

The Epistle

THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

Gloucester, Virginia

www.apostles-elca.org

January 2022

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



Messages From The Maggid

*"Wealth gained hastily will
dwindle, but whoever
gathers little by little will
increase it."*

—Proverbs 13:11

Well, we finally made it to a new year. Can you believe that it's been two years since the Lockdown of 2022? We're not out of the woods with this virus; however, that has not stopped the world from turning. We at Apostles have experienced two seasons of stewardship vitality with our Administration and Service and Sharing Teams presenting, inviting, and celebrating both Summer and Autumn back in 2021. We now have the pleasure to experience the Winter and Spring with our Caring Communities and Worship Teams at the helm. I for one am excited to celebrate our first Youth-led Worship this year!

We will be entering the Season of Epiphany soon, and with it, I have a bit of a request. If you are reading this article, then please wear something yellow on January 9th when I return. Don't share this request with anyone as I want to see how many of you have read this article when we worship together. *Wink.*

Speaking of requests, I have some very good news to share with you. As I am writing this,

students have been given the opportunity to postpone or pay down their Student Loans at 0% interest between now and either May 2022 or October 2022. That being said, I have only \$38,000.00 to pay down as of January 2022. I have a very good feeling that paired with the Lifeline Fund of \$5,000.00 next year with my own monthly contributions, I will be able to completely pay off my Student Loans by the end of this year. I greatly appreciate your past and future contributions to helping me achieve this goal. Thank you!

I hope that as you were able to celebrate the New Year's Banquet this year, but due to Omicron being the newest big bad of viruses at the moment, I pray that you were at least able to enjoy some variation of this celebration during my absence on January 2nd. I'm looking forward to reading your three responses! Take care of each other for now as we usher in this new year together.

*"I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good
belongs to you."*

~Walt Whitman, "Song of
Myself" (1892 version)

In God's Abiding Love,
Pastor Jeniffer Tillman, M.Div, M.Dev.

Congregation Council President and Vice President Elected

Congratulations to **Doug Dalager** and **Ben Grimes** who were unanimously elected by Congregation Council in December to serve as President and Vice President, respectively, for 2022. A BIG thank you to outgoing President and Vice President, Pete Liljeberg and Nancy Wagner, for their wonderful leadership in 2021!!

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Annual Congregational Meeting

The annual congregational meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 30th** after worship at 9:30 AM. At the meeting Pastor Jeniffer, the President of the Congregation Council (Pete Liljeberg) and the Treasurer (Tina Britt) will submit their reports; each ministry team and affiliated group will submit their reports and we will elect new Congregation Council members (3), Mission Outreach Fund Committee members (3), members for the Nominating Committee (6), and voting members and alternates of the Virginia Synod Assembly.

Everyone is encouraged to attend!

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Ministry Team Meetings

The following ministry team will meet in January:

- + **Worship**—Date and time TBD
- + **Caring Community**—Thursday, January 6th at 7:00 PM.

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Happy Anniversary To...

- Pete and Betsy Liljeberg January 15th
- Pam and Billy Moore January 25th

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Safety In Worship to Meet

In light of the recent spike in COVID cases in our area, the Safety in Worship Committee will be meeting the first week in January to discuss future plans for in-person worship (the Congregation Council approved the recommendation by the Committee to have the worship service on January 2nd via Zoom).

December 2021 at Apostles!



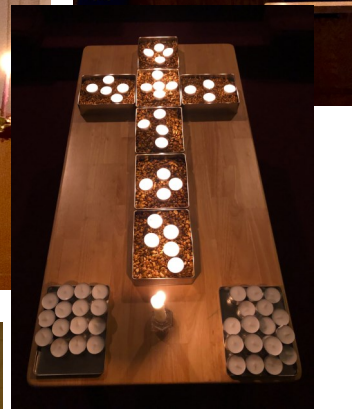
Advent worship with a sermon series from Pastor Jeniffer on A Weary World by Kathy Escobar

Decorating the sanctuary for Christmas



Chase Ambrose LOVES decorating the tree!!

Apostles first Blue Christmas Service on the longest day of the year—December 21st



Christmas Eve worship—we sang Silent Night (outside)!!



ES HORA DE FIESTA!!

