

The Epistle

THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; or the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

Romans 8: 18-25

As we enter the month of November we are bookended by celebrations in the Christian calendar where "hope" is a major theme. We begin the month with All Saints' Sunday, and as we end the month we enter into the season of Advent. Both of these church year events call on Christians to hope for that which we cannot see. All Saints, of course, is the celebration of

all who have gone before us in the faith. On this Sunday we remember those who have passed the faith on to us, from the first Christians so many centuries ago to our latest dearly departed. As we remember we do so with the greatest of hopes, that God will be true to God's promises, that the God who sent Jesus into the world, the God who faced crucifixion and triumphed in resurrection, is the God who will give the gift of everlasting life to those who have faced the great enemy... death. Still, this remains a hope, because, this side of the grave, we don't have the concrete proof that life continues in the presence of God. We find the proclamation, the promise of everlasting life in Scripture, and ultimately see our hope in God's gift of resurrection that the apostles witnessed in the crucified Jesus. Jesus, we believe, is the first fruits of what God will do, the very one who destroyed the power of death for us and for all the saints. So we hope, fervently hope, in this promise, even though we don't see the final results. Yet Paul reminds us, "For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes in what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." It is this patient hope that greets us in Advent. Advent, in a very real way, is the season of hope. Advent is the dual promise of the coming of the Messiah, first in the baby born in Bethlehem, but ultimately in the Christ who is promised to come and bring us the full presence of God, through whom we will be made whole, the fullness of life will be ours,

and our hope will be realized. In the face of the darkness of this world, we light candles on the Advent wreath to announce our hope, to defy the darkness and to focus on what God has promised. Still, we do not have the fulfillment of these promises. We get bits and pieces of them... a foretaste of the feast to come... in the proclaiming of the promises God has made in Jesus and in Baptism and Communion. As we gather for Word and Sacrament in the presence of the risen Christ we are graced with promise and called to hope. In this crazy world in which we live, we hear from God through Jesus and the witness of the faithful that God has spoken the final word over our lives and over all creation. In between All Saints' Sunday and Advent, we also celebrate Christ the King Sunday, a day on which we proclaim the One in whom our hope resides. We don't just hope, "pie in the sky," for things to get better. We hope in the very one whom God sent to reveal what God has done, is doing, and ultimately will do. As we live in the meantime, even when things seem to be dark or scary or out of control, we find truth in our hope. "And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us." Romans 5: 3-5.

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Happy Birthday to .

Michael Crocker	November 2
Nan Duff	November 6
Chris Liljeberg	November 8
Jim Wright, Sr.	November 9
David Leunig	November 10
Matthew Hautz	November 11
Tyler Britt	November 18
Conner Badger	November 19
John Mayer	November 19
Donna Ambrose	November 23
Reagan Badger	November 25
CK Ambrose	November 27

Happy Anniversary To . .

Pastor Jay and Jamie Serafin	November 3
Kayla and Matthew Hautz	November 3
Shawn and April Anby	November 18
Jason and Cynthia Lowe	November 29

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Happy Baptismal Anniversary To..

Marina and Nicolas Allen	November 21
Sue Turner	November 25
Emmaleigh Hautz	November 30

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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

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Blessing of the Animals

After the worship service on Sunday, October 12th, we gathered to ask God's blessings on some important members of our family - our pets. As you look through these pictures know that we pray God's blessings on your pets as well!



Welcome New Members!!!!



**Tonia Fallin
and
David Muse**

David was born outside of London, England, and moved to the

states at age 8. He has been retired since 2005, and recently moved to Williamsburg from Shacklefords, VA, on the York River. Tonia moved to Williamsburg last year, from San Antonio, TX, where she had lived for the last 60 years. She has deep family roots in Virginia, and has visited here frequently over the years. Her mom was born and raised in Cradock, and she has many cousins scattered throughout the state. Tonia is currently working remotely for the Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas as a Troop Finance Coordinator.



