

The Epistle

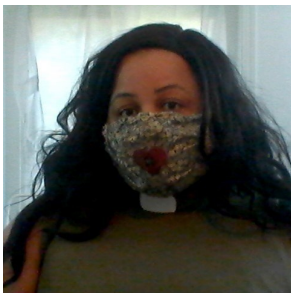
THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

Gloucester, Virginia

www.apostles-elca.org

April 2021

Our Mission is to be a Caring Christian Community responding to God's grace through Worship, Service, and Sharing the Gospel



A Letter From The Litterateur

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

~John 11:25

It's Spring again, and welcome another Easter. Our congregation has responded to Jesus' resurrection with an astounding 44 voting members unanimously agreeing to adopt both our new Welcome Statement and Reconciling in Christ Status! Thank you to our RIC Team, especially Betsy Liljeberg and Janet Gomez, for all of your hard work and dedication. This marks a new beginning for us as a community, and I look forward to taking this adventure with you all this season. Speaking of seasons, our Council has approved the Seasons of Stewardship "Three Month Model". Every Team (e.g., Administration, Worship, etc.) will have three months to share, express, and advocate for their contributions to Apostles Lutheran before ending the cycle with a celebration. We will begin this June with our Summer Team, Administration, which is the season of growing. We have learned plenty of new tools that have kept God's Mission going in the Peninsulas. The Synod Office is working diligently to determine how we might safely and effectively approach

in-person activities including but not limited to, worship and service. Our Safety in Worship Team will meet a week or so after Holy Week to discuss our options. Everyone is privy to their comfort level concerning gatherings during this Pandemic. Take heart and be of good courage; we will find navigate these stranger tides together.

In God's Abiding Love,
The Reverend Jeniffer Tillman,
Mission Developer

Espice, adspice, prospice.

Look behind, look here, look ahead.

– Latin phrase

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Holy Week Schedule

- April 1 Maundy Thursday Holy Communion
7:00 PM Zoom Worship Service
The Last Supper
- April 2 Good Friday
7:00 PM YouTube Premier
Love That Surpasses Understanding
- April 3 Easter Vigil
7:00 PM YouTube Premier
Comfort In The Midst of Darkness
- April 4 Easter Sunday Holy Communion
9:30 AM Zoom Worship Service
He Is Risen!

Invitations to all of the Zoom worship services and the YouTube Premier services will be sent out by email and also can be accessed on the Apostles' website, www.apostles-elca.org/events



***From Your
Council President***
THE LITTLE CHURCH
THAT ANSWERED,
“HERE I AM”

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send...?” And I answered “Here I am; send me!” (Isaiah 6:8)

God calls his people to go into the world.

God calls His people to serve. Members of Apostles, I want to thank you for answering, “Here I am!”

God has children who are hungry. This last Monday at the food pantry, 6 of the volunteers were from Apostles, unloading trucks, packing and distributing food, laughing and talking with our brothers and sisters in need.

God has children who are homeless. This week, members of our church are preparing meals for 40 community members who are staying in motels because they have no home to live in.

God has children who have no doctor. But there are 6 children living in a small village in Guatemala who now have access to medical care, and an education, because of the support from members of Apostles. Many more will be served when our team returns to Xojola in 2022.

God has children who do not feel welcome in church because of who they are. This last Sunday, the members of Apostles came together and said in a unanimous voice, “You are welcome here, all are welcome at Apostles!” God has called, and we have answered.

My prayer is that we will continue to listen for God’s call.

My prayer is that we will continue to answer “Send me!”

My prayer is that we will continue to be the little church that answered “Here I am!”

God bless you all.

Pete



***Reconciling in
Christ
Ministry***

At the recent special congregational meeting called by

our church council, the congregational members present (44) voted **unanimously** to accept the proposed welcome statement and become a Reconciling in Christ Congregation. It is with great joy and thanksgiving that we praise God for the gift of this ministry!!

