



January 2021

A Publication of
Christ Lutheran Church
113 Union Street
Natick, MA 01760

Website: www.christnatick.org
Phone: 508-315-3170
E-mail: office@christnatick.org

The Rev. Rebecca Bourret, Pastor
pastorbourret@christnatick.org

Tom Berryman, Music Director
musicdirector@christnatick.org

Gretchen Rowley
Administrative Assistant
office@christnatick.org

Gail Weston-Roberts,
Youth & Family Ministries Coord.
youthdirector@christnatick.org

Bruce Schnepfer
Property Manager

Kim Petot
Bell Choir Director

Leaders of the Congregation:

John Whitlock - Finance and Property
Frank Miller - Financial Secretary
Amy Lousararian - Endowment
Phil Roberts - Worship, Music, Visual Arts
Jeffrey P. Kinney - Stewardship
Carol Virshbo - Professional Leadership
Mary Avalos, Robin Hurst - Family Promise
Edie Lohr, Altar Guild

Congregation Council:

Hilding Hedberg (2021)
Celeste Larson (2021), President
Amy Lousararian (2021), Secretary
Peter Miller (2021)
Edie Lohr (2022), Treasurer
David Ripp (2022), Vice President
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Patricia Bianco (2023)
Martha Cronin (2023)

Christ Lutheran Church

REPORTER

Ring in the New Year ~ Welcome, 2021!

How can we effectively keep our community abreast of events, on-going programming, and uplift our mission of engagement?

Currently, we find ourselves at a place in time where information is available at lightning speed. Updates and events can be broadcast via email instantly to an almost infinite number of people. We have a weekly newsletter that provides a platform for our internal committee work and community partners to disseminate timely, relevant, and mission-driven information. As it evolves, our newly launched website is meant to be both a useful tool for church members as well as a dynamic portal representing our leadership and strategic direction. While we have made the decision to discontinue the Reporter, we will still be posting and providing the information contained within it but we hope to do so maximizing our other information platforms: email, the website and the weekly newsletter. What would you like to see in the coming months? Do you have ideas on how we can continue to stay connected while we are also isolating and riding out a devastating pandemic? We would love to hear them.

If you still would like to participate so your voice and preferences can be heard, please email your thoughts to the office email: office@christnatick.org or complete an anonymous survey [here](#). As always, thank you for your commitment.



Pastor's Page

An atheist contributor blogged recently about the distinction between “evidence” and “proof” on the media platform Patheos, which describes itself as “the premier online destination to engage in the global dialog about religion and spirituality.” Proof, he wrote, is indisputable, while evidence may lead only to probabilities. All assertions about God, he maintained, lie in the conceptual realm inside our heads. The tone was respectful, not mocking, but the writer argued that theological assertions must be supported by evidence—“sharable, repeatable observations.” (John Richards, “Proof versus Evidence,” Patheos, 12/26/20)

It is an argument that partly makes me want to shrug, “okay”—because faith has never been an evidentiary enterprise, at least in the sense that it’s subject to a trial to determine its validity. Faith is, first, a gift of God through the Holy Spirit. Christian faith is, in fact improbable—no, not the virgin birth or the miraculous healings nor the bodily resurrection (though they may also be improbable), but the incarnation itself: the idea that God would join us on this difficult, messy, complicated, often painful journey of human life. And that -- in the face of all evidence that the cosmos is in peril, that nations rage, that might prevails, that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer and the in-betweens simply disappear -- God still reigns, and will bring to fulfillment the promise of a world of righteousness and peace. A world where the abundant goodness of creation is enjoyed by all. As often as not, it is contrary to easily apprehended evidence. As the apostle writes, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

Faith to trust these truths is thus a gift: “I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common, true faith (from Luther’s explanation of the third article of the Apostles’ Creed, Small Catechism).