**The Slider
Family
Michelle, Mia,
Ben V, Keegan
and Ben IV**

The Sliders are originally from Pennsylvania

and moved to Virginia in July 2021. Ben IV works for the Department of Defense in Washington DC. Michelle works for the Middlesex County School District at St. Clare Walker in the 8th Grade. Ben V is a fabricating welder for Hanover in Richmond and teaches welding part time for RCC. Keegan is in his sophomore year at Randolph College in Lynchburg, VA. He is studying Exercise Science with a goal of getting his Doctorate in Physical Therapy. He is also the goalie for Randolph's Men's Lacrosse team. Mia is a Junior at Middlesex Highschool and attends the Governor's School at RCC. She is a varsity cheerleader, varsity soccer player and plays league lacrosse year round. She's involved in many clubs and is her class secretary. She hopes to graduate in June of 2027 with an Advanced Diploma from MHS and her Associates in Science from RCC.

Meet Lutherbot!!

Lutherbot has joined Apostles cleaning team. He is able to vacuum and mop the fellowship hall and vacuum the carpeted areas of the church. He loves cleaning and is never takes a vacation, although sometimes gets tired and will need to recharge at his base. Lutherbot will be scheduled to clean up after fellowship time. **Please help by putting your chair up before you leave.** He will clean even if the chairs are down but can do a better job with the chairs up. Watch for a tutorial, sometime after worship this month, on how to communicate with Lutherbot!

Betsy Liljeberg

(Editor's Note: Thanks to Pete and Betsy for "Lutherbot!!")



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Congregation Council Meetings in November

The Congregation Council will be meeting on **Sunday, November 2nd** after worship to discuss the 2026 ministry spending plan and also on **Monday, November 10th at 7:00 PM** for the normal monthly meeting—anyone is welcome to attend.

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Ministry Team Meetings

The following Ministry Teams will meet in November:

- + **Caring Community**– Monday, November 10th, at 12:00 Noon
- + **Worship**–TBD
- + **Reconciling in Christ**–Monday, November 17th at 7:00 PM (Zoom)

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Set Your Clocks Back!!

Remember to set your clocks back on **Sunday, November 2nd!!**



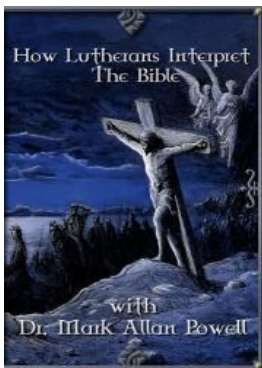


Jubilee Churches News

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

December on December 10th at 9:30 AM at Ware Episcopal Church. The Rev. Dr. Ed Walker, pastor of Bellamy United Methodist Church, is the covener of the Jubilee Churches of Gloucester. In October, Jubilee Churches assisted 3 households with \$2,497 in rent and Dominion Power assistance. In October, Jubilee Churches were able to help a local family of seven – two parents and five children – to keep their lights on and stay in their home. The father, who serves in the National Guard, was not paid for his recent 28-day duty due to the current government shutdown. In addition to his military service, he is self-employed, but his time away meant he was unable to earn income from his business. This unexpected gap in pay created a serious financial strain for the family. Thanks to the Jubilee Churches, we were able to step in and cover their Dominion Power bill. This assistance brought tremendous relief and stability during a stressful time – helping them avoid falling behind and keeping their home warm and bright for their children. Your contributions make stories like this possible every day. **If you would like to learn more about Jubilee Churches, please contact Pete Liljeberg or Janet Gomez.**

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How Lutherans Interpret the Bible

A new adult study will continue **on Wednesday, November 12th and 19th—we will have a sandwich and fellowship at 6:00 PM and the study will start at 6:30 PM.** The study will focus on how Lutherans interpret scripture. The 6

sessions are being led by Pastor Jay. We would LOVE to have you join us!!



GUEST News

+ **Needed supplies** at the GUEST homeless shelter include microwave safe paper bowls, plastic forks and spoons, salt and pepper shakers, and laundry pods.

+ **Apostles** will be providing lunch for the clients of GUEST the **week of November 17th**—we will be providing lunch for 10 people on **Tuesday, Thursday and Friday (November 18th, 20th and 21st**—if you would like to help, please contact Janet Gomez.

+ **Apostles** will be hosting the GUEST winter shelter **the week of February 23rd**—stay tuned for ways to help!

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Mathew's Lions Club Fundraiser

The Mathew's Lions Club is having a fundraiser—they are selling a crab cake dinner for \$30 on **Saturday, November 15th**—the cost of **tickets are \$45.** This is a first come, first served event from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM—if you need additional information, please see Linda Hodges. For several years, the Mathew's Lions Club has supplied eyeglasses for the Guatemala Medical Mission trip.