Moving forward, each ministry team will be tasked with discovering ways in which they can help make Apostles a more welcoming place for all people. The Reconciling in Christ ministry team will function as a resource and help in any way needed. We hope to be the face of an open and welcoming worshipping community in Gloucester and beyond!

The RIC team would love some fresh voices and ideas. Please consider joining the team!

Contact Pastor Jeniffer, Betsy Liljeberg, or Janet Gomez or watch for upcoming meetings to add your creative ideas.

Betsy Liljeberg

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***Virginia Synod Offers
“Triduum Together”***

Join us on Facebook, YouTube, or Zoom:

Maundy Thursday
April 1, 7 pm

Good Friday
April 2, 7 pm

Easter Vigil
April 3, 7 pm

Triduum Together
Worship for Maundy Thursday,
Good Friday, and Easter Vigil

Virginia
Lutherans

The Virginia Synod is offering a Triduum Together—worship services for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil—for more information, you can go to <https://www.vasynod.org/triduum-together/>.

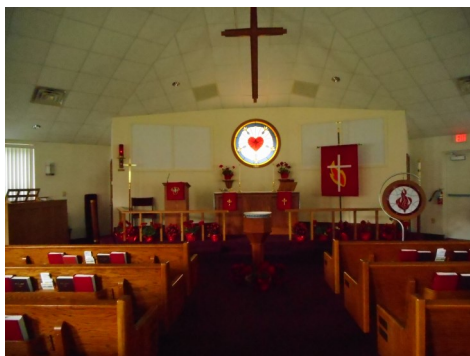
Palm Sunday History at Apostles Lutheran Church

Did you know that our church has quite a history with Palm Sunday. . .

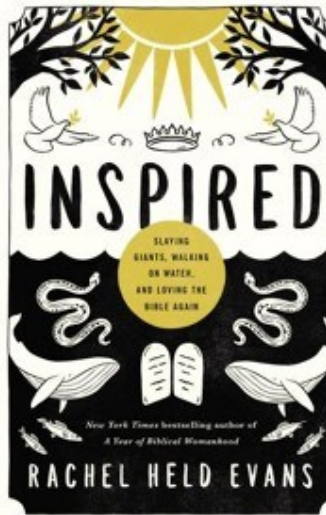
- **On Palm Sunday, April 12, 1987**, almost 3 years after breaking ground, the congregation worshipped for the first time in the church (what is now the fellowship hall). The original building was built entirely by the members of the congregation.



- **On Palm Sunday, April 13, 2002**, the congregation worshipped for the first time in the new sanctuary.



- **On Palm Sunday, March 28, 2021**, the congregation voted to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation.



Thursday Evening Book Study

The study of Rachel Held Evans' book, *Inspired*, will continue on **Thursday, April 8th and 22nd from 7:00-8:00 p.m.** via Zoom—watch your e-mail for the Zoom invitation. Pastor Jeniffer is leading the study.

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Readings for April

Lectionary readings for April are:

- + **April 4th, Easter Day** – Acts 10:34-43 (God raised Jesus on the third day), Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 (this is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it), 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (witnesses to the risen Christ), Mark 16:1-8 (the resurrection of Jesus is announced and the response is one of terror and amazement)
- + **April 11th - Second Sunday of Easter** – Acts 4:32-35 (the believers' common life), Psalm 133 (how good and pleasant it is to live together in unity), 1 John 1:1-2:2 (walking in the light), John 20:19-31 (beholding the sounds of the risen Christ)
- + **April 18th - Third Sunday of Easter** – Acts 3:12-19 (health and forgiveness through the risen Jesus), Psalm 4 (the Lord does wonders for the faithful), 1 John 3:1-7 (the revealing of the children of God), Luke 24:36b-48 (eating with the risen Christ)
- + **April 25th - Fourth Sunday of Easter** – Acts 4:5-12 (salvation in the name of Jesus), Psalm 23 (the Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want), 1 John 3:16-24 (love in truth and action), John 10:11-18 (Christ the shepherd).

Check out God Pause from Luther Seminary for a daily devotion based on the upcoming readings for the week—www.luthersem.edu/godpause.

