

The Epistle

THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

Gloucester www.apostles-elca.org | www.facebook.com/ApostlesELCA | July 2025

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



A Word from Pastor Jay

As we continue through the warm summer months (today's temperature as I write this is near 100 degrees), I wanted to revisit a habit of mine for summer newsletters, which is to provide some fun for the relaxing, re-creational days of summer. Below you will find a trivia game which includes items in Bible, church history and church trivia. Try to see how many of these you can answer without the help of Google or other search services.

1. How many wives did Solomon have?
2. How many of each type of animal did Noah take with him on the ark?
3. What is the shortest book of the Bible and how many verses does it have?
4. What book of the Bible has the most chapters, and how many chapters does it have?
5. Which chapter of the Bible, written by St. Paul, traditionally is known as the "love" chapter?
6. What were the names of the brothers of Jesus listed in the Bible?
7. Who was Martin Luther's right hand man who helped him organize and promote the reformation?
8. Where is the main Synod office for the Virginia Synod located?
9. How many Synods are there in the ELCA?
10. In what two languages was the Augsburg Confession, one of the foundational documents of the Lutheran Church, written?

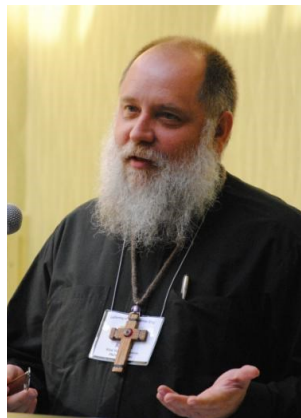


Agape Worship Service— Sunday, July 27th

Please join us on **Sunday, July 27th**, for an "agape" worship service—it will be held in the fellowship hall starting at 10:00 AM. Everyone is asked to bring a brunch dish to share.

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Bishop of West Virginia Visit



Bishop Matthew Riegel of West Virginia worshipped with us on Sunday, June 22nd. Bishop Riegel shared news of our previous Pastor Paul Schafer—Pastor Paul and another pastor are serving in a 5-point parish in Franklin, West Virginia. Bishop

Riegel joined us for fellowship after worship.



Women's Group Meeting

The women's group met on Saturday, June 14th—Jamie Serafin

did a wonderful presentation on "Using Myer's-Briggs to Strengthen Church Relationships" - we all learned a lot!!! The next meeting will be on **Saturday, July 12th, at 9:30 AM.** We would LOVE to have you join us!!

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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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Happy Birthday to...

Manning Freeman	July 4
Kaleb Hess	July 9
Nate Peterson	July 22
Miles Frost-Mayer	July 23
Brian Badger	July 24

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Happy Baptismal Anniversary to...

Matthew Hautz, Jr.	July 7
Preston Higgins	July 20
Willow Crocker	July 23
Karen Johnston	July 24
Janet Gomez	July 31

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Ministry Team Meetings

The following ministry teams will meet in July:

- + **Worship**—Monday, July 21st, 5:00 PM
- + **Service & Sharing**—Monday, July 21st, 7:00 PM

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Please Keep In Your Prayers

Rich Bitting, Manning Freeman, Don Garfield, Ellen Kendzierski, Ellen Quirk, Doug Leip, Michael Schlemmer, Keith and Juanita Sturdy, George Thomas, Jewel Thomas, Lena Woodlief, and Nancy Wagner



Reconciling in Christ News

- + **Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church** in Newport News is the newest church to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation—**congratulations!** (*Editor's Note: Did you know that Trinity Lutheran Church was a mission partner of Apostles providing mission support when Apostles first became an ELCA congregation?*)
- + **The Rev. Colleen Hetrick**, Director of Digital Ministries and a member of the Virginia Synod's Tapestry Team that addresses LGBTQIA+ inclusion, will be meeting with the Apostles Reconciling in Christ Team on **Tuesday, July 29th, at 7:00 PM on Zoom.** Anyone is welcome to attend—please contact Betsy Liljeberg for an invitation to the Zoom meeting.

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Power In The Spirit 2025

The Virginia Synod's annual Power In The Spirit event will be held **July 17-19** at Roanoke College in Salem, VA. *"Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."* Keynote speaker will be **Maryn Olson**, Director of Lutheran Disaster Response for the ELCA, and **Rev. Bobby Morris**, Pastor of St. Matthew's in Pomaria, South Carolina, will be the Bible study leader. Registration information can be found at vasynod.org. Registration closes on **July 1st.**





World Hunger Sunday July 20th

More than 820 million people - that's about 11 percent of people in our world today - are hungry. Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger

make it possible for the ELCA to respond, supporting sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty. Please remember your offering on the third Sunday—July 20th.