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Correspondence

"Thank you so much for supporting the Jubilee Churches and their work with the Gloucester United Emergency Shelter Team (GUEST) program through your generous donation. We are so grateful for your contribution of \$500. Through the enduring support of congregations like yours, Jubilee Churches is able to work together to prevent homelessness crises for our neighbors and to help the GUEST program continue to provide our neighbors without a home caring case managers, a day shelter with laundry and shower facilities, and much needed supplies and food. GUEST is currently preparing for their winter shelter season. Your investment in the Jubilee Churches and the GUEST program is vital to the success of their mission.

Warm regards,
Janet Gomez, Secretary, GUEST Board"

*From Your Treasurer,
Doug Dalager*



September 2025

<i>Planned Income</i>	<i>\$ 9,610.24</i>
<i>Actual Income</i>	<i>\$18,697.68</i>
<i>Delta</i>	<i>\$ 9.087.26</i>

Year to Date

<i>Planned Income</i>	<i>\$86,494</i>
<i>Actual Income</i>	<i>\$93,048</i>
<i>Delta</i>	<i>\$ 6,554</i>

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Apostles Women's Group

Apostles Women's Group will be meeting on **Saturday, November 8th**—all women are invited!!

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Congregational Meeting, Sunday, November 16th

A congregational meeting has been scheduled for

Sunday, November 16th, after the 10:00 AM worship service (around 11:00 AM) both in-person and via Zoom to discuss and approve a ministry spending plan for 2026. Please make plans to attend - we need your voice and vote!!! The proposed spending plan will be sent out by e-mail in the coming week from Apostles office. **This meeting will take place after an "agape" worship service in the fellowship hall. Please bring a brunch type dish for the agape meal and make plans to stay for the meeting - thanks so much!!**

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Save the Date!!!

Pastor Jay and Jamie have announced their annual Christmas "Open House" on **Saturday, December 13th**—details will be forthcoming. Make plans now to come and enjoy time with your Apostles community of faith and some absolutely delicious food!!

Urge lawmakers and the Department of Agriculture to release SNAP contingency funds and to ensure no delays in hunger benefits during the government shutdown. There are 42 million Americans who depend on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to feed their families who are at risk of seeing delays of their November benefits due to the current government shutdown. This comes as other essential hunger programs, such as the Women, Infants and Children's Program (WIC), and free/reduced school meals are also set to run out of contingency funding due to the shutdown around the first week of November. Through ELCA World Hunger and our congregational networks across the country, we witness daily the vital role SNAP and federal programs play in preventing hunger. Our food pantries, community meals and hunger relief organizing efforts complement but cannot replace these benefits. The families we serve – working parents, children, seniors and people with disabilities – are counting on these benefits to survive. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2025 Lapse of Funding Plan explicitly stated that SNAP operations should continue during a shutdown using contingency funding – before it was removed from the website in late October. Allowing hunger to deepen during a government shutdown is a policy choice and possibly a violation of law, not an inevitability. Please contact your members of Congress today, urging them to demand that USDA immediately release guidance to states, distribute contingency funding and ensure uninterrupted SNAP and hunger benefits for November and beyond. Congress should also negotiate and meet ASAP to end the government shutdown as soon as possible to avert additional harm to low-income families. Let's speak up for our neighbors in greatest need! **Thank you for your advocacy.**



All Saints Sunday

Who are the saints, and what do they have to say to us? What makes someone a saint? Rather than being perfect Christians, the saints are people who have been made

whole by the grace of God, through baptism into Christ. On All Saints Day, we remember that saints are not just people of the past, like St. Patrick or St. Nicholas. They are people of the present. Some saints we see every day. Some saints we have never met in person. All saints inspire us to be closer and more faithful to God in the way we live, serve, and pray. This is because saints are ordinary people like you and me by the grace of God. **For the worship service on Sunday, November 2nd, you are invited to bring in pictures of the saints in your life who are no longer with us to adorn the sanctuary.** We will celebrate the victory won for all the faithful dead, but we grieve our beloved dead as well, knowing that God honors our tears.

