

CROSSROADS

Sept/Oct 2024

Cross of Christ Lutheran Church
Newsletter





Beloveds in Christ,

I want to use this space to share some thoughts I'm having about peace. Here are two passages about peace and both are pertaining to Jesus Christ.

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace.**” (Isaiah 9:6)

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. **I have not come to bring peace**, but a sword.” (Matthew 10:34)

In the first passage from Isaiah, the prophet indicates that Jesus will be called the Prince of Peace. In the second passage from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus himself says that he has not come to bring peace, but a sword, and goes on to say that he will bring division among families.

As followers of Christ, we pray for peace: peace in the world, peace in our homes, peace in our hearts. We strive for that peace, and still it is not always easy to feel peaceful. The news outlets continuously stream stories of war and violence all around the world and within our political system. Conversations between friends, neighbors and family members can be rife with tension. Sometimes even the most innocuous statements can be catalysts for arguments. My husband has a shirt that reads, “be a good human” and when he wears it, he is regularly on the receiving end of eyerolls and snide remarks.

We crave peace, and sometimes the effort to make peace within our relationships with others, does NOT bring us inner peace. Or if we try to bring about peace in the community by making a stand for what we believe in, we break down the fragile peace between our family members and ourselves. If we try to tune out the world and all its troubles so that we can have inner peace, we are missing opportunities to live out our call as peacemakers and justice-bringers to the world. And all of it can be exhausting.

I think while we may crave **peace**, it might be more realistic and achievable to strive for **balance**: balance between the work of justice and the need for rest. Jesus brings a sword and creates divisions so that we might see and hear more clearly the various points of view - and not quietly assume that all people think and believe and act the same way. This gives us an opportunity to engage in conversation and listen to others with open ears and open hearts. We do not have to agree with each other, but we can take the opportunity to at least understand and to build relationships built on respect and trust. We all want to be heard, and respected and valued. Perhaps this is what brings us peace, in the end: The presence of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, when he is brought into these difficult conversations we have with one another and even within our own hearts as we pray.

Continued

In these turbulent times, let us strive to do the work of peacemakers, listening and honoring one another, taking breaks when needed, and inviting Jesus to bring his love into all the broken parts of the world. I welcome your thoughts about what I've written and ways you have found to create peace.

Peace be with you, and peace flow from you,

Pastor Sam

- On another note: my daughter Elle had the opportunity to participate in the GWIM Kids Club this year. This is what she had to say:

Quote: "I had so much fun being with these kids. Getting to know them and spend time with them was always a delight. They were smart, funny, and absolutely adorable."



SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Charmaine Lawton, Kristen Benoit, Randy Bock, Dolly Caldwell, Linda Nido, Sue Piel, Becky Armington, Judy Juraschka, Nancy Cosgrove, Lisa Rapisarda, Carolyn Edquist, Britani Stephenson, Bob Blewitt & Jacky Anderson



Lainey, Joshua, Augusto C, Melvin V, Marnie I, Sr, Luna, Ziva, Jenn & family, Myra S, Kendall, Elaine W, Jim C, Arlene & William S, Judy J, Arthur F and family, Jacky A, Judi C, Barbara C, Brandi L, Eva B, Shawn Y, Candie L, The LeClair family, Mark B, Melissa H, Phyllis K, Ernst R, Iliana B, Nadia & Gary M, Glenn & Ann, Betsy C, Adam K, Don M, Lori, Susan A, Randy and Priscilla B, Randolph K, Jeff S, and all whom we send cards through our Care Card Ministry, on our prayer tree.



CHRISTMAS IN JULY - BACK TO SCHOOL

Thank you all!

On August 19, for the third consecutive year, we delivered hundreds of school supplies for the first-grade students and teachers at Wendell Cross School through our Christmas in July project. Pictured in the last photo: Bob & Delphine Blewitt, Teachers Sierra Batista and Michelle Quintana, and Nadia Marcella.

Ornaments marked with specific items were on Christmas “trees” in the community room, and all of you so generously donated. Seventy-two first graders received bags of crayons, pencils, erasers, stickers, and a snack. The teachers were supplied with many of the things they usually supply from their own funds, such as tissues, hand sanitizer, wipes, dry erase markers and glue sticks. The first-grade teachers promised to share their bounty with other teachers!

Nadia Marcella coordinated the project with Pastor Sam. Many helpers made ornaments and sorted and packed the items. The delivery team had an unexpected “surprise” when they arrived at the community room on the morning after the BIG RAIN--water on the floor everywhere! Luckily most of the school items were on tables; we only lost a few boxes of Kleenex and some plastic storage bags!



A SUMMER WINNER!

