

SUMMER 2026

CROSSROADS

The Official Newsletter of Cross of Christ Lutheran Church

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NOTE FROM THE OFFICE:

Whether you're soaking up the sun or kicking back in the shade this summer, wishing everyone a season of delight and serenity.

Erin Shea

Office Assistant

Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 - 4:30



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PASTOR'S COLUMN

"I love to tell the story! 'Twill be my theme in glory, to tell the old, old story, of Jesus and his love."

Stories are powerful tools. Stories are ways to share information and teach lessons. Stories connect generations and keep memories of events and people alive. When a story is told well, the listener not only remembers the message, but through the sharing, becomes a part of the story.

When I was a little girl, I had the great privilege of living in a story-telling community. My grandmother lived next door, and summer evenings were the prime opportunity to sit in lawn chairs with a cool treat and listen to stories of life growing up on a farm and meeting Grandpa at the square dance. Sometimes, my aunt and uncle and cousins would visit, and there were opportunities for more stories, and often, songs (another form of story-telling).

You may remember a time when the front porch was the place to gather, to rest, to share stories and build community. People might stop by uninvited and join in the conversation, just because they saw you there and wanted to visit.

Our culture has moved our places of gathering to the back yard - (where passersby cannot determine when you might be out there, where it is implied that an invitation to join might be in order) or even inside behind closed doors. In many ways, we have lost our literal front porches, as well as our "front porch" mentality.



Rev. Jake Jacobson is interested in reclaiming the “front porch” and our storytelling culture as a way of sharing God’s story. In order to do this, we listen to Bible stories, we think about our own stories and we discover all the places in which God makes appearances in our story or ways in which God’s story influences our own. The goal is to become comfortable sharing our stories about God with others, creating that front porch mentality wherever we may be, and bringing the Gospel to those with itching ears.

I will be leading a workshop developed by Rev. Jacobson in September to see if we can reclaim our stories and learn to share them with others, as a way of bringing the good news and encouraging others to listen and share their own stories. Stay tuned for date and time - and yes, there will be snacks.

“I love to tell the story, for those who know it best seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest. And when in scenes of glory I sing the new, new song, 'twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.”

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Sam

WENDELL CROSS ICE CREAM PARTY



6/16/26



Photos by
Mary White





sanctuary clean 6/6/26



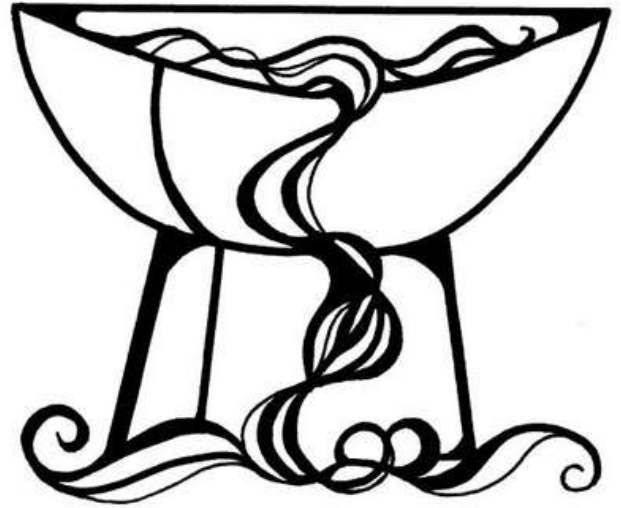
photos by Nadia M.



HERE COMES THE BOSS!



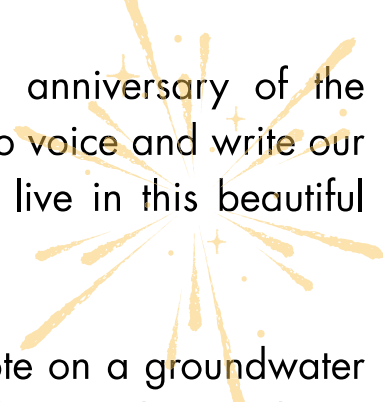
Baptism 6/14/26



photos by Lisa R. and Nadia M.



Greetings Cross of Christ members and friends! Happy 250th anniversary of the founding of our great nation, where we have freedom to worship, to voice and write our opinions, and to assemble and petition! I am so very grateful to live in this beautiful country, and to be a part of this wonderful church.



Our congregation recently assembled at a town hall meeting to vote on a groundwater remediation proposal, hear property usage and financial status updates, acknowledge a generous gift from Our Savior Lutheran Church, and discuss our future openly and honestly. I want to thank everyone who participated.

