

OUT OF THE DARKNESS - THE STEWARDSHIP TIMES

Christ Lutheran Church & The Bridge Campus Ministry May 2022

"Connecting people to people • people to faith • faith to life" since 1955

"Out of the darkness, into the light" is the theme of this year's stewardship campaign. When we think of darkness in this season, we often think of Lent, Jesus' crucifixion, and the tomb—the repentance, sacrifice, and pain from which we have just emerged into Eastertide. When reflecting on darkness, it's so easy to forget that God made the darkness, that it is a part of creation which God saw as good. This pandemic has been an extended Lent, a period of repentance, sacrifice, and at times pain, but there has been goodness in the darkness. I give thanks for:

- **Your Passion** Your care for one another and our community neighbors is really unparalleled. I pray together we can channel that into concrete ways to move us forward in our shared ministry.
- **Your Willingness** to take leaps of faith. We have had some challenges around here and responded with changes. You have met these situations with a boldness and grace. I pray that you will continue to be bold in your answer to our stewardship call.
- **Your Generosity** When we needed more funds for emergency assistance and to support young adult ministries, you stepped up. When we have needed volunteers at the food pantry, Habitat, Friday Night Life, and even to bake for Bridge, you have stepped up. I am grateful for the many ways which you have given of yourselves to others and pray that God continues to provide you with the health and means to do so.

As we move into the lightness of Eastertide and the possibility of the pandemic moving toward endemic, excitement is palpable. Council and I have a vision for the future, one that is set for growth. It involves boldness: a willingness to fund a fulltime position in hopes of attracting an excellent candidate who can bring new gifts of administration and spiritual formation to our community. It is an investment in a passion of this congregation, to help our youngest and oldest members grow spiritually. And it is a leap of faith that can only be realized by your generosity. We ask you to prayerfully consider increasing your giving by 5%, recognizing that we would still be at a financial deficit. This is one of those moments where we are asked to step out in trust that He who began a good work in us will bring it to completion.

Many blessings,
Pr. Chad

New Bench in Memorial Garden

John Deno, pictured here with his grandson on our new bench, assisted the Property Committee in registering Christ Lutheran in Trex Company's community recycling challenge. In only 2.5 months, CLC collected over 500 pounds of plastic film refuse which the company recycled into a bench. Now you too can come sit a spell in our memorial garden!



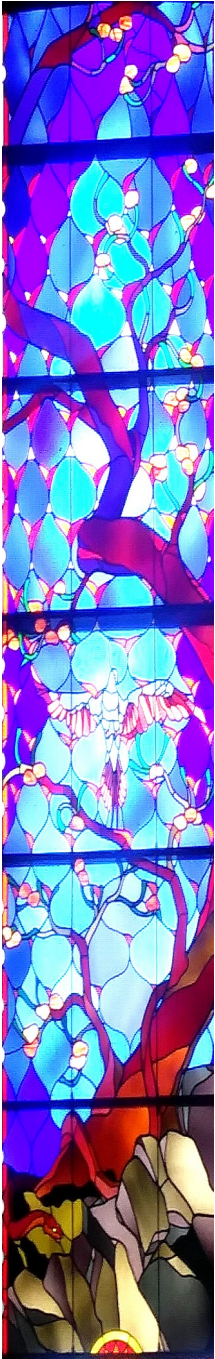
Lifelong Formation Committee

Council has created a new committee! It's mission statement is to view all people as continuous learners and provide opportunities to grow in faith and knowledge of the Gospel. Council recognizes that the future of faith formation is intergenerational, with young people learning alongside those with broader and deeper experience. The parents of our youth, too, have voiced a desire for their family to be more fully included in the life of the church. As a result, we have dissolved our Youth and Family and Christian Education committees and folded them into this new one. The change reduces the number of meetings folks need to attend, facilitates better communication, and allows for advocacy for and planning of intergenerational activities. Most exciting is Christ Lutheran's desire to hire a fulltime Director of Lifelong Formation and Administration to lead this committee and our volunteers into new growth and experiences.

INTO THE LIGHT - THE STEWARDSHIP TIMES

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2021-2022 CLC Highlights

Our Ministry at Christ Lutheran is a balance between action and reflection. While by no means an exhaustive list, here are a few highlights from this past year:

- **The Bridge Campus Ministry** - has experienced growth in the program, bonded with Pr. Chad in their transition under his leadership, and started a new semesterly breakfast giveaway. Thanks to George Weckman for use of his yard.
- **CLC LLC** - even with the pandemic lingering on, has managed to maintain full occupancy of the apartments. Expect to once again be able to offer benevolence funds in summer 2022.
- **Christian Education** - held outdoor VBS throughout the summer, continued with Theology on Tap online, and initiated a new "Milestones" program where youth receive an age appropriate Bible at different stages of their lifelong journey in faith. Merged with Youth and Family, see cover for more.
- **Life Together & Outreach** - encouraged and supported our faith family with positive social interactions like online hospitality times and thinking of you cards.
- **Property Committee** - completed several outdoor upgrades: repaved back parking lot, replaced vandalized parking signs, installed security cameras, and replaced the protective covering of the stained glass window featured at left, affectionately known as "George's Window." The committee and Nic kept us operating smoothly, and we are grateful!
- **Social Ministry** - met local food needs by organizing a CROP Walk and supporting monthly mobile food pantries, led a virtual Montaña de Luz service trip, and once again hosted a Friday Night Life for Good Works.
 - **Equity and Justice** continued to offer monthly discussion/reflection based coffee hours on issues such as immigration reform, Critical Race Theory, and oil pipelines. Initiated a monthly "wave of prayer" to lift up situations of pain and injustice around the world, so that we might connect and pray more deeply for our global kin.
 - **Earth Justice** published an editorial on plastics, is sponsoring a hope-filled creation care series based on *Regeneration* by Paul Hawkins, and is advocating for Christ Lutheran to consider becoming a Covenant Congregation for Creation Care, the details of which can be found on Lutherans Restoring Creation's website.
- **Youth and Family** - rebooted after being fully online during most of the pandemic. Hosted both educational and fun events for the whole family. Merged with Christian Education, see cover.

On Going Goals 2022-2023

- **Develop** youth and young adult ministries.
- **Create** a new strategic plan for the next 3-5 years.
- **Involve** our community in faith formation for all ages and in opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth.
- **Envision** a new future for the space currently occupied by the Student House

As Henry Nouwen writes, stewardship "is a very concrete way to help the kingdom of God come about. What is the kingdom? Jesus is clear that if we make the kingdom our first priority, 'all these other things will be given to you as well' (Matt. 6:33, NJB). The kingdom is where God provides for us all that we need. It is the realm of sufficiency where we are no longer pulled here and there by anxiety about having enough.... Jesus also compares the kingdom to a mustard seed, 'which, at the time of its sowing, is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet once it is sown grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade' (Mark 4:31-32, NJB). Even a seemingly small act of generosity can grow into something far beyond what we could ever ask or imagine." We thank you for all you have done this past year. It is more than we could have imagined, and we look eagerly toward the next. We are with you in Christ's mission.

The Stewardship Committee