As we get ready to enter a new season—with many colors and changes—let us pause for a moment and give thanks for a summer of **Worship, Love, and Giving at Cross of Christ!**

I nominate **GWIM's Kid'z Club** for four weeks in July as our outstanding gift of love and partnership! I found myself in their midst just a few times, but I always felt a sense of joy, community, and fun—all at the same time! Watching kids enjoy breakfast and lunch, and then activities such as ball games, table games and crafts, swimming, picnics, and parachute play, revealed the love of Christ in new and different ways! There are many to thank, but our council leadership, particularly Keith Weston, and the help of our partner churches did so much to make this program happen!

In addition, there were healing mercies to all participants as three major heat waves threatened to undo activities as well! Thank goodness for our beautiful community room which offered cooling and healthy relief. As a former Physical Educator, I would have called it a “multi-purpose” room! And now we must deal with the flooding issue which our council and pastor are working diligently to overcome and rebuild our flooring space especially. Keep all in your prayers. AMEN

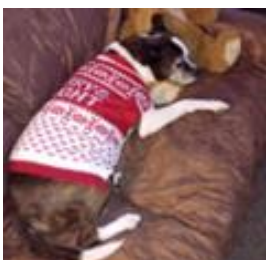
In closing, may I remind everyone that as a deacon in the church of Christ, my deaconess community embraces “*Prophetic Diakonia*.” It takes courage, love and COMMUNITY to deliberately go into suffering places and seek healing and justice. But into the messiness with love, respect and diligence we go, following the path of Jesus always! Amen. Ponder the following:



***Call us to be prophets:
not delivering messages of coziness
and comfort,
not seeking popularity and acceptance,
but willing to stay with the struggle,
to listen to the difficult,
to challenge the status quo.****

Peace, love, and justice always,
Sister Carol Weaver,
Abby and the angel dogs of Gracie and Charlie
*Deaconess Community

GRACE HAPPENS



Charitable Giving Ministry



The Charitable Giving Ministry of Cross of Christ Lutheran Church recently sent out three \$750 checks to Safe Haven for Abused Women, Salvation Army Women's Homeless Shelter, and the Connecticut Humane Society. A \$1,150 check will also be used to provide a picnic table to GWIM so that lunch recipients, who since COVID had no place to eat their meals because they have not been allowed inside to eat, can now enjoy their meals in comfort. Also, a \$600 check was sent Woodbury's Methodist Church for Ecuador's building fund. We are so honored to be able to provide these wonderful organizations with a little extra help to continue to provide their services.

Elaine, Pat, Lisa R, and Blanche



311 Murdock Ave
Meriden, CT 06450
(203)238-3650

Dear *Members of The Cross of Christ Lutheran Church,*
On behalf of the Meriden Humane Society, we would like to thank
you for your generous donation of \$ 750.⁰⁰.

We rely fully on the support of our amazing community to rescue
animals in need, and could not do so without your donation.

As a result of your generosity, we can continue to help animals in
need by providing food, shelter, vaccinations, and veterinary
care.....in addition to ensuring they are all spayed/neutered.

From the bottom of our grateful hearts....and on behalf of all the
animals we continue to help now and in the future, Thank you!

Warmly,

Meriden Humane Society Volunteer

*Thank you for
your support.*

The Meriden Humane Society is a Non-Profit 501(c)3 Organization
All donations are tax deductible.
The IRS requires written substantiation of charitable gifts of \$250.00 or more.
No Goods or services were provided in exchange for this gift!
501(c)3 # 06-1026129

email: info@meridenhumanesocietyrescue.com

Cross of Christ Property Report

Summer 2024



- June, fired Easter Seals and hired another cleaning contractor from WARC for \$65 per week versus \$100 per week. Cleaning is done on Thursday morning.
- July installation of keyless entry system by Mule Security. Currently fine tuning its use. Keys have been collected from both NA groups and automatic unlocking is occurring at specific time, 30 minutes before meeting and lock 30 minutes prior to completion of meeting.
- Accessible door closer reversed and tweaked to close correctly.
- Flood mitigation is ongoing. Mold testing positive in kitchen, most likely due to ground water standing in air return under cabinet. This was exposed during testing. We will pump remaining water from this area and bleach. A new metal cover will go over the hole.
- Community room is free from mold. Rental Fans and Commercial dehumidifier were run for one and two weeks in community room. Fresh air was allowed daily. Flooring replacement quotes are ongoing. It is recommended we use a vinyl flooring versus our current. Quotes from Prospect Flooring and Gagnon flooring are awaiting. Samples will be available on Sunday
- Fahey Plumbing came and inspected our water mitigation system. Only recommendation is to clean out accessible entry door drain.
- To do, change out filters to furnaces before heating system. Paint trim around closet door, varnish closet door, another coat on kitchen door and paint that trim. Outdoor rid backyard of the bamboo. Looking for inexpensive solutions.

