

The Epistle

THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

Gloucester, Virginia

www.apostles-elca.org

July 2021

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



From Beyond The Page

"If I but touch his
clothes, I will be
made well."

Mark 5: 28

Well, it took 16 months, but we've finally returned to our building. Some things are the same: worshipping in pews, navigating a bulletin, and listening to the Choir sing. However, some things are different: wearing masks, live-streaming our worship, and outdoor fellowship. The Early Church worshiped very differently as well, so we are in good company. Hopefully, you have received our recent letter, which explains guidelines and includes a devotion for the Seasons of Stewardship. We welcome the Administration Team's take on the Summer season this July.

The stressors of this past year have been many, and we have all done our best to thrive under pressure. Summer is the perfect opportunity for travel and restoration. I will also be taking a week off from July 26th until August 2nd to visit my family for the first time since we entered Lockdown. The Reverend Tina Melusky will provide pastoral care to Apostles during my absence. The Council will call upon a retired Minister to provide Word and Sacrament on Sunday Morning.

I cannot thank our Council and various Servant Leaders who have stepped up above and beyond expectations this past year. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Everybody can be great because everyone can serve... You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." I know firsthand from experience that Apostles Lutheran is well endowed with both of these blessings. Take care and have a great summer!

In God's Abiding Love,

Pastor Jeniffer Tillman, Mission Developer

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Apostles Is Returning to In-Person Worship!!

Sunday, July 4th, Independence Day, will be our first day back in our sanctuary—the service will be at 9:30 AM. In addition, people will be able to continue to join the worship service via Zoom—the invitation will be sent out on Saturday and Sunday. A copy of the bulletin will be attached to the invitation. We at Apostles have been blessed. Our church, the people, never closed during the pandemic and now our building is reopening. Thanks be to God! Looking forward to seeing all of you again - in person - on the 4th!!



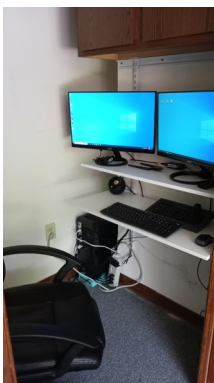
Outdoor Fellowship on July 4th

Please join us for an outdoor fellowship on **Sunday, July 4th**, after our 9:30 AM worship service - we've planned a wonderful fellowship to welcome everyone back to in-person worship!! We are asking that the congregation bring their own lawn chairs as well as anything else they might like to have for outdoor activities (sunscreen, hat, etc.). We would also like to have volunteers bring chips, soda, and some favorite lawn games — please email Ingrid Peterson at ifloersh@gmail.com if you can bring something! Please note that there will be a friendly water balloon toss competition after the fellowship - people should plan to wear or bring a change of clothes that don't mind getting a bit wet! It should be a WONDERFUL time of catching up with everyone and fellowship - we hope you can join us!!!

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Update on Live Streaming

For the first few worship services back in the building, people can join the service remotely the same way they have been by using a Zoom link. The plan is to eventually be live on YouTube and/or Facebook but we're not quite there yet. We want to see how the sound and camera work in a virtual setting before introducing the step of streaming to YouTube. We will continue emailing the link as we have been and/or people can go to apostle-elca.org and look for the link to join the Zoom service there. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Gerald Britt at geraldb@cox.net.



Reconciling in Christ Ministry

Recently, some members of the

Reconciling in Christ team and Pastor Jeniffer met over Zoom with Ashlei Cramer, ReconcilingWorks Program Coordinator. ReconcilingWorks is committed to supporting our community in our RIC journey. We shared with Ashlei some of the things the RIC team has done since Apostles became a RIC congregation: we have made changes to our website and Facebook page, we have included information in our local newspapers about being a RIC community, we are in the process of designing a banner to be displayed outside, we are meeting with all 4 ministry teams and talking about how to be more inclusive and **BIG NEWS**, we have scheduled our RIC celebration for **Reformation Sunday, October 31st**. Ashlei shared with the team members some ideas for future adult forums and told us that she had been contacted by another congregation in the Virginia Synod who is interested in starting the journey to becoming a RIC congregation. The Reconciling in Christ team will be meeting on **Thursday, August 12th, at 8:00 PM** via Zoom—if you would like to join the meeting, please contact Betsy Liljeberg at b4liljeberg@gmail.com.