Updates from Our God's Work, Our Hands Ministries



BREAD FOR LIFE

Bread for Life Food Pantry

The Bread for Life Food Pantry has just signed a contract to purchase a new building located on Route 14 (the building was formerly a Jehovah Witness church) - they are waiting for the Zoning Board to approve utilization of the building as a pantry. The Pantry always needs volunteers especially truck drivers to go to Foodbank in Hampton to pick up food. If you have any questions, please contact Ray Scholz, Chairman of the Board of the Pantry.



Gloucester Mathews Care Clinic

The Gloucester Mathews Care Clinic currently is caring for both uninsured and Medicaid patients from Gloucester and Mathews—the Clinic has 384 patients—77% uninsured and 23% Medicaid. Uninsured patients must have an annual income at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (\$38,280 for an individual, \$51,720 for a couple, \$65,160 for a family of 3 and \$78,600 for a family of 4) - patients are cared for by 2 physicians and a psychiatric nurse practitioner. In addition to medical care, uninsured patients receive all of their medications from the Clinic and the Clinic just reopened their dental clinic. The Clinic will be holding a wellness screening (blood pressure, BMI and blood sugar checks) at Antioch Baptist Church in Mathews on April 15th. The Clinic will be hiring a patient navigator in the near future to help patients access resources that are available in the area for food, housing and utilities. If you have any questions, please contact Janet Gomez.



enCircle
(formerly Lutheran Family Services)
The people of enCircle educate students who

need additional supports, empower people with developmental disabilities through a variety of community-based services, support children in foster care and foster parents,, and provide mental health counseling to children, youth, and adults. They are also a part of a network of agencies that unite unaccompanied immigrant children with family or sponsors in the United States. For more information, go to <https://www.encircleall.org/about-us>.

GUEST

What could be a better mission outreach for Apostles? Helping our neighbors who are less fortunate. During the months of February and



March, we have provided meals to the homeless through Guest Services. Due to COVID, they were not staying in the area churches, like in the past. Each person received a voucher to stay in a motel. Providing meals was a little different. The meals were cooked by members of Apostles, brought to the church and assembled in individual take-home containers. The meals were delivered to Guest Services and they delivered them. Our first meal in February was meatloaf, macaroni and cheese, green beans and brownies. Our second meal in March was ham, potato salad, cole slaw and cookies. Mary Leunig, Janet Gomez, Ray and Lynn Scholz and Nancy Wagner provided the first meal. The Britts, Ray and Lynn Scholz, Juanita Sturdy, Margaret Grimes, Mary Leunig, Bonnie Hayman, and Luise Buerkert provided the food for the second meal. Even though we didn't get to meet the people we were feeding, I am sure they appreciated everyone's efforts. There may be some additional opportunities to provide meals—stay tuned. Please contact Nancy Wagner if you have any questions.



Correspondence

“Dear Pete & Betsy,

Just wanted to thank you again for your very generous donation last year and bring you up to date on what GUEST has been doing for the community.

GUEST is almost at the end of our 2020-2021 Winter Shelter Season. Due to COVID-19, the Winter Shelter Season is very different from years past. We wanted to shelter and minister to people in the church setting, but COVID-19 made it challenging to keep everyone safe and healthy in a communal setting. In order to protect the health of the homeless, volunteers, and staff, GUEST is utilizing the Motel Voucher Program which provides shelter at local motels throughout the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck.

To summarize GUEST’s activities from April through December 2020:

We served 104 people: 79 adults & 25 children, 55 males & 49 females. Our clients are made up from several different individual groups: veterans, victims of domestic violence, the elderly, chronically homeless individuals, people with substance abuse, the mentally ill, & people with other physical disabilities. During this time period, we have also helped 41 households exit our program! Currently we are still housing and feeding about 30 people. GUEST is working with multiple state and local organizations to provide the homeless in our community with much-needed resources. Thank you so much for making a difference in the lives of those affected by homelessness, many who are struggling to even obtain the basic needs of life. GUEST and the individuals that are being aided by this ministry are extremely grateful for you! Your thoughtfulness extends the love of God to the less fortunate in their greatest time of need. We pray for you and your family to remain healthy and safe.