On the 12th of last month, the members Apostles were treated to a Guatemalan Fiesta complete with typical Guatemalan food, music and of course a piñata! Plates were filled with caldo de pollo, arroz, y frijoles (chicken stew, rice and refries). Everyone loved Janet's tres leches cake! Lynn Scholz and Chase Ambrose, as winners of the time and talent sign up competition, got the first swings at the piñata and little kids had to make room as the big kids (i.e., adults) dove for the candy and poppers that fell to the floor! The event closed the second quarter of our Seasons in Stewardship and celebrated all the ministries supported by the Service and Sharing Ministry Team. The response of the congregation was phenomenal! Over 30 people returned the time and talent sheets volunteering to help with various missions! 25 people signed up for things that were new to them!

- 15 people pledged to give monthly to world hunger!
- 11 people committed to help sponsor our children in Guatemala!
- 10 people volunteered to make meals for the guest shelter!
- 13 people plan on working at the food pantry!
- 9 of our members hope to travel to Guatemala!

And the list goes on and on.

From the Service and Sharing Ministry Team:
THANK all of you for being who you are and serving as God's hands in this world and **THANKS** be to God for the opportunity to serve.

Pete Liljeberg



Youth Shopping for Salvation Army Angels

Nate and Ingrid Peterson along with Pastor Jeniffer took Chase Ambrose and Jade Hawkins shopping for a family of Salvation Army Angels—thank you to those who donated money for this as well as Betsy Liljeberg for applying for and receiving a Thrivent Action Grant.



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Advent Devotions



The reflections were wonderful—we hope you took the opportunity to use our first Advent devotion booklet written by members of the congregation for your devotions during Advent this year. Sue Turner shared a picture of her “Advent corner” in her home.

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Congregation Council Meeting

The Congregation Council will be meeting on **Monday, January 10th, at 7:00 PM.** Anyone is welcome to attend!



Opportunity to Try on Advocacy

The writer of Proverbs tells us in Chapter 31:9: “speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy”. And Jesus tells us through a parable in 25:40, that what we do for the least of his brothers and sisters, we do

for him. We are called to advocate for the voiceless, the disenfranchised, and the marginalized. We often don’t know where to start and how best to attempt this work. During the week of **January 17-21**, the Virginia Interfaith Center will host a hybrid (virtual and in-person) gathering to learn about advocacy, meet with one another, and speak to our representatives in Richmond about the most pressing issues confronting our fellow Virginians.

Guest speakers will help inform us about these issues and how we can help. There will be a variety of workshops to choose from. On **Wednesday**, people of faith from all over Virginia will gather for in-person workshops, rallies, and fellowship. There will be time to speak with our representatives in the state Senate and House. Your presence will show others that people of faith are willing to speak up and take action for others. Join your siblings in faith in being a voice for those who are unable to speak out. You can register at: <https://virginiainterfaithcenter.ourpowerbase.net/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=170>

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A Message From Your Financial Secretaries

This year, we ordered fewer offering envelopes so people whose envelopes were numbered above 50 in previous years have been assigned new envelope numbers. This is a small inconvenience that will save our congregation money and save trees.

(A BIG thank you to Irene and Heinz for serving as our Financial Secretaries for many years—they have agreed to serve again next year—we are so grateful!!)



Thank You for Supporting The Shared Mission of the Virginia Synod!

As a Synod in 2021, we have:

- *supported one another through this phase of the pandemic,
- * assisted congregations in the call process and in times of transition,
- * engaged in conversations about racism, equity, and diversity,
- * provided educational opportunities for rostered ministers and lay leaders,
- * joined together for the Virginia Synod’s first digital Assembly,
- * helped launch new digital ministries and an exploration for a new ministry on the Eastern Shore,
- * significantly increased our proclamation of the good news about Jesus on social ministry platforms,
- * shared 40% of mission support with the ELCA Churchwide organization,
- * continued to partner with Lutheran and Ecumenical institutions and agencies,
- * provided scholarships to seminary students and nurtured new candidates for ministry.

Thank you for being part of the journey of the Virginia Synod.

Thank you for sharing stories of your ministry to inspired the broader community.

Thank you for being a faithful witness to God’s love in your community.

Thank you for sharing the gift of mission support with the Virginia Synod and the wider church.

Peace and hope,

Pastor John Wertz, Jr.