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Happy Easter



This is one of the lilies that was in the “Holy Week” bag that the Congregation Council delivered to the congregation before Holy Week—we hope yours bloomed as well!!

News From The Service and Sharing Ministry Team

Thank you Apostles! Our world may have been locked down over the last year, but thanks to your generous gifts of time talent and treasure, Apostles has NOT shut down. We have continued to reach out to our sisters and brothers in need in our community and around the world. As our lives reopens and with your continued support we hope and plan on doing even more in the weeks and months to come. Here's a brief summary of what we are doing.

*We continue to support the Bread for Life food Pantry financially and with volunteers.

*We continue to support the free clinic financially and several of our members have recently started volunteering there.

*Yard work for our neighbors on God's work our hands Saturday.

*We provided meals for the homeless this winter through the GUEST shelter, and hope to increase our support to 2 dinners per month starting in the fall.

*The mission trip to Guatemala is back on for Marsh 2022! Who wants to join us ??

*We currently provide medical care food and education to children in Guatemala. (3 children supported by the congregation and 4 others individually by members).

*We support Encircle (formerly Lutheran Family Services), Lutheran World Relief and World Hunger.

*Prayer-shall ministry.

*KIVA micro loans to people around the world

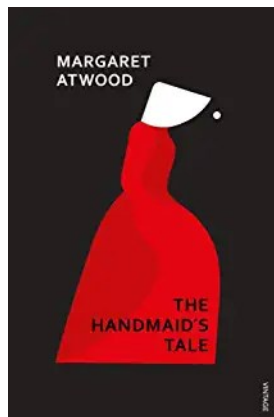
*We are beginning an outreach ministry to LGBTQ+ youth in our community That's a lot! But there is so much more that we could do with your help. So think about it, pray about it then give anyone on the committee a call. Trust me, we will find a ministry and a mission for you!

Pete Liljeberg

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Ministry Team Meetings

The following ministry teams will meet in July
+ **Worship** - Wednesday, July 14th, at 7:00 PM
(hybrid meeting—in person and via Zoom)



New Book Study To Start

A new book study will be starting on **Thursday, August 5th, at 7:00 PM**—we will be reading Margaret Atwood's book, "The Handmaid's Tale." We hope you can join the discussion!

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Readings for July

+ **July 4th—6th Sunday after Pentecost** —

Ezekiel 2:1-5 (the call of Ezekiel), Psalm 123 (our eyes look to you, O God, until you show us your mercy), 2 Corinthians 12:2-10 (God's power made perfect in weakness), Mark 6:1-13 (sending of the twelve to preach and heal)

+ **July 11th—7th Sunday after Pentecost** —

Amos 7:7-15 (the sign of the plumb line: God's judgment on Israel), Psalm 85:8-13 (I will listen to what the Lord God is saying), Ephesians 1:3-14 (chosen in Christ to live to the praise of God's glory), Mark 6:14-29 (the death of John the Baptist)

+ **July 18th— 8th Sunday after Pentecost** —

Jeremiah 23:1-6 (from David's line, a righteous shepherd for Israel), Psalm 23 (the Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want), Ephesians 2:11-22 (reconciled to God through Christ, our peace), Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 (Christ healing the multitudes)

+ **July 25th—9th Sunday after Pentecost** —

2 Kings 4:42-44 (Elisha feeding a hundred people), Psalm 145:1-18 (you open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing), Ephesians 3:14-21 (prayer for wisdom, strength and Christ's indwelling), John 6:1-21 (Christ feeding the five thousand)

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Happy Birthday To...

Manning Freeman	July 4
Janice Roe	July 13
Nicholas Biggs	July 17
Dan Grantham	July 22
Nate Peterson	July 22
George Turner	July 23
Brian Badger	July 24

Seasons of Stewardship

The Administration Ministry Team

As Pastor Jeniffer said in her recent letter to the congregation, we are embarking on a new journey together this year—God gave us the seasons to be quarterly time-markers that transition us through the years. Pastor Jeniffer believes that applying the concept of seasons to the freedom of our Baptismal Promise would ultimately help our church navigate stewardship on a more holistic level. We will begin with the Three-Month Model for this year. Each of our Ministry Teams has been assigned a season and start date. The Administration Ministry Team is Summer—the team will have a month of presentation (July), a month of invitation (August) and a month of celebration (September). There will be a special presentation by the Administration Ministry Team on Sunday, July 18th, during the 9:30 AM worship service.