Yet...there is evidence. Evidence in the surprising ways that the reign of God begun in Jesus pops up here and there, when people behave in ways that serve not their narrow self-interests but the well-being of neighbors, those marginalized, the stranger, the planet. Evidence in the disruption of exploitation of the earth, unfettered greed and consumerism, resentment and retaliation, and human oppression. Led by God’s Spirit, we act in ways that upend those patterns, and we become the evidence...epiphanies of the gracious dominion of God.

On January 6 we celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord, the revelation to the sages from the East of Jesus’ sovereignty, followed by additional epiphanies: his baptism in the Jordan, turning water to wine at Cana. But the final epiphany is the one that comes later—in his willing obedience unto death and resurrection on the third day.

None of us—I don’t think!—can change water to wine; but we have been baptized, named as God’s beloved children and commissioned to usher in God’s liberating reign, to spend our lives and our resources to provide “shareable, repeatable observations” not only of God’s being, but of God’s favor. God’s Spirit has visited you...us...we can be the evidence the world needs to see.

Peace in Christ.

Pr. Rebecca Bourret

Music Notes ~ January 2021

Tom Berryman, Music Director

Our CLC players and singers pack a potent musical punch, don't you think?

Bells, voices, guitars, mandolin, accordion, flute, violin, viola, piano, clarinet, organ: an impressive array of wonderful sounds leading our Sunday and special services.

-Ten cantors record the appointed Psalm for each Sunday on a scheduled rotation.

-Twelve singers regularly add their recorded voices to hymn singing and anthems.

-Our Thursday evening CLC Choir meets via ZOOM to build vocal and musical skills, to sing hymns and to rehearse new and archival music.

-Ten bell players rehearse in two groups at the church and record music for prelude, postludes and hymns.

-Instrumentalists have been regularly recording music for Sunday services and meditative music for the Daily Reflections.

-Anders Carlson, a sophomore at UMASS Lowell in music technology has been our chief recording engineer and advisor.

We expect to continue to meet the challenges of "remote" worship and music making as the liturgical seasons unfold in 2021. We welcome your support of these efforts and your participation. Add your skills to our bands of musicians. And thank them when you see them!

Please check out our new page of recent CLC musical recordings on the website:

CLC MUSIC

CLC Voices:

Gyongyi Molnar
Anne Weaver
Gail Weston-Roberts
Mary Wolf
Anna Carlson
Audrey Colson
Celeste Larson
Hannah Kinney
Anders Carlson
Hilding Hedberg
Robert Weaver
Scott Carlson
Jeff Kinney
Jim Nail
John Whitlock

CLC Bells Kim Petot, Director

Monday Bell Choir:

Elinor Holm
Ryan Schnepfer
Peter Miller
Anne Holm
Frank Miller

Thursday Bell Choir:

