



First of the Month @ CLC

January 1, 2023

Dear Christ Lutheran Church,

Happy New Year!

Let me begin by simply stating the obvious: it has been quite a year. While we continue to move through pandemic challenges, things are much better than a year ago. Though on campus worship numbers are down, on-line worship attenders continue to be strong. I am praying that more and more will return to on campus worship as vaccinations increase and symptoms of COVID lessen.

It has been a full year since the addition of Paul Delgado and Kurt Salierno. And what additions they have been! Under Kurt's leadership we have revamped our church security (restarting our security team and adding security cameras). He has also improved our custodial services and added the new Welcome Center in the foyer. And I value his insight and experience in working with those on the street. Kurt has improved CLC in so many ways.

And what a delight Paul has been. We all know that he filled a significant void and has done so admirably. His relationship with the choral department at COS has reaped the benefits of talented young voices to our 8:00 worship choir. And his leadership of the 9:30 praise team has been terrific. I am excited to see where Paul will take the music ministry of CLC into the future.

Christmas Eve was, of course, a highlight. The three worship services were warm and celebrative. There is nothing quite so wonderful as the 11:00 Service of Candles. I love singing "Silent Night" with our folks as we conclude worship and welcome an early Christmas morning.

The highlight for me this year, however, was the *Church Street Christmas* event at The Warehouse. Dozens of smiling volunteers (many of whom were CLC folks) set-up, welcomed the hungry, served

them, and cleaned up making this event the success it was. I generally wouldn't do this, but below is a picture of the activity and I have to share it. It was inspiring!



What remains on many people's minds is the work being done to call our next Lead Pastor. As I mentioned in my last First-of-the-Month letter, activity during December would slow down. However, there was a good turn-out for the December 11 Round Table Discussion hosted by the Transition Team. Our consultant, Jeff Kjellberg, was pleased with the conversation which took place, and the comments made regarding CLC's future. On January 21 the Transition Team, Call Committee, Church Board, and Church Staff (minus me) will meet for a retreat to clarify the messaging to potential candidates, and set forward a plan for the next phase in this process. Please keep these groups and this gathering in your prayers.

On December 20 the Church Board met with Pastor Manda Truchinski from the Synod office. Pastor Truchinski is working with the Board at finding a qualified pastor to serve as our (hopeful) short-term interim. On-going conversations will be taking place between the Church Board and Pastor Truchinski. The interim pastor will be very helpful in maintaining the ministry and activity of CLC. Again, please keep this process in your prayers.

A new leadership team has been created to support the work of Pastor Samee Singkeovilay and the ministry of the Lahu congregation. Representing the English-speaking church are Lori Berger (convener), Carol Finney, and Ann Zelaski. Representing the Lahu-speaking church are Ai See, Charlor Seechan, Ai Na See, and Chai See. They will meet monthly to support and make plans for the health and growth of the church. Also, in regard to the Lahu, Pastor Samee will be attending an ELCA conference in Thailand, and Nakor (his wife) will be attending a lay leadership course there as well. They will also enjoy a return to familiar settings and reconnect with friends and family. He will be away from January 7 to February 4. This is a much-deserved break from the ministry he has led for so long.

Your prayers are also requested as Boontham Seechan, the Lahu Music Minister, will step down beginning January 1. Boontham has served faithfully since the Lahu congregation started at CLC. He and his wife, Nathor, will continue to worship and even sing in the choir (good thing!). The search of a new Music Minister will begin immediately.

It is worth repeating the announcement made in worship about the success of our 2023 Pledging Campaign. 150 households pledged \$770,091, surpassing the goal by \$20,000! This is the single

highest pledge total ever recorded at CLC. Many thanks to our members who made such a promise. May God equip our folks with faith and passion as we enter this new, and transitioning, year!

And while the month of January will prove a little less hectic than December, activity continues. We will not meet for worship on January 1, but instead encourage our folks to begin the year with a Sabbath focus (I hope you have your activity box!). Our January worship series in the season of Epiphany is "We Want to See Jesus." The texts in January will reflect the early ministry start of Jesus, and the way people were attracted to him. And we will equally seek to renew the attraction we have for Jesus. January 8 is Baptism Sunday, so those who have not yet been baptized are encouraged to consider this opportunity. A pre-baptism class will take place Tuesday, January 3. And Bible studies, such as Tuesday's *Bible Meets World*, Thursday's *Theology on Tap*, and Sunday's *Sunday Morning Bible Study*, will pick up again.

And finally, we will say "good-bye" to long time and faithful member, Lois Justus, on Saturday, January 7. Her Celebration of Life service will be at 11:00am, with a committal to follow at the CLC Memorial Garden, and then lunch in the Community Connections Center. It is hard to lose such a wonderful member as Lois. But we are thankful she is reunited with her Lord, and those who have preceded her in heaven. I hope you can join us on the 7th as we truly will celebrate her life.

May God bless you in this New Year. I pray for all our members and ask that 2023 will be a wonderful year of spiritual growth and personal joy.

Peace, Pastor Brian