On June 30th, COC Council met to discuss key takeaways from that meeting and engage in forward planning. There was no formal agenda. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we reflected on the thoughts shared by the congregation and a strategy that would be best for Cross of Christ, in keeping with our mission statement: **To welcome all into safe, sacred relationship, as the Spirit works through us to embody God's love and grace in the world.**

We were spontaneously inspired to discuss what brought each of us to Cross of Christ church; unique stories that highlighted the power of God in our lives to put us where we needed to be. Similarly, when reviewing the notes from the town hall discussion, we discovered that a phrase that was repeated throughout was "we are supposed to be here." We are currently the only ELCA presence in Waterbury, CT. It is the unanimous opinion of this Church Council that our mission, at least for now, is to stay where we are.

We know there are obstacles. Long-term financial security is the main one at this point. Maintaining our building is costly, but in doing so, we are protecting the tools that allow us and our tenants to serve the community. We are funding the physical and spiritual welcoming and comfort of the people who enter our premises. Since we have already heavily invested in major infrastructure repairs and betterments, staying and protecting our investment is likely the most financially responsible path forward, at least until better opportunities are presented. In terms of future viability, we have already eliminated the most high-risk financial liabilities for this location (removing asbestos, repaving the parking lot, water remediation, refreshing the Sanctuary). God has miraculously provided us with the means for doing so to date.

So, how do we stay? What do we need to do? Three goals we will focus on: **fundraising, community outreach, and growth.** These are all interconnected. Each of these goals will support the other two. Your donation money can be allocated as you see fit – toward programs and services or toward operations, or both. In the past three years, there have been so many positive changes! Let us work together to keep the momentum going.

We have lots of ideas, but we want to hear from you! Let us know your thoughts on how we can get our name out there, shine our light in the community, help people, build our funds, fill our pews. Your Council is excited and hopeful for our future, and we hope you are too. Thank you as always for your support! God bless you all.

~ Becky Armington, COC Council President

THIS IS MY JOURNEY

Twists and turns, but always moving in a direction that encompasses love, justice, and mercy in Jesus' name. I am looking for radical welcome that is intentional and bold. AMEN.



"Be strong and courageous... for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." - Joshua 1:9

Reflection*

Courage is not the absence of fear. It is the decision to *move forward*, trusting that God remains present. There are many forms of courage: speaking truth, beginning again after loss, standing beside someone who is vulnerable, choosing compassion in divided times, or continuing the work of justice when progress feels slow. God does not promise an easy path. But again and again, Scripture reminds us that we do not walk alone. As we continue bearing Christ into the world, may we move forward with courage rooted not in certainty, but in God's enduring presence and love.

Prayer*

Courageous God, be with us in moments of fear, uncertainty, and challenge. Strengthen us to act with compassion, integrity, and hope. Remind us that your presence accompanies us wherever we go. Amen.

Peace, love, and justice always,
Sister Carol Marie Weaver, She/They
Benji, and all my dog angels

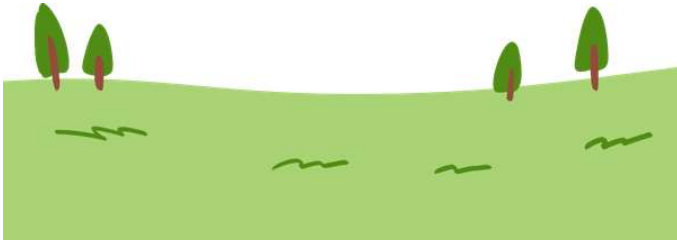
GRACE HAPPENS

P.S. Thank you, Sister Ramona, for the opening praise statement!

A GLIMPSE OF MOMENTS & MEMORIES...

Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Why advocate for Creation Care? Reasons are many—stewardship, nature, nurture, comfort, protection, hope. My journey began when my father, a strong man with his callused hands, so gently placed three scared baby robins back in their nest. I was six years old and did not connect Creation Care and Genesis. My grandfather inspired my love of flowers and gardening as he planted pansies with me. My other Grampa owned and operated a dairy farm with goats and cows and lots of land. My father was a farm hand who worked long hours, and we moved so too many times as technology replaced his job. I felt sad when my friends did not understand the job of a farm hand and felt it had no comparison to the business executive life. They did not see, feel, hear, or touch what I did--the joy of a heron in flight over the pond, the beauty of a newborn calf, the gentleness in the eyes of the Brown Swiss cow and their velvet faces, moss growing on a tree can be a guide if you are lost, crop rotation to restore nutrients, tall trees forming a natural chapel, picking strawberries with killdeer birds beside you, the expanse of the fields of hay with rustling sounds in a gentle breeze, expanse of sky and earth and hope at the double rainbow after the storm, banking a plant, saving four abandoned kittens—my brother and I asked permission to care for them and the owners said it was totally our job—we used my doll bottles to feed them fresh milk--and they thrived and survived..*Ecclesiastes 3:1 "There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven."* The connection between earth and water and sky, all living things--stewardship was blooming and the tug for advocacy was growing. We cannot buy creation. God has created our world; it is vital for survival, and we are a part of it. Sitting on my rock, the world comes closer and walking in the field, a young deer runs in front of me—treasured moments. *Psalms 32:8 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go, and I will counsel you with my loving eye on you."* God gave me messages through my life that I held, but did not see the connections until a devastating toxic fire nearby. At the

time, I was studying environmental law. Now, the messages connected. My too small voice before paralegal studies was getting stronger. Our words do matter, our support of God's Creation matters, and God gives us tools to outreach and to care. A lesson from writing class--we do not write to impose our views; we write to open new avenues of thought to those who read what we write. *Psalm 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."* God works through us. It is about just one step growing into outreach of many steps together. In my Sunday school class as it closed for summer, I asked the children to stop near a hay field in the summer to smell the aroma of the hay, hear its gentle whispers, and feel the warmth of the sun. A child I did not expect to report back did report and it was a moment that changed his life and others around him. *Proverbs 4:11 "I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths."*



Sharon Samoska

4-28-26



ALTAR CARE SCHEDULE

7/5: Janine & Delphine

7/12: Delphine & Charmaine

7/19: Tish & Seita

7/26: Janine & Charmaine

8/2: Delphine & Charmaine

8/9: Tish & Seita

8/16: Janine & Delphine

8/23: Delphine & Charmaine

8/30: Tish & Seita

Council Members:

Becky Armington,
President

Charmaine Lawton, VP

Blanche Feero/Lisa
Rapisarda - Secretary

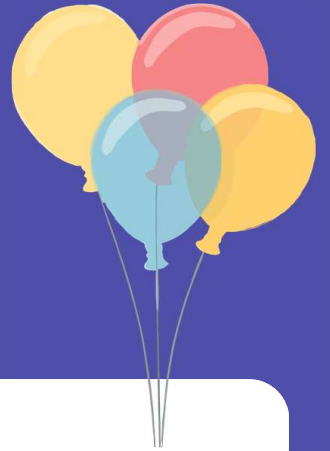
Pat Huesch, Financial
Secretary

Arnold Arnajallum

Dolly Caldwell

Bob Melnick

Happy Birthday!



JUNE:

NANCY SALCITO
BLANCHE FEERO
JOYCE SHAFFER
MARGE OUELLETTE
BOB MELNICK
SHARON SAMOSKA
JANINE KIFER
DONNA LILJESTRAND
LISA BERNAITIS
NICHOLAS RAPISARDA
ARNOLD ARNAJALLUM

JULY:

HENRY FROHN
PAT HUESCH
NADIA MARCELLA

ANNOUNCEMENTS + GRATITUDE

Thank you to the Wendell Cross
summer goodie bag prep crew!



“Faith is the
bird that feels
the light and
sings when the
dawn is still
dark.”

~ Rabindranath
Tagore

The Easter season is past us but I'm reminded of something Pastor Sam said on Ash Wednesday:

While Lent is a season to deepen our personal relationship with God. Let's also remember that We are all in the dirt Together! That phrase has stuck with me since Ash Wednesday, this congregation has certainly endured some muddy situations lately! I know she meant it differently, but I have seen such faith, love, fellowship and determination in this congregation! I'm so blessed to call you my church family. Let us always carry the Easter season in our hearts, the spirit of renewal, joy and unconditional love into every day.

~ Lisa Rapisarda

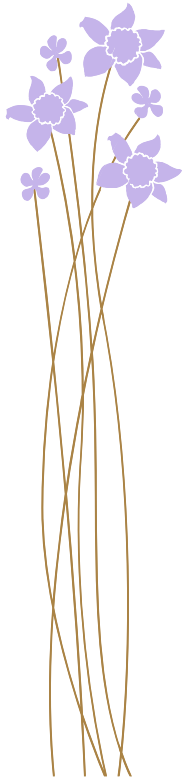




What is Water: Creation

by Sharon L. Samoska

In creation water bathed the earth...
In creation water set the boundaries...
In creation water nourished...
In creation water always flowed...
Water core to baptism
Water core to erasing sin.
Water saves every part of creation.
Water gentle, strong, brave.
Water refreshed and refreshes.
Water calms the anxious heart...
Water speaks of gentleness, wise words, strong words, warning words...
Words from God.
Without water no life at all...
Water blesses all...



thank you to
the Hispanic
Coalition of
Greater
Waterbury
for the many
ways they
care for and
beautify the
property!