Carol Virshbo
Mary Wolf
Ellen Zagajeski
Judy Jorgensen
Robin Hurst

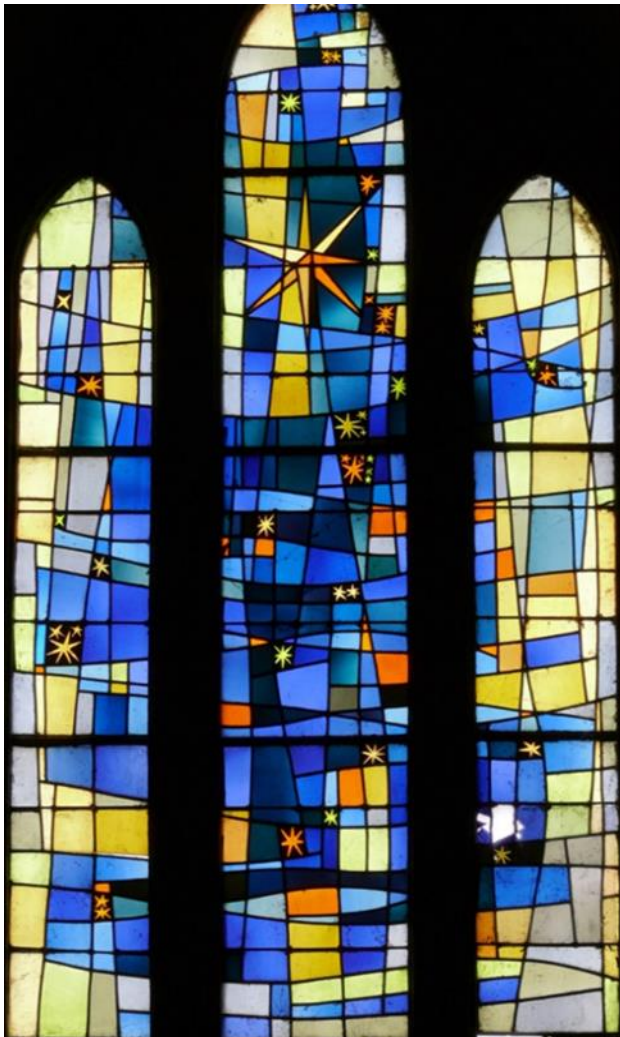
CLC Players

Andrew Avalos, clarinet
Anders Carlson, guitar
Anna Carlson, bass
Scott Carlson, guitar
Joan Ellersick, viola
Frank Miller, accordion
Jim Nail, guitar
Kathy Sheperd, violin
Anne Weaver, flute
Gail Weston-Roberts, mandolin and percussion



We were thrilled to bring our community together virtually to celebrate all we have accomplished this year and to continue KEEPING THE PROMISE to support our families in their time of greatest need.

We are even more thrilled to share we raised \$161,000 at the virtual concert on December 5th to support our communities' most vulnerable populations. Thank you to everyone who participated! If you missed the concert and want to view it, click [here](#) for a link.



Through our connections with MISN, we became aware of 'David' in early December. Six years ago, David was living in Worcester with his family. Although he was born in the US Virgin Islands (and therefore a US citizen), David was arrested by ICE, and ultimately held for six years in an Alabama detention center. He was released for reasons unknown on November 30 and provided transportation back to the Boston area. A small group of folks, including members of CLC, have been working to provide him the means to get back on his feet and, with help from Ascentria Care Alliance, to identify long-term housing in Worcester. With friends from other churches and organizations, we are hoping to be able to cover his basic expenses for three months, while he finds work and begins to re-imagine what it is to be free. We estimate that it will cost approximately \$2,400 for three months. The hope is that this will be shared by two or three congregations. David is very motivated to find a job, to begin working and to continue with his life. He just needs a little assistance to begin.

Checks should be made out to Christ Lutheran Church and mailed to the church office; write "for David" in the memo line. For more information on how you can help, please contact Rolf Larson or Pr. Bourret.

Credit Card Donations:

Kudos' to Joyce Simon for the excellent job and hard work she did in getting our new Website up and functioning. One of the long-awaited important options the Website now offers is the ability for donors to make donations to Christ Lutheran for any purpose by using their credit card. We are grateful for each and every donation given to our ministry. If your best choice for making a donation is by credit card we are pleased to receive it. I ask however, if you plan to make donations by credit card and you are able, to please consider clicking the "yes, I'll pay the credit card fee" box, thus we will receive the full amount you intended to give.. Credit card fees cost 3.5% of the total donation. Thanks for your consideration.

Edie Lohr, Treasurer



**Do you have a friend or family member
who would enjoy receiving
an inspirational card from our church?**

Please give Lisa Chan the information, and she will ensure that a card or cards are sent to your friend or loved one.