The **Administration Ministry Team** is responsible for organizing and overseeing the administrative business of the church—the team will:

- + routinely maintain the building and grounds and plan for long range renovations



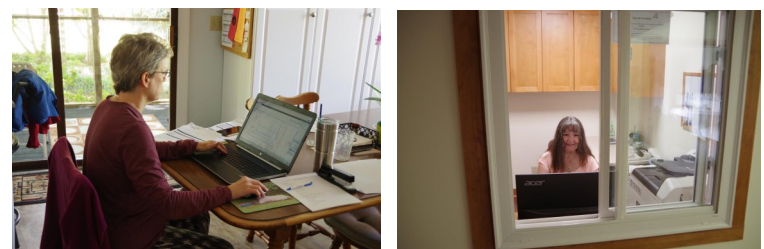
- + provide effective communication avenues within the church and provide relevant and timely information to the community



- + perform financial duties



- + monthly bill payments and reconciliations, annual development of spending plan, ensure annual audit of financial transactions, plan and monitor long range financial needs and goals of the congregation





On-Line Power In The Spirit July 11-15

Join the Power in the Spirit community July 11 to 15, 2021, to celebrate "Advent in July!" Enjoy morning devotionals on your own

time and select from a variety of live workshops each evening. End each day with an Evening Prayer service, celebrated with fellow Christians near and far. God continues to lead us through the COVID-19 pandemic, we are beginning to imagine about what life can look like on the other side of this season. Yet we are still waiting. Through the exploration of Advent themes, texts, and images, participants will be able to reflect on God's presence with them and others in the past as they anticipate what is yet to come. New life made possible through the incarnation of Jesus! Register at vasynod.org. (PS - Thursday, July 15 will be Christmas!) *A ministry of the Virginia Synod, Power in the Spirit is an inspirational conference for people of all ages who wish to explore God's call to service through joyous worship, Bible studies, keynote addresses, workshops, games, and fellowship.*

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News From Apostles Youth Group

The youth group met on June 27th for the first time in-person since the pandemic!! WooHoo! It was wonderful to be together, and we enjoyed our time delving into the Word and playing games. Our next meeting will be **July 11th**, following worship! As always, all youth 6th-12th grade are welcome!

Ingrid and Nate Peterson

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Mutual Ministry Committee

The Mutual Ministry Committee will be meeting on Sunday, July 11th, at 1:00 PM.

Congratulations To...



Ben and Margaret Grimes' grandson, Boe and his team for winning Gloucester Youth Baseball League's championship (ages 9-11). Boe is on the left. Way to go!!!

Jade Hawkins for receiving her promotion certificate from Peasley Middle School—Jade



will be a freshman at Gloucester High School in the Fall of 2021. We are so proud of you!!

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Greetings from Italy



Lilly Frost and John Mayer will be returning from Italy

this month—they spent some time with Pete Liljeberg's sister, Lisa, and her wife, Helena, who live in Italy.

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Congregation Council Highlights

+ Council voted to use the \$15,300 grant we received during the pandemic for live streaming equipment, a special offering to the Virginia Synod, Lutheran World Relief and to a local cause.

+ Council voted to entertain a proposal at the next council meeting for a part-time administrative assistant – exact list of duties, timeline and budget will be presented at the next council meeting for approval.

The next meeting of the Congregation Council will be Monday, July 12th, at 7:00 PM.

Happy Baptismal Birthday To . .

Bobby Trombley	July 1
Matthew Hautz, Jr.	July 7
Willow Crocker	July 23
Preston Higgins	July 20
Janet Gomez	July 31

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Happy Anniversary to . .

David and Ann Albert	July 8
Shawn and Lara Jaeger	July 17
John Mayer and Lilly Frost	July 20

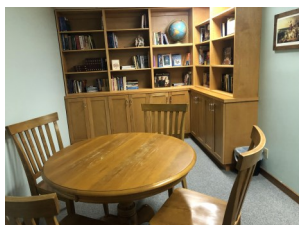
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New Pictures of Our Children in Guatemala



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Look What's New At Apostles



New cabinets have been installed in the library in the basement

and in the administrative office space.