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Lay Assisting Ministers Meeting

There will be a meeting of all Lay Assisting Ministers on **Sunday, November 9th, after the worship service.** All Lay Assisting Ministers are encouraged to attend. **The meeting is also open to anyone who might be interested in becoming a Lay Assisting Minister!!**

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News from Your Virginia Synod

+ **Pastor Dave Delaney**, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, has announced his retirement effective August 15, 2026.

+ **Pastor Liz Radtke**, Director of Faith Formation, Retired Rostered Ministers Relations, and Conflict Mediation, has announced her resignation effective November 14, 2025.

+ **"Lost and Found"**, the Virginia Synod retreat for youth in 7th and 8th grade will be held **November 21-23** at Eagle Eyrie in Lynchburg. Registration information can be found at vasynod.org.

News From The Pews



Barbara Runk raised \$630 for Alzheimer's during the "Walk to End Alzheimer's" on October 4th—way to go Barbara!!

Gerald Britt was recognized as a "Clinic Hero" for all his volunteering at the Gloucester Mathews Care Clinic during the Clinic's recent Oktoberfest. Congratulations, Gerald!!



Janet Gomez made over 300 cookies for the recent NAACP College and Career Fair at Gloucester High School—pictured also is Carolyn Lemon who provided other snacks. Yum!!

Jamie Serafin and Barbara Runk recently made flower arrangements for the altar with flowers from our very own raised beds—they were beautiful!!



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Did You Know???

Did you know that Linda Hodges and Apostles' former member, Carol Wolf, designed and made the banner we displayed on Reformation?

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News From Your Caring Community Ministry Team

A big **THANK YOU** to all who participated in the first Apostles Dinner at Movie Oktoberfest. The Team is planning for a quarterly dinner and movie—details will be forthcoming for the next event soon.

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Don't Forget To...

Sign up to **sponsor a bulletin** and **provide flowers for the altar**—signup sheets are in the narthex.

Oktoberfest 2025!!

What fun!!! A special thank you to Irene and Heinz Albert and Karen Johnston for a WONDERFUL event!! The food was absolutely delicious!!



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God's Work Our Hands 2025!!

God's Work, Our Hands 2025 was held on Saturday, October 25th. Service and Sharing Ministry Team leader, Pete Liljeberg, and Ray Scholz scoped out the projects before the work day. We worked with Joedey Bell from Bay Aging for projects. Everyone enjoyed a lunch after the work.

Thanks to everyone who helped with God's Work, Our Hands 2025!!



A Letter from Bishops of the ELCA to the Church

“On Hope and Action”

October 8, 2025

A Letter from Bishops of the ELCA to the Church

Beloved in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we write to you in this moment of national and global tension with clarity and conviction. Our faith compels us to stand where Jesus stands—with and for those whom society often seeks to exclude, erase, or diminish.

Our shared confession that every person is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) grounds us in the conviction that all people possess inherent dignity. The incarnation of Jesus Christ reveals God’s profound solidarity with humanity—especially with those who are marginalized or oppressed. The gospel we proclaim insists that our neighbor’s need is the occasion for our love and that our public life is shaped by justice, mercy, and a commitment to the common good.

Further, we have a shared tradition in our social teachings which grounds us. The ELCA’s Social Message on Immigration reminds us:

“We are to respond to newcomers as we would to Christ—welcoming them, meeting their immediate needs, and advocating for justice in our laws and policies.”

Likewise, our recently adopted Social Statement Faith and Civic Life affirms that Christians are called to be “a public witness, holding leaders accountable when they fail to protect the vulnerable.”

We are living through a time when vulnerable communities are being scapegoated and attacked. Immigrants and refugees are vilified, though Scripture commands us to welcome the stranger. People of color continue to bear the devastating weight of racism woven into the fabric of our society. Transgender people, beloved by God, are being targeted with laws and rhetoric that deny their dignity and even their right to exist. These assaults on our siblings are not political abstractions—they are deep wounds in the body of Christ.

In this time of division and fear, we, as people grounded in our faith, insist on love. This commitment flows from our faith in Christ crucified and risen—the One whose love breaks down barriers, confronts hatred, and transforms hearts.

Love insists on the dignity of every human being.

Love insists on justice for the marginalized and oppressed.

Love insists that the church must reflect God’s diverse, life-giving community.

Love insists that we listen, speak, and act with respect, even in disagreement.

Love insists on hope, trusting that God’s kingdom of justice and peace will prevail.