With sincere gratitude,

Joyce Blevins

Treasurer, GUEST”

First Ever!!

The Amazing Grace Race

Have you ever watched The Amazing Race? Well, the Race is currently in their 32nd season and they have raced one million miles!!!! In the 32nd season, the globe-trotting teams began their adventure from the iconic Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, and travelled to their first destination, Trinidad and Tobago. Along the route, teams travelled to France, Germany, Kazakhstan, Brazil and more. The team that crossed the finish line first was crowned the winners of THE AMAZING RACE and the \$1 million prize. WOW!! Well, coming shortly to Gloucester, Virginia, it's the **Amazing Grace Race**. Yes, you heard right - the Amazing Grace Race will be held right here in Gloucester on **Saturday, May 1st, from noon to an estimated time of 4:00 PM.**

Teams from Apostles will be competing with teams from Abingdon Episcopal Church for wonderful prizes. While specific details about the Race are currently being planned, we need to know if you and your family and/or friends would like to be a team - each team is allowed one car (drivers have to be over the age of 18). We also need at least 10 people to oversee the challenges and take pictures and people to provide food for the finish line which will be at Abingdon Episcopal Church.

COVID-19 measures will be required (masking, everything outdoors, etc.) and challenges will include some walking and moving around, but physical activity will be limited and be non-strenuous.

Please e-mail Ingrid Peterson if you are interested in being a part of the FIRST AMAZING GRACE RACE (ifloersh@gmail.com).



Happy Birthday to . . .

Ann Albert	April 3
Ray Kendzierksi, Jennie Hawkins,	April 5
Pam Moore and Jack Baur	April 5
April Anby	April 6
Barbara Runk	April 7
Carson Riordan	April 9
Doug Dalager	April 10
Marina Allen	April 19
Pastor Jeniffer	April 20
Shawn Anby	April 21
John Moore	April 24
Mary Leunig	April 25
Willow Crocker	April 27

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Happy Anniversary To . . .

Robert and Krystle McMahan	April 19
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Happy Baptismal Anniversary to . . .

Karen Stark	April 10
Abby Britt	April 18
Margaret Grimes	April 19
Tyler Britt	April 21
Sarah Anby	April 25

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Conversation Café for April

Our next Conversation Café will be on Monday, April 26th—watch your e-mail for the Zoom invitation and topic.

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Ministry Team Meetings

The following ministry teams will meet in April:
 + **Worship** - Meeting date is to be determined—watch your e-mail for the date and time.
 + **Service and Sharing** —Monday, April 19th, at 7:00 PM via Zoom.

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Please Keep In Your Prayers

April Anby, Opal Baker, Luise Buerkert, Eddie Freeman, Manning Freeman, Betty Hauch, Michael Schlemmer, Keith and Juanita Sturdy, George Thomas, Jewel Thomas, Sue and George Turner, Lena Woodlief, and Judy Wright



Hepi Ista!

Worship for the Second Sunday of Easter

The Virginia Synod staff will record a full worship service for the **Second Sunday of Easter, April 11th**. The purpose is to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus as a synod. The service will highlight and celebrate our companion relationship with the New Guinea Islands District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. Pastor Kelly Bayer Derrick will preach. This service will be available on Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo.

There will be no regular Zoom worship service—information on the Synod’s service will be available on our website and sent out by email.

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Congregation Council Retreat Scheduled

The Congregation Council (Pete Liljeberg, President, Nancy Wagner, Vice President, Tina Britt, Treasurer, Janet Gomez, Secretary, Gerald Britt, Doug Dalager, Ben Grimes, Ingrid Peterson and Ray Scholz) and Pastor Jeniffer will be on retreat on Saturday, April 24th. Retreat leader will be the Reverend Cathy Mims from First Lutheran Church in Norfolk, Virginia.

Save and Date!!