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Apostles Adult Choir

The adult choir met for the first time in over a year on June 23rd. They will be singing during

worship on July 4th and August 15th—practices will be held on Wednesday, July 21st and August 11th—weekly practice will resume on Wednesday, August 25th—we would LOVE to have you join us!!

Correspondence

“Thank you for always being there for us. Thanks again for letting us use your church. Let us know if we can do anything for you all. Strictly Solutions Men’s Group”

“Please accept our donation this month and allow us to thank the church for being so kind to our group. We appreciate you. Respectfully, Mike Farrell”

“Dear friends at Apostles Lutheran Church, Thank you so much for making a difference in the lives of those in our community affected by homelessness. Your gift to the Gloucester United Emergency Shelter Team (G.U.E.S.T.) supports those that are struggling with the basic needs of life and provides vital support to our local homeless population. Your support is vital to this important ministry. Your generous donation of \$250 will enable the continuation of care and outreach to some of the most vulnerable in our community.

With sincere gratitude,
Joyce Blevens, Treasurer, GUEST”

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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

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Save and Date!!



God's Work, Our Hands

Our annual weekend of worship in the park and a day of service in the community will be **Saturday-Sunday, October 9-10**

Guatemala Mission Trip Kick Off

The kick off for our 2022 mission trip to Guatemala will be in **November**.





Virginia Synod Assembly 2021

On June 12, 2021, Pastor Jeniffer Tillman, Judy

Wright, and I joined together at the church to attend the synod assembly. We were comfortably set up (nice, soft desk chairs) with the Zoom meeting projected on the large screen.

I believe we were able to fully participate in the entire assembly. That being said, technology was really at the center of our day. That includes all the fun things that can go wrong. Fortunately, we were able to work together and learned to vote quickly.

This was the year to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women, the 40th anniversary of the ordination of women of color, and the 10th anniversary of the ordination of the LGBTQ+. We were blessed with a wonderful group of church leaders to lead us through the day.

We opened with a worship service which was led by people from all over the state. Our own Pastor Jeniffer was active in all our services and throughout the day because she was the assembly chaplain this year. We were blessed to hear Pastor Adam Schultz speak during the opening service. You may remember we shared a service with him and his church earlier this year. We began voting on simple resolutions to begin the meeting by oral voting. That created a few laughs. What a mess! There were 140 rostered clergy and 230 registered lay members.

Most voting was by e-ballot – constitution revisions, compensation packages, audits, and elections to various positions and committees. Our pastor will be attending the Churchwide Assembly in 2022.

Sometime during the voting, we were given a 45 minute lunch break. For us, that meant a lovely lunch from Sweet Tooth Café & Bakery. Yum! Before the final closing service, the youth joined us and shared some fun songs. After the service, Bishop Humphry installed Pastor Colleen Montgomery to Director of Digital Ministry of the Virginia Synod. He also installed newly elected

members to their new positions.

There were many more reports and positions, but I think I was most impressed learning about all the work that has been accomplished during the Covid-19 pandemic by the ELCA. Some of the highlights:

- + ELCA Covid-19 Response Fund: \$1.8 mil collected to support technology and hunger

- + World Hunger was able to do more than ever through generous donations.

- + Global ministries were able to provide \$5 mil in 49 countries.

- + Leadership Development has been able to provide \$2.4 mil in scholarships.

- + Diversity, Ethnicity, and Inclusion spent much of the year working on social justice after deaths in many communities.

- + Migration support has been busy and started AMMPARO – Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities.

We heard more reports from Campus Ministries, Caroline Furnace, EnCircle, Mission Investment Fund, Virginia Lutheran Homes, and Hungry Mother Retreat Center.

If you wonder where your giving goes, we are all able to give to these amazing programs by simply donating to our own church.

If you would like to watch parts of this assembly, you can watch the whole thing by going to the Virginia synod website. It's on YouTube.

I personally thank you for this opportunity to serve my church.

Prayerfully submitted by Sue Turner