Respectfully submitted:

Elaine and Keith Weston



Elisabeth Breslav ~ WW II

We were very honored to have Elisabeth Hofboer Breslav speak to our Conference Series on September 14. She wrote the book *Five Years Under Nazi Occupation: A World War II Memoir of Resilience and Survival in the Netherlands*. She related some of the horrible situations that she lived under when the Nazi's occupied her country from 1940-1945, when she was 12-17 years old. She was not Jewish, and did not suffer the unspeakable horrors that befell them, but she and everyone else did still suffer terribly.

Elisabeth did not accept any money from the sale of her books. All the money went directly to the publisher, and he in turn sent the money that she would have made to the International Red Cross. That was a beautiful gift that she gave.

(In my mind, although she is no longer a believer in God, I hope that maybe when she dies, He will look upon her goodness and say that she did well.)

Submitted by Blanche Feero





Care Card Ministry: *First Thessalonians 5:11: "Therefore encourage one another and build up each other..."* Cards sent: June 2024:13; July 2024: 17; August 2024:4. During October, please contact Sharon with requests and updates. Let us know of address changes. We send cards as requested to anyone you add to our prayer list. We have sent our first card out of the United States. Jacky and Nadia—we are keeping you in our thoughts and prayers. Thanks to each of our volunteers 😊.



GWIM: *Deuteronomy 15:11: "I, therefore, command you, 'Open your hand to the poor & needy neighbor in our land.'"*

• **Statistics--Soup Kitchen:** *May 2024*—22,342 & *Food Pantry*—22,906. *Soup Kitchen: June 2024*--22,401 & *Food Pantry*—25,610. *Soup Kitchen: July 2024:* 22,765 & *Food Pantry*--22,800. *Soup Kitchen: August 2024*—22,869 & *Food Pantry*—21,606.

- **Donations to Food Pantry:** May 2024—less than 7 items. June 2024—57 items. July 2024—34 items. August 2024—16 approximately. If anyone removes items or adds items, please note this on the log sheet. **Updated needed items for the food pantry:** Special needs during warmer months, large size jars Mayonnaise. Changes to fall needs will be announced when available.

Learning Committee Notes: Surprises: Children gave out a surprise in August at Coffee Hour; an autumn surprise is planned. Crafts: An autumn craft was sent home with children in mid-September. Early October—children and adults will be invited to paint a rock for our garden cross. Thanksgiving craft--will be sent home with children in late October. New Advent materials are under review.



Pollinator Garden: *"One is nearer God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth."* (Dorothy Gurney). It is time to change our garden flags. We need religious garden flags for fall, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The remembrance/faith cross we plan to complete by the end of September. God is at work in our gardens--during Pastor's sermon, the flags were moving as if touched by a gentle wind when there was none. Several visitors have shared how special the gardens are. The tall plant closest to the ramp door is Amaranthus, Red, Spike. Only God knows how it came to us—it is lovely and now about five feet tall in its second year. The pansies donated by Cheshire Nursery to our surprise continue to bloom. My grandfather gave me my first pansies when I was seven. That time with him was so special reminding me how times like this are memories forever for our youth. Thanks to Lisa R, Sister Carol, Pastor, and Linda N for watchful eyes letting us know of many butterfly visitors. One Sunday afternoon I counted about 25 bees and butterflies on the largest butterfly bush! For spring—? create a herb garden in a raised bed. Contact Sharon for questions/information/ suggestions. Outreach--Lutherans Restoring Creation invites us to send photos of the garden.



Social Advocacy: *"We are called to be a voice and spirit for the voiceless."* **NE Synod: Green Team:** Meetings resume the 4th Monday in September at 1:00 pm. See the August edition of the Green Team magazine at the NE Synod site. "Advocacy for Democracy and Planetary Care" shares the precious gift of voting. From Bishop Piphon: "In response to God's love for the world announced in Christ, Lutherans are called to

nourish life love and serve our neighbors, and care for generations to come. Not everyone is called to do the same thing, but faith active in love calls each of us to something.” **EcoSpirituality program:** Meets the second Sunday evening of each month as we explore our relationship with creation in this time of calm contemplation sharing experiences and prayers. **ELCA: Lutherans Restoring Creation:** Connection Calls: 09/24/24—Special program—anniversary one year celebration of partners “One Home, One Future. 10/29/24—“Emissions and the USA’s Fair Share.” Thanks for considering phasing out Styrofoam cups to protect our environment 😊. Summer connection call focused on climate change. ELCA encourages us to review where we make investments to determine if our values and the values of the institution are not in conflict. **ELCA Advocacy See web site for June, July, August** editions—see web site. **God’s Work Our Hands at Home:** Contact us for help with “little things” or “big things.” A tip from AARP to avoid being scammed--look at the Email address or phone number--if you do not recognize it, do not enter the site or answer the call. **Waterbury Environmental Commission (WECC):** I am now a Commissioner. If you have questions/concerns, contact me.