This love also compels us to speak clearly against Christian Nationalism, which our Churchwide Assembly named as a distortion of the Christian faith and an unhealthy form of patriotism. Christian Nationalism confuses the Gospel with political power, turns God into a mascot for the state, and privileges some people over others based on race, religion, or birthplace. This is not the way of Jesus. The kingdom of God is not a nation, not a culture, not a political ideology—it is God's reign of love, justice, and mercy for all people.

Therefore, as bishops of this church, we declare that the ELCA cannot be silent. Our call is clear:

- To proclaim the God-given dignity of every human being.
- To resist systems and ideologies, including Christian Nationalism, that oppress, dehumanize, or erase.
- To stand shoulder to shoulder with those who are targeted or harmed.

To bear public witness that the love of Christ is stronger than fear, stronger than hatred, and stronger than death.

We call on all members of the ELCA to join us in prayer, advocacy, and action:

- Pray for those who are vulnerable and for all who work for justice.
- Advocate in your communities, legislatures, and Congress for laws that protect migrants, advance racial justice, and safeguard LGBTQIA+ people.
- Engage in the holy work of hospitality, creating spaces of safety, affirmation, and belonging for all God's children.
- Model respectful dialogue in a polarized world, seeking understanding rooted in love.

Hold fast to hope, trusting that the Spirit is still at work renewing creation and reconciling the world to God.

In baptism, we are marked with the cross of Christ forever. That cross is not only a sign of our hope—it is also a summons to follow Jesus into solidarity with those who suffer.

In the power of the Spirit, let us be bold. Let us be faithful. Let us Insist on Love—in our words, our actions, our public witness, and our life together.

Together in Christ,

Bishop Susan J. Briner - Southwestern Texas Synod, Bishop Becca Middeke-Conlin - Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, Bishop Vivian Davila - Caribbean Synod, Bishop Donna Simon - Central States Synod, Bishop Bill Gohl - Delaware-Maryland Synod, Bishop Anne Edison - Albright - East Central Synod of Wisconsin, Bishop Pedro Suarez - Florida-Bahamas Synod, Bishop Deborah Hutterer - Grand Canyon Synod, Bishop Paul Erickson - Greater Milwaukee Synod, Bishop Felix Malpica - La Crosse Area Synod, Bishop Stephen R. Herr - Lower Susquehanna Synod, Bishop Wayne Miller - Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Bishop Katrina D. Foster - Metropolitan New York Synod, Bishop Philip C. Hirsch - Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, Bishop Jen Nagel - Minneapolis Area Synod, Bishop Scott Alan Johnson - Nebraska Synod, Bishop Nathan Pihlo - New England Synod, Bishop Christa Compton - New Jersey Synod, Bishop Emily K. Hartner - North Carolina Synod, Bishop Julie Schneider-Thomas - North/West Lower Michigan Synod, Bishop Kevin Jones - Northeastern Iowa Synod, Bishop Amy Odgren - Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Bishop Laura Barbins - Northeastern Ohio Synod, Bishop Christopher deForest - Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Bishop Katherine Finegan - Northern Great Lakes Synod, Bishop Stacie Fidler - Northern Illinois Synod, Bishop Erik Gronberg - Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, Bishop Meggan Manlove - Northwest Intermountain Synod, Bishop Martin Halom - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee - Northwest Washington Synod, Bishop Daniel G. Beaudoin - Northwestern Ohio Synod, Bishop Kristen Papson - Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, Bishop Laurie Larson Caesar - Oregon Synod, Bishop David Nagler - Pacifica Synod, Bishop Meghan Johnston Aelabouni - Rocky Mountain Synod, Bishop Jeff R. Johnson - Sierra Pacific Synod, Bishop Ginny Aebischer - South Carolina Synod, Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe - South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Bishop Amy Current - Southeastern Iowa Synod, Bishop Bryan Penman - Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Bishop Brenda Bos - Southwest California Synod, Bishop Melissa L. Stoller - Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, Bishop Keith Marshall - Southwestern Washington, Bishop Tracey Breashears Schultz - Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, Bishop Craig Miller - Upper Susquehanna Synod, Bishop Lee M. Miller II - Upstate New York Synod, Bishop Phyllis Milton - Virginia Synod, Bishop Scott Dalen - Western Iowa Synod