 6:45 pm, he'll be at Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church in Park Ridge, (2 Fremont Avenue). This service will take place after Saturday evening mass and will include readings, prayers and more.

Many towns will be commemorating the 20th anniversary of 9/11. Let Pastor Marc know of the events happening in your area, and he'll include them in our weekly e-newsletter.

Two Worship Services on Sunday

Pastor Marc and the Church Council have decided that we will return to two worship services on Sundays starting on October 3rd. We are delaying the start of this schedule to see the impact of kids returning to schools in our area.

Update on Live Streaming in the Sanctuary

After receiving two bids higher than expected, Pastor Marc and the Worship Committee are evaluating how best to add live-stream to our sanctuary. One of the main goals of this project is to make sure worship can be seen and heard. The audio quality of the live-stream is important and will involve connecting the organ, piano and mics to whatever system we install. We'll use our weekly e-newsletter to keep you updated on the project. Until the system is installed, we will continue having a pre-recorded worship option available on Sundays.



An Introduction to the Bishop's Challenge: The Jehu Jones Mission

During the 2020 NJ Synod Assembly, Bishop Tracie Bartholomew challenged every congregation in the Synod to have conversations about race (specifically the African American experience), commit to participating in a series of synod-wide events, help raise \$50,000 to support the lives of emerging leaders of African descent in our church today and help create a better future for all by being a part of Christ's beloved community. Over \$25,000 has already been pledged to the campaign including a gift from Zion Lutheran in Oldwick, the oldest church in our synod, which first met in the home of a freed slave named Aree van Guinee. On September 19th, we will share videos from the Synod retelling the story of Rev. Jehu Jones (which Pastor Marc shared in May) and invite you to participate in a Bible study beginning in October.

Three Sunday Morning Opportunities to Worship

- 1) Sanctuary worship, 10:00 am: Please wear a mask and refrain from greeting one another in the narthex. Special pew markers will show you how to sit six feet distant from those around you. Worship materials will be available on a narthex table: wine or grape juice and a brown paper bag with a bulletin and wafer.
- 2) Worship on Facebook, 10:00 am, visit <https://www.facebook.com/clc4u/live>
- 3) Listen to worship via Conference Call: dial 646-558-8656, enter meeting id: 827 672 730 and then #. Hit # to ignore participant id and enter password 195901.

We Need You! If you are available to be an usher or service coordinator during our fall schedule, let Doris Crouse in the church office know.

Mid-Week Wednesday Worship – The Oldest Church. The oldest church we have found was located in Dura Europas in Syria. It was a fortress city on the border between Persia and the Roman Empire. It was conquered in 253 C.E., and much of the city was buried. A Christian church was found inside the city's walls, and many paintings (especially those in the baptistery) were preserved. The paintings are housed 80 miles away at Yale University. We're exploring these paintings and what they say about our own faith practices today. These 30-minute mid-week worship evenings will include confession, prayer, music and communion. They'll premier on Facebook at 7:00 pm and will be available on YouTube throughout the day.

Kids and Adults: Education and More!

Sunday School Returns October 3rd: Our plan (at the moment) is for Sunday School to return on October 3rd. We'll meet in-person at 9:40 am while also providing opportunities for kids to join virtually as needed. Every two weeks, these 30-35 minute sessions will include a Bible story, art, crafts and other ways to experience the joy that is Jesus Christ. We'll have a special online sign-up form for Sunday School very soon. Contact Pastor Marc or Meredith Drobinske if you have any questions.

Confirmation: Our partnership with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church continues! A new year of Confirmation classes will begin September 19th. This year we will be digging into the Bible, providing an overview of all sixty-six books. If you are interested in the Confirmation program for your youth (typically in 7th and 8th grade—but no upper age limit), please contact Pastor Marc at pastormarc@clc4u.com.

Devotions: The Worship Committee is currently reviewing the devotions we distribute and, in the process, found several online devotions we wanted to share with you. If you're looking to add some daily devotions, check these out:

- Daily Grace: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/blog/category/daily-grace>
- God Pause by Luther Seminary: <https://www.luthersem.edu/godpause/>
- Daily Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries:
<https://www.lhm.org/dailydevotions/>

Five Wishes: The start of the school year is a good time to check off a few of the items you've been meaning to do. One thing you might have been wondering about is how to pre-plan for the unexpected. You can make a plan today that addresses how you would like to be treated if you were seriously ill. The Five Wishes is a series of worksheets that you can fill out that lets you talk with your family, friends, and doctor on how you would like to be treated if you became ill. Family members will not have to guess what you want. Pastor Marc has a few of these packets available and please contact him if you would like one.

An Update from Debbie Kruegle, Missionary

For the last several years, money from our Mission Endowment has supported Debbie during her work in Africa. She's with a group translating the Bible into local languages. She's been stateside for the first time in several years and will be visiting New Jersey soon. Here's a story she recently shared in her last email update.

When Joel (team leader in-country) arrived at the fairly new discipleship group in chief S's village, he was very excited to see all the chiefs carrying one or two of our Bible booklets. They were carrying them around everywhere so that whenever they had free time they could read God's word. Among these people the rate of divorce, spousal abuse and other severe family problems is very high. God frequently uses that need to open the door for sharing his word.