UNTIL ALL ARE FED!!

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Correspondence

“Dear friends and parishioners of Apostles, We were thrilled to receive a \$250 donation from Pastor Jim’s memorial Mission Outreach Fund. Pastor Jim’s mother’s memory lives on in the work we do to help those income restricted seniors in need of home repairs in our community. Thank you for this kind donation! We also express our sincere gratitude for the many ways Apostles’ church family works closely with our nonprofit to help those most in need. Don Garfield, Chris Hawkins and Heidi Henderson are crucial voices on our Board of Directors. And our two staff members, Babs Zuhowski and Irene Albert also call Apostles Lutheran Church home. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Love in Christ,
Babs Zuhowski
Executive Director
Rural Housing Partnership”

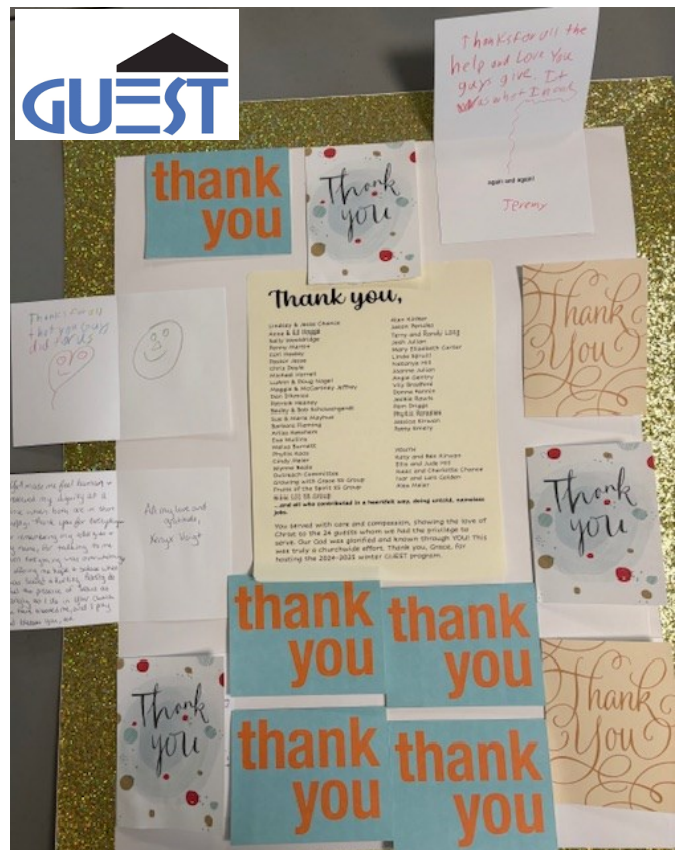


“Dear Pastor Serafin,
On behalf of GMCC,
thanks to you and the congregation of
Apostles Lutheran
Church for your

generous gift of \$250 which was donated in dedication to several clinic team members or former team members. This contribution comes at a time when the Clinic is working hard to

Broaden our services and outreach in order to meet the needs of our vibrant, growing community. Health care needs are always changing, but healthcare access should not. Thank you for helping us to keep the door open for everyone in our community who needs a healthcare home but is unable to afford private insurance. Your support for the Clinic is truly an investment in a healthier Gloucester-Mathews community. As the state of healthcare availability changes across Virginia this year, we’re looking forward to continuing our work—with grateful hearts, always, for our tremendous community of support. Thank you for being a part of our mission! Thank you all for honoring the Clinic with this wonderful gift!

Warm regards,
Arlene Armentor
Executive Director”



Check out the display in the narthex and read the thank you notes from the clients from GUEST expressing their appreciation for offering a night shelter. (Editor's Note: Apostles hosted the winter night shelter for 2 weeks during the winter season.)