Assistant to the Bishop

Director of Evangelical Mission

Virginia Synod, ELCA

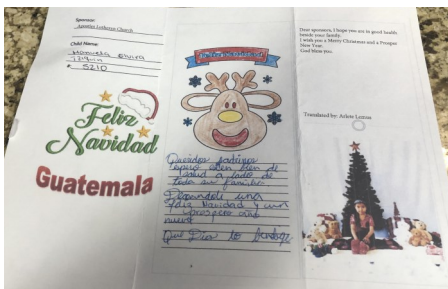
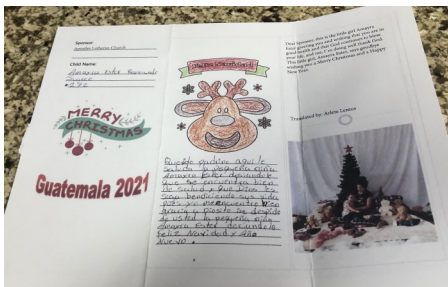


Reconciling in Christ Ministry

The Reconciling in Christ team will be meeting on **Thursday, January 20th, at 7:30 PM**—anyone is welcome to attend!!

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Christmas Greetings from Our Children In Guatemala



We received some beautiful cards from our sponsored children in Guatemala—the cards are on the table in the narthex—check them out!

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Please Keep In Your Prayers

Opal Baker, Luise Buerkert, Eddie Freeman, Manning Freeman, Betty Hauch, Michael Schlemmer, George Thomas, Jewel Thomas, Sue and George Turner, and Jerry and Lena Woodlief.

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Happy Birthday To . .

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|-----------------|------------|
| Abby Britt | January 2 |
| Carl Hess | January 5 |
| Heinz Albert | January 12 |
| Teresa Grantham | January 14 |
| Kenny Epling | January 16 |
| Gene Gomez | January 16 |
| Emily Riordan | January 20 |
| Chris Hawkins | January 22 |
| Don Garfield | January 24 |
| Kayla Hautz | January 25 |

Happy Baptismal Anniversary to . . Ellie Crocker

January 5

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Readings for January

+ January 2—Second Sunday of Christmas
Jeremiah 31:7-14 (joy at the gathering of God's scattered flock), Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-21 (we sing, O Lord, to your holy name), Ephesians 1:3-14 (the will of God made known in Christ), John 1:[1-9]10-18 (God with us: the incarnation of the Word)

+ January 9—Baptism of Our Lord
Isaiah 43:1-7 (when you pass through the waters, do not fear for I am with you), Psalm 29 (the voice of the Lord is upon the waters), Acts 8:14-17 (prayer and laying on of hands for the Holy Spirit), Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 (the baptism of Jesus with the descent of the Holy Spirit)

+ January 16—Second Sunday after Epiphany
Isaiah 62:1-5 (as bridegroom and bride rejoice, so shall God rejoice over you), Psalm 36:5-10 (we feast upon the abundance of your house, O Lord), 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (there are a variety of gifts but the same Spirit), John 2:1-11 (the wedding at Cana)

+ January 23—Third Sunday after Epiphany
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 (Ezra reads the law of Moses before the people), Psalm 19 (the teaching of the Lord revives the soul), 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a (you are the body of Christ), Luke 4:14-21 (Jesus reads from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah)

+ January 30—Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
Jeremiah 1:4-10 (I appointed you a prophet to the nations), Psalm 71:1-6 (from my mother's womb you have been my strength), 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (if I speak without love, I am a noisy gong), Luke 4:21-30 (Jesus says a prophet is not accepted in his hometown)

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A Reminder From The Technology Team

Every week, an e-mail is sent out with links for worshipping online—just remember that if you can't access the links on the e-mail, you can always go to our website to access the worship service—apostles-elca.org.

Seasons of Stewardship *The Caring Community Ministry* *Team*

We are continuing the journey we started last year with Seasons of Stewardship—the season of Winter will be dedicated to the work of the Caring Community Ministry Team. As Pastor Jeniffer said, 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 will ultimately help our church navigate stewardship on a more holistic level. We continue with the Three-Month Model—in January the Caring Community Ministry Team will make a presentation, in February you will be invited to participate in the work of the Caring Community Ministry Team and in March, we will celebrate the work of the Caring Community Ministry Team. The **Caring Community Ministry Team** is responsible for encouraging and supporting the growth of members’ faith and for strengthening the congregation’s sense of Christian community. the team:

- (1) **provides** on-going opportunities for learning about the Bible, the Lutheran faith, and Christian spirituality (Sunday church school, Vacation Bible school, Bible study, study groups, small spiritual growth groups, synod -sponsored programs and retreats, and the like);
- (2) **coordinates** the congregation’s caring ministries to members in time of need;
- (3) **fosters** the congregation’s sense of community through fellowship activities (Sunday fellowship hour, special events & programs, family game and movie nights, and the like);
- (4) **encourages** members’ growth in generosity as a grateful response to the abundance of God’s blessings in their lives;
- (5) **supports** the growth of our youth through a program of activities that help develop a sustaining faith marked by joy in living,

mutually supportive relationships, compassionate service to those in need, and growth in understanding of God’s purposes for life.)