Road to Emmaus

The Virginia Synod's next adult faith formation offering will be **May 2–June 13th**—details will be in the May edition of The Epistle.



Power In The Spirit

This annual event will be held the week of **July 5th** either in person or virtually.

God's work.
Our hands.



God's Work, Our Hands

Our annual day of service in the community will be **Saturday, September 11th.**



Save the date
September 12

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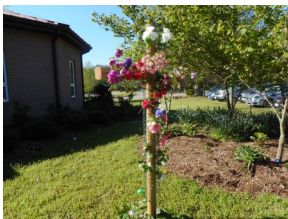
Apostles In The Spring



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Don't Forget Flowers for the Easter Cross

Our annual tradition of decorating the cross on Easter with flowers will continue despite the fact that we are not physically worshipping together. George Thomas will place the cross near the corner of Fox Mill and Route 17 Bypass—please take a minute when you drive by to put some flowers on it—thanks!!



Happy 40th Anniversary, Apostles!!

Gloucester Lutheran Church, began in 1981 as a satellite of St. Mark Lutheran Church in Yorktown, Virginia. The first worship service was held on April 26, 1981 at the Botetourt Masonic Lodge in Gloucester Courthouse by the Reverend Ralph W. Spears. In September 1983, the congregation became chartered and subsequently approved by the Commonwealth of Virginia as an Independent Lutheran Church. On May 13, 1988, Apostles Lutheran Church became a congregation of the Virginia Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. The Reverend Theodore M. Schulz was called as Apostles' first ELCA pastor in October 1988 and was installed on December 4, 1988.



Pictures from the groundbreaking for the original building in May 1984.

The Three Days



For something as ancient and as central to the Christian faith as the days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter are, they generate a surprising amount of questions and misunderstanding. These days are at the very core of Christianity. Through our worship we actually become involved in—a part of—the stories they tell. No longer are they just something that happened thousands of years ago—they are now living, active and urgent events—we are no mere passive bystanders—we are part of the story.

Maundy Thursday



This evening our Lenten observance comes to an end. Tonight we remember Christ's last meal with his disciples, but the central focus is his commandment that we live out the promise embodied in this meal. As Jesus washed his disciples' feet, so we are called to give and receive love in humble service to one another. Formed into a new body in Christ through this holy meal, we are transformed by the mercy we have received and carry it into the world.

Good Friday



Life and death stand side by side as we enter into Good Friday. In John's passion account, Jesus reveals the power and glory of God, even

as he is put on trial and sentenced to death. Standing with the disciples at the foot of the cross, we pray for the whole world in the ancient bidding prayer, as Christ's death offers life to all. We gather in solemn devotion, but always with the promise that the tree around which we assemble is indeed a tree of life.

Resurrection of Our Lord—Easter Vigil



In the darkness of Jesus' death, Christians gather to keep vigil and await the dawn—to pray, sing, and remind one another of God's promises and salvation. All are appropriate ways to travel the way from darkness to light, from uncertainty to joy, from death to life. The Vigil of Easter expansively reflects many of life's dramatic journeys by making room for a variety of senses and emotions. The Old Testament stories appointed for the Vigil are powerful companions for the journey. The Vigil journey is shaped by stories, but *words* are not the focus; rather, the worship offers experiences and images of the *word* along the way. Recurring in this journey are the elements of fire, water, earth, and air. Like the people of Israel escaping Egypt, we follow a pillar of fire, in the form of the paschal candle. In baptism, we "come to the waters," as Isaiah 55 invites us to do, and we also encounter stories of the flood and the Red Sea. We hear how earth is created and enlivened and renewed by the breath of God's Spirit. In the Vigil of Easter we learn again that these are not just *old* stories, but also *our* stories. The Vigil celebrates the baptismal journey by making room for all the elements and emotions of life, and it calls us into a community that can make that journey together as it trusts in the promise of God's saving grace. We gather with all the saints of every time and place to celebrate the good news:

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

(Reprinted from Augsburg-Fortress Sundays and Seasons)