Jubilee Churches News

The Jubilee Churches of Gloucester, a coalition of 18 congregations in Gloucester (including Apostles), will be meeting again in August

on August 13th, at 9:30 AM at Susanna Wesley United Methodist Church. In June, the Jubilee Churches welcomed a new church to Jubilee Churches—Gloucester Point Baptist Church. The Rev. Dr. Ed Walker, pastor of Bellamy United Methodist Church, is the covener of the Jubilee Churches of Gloucester. In May, a young mother in our community recently faced one of life's toughest challenges. With two little ones—just 2 and 4 years old—depending on her, she suddenly lost her job and quickly fell behind on rent. As the threat of eviction and a court date quickly approached, fear and uncertainty took hold. But even in her struggle, she showed remarkable determination. She quickly found new employment and began working again, confident that her new income would be enough to support her family moving forward. She also turned to GUEST and Jubilee Churches looking for help—doing everything she could to protect the home her children know and love until she was able to start receiving pay from her new employer. For the first time, she reached out for support from the community. **In May**, Jubilee Churches provided support to 6 families, totaling \$2,339 - assistance was provided for rent and Dominion power assistance. **If you would like to learn more about Jubilee Churches, please contact Pete Liljeberg or Janet Gomez.**

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GUEST News



+ Apostles will be providing lunch the clients of GUEST the week of **July 28th**—if you would

like to help, please contact Janet Gomez.

+ **Needed supplies** at the GUEST day shelter include bug spray, sunscreen, hats, cooling towels, hand held fans and coffee. There is a bin in the fellowship hall to place your donations—thanks!

Our Deepest Sympathy To...

- + Cynthia and Jason Lowe upon the death of family member, Isaac.
- + Lynn Jaeger upon the death her sister.
- + Jamie Serafin who had to euthanatize her beloved horse.

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Guatemala Medical Mission Trip News



Several members of the medical mission team who travelled to Guatemala in April made a presentation on their trip during the fellowship hour on Sunday, June 22nd. They shared stories about the medical mission, the construction projects and programs for students. Several members of the team will be travelling again to Guatemala the week of March 8th in 2026—if you are interested in learning about the trip or are interested in joining the team, please contact Dr. Donna Ambrose.

*From Your Treasurer,
Doug Dalager*

May 2025

<i>Planned Income</i>	<i>\$9,610.24</i>
<i>Actual Income</i>	<i>\$7,708.93</i>
<i>Delta</i>	<i>\$1,109.49</i>

Year to Date

<i>Planned Income</i>	<i>\$48,502</i>
<i>Actual Income</i>	<i>\$39,827</i>
<i>Delta</i>	<i>\$ 8,225</i>



Global Refuge

formerly known as
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

The offering received during our mid-week Lenten services was designated for Global Refuge, formerly known as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. A total of \$666 was given—thank you to everyone for supporting this wonderful ministry!!

Visit from Lutheran World Relief

Emma Wayne, a representative from Lutheran World Relief, met with Pastor Jay in May—she thanked Apostles for our support of LWR and presented Pastor Jay with a LWR mug. Lutheran World Relief is an international non-governmental organization that focuses on sustainable development projects and disaster relief and recovery. The organization was founded in 1945 to collect and send aid to people living in post-World War II Europe.



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**

Congregation Council in July

The regular Congregation Council meeting will be on **Monday, July 14th, at 7:00 PM**. The Council will be working on several initiatives that came out of the Congregation Council retreat that was held in May. One of the initiatives that will be worked on is paying off the church mortgage. Stay tuned for details!

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News from Your Caring Community Ministry Team

Your Caring Community Ministry Team has been busy planning for the summer and fall—here is what they have been working on. . .

- + **Summer Fun Picnic** has been postponed to **Sunday, August 17th**. An updated pre-populated food signup sheet is available in the narthex. Please lend a helping hand and join us for some summer fun!!
- + **Agape Worship Service** is being planned with the Worship Ministry Team for **Sunday, July 27th**. Everyone is asked to bring a brunch dish to share.
- + **Worship In The Park** will be held at Beaverdam Park on **Sunday, September 7th**—please make plans now to attend this wonderful worship service and fellowship in the beautiful Beaverdam Park!!
- + **Quarterly Theme Event** will kick off in October with a viewing of the movie “Luther” and a mini-Octoberfest—tentatively scheduled for **Friday, October 24th**.
- + **Adult Theological Discussion** will launch in the Fall and focus on how Lutherans interpret scripture. The sessions will be led by Pastor Jay and Pete Liljeberg.

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A Big THANK YOU to . . .

Ray Scholz for repairing the air conditioner in the sanctuary—it was getting a little hot!!

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Congratulations to . . .

Pastor Jay on the anniversary of his ordination on July 9th!!

2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly

The ELCA Churchwide Assembly will be held in Phoenix, Arizona on July 28th–August 2nd. The Churchwide Assembly is held every 3 years. The Assembly is the primary decision-making body of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. There will be additional information in the July edition of The Epistle about the Assembly—most importantly, a successor to Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton will be elected.