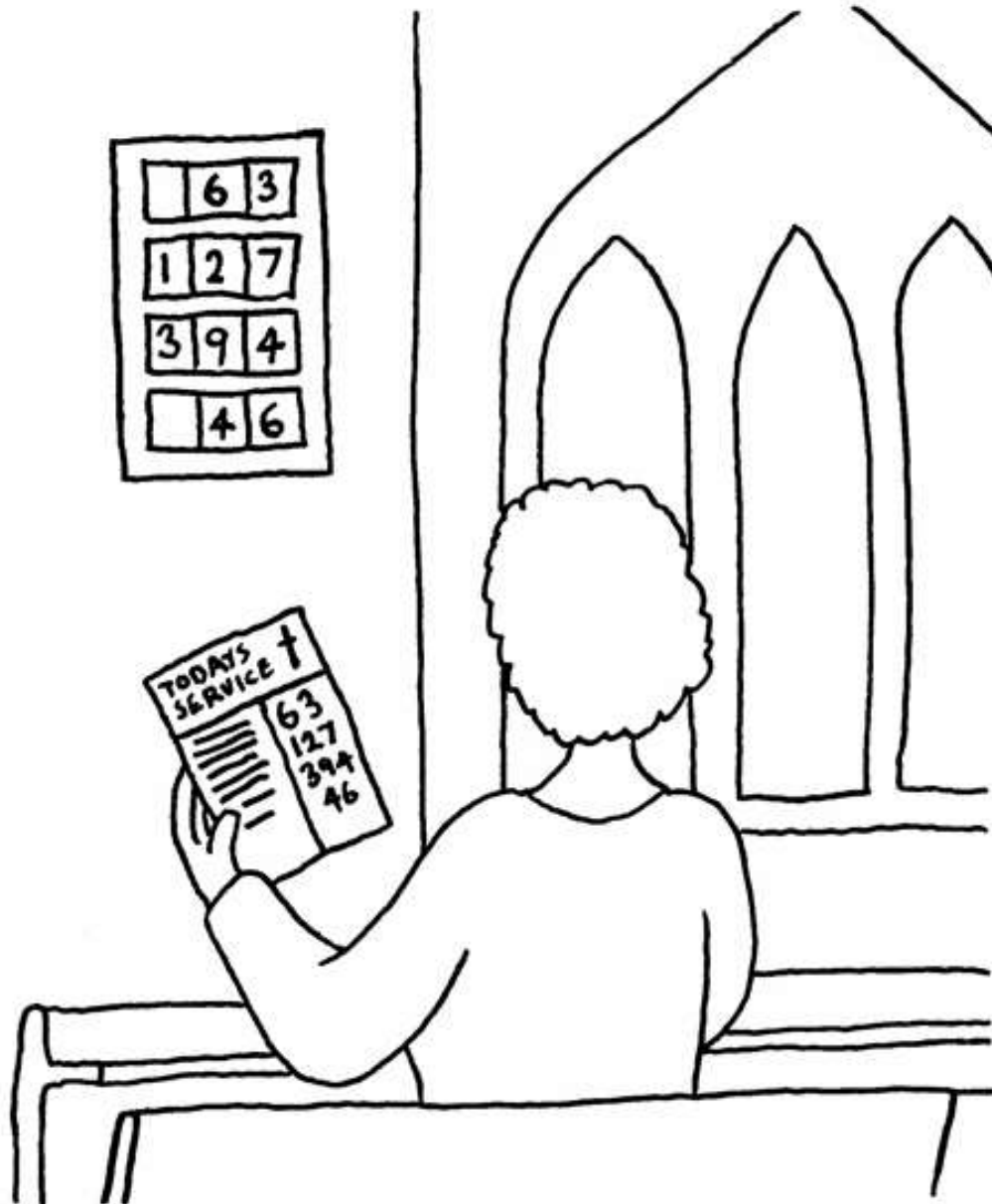


Photo by Sharon Samoska



FUNNY PAGES

CartoonChurch.com



SHE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE SHE HAD
WON ON HER FIRST VISIT TO CHURCH

Cartoon by Dave Walker