Stay tuned for details!!

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Midwinter Power In The Spirit

Register today to join us for **Midwinter Power in the Spirit (Digital) event Sunday, January 31 to Wednesday, February 2, 2022**. Our virtual doors will open at 5:30 PM each night and by 5:45 PM, we will be enjoying lectures and worships from a variety of leaders. At 7:00 PM, we will close with worship. The Rev. Kevin Strickland, Bishop of the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA, joins us as our keynote speaker. Bishop Strickland brings a wealth of knowledge regarding worship practices and how our worship forms us for mission. Registration at <https://www.vasynod.org/event/midwinter-power-in-the-spirit-2022/> will open on January 3, 2022.

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Correspondence

+**From Middle Peninsula/Northern Neck CSB**—“How very generous it was to donate to our organization in support of programs related to LGBTQIA+. We are most appreciative and thankful for this consideration. The funds will be used for promoting wellness through our Prevention Division.”

+**From GUEST**—“Thank you—we are so grateful to all of you for your recent gift and continued support. . .”

+ **From encircle**—“Friends in Christ—thank you so much for your faithful support.”

+ **From GMCC**—“Thanks so much to everyone at Apostles for thinking of the Clinic.”

+ **From The Court House Players**—“Thank you for your hospitality in allowing the Court House players to use your fellowship hall for our annual Christmas party.”

(Copies of the letters are on the “Correspondence” bulletin board in the fellowship hall.)



Blessing The Home During Epiphany

Matthew writes that when the magi saw the shining star stop overhead, they were filled with joy. "On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother" (Matt. 2:10-11). In the home, Christ is met in family and friends, in visitors and strangers. In the home, faith is shared, nurtured, and put into action. In the home, Christ is welcome.

Twelfth Night (January 5), Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6), or sometime before February 14 (the festival of Transfiguration) offers an occasion for a blessing for the home. During this time where many of us are staying close to home, what better time to bless these homes that have kept us safe, warm and healthy. You could enjoy a "Twelfth Night" cake or some other treat to celebrate the visit and the gifts of the Magi (see recipe below). Someone may lead the greeting and blessing, while another person may read the scripture passage. Following an eastern European tradition, a visual blessing may be inscribed with white chalk above the main door; for example, 20 + CMB + 22. The numbers change with each new year. The three letters stand for either the ancient Latin blessing *Christe mansionem benedicat*, which means, "Christ bless this house," or the legendary names of the magi (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar).

Greeting

May peace be to this house and all who enter here. By wisdom a house is built and through understanding it is established through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures. (*Proverbs 24:3-4*)

Reading

As we prepare to ask God's blessing on this household, let us listen to the words of scripture. Read John 1 verses 1-4, 14, and 16—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the

beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being, and the life was the light of all people. The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace."

Inscription

This inscription may be made with chalk above the entrance: 20 + CMB + 22. Write the appropriate character (left) while speaking the text (right)

The magi of old, known as

C Caspar

M Melchior, and

B Balthasar

Followed the star of God's Son who came to dwell among us

20 two thousand

22 and twenty two years ago.

+ Christ bless this house,

+ and remain with us throughout the year.

Prayer of Blessing

O God, you revealed your Son to all people by the shining of a star. We pray that you bless this home and all who live here with your gracious presence. May your love be our inspiration, your wisdom our guide, your truth our light, and your peace our benediction; through Christ our Lord.

20 + C + M + B + 22

Twelfth Night Cake

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Sift 2 c. flour, 1 1/2 c. sugar, 2 tsp. baking soda, 1/2 c. cocoa powder and 1 tsp. salt. In a separate bowl, mix 1 egg, 1 c. mild-tasting oil, 1 c. buttermilk, 1 tsp. vanilla and 1 c. boiling water. Combine dry and wet ingredients. Grease 2 round 9-inch cake pans or one 9x13 pan. Sprinkle pan(s) with cocoa. Pour batter into pan(s) - bake for 45 minutes. Make frosting by mixing 4 oz. chocolate pudding (not instant), 1 1/4 c. milk, 1/2 c. softened butter, 1 tsp. vanilla, 1/4 tsp. salt and 1 c. powdered sugar in a pan and cook over low heat, stirring until thickened. Transfer to a bowl and let cool before frosting.