New England Synod: Camp Calumet— Book study 10/28 or 10/29: Jim Wallis' The False White Gospel." Pumpkinfest October 26.

ELCA: New post on ELCA Advocacy: ELCA Election Activator Network; next regular Advocacy Connections will resume soon.

Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology: 09/24/24 free online all-day event celebrating “One Home One Future.” See web site for details.

Web sites: New England Synod: www.nelutherans.org **Camp Calumet:** www.calumet.org **ELCA:** www.elca.org **Green Team:** www.nelutherans.org/howeare/people/greenteam
Lutherans Restoring Creation: <https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/> **WELCA:**
www.womenoftheelca.org **Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology:**
<https://www.onehomeonefuture.org/1-year-anniversary>

Submitted by Sharon Samoska



Please submit your entries for Nov/Dec newsletter by 11/19. Thank you!

THE BEAUTY OF GOD'S NATURE



God's Yellow Woolly Bear Rescue:

In unusual places God gives us gifts of creation. At a Home Depot I saw this bright critter crawling on concrete. I enticed it onto a plastic card and brought the critter home. It is a yellow woolly bear, yes a species related to our orange and black woolly bear. The clerk looked at me and smiled as did a customer behind me. Thanks to God for a touching moment.

Another precious moment in God's world of nature. This was at Cross of Christ. This small butterfly rested on my index finger just until I got the photo and then flew back to the cone flowers. They normally will not allow you to touch them. God's loving touch--the critter was resting on the hot pavement and I think appreciated the coolness.



Another gift from God!! This Amaranthus just appeared one day. They're not easy to find, so when we saw it, it was quite the surprise!!

Submitted by Sharon Samoska

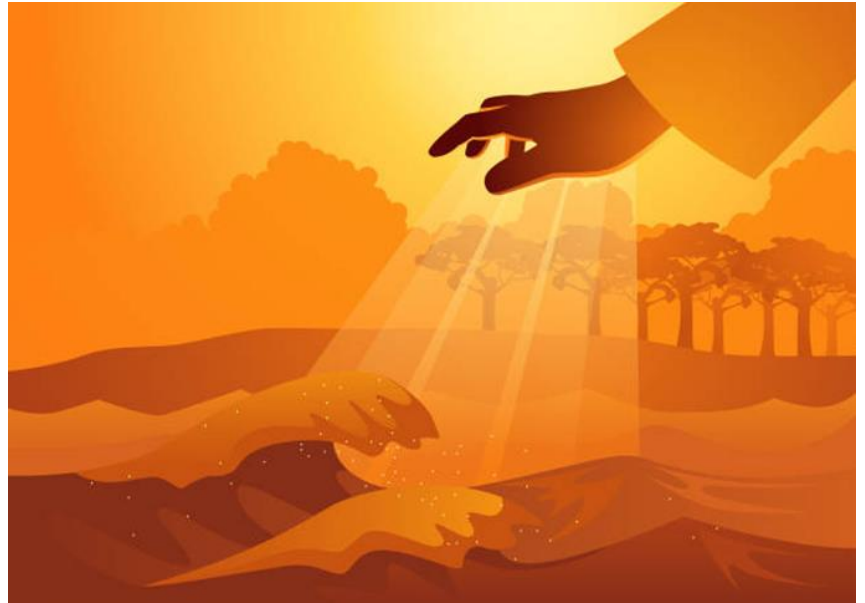


Additional picture submitted by Linda Nido



God's Touches through Creation...

- The gentle touch of tending...
- The strong touch of protecting...
- The soothing touch of water...
- The sustaining touch of feeding...
- The serving touch of weeding...
- The hushing touch of dusk...
- The waking touch of dawn...
- The beautiful touch of rainbows...
- The bright touch of autumn leaves...
- The joyous touch of love and hope...
- The touching voice of God...
- The comforting touch of God...



God calls us, soothes us, inspires us through Creation especially at this change of seasons from the busy-ness of summer transitioning to the brilliance of autumn with its newness and its bridging to a greater calm and anticipation of winter. Let God touch your heart and spirit. Share God's touch with another. Give thanks for God's garden enveloping you--the trees, plants, rivers and oceans, the light of day and dark of night. Nature calls to us, nature cries to us, nature is us...

*Sharon Samoska
September 2024.*