Lisa's email address is thechanclan@yahoo.com

ASSISTING LIST FOR JANUARY 2021

THIS TABLE CAN BE FOUND ON THE CLC WEBSITE UNDER **WORSHIP** BANNER

Date	Liturgical Day or Setting	Time	Prayer Leader	Reader 1	Reader 2	Amen Corner	Cantor
January 3	2d Sunday of Christmas	10:00 a.m.	Joyce Simon	Phil Roberts	Lana Peta	George Hall & Martha Cronin	Anders Carlson
January 10	Baptism of Our Lord	10:00 a.m.	Carol Virshbo	Amy Lousararian	Rolf Larson	Lisa Eck & David Ripp	Kim Petot
January 17	Second Epiphany	10:00 a.m.	George Hall	Mary Pollard	Edie Lohr	Rolf & Celeste Larson	Gail Weston-Roberts
January 24	Third Epiphany	10:00 a.m.	Marianne Swenson	Alan Avalos	Margit Smith	Patricia Bianco	Hannah Kinney
January 31	Fourth Epiphany	10:00 a.m.	Russell Pollard	Beth Castro	Gyongi Molnar	Lydia Roberts	Jeff Kinney



1 Give thanks and praise that God knows intimately our complexities, failures, accomplishments, questions, goals and hopes, and still looks upon us with loving kindness, newness and a desire for us to thrive as individuals and communities.

2 Pray for our companion churches and international leaders as they confront multiple waves of the pandemic. Ask the Spirit to fill them with hope, resilience and reassurance that our faith in the presence and love of God, which we share as siblings in Christ, will unify us in caring for one another and in doing God's work in the world, using our diverse gifts, cultures, languages, resources and perspectives in every circumstance.

3 Give thanks and praise to God that we are children of God, knowing and testifying to the good news that Jesus Christ became flesh and lived among us, and that we have seen the glory of God's only son, full of grace and truth for the world.

4 *National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month* We remember and pray for victims of sex trafficking, involuntary servitude, debt bondage and forced labor in our nation and around the world, and we ask God's guidance in caring for victims and actively working to end this abuse, injustice and oppression.

5 Pray for Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, members of the ELCA Church Council and the Conference of Bishops. Give thanks for their humble service, their faith in Christ, their leadership and gifts, and their commitment to wrestle with difficult decisions and issues for the sake of the church and the world.

6 *Epiphany* As people of faith, we are not immune from wondering about God, Jesus Christ and the Spirit. Pray that God will be patient with us, illuminating the truth of who we are as baptized children of God and the reality and certainty of the good news of Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, our Savior, Messiah, Redeemer and teacher.

7 As the pandemic continues, pray for doctors, nurses, emergency responders and health care workers who need renewal, strength and our gratitude and recognition as they continue to serve at great personal risk and sacrifice for the sake of our health and well-being.

8 Give thanks for the people in our lives who inspire hope, faith and courage, and whose words and actions touch us, teach us the meaning of grace and move us to become bearers of mercy in the world.

9 In Christ we have received forgiveness of our sins and salvation through God's unfathomable grace, showered upon us every day. Praise God!

10 Give thanks for God's love and forgiveness in baptism, which marks the beginning of our journey with our siblings in Christ to share the good news, serve all people, grow the church and strive for peace and justice in the world.

11 Pray for parents, students, employees and business owners whose plans and routines change day by day and week by week due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, that they might be hopeful, resilient and able to adapt, change and endure.

12 Pray for our faith-based schools, early childhood education programs and day care centers as they provide experiential education, social interaction, stability and calm for the youngest of our children, who are often most vulnerable during times of uncertainty and anxiety.

13 God is mighty, majestic and eternal throughout the universe, generously sharing strength and blessings with us. Give glory and thanks to God, and shout for joy!

14 Ask God to help us practice justice, generosity and care for creation, sharing our resources with others who have few or who have lost resources or productive land as a result of natural and human-caused disasters.

15 Pray for the young adults who have applied for a yearlong journey in international service with our companion churches and organizations through the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program, which will resume in 2021-2022 after a time of sabbath during the pandemic.

16 Thank God for our special relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a full communion partner with the ELCA since 1997; pray for the church, its members and its leaders, and pray that together we will find strength and new resources for the

work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor, especially in these uncertain and challenging times.

17 Jesus invited Philip to follow him as a disciple, and Philip, in turn, invited Nathanael. Ask God to help us be faithful followers, students and, at the same time, disciples eager to invite others to join in God's good work in the world.