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A THOUGHT ABOUT INDEPENDENCE DAY

Both Canada Day (July 1) and US Independence Day (July 4) hold significant places in the hearts of their respective countries' citizenry, appropriately celebrating their independence and freedom (including freedom of religion). We are not as "free" as we may think. The gospel shows that we are never independent of God's providence and mercy, while 2 Corinthians highlights our interdependence with one another in the body of Christ, the church.



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News From The Pews



- Pete Liljeberg and his band, Tidewinders, played for "Music in the Park" at Machicomoco State Park on June 14th—they entertained a crowd of over 250 with bluegrass music with a modern flair.

- Sue Turner and Karen Johnston recently traveled to Camden Yards for a baseball game—Sue said unfortunately her team, the Detroit Tigers, lost but they had a grand time!!



- Pastor Jay and Jamie recently traveled to Michigan for Jamie's nephew, Spencer's, wedding. He lives in Ypsilanti. It was a beautiful day and they really enjoyed the family time. Jamie's nephews are pictured in the photo. They had a nice week visiting some nature trails and lakes too! Pastor Jay officiated at the wedding.



- Irene Albert's Chapter BW of P.E.O. (Professional Employer Organization) was one of five hostess Chapters providing support as hostesses and Registrar for the Virginia State Chapter of the P.E.O. Sisterhood 2025 Convention at the Richmond Marriott. Irene has been a member of this wonderful organization, and of Chapter BW, Gloucester, since 2010.



Virginia Synod Assembly—2025



Lutherans from all around the Virginia Synod (including Pastor Jay and our delegates, Chris and Jennie Hawkins) gathered at Roanoke College for the 2025 Virginia Synod Assembly. The Synod welcomed Jill Beverlin, ELCA Program Director – Coaching Ministries, as our Churchwide Representative. Bishop Dee Pederson from our companion synod, Southwestern Minnesota Synod preached and brought greetings from her synod.

The Assembly theme was Intertwining Hope. I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you abide in Me, and I in you, you will bear great fruit. Without Me, you will accomplish nothing. (John 15:5 The Voice Translation). The theme was carried out throughout the assembly by hearing updates from various mission partners who were present. Intertwining prayers were offered throughout the assembly. Congregations and ministry sites were invited to share information and pictures about their ministries. These pictures and stories were available on the tables at the assembly and attendees prayed for the congregations and ministry sites across the Synod. A variety of Ecumenical leaders were present and introduced at the start of the assembly.

Elected to serve on Synod Council are River Smith (St. Mark, Floyd-Willis Parish), Jerry A. Hoke (Our Saviour, Warrenton), Nathaniel Porter (Our Saviour, Christiansburg), Patricia Corliss (St. Timothy, Norfolk) Cedric Wilson (St. Philip,

Roanoke), Pastor Tina Melusky (Trinity, Newport News), and Pastor Deanna Boynton (Grace, Winchester - serving as Chaplain at Valley Health). Elected to serve on the Committee on Discipline are Erin Hager (Trinity, Pulaski), Charles Page (Good Shepherd, Lexington), Erin Georion (Grace, Winchester), and Pastor Joel Neubauer (St. Mark, Yorktown).

The Assembly opened with a service of Holy Communion. Bishop Dee Pederson, Southwestern Minnesota Synod, served as the preacher for worship and focused on the Assembly theme, 'Intertwining Hope.' On Saturday morning, Bishop Phyllis Milton presided at a service of remembrance for rostered ministers who had died since the last onsite assembly in 2023. The assembly also remembered congregations that had closed. Saturday's Assembly concluded with a Festival Service of Holy Communion that included commissioning four lay ministers, Jim Ingraham, Erich Lantz, Debbie Mintiens, and Jennifer Partica. The final day of the Assembly began with morning prayer and ended with a closing worship service featuring a sermon by Vicar Andy Taminger (Southside Partnership-Ascension, Danville and Holy Trinity, Martinsville) and the installation of those serving in leadership roles in the Virginia Synod. This year, the offerings were designated to support the Lutheran Disaster Response.

The Assembly celebrated rostered minister ordination anniversaries, congregation anniversaries, and gave thanks to lay leaders, including those concluding terms on Synod Council.

The Assembly approved the 2026 and 2027 Investment in Ministry Plans, the 2023 and 2024 Synod Audits, and the Compensation Guidelines for 2026. Susanna Carr (First English, Richmond) president of the Lutheran Youth Organization, presented the Youth Assembly report, focusing on the theme, "Shapes of Hope," based on Romans 5:1-5, and the images of hope that present themselves to us in our daily lives.