When marriage and family issues come up with people who haven't heard the Bible, the men blame the women for all the problems, and vice versa (although usually quietly). This happened in S's village several weeks earlier. But since then people have begun to read the Scriptures. On this day the men, several of them chiefs, confessed that after reading God's word they realized that many of the family problems were the result of men not taking their God-given responsibility to love, lead and care for their wives and children.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

Our Parish Administrator is available in the church office 8:30 am to 3:30 pm for all questions, comments and concerns.

Notice for a New Church Directory: We're updating our church directory! If your contact information has changed since 2019, let the church know. We're looking for information of all people who call CLC their faith community including youth now at college. You can share with us your updated information online at <https://clc4u.com/Contact> or by contacting the church office - (201) 391-4224 or clc4u2@verizon.net.

Update on Church Infrastructure Projects: We want to share updates about church projects happening which you voted on during our special congregational meeting:

The security system is currently being installed. Due to some unexpected delays in the worldwide supply chain and a need to make sure our entrances are up-to-code, we're currently re-evaluating the remote access options for the Opsal and Church Office doors. We do not know when the system will be fully installed, but the church council is keeping on top of the project.

THE TRAIN OF LIFE

A member shared this with Pastor Marc and he is sharing it with you:

At birth, we board the train and meet our parents [and guardians], and we believe they will always travel by our side.

As time goes by, other people will board the train; and they will be significant, i.e., our siblings, friends, [the family we also choose,] children and even the love of your life.

However, at some station our parents will step down from the train, leaving us on this journey alone. Others will step down over time and leave a permanent vacuum.

Some, however, will go so unnoticed that we don't realize they vacated their seats.

This train ride will be full of joy, sorrow, fantasy, expectations, hellos, goodbyes and farewells.

Success consists of having a good relationship with all passengers requiring that we give the best of ourselves.

The mystery to everyone is: we do not know at which station we ourselves will step down.

So, we must live in the best way, love, forgive and offer the best of who we are. It is important to do this because when the time comes for us to step down and leave our seat empty, we should leave behind beautiful memories for those who will continue to travel on the train of life.

I wish you all a joyful journey.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Bergen County Free Property Alert

Property and mortgage fraud is a fast growing crime where scammers record fraudulent documents - like fake deeds - or record fake liens - against property owners. In some cases, fraud on real property is not discovered for years. To address these concerns and protect one of your most important assets, the Bergen County Clerk has created a free service to notify you immediately via email whenever a document with your name is recorded in the County Clerk's Office. Visit bergencountryclerk.org, click on Services and look for "Property Alert" to sign up.

Community Conversation between Pastor Marc and Rabbi Loren Monsoon of Temple Emanuel of the Pascack Valley has been rescheduled!

Due to scheduling issues, our planned Interfaith Conversation with Rabbi Loren Monsoon did not take place in late August. Instead, we'll have a series of conversations starting on Wednesday, October 6th, at 8:00 pm. Save the Date and more information is available on the flyer below.



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FIRST | How We Got Here:
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Wednesday, October 6 | 8:00 PM

Explore effective strategies for cultivating relationships amongst Jewish and neighboring communities through a live conversation with Rabbi Loren Monosov, Reverend Marc A. Stutzel, and a diverse audience.

The conversation will be moderated by Rabbi Ron Symons of the Center for Loving Kindness of the JCC of Greater Pittsburgh and Reverend Liddy Barlow of Christian Associates of Southwest PA.

**RABBI
LOREN MONOSOV**



Rabbi of Temple Emanuel of the Pascack Valley, a Conservative Synagogue with a vibrant Early Childhood Program and Religious School, nourishing the soul and mind of all ages, while striving to bring justice and acts of loving kindness to our greater community.

**REVEREND
MARC A. STUTZEL**



Spiritual leader of Christ Lutheran Church in Woodcliff Lake, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) that feeds everyone through faith, worship, hope, and service.

Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey is a non-profit philanthropic organization dedicated to strengthening the vibrant Jewish community in northern New Jersey. In partnership with community organizations, Federation cares for those in need, builds relationships with the broader community, and strengthens the connections between northern New Jersey and Israel.

REGISTER HERE FOR THE VIRTUAL PROGRAM

www.jfnnj.org/conversations

For more information contact: Naomi Knopf | 201-820-3974 | NaomiK@jfnnj.org



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WOODCLIFF LAKE NEW JERSEY



Jewish Federation
OF NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

2021



2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Genesis Garden Night 6:00 pm Midweek Worship Facebook, 7:00pm	2	3	4
5 Worship--Holy Communion 10:00 am Sanctuary and Online	6 LABOR DAY Holiday Weekend (Church Office closed)	7 Worship Committee Meeting 8:00 pm	8 Genesis Garden Night 6:00 pm Midweek Worship Facebook, 7:00pm	9	10	11 9/11 Memorial Services 11:00 am and 6:45 pm (see article this issue)
12 Worship-- Holy Communion 10:00 am Sanctuary and Online	13 Finance Committee Meeting 8:00 pm	14 Care Committee Meeting 10:00 am	15 Genesis Garden Night 6:00 pm Midweek Worship Facebook, 7:00pm	16 Council Meeting 8:00 pm	17	18
19 Worship-- Holy Communion 10:00 am Sanctuary and Online Tri-Boro Sept. Food Drive donations due Confirmation Class Begins	20	21	22  Genesis Garden Night 6:00 pm Midweek Worship Facebook, 7:00pm	23	24	25
26 Worship--Holy Communion 10:00 am Sanctuary and Online	27	28	29 Genesis Garden Night 6:00 pm Midweek Worship Facebook, 7:00pm	30	Oct. 1	Oct 2

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