18 *Martin Luther King Day* Today we remember the life, ministry, sacrifice and activism of Martin Luther King Jr. Pray that his life and the legacies of others who have fought for civil rights and social reform will inspire our own commitment and persistence in working for racial justice, dismantling racism and combating white supremacy.

19 We may argue about what is legal, what we are entitled to or what we have the right to do with our bodies and lives. But Paul reminds us that we have been made one with the body and spirit of Christ; we "were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." Pray that the Spirit will guide us to live with humility and deference for who we are in Christ and in obedience to the ways and desires of God.

20 *Inauguration Day* As members of society and the church who represent varied political affiliations and perspectives, pray together for our nation's newly elected president and vice president, that the Spirit will grant them wisdom, strength, commitment to serving all people, a deep understanding of justice and mercy, and the courage to enact change for the well-being of our communities and nation.

21 Pray for the ELCA World Hunger Leadership Gathering, an online event happening right now that gathers ELCA World Hunger leaders for learning, networking, sharing ideas and planning for our common ministry to address hunger and its root causes.

22 Pray for reconciliation, understanding and renewal in our divided nation so that we might work together for justice, compassion and generosity, serving our neighbors in need and the well-being of our communities as they struggle with vexing, deep-rooted problems. Ask the Spirit to inspire and guide our lives so that our values, decisions, actions and words reflect the gospel, the teachings of Jesus and the ways of God, who is good, gracious, merciful and just.

23 Praise God that, as small and insignificant as we might be in the vast universe, we are wonderfully made and God knows every little thing about us and our human ways.

24 In Scripture we read about Jesus' simple, personal and compelling invitations to Simon, Andrew, James, John and the other disciples to drop everything and follow him. Pray that when God calls us to follow and serve, we will respond with faith and trust, even if we do not yet know where God is leading us or what God is calling us to do.

25 Pray for ministries, nonprofit organizations and agencies that serve the daily needs of communities, families and individuals; pursue justice and equity; build resilience to cope with disasters and crises; accompany immigrants and refugees; and bring the hope and love of Christ where there is despair and weariness.

26 When, like Jonah, we are reluctant to forgive, practice mercy or share the gospel with those we deem undeserving, ask the Spirit to help us discern God's ways, grace and mercy for all people, and to act boldly without personal bias.

27 *Lydia, Dorcas and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith* Praise God for the witness and ministry of women of the early church. Give thanks for women of all ages and backgrounds who, responding to God's call, continue to use their gifts, life experiences, knowledge and passions to grow the church, serve all people and be bearers of hope and healing in the world.

28 Give thanks for the Lutheran liturgy and worship practices that equip us for daily life, helping us to praise God, listen to God's word and experience unity in the body of Christ.

29 Give thanks for the self-sacrificing generosity of people who demonstrate their gratefulness for God's gift of life and their concern for their neighbors' well-being by donating blood, plasma and even organs.

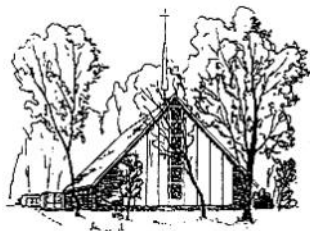
30 Remember in prayer those who continue to struggle with unemployment, underemployment and job searching as a result of the economic and health impacts of COVID-19.

31 Though our creeds do not speak of Jesus' teachings, miracles or example, give thanks that, through Scripture, the Spirit reveals Jesus to be the source of our redemption and a trustworthy guide, instructing us how to live with one another, serve our neighbor and do God's work in the world today.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 3	Morning Service, 10:00am
January 10	Morning Service, 10:00am
January 17	Morning Service, 10:00am
January 24	Morning Service, 10:00am
January 25	CLC Book Group, 7:30pm
January 31	Morning Service, 10:00am

**Please visit the CLC calendar at www.christnatick.org/events for
upcoming programming in 2021**



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