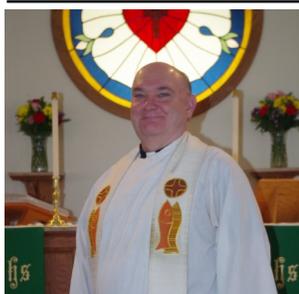


The Epistle

THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.apostles-elca.org | www.facebook.com/ApostlesELCA | April 2026

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

“Know then - sin, death, devil, and everything that assails me - that you are missing the mark. I am not one of those who are

afraid of you. For Christ, my dear Lord, has presented to me that triumph and victory of his by which you were laid low. And from this very gift of His I derive my name and am called a Christian. There is no other reason. My sin and death hung about His neck on Good Friday, but on the day of Easter they had completely disappeared. This victory He has bestowed on me. This is why I do not worry about you.” (Luther’s Easter sermon in 1530)

Martin Luther was an Easter person. At the center of his entire understanding of God and what God has done for us is the incredible gift of Good Friday and Easter, those events through which God has reconciled humanity. When we try to come to an understanding of Martin Luther and of the Reformation which he started over 500 years ago, we cannot go very far without realizing that, even though he doesn’t write the word “Easter” all the time, the promise and hope of Easter lay behind everything he believed and wanted other Christians to understand. But Easter, for Luther, only makes sense when tied to Good Friday and to the cross. Luther sees in the cross perhaps the

greatest teaching tool for who God is and how we should understand God. For Luther, the cross is not just some symbol of a God removed from humanity about whom we can speculate and who floats above us capriciously blessing or cursing our lives in ways we cannot understand. God invests greatly in us, and for Luther, the proof of that investment is the cross. In the person of Jesus, God reveals to us the depth of love God feels for us. Jesus, God incarnate, bears the very pain and despair of the cross and death so that God’s great love might be known. God, through Jesus, even takes on death on our behalf so that our greatest enemy might be overcome. So Good Friday and the cross teach us more about God than volumes of Christian theology ever could. And in his “Theology of the Cross,” Luther explains to us that the cross shows that our God is found in the midst of pain and suffering, in our hurt and despair, in the very places where we live our lives and feel most vulnerable.

Easter, then, is God’s answer to this pain and suffering and despair. It is God’s answer to death. In the proclamation that “Christ is risen!” we are set free from our worries over sin and death and, through the promises of baptism, “joined to the death and resurrection of Christ,” as both Luther and Saint Paul would remind us. In this “freedom from” we find our “freedom for,” our empowerment through Christ to share the joy, the light, the life of Easter with all of God’s children. With Luther, we are Easter

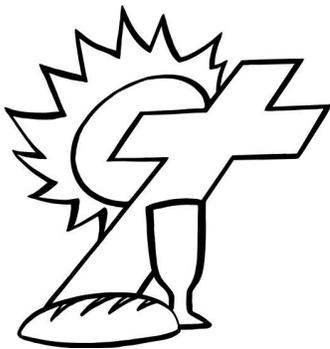
people, but understand what this means even better when we recognize that we are people of the cross as well. Called to serve, we become the body of Christ for the world and find ways to touch others with the fullness of life which comes through the one who bore the cross and who leaped from the grave.

As we journey through the holiest week of the year, and approach the cross, it does us well to consider what the cross reveals to us about ourselves and about our God. Then, as we continue to the tomb, and find it empty, we are touched with the fullness of grace and life bestowed upon us by our Father through Jesus. All of this makes us Easter people, too!

+++++

Holy Week Schedule

- March 29 Palm/Passion Sunday**
10:00 AM
- April 2 Maundy Thursday**
7:00 PM
- April 3 Good Friday**
7:00 PM
- April 4 Holy Saturday**
The In-Between Time
Noon
- April 5 Easter Sunday**
Holy Communion
10:00 AM
Easter Brunch



*Christ Is Risen
Christ Is Risen Indeed!*

What is an Offering of Letters?



In Proverbs 31: 8-9 we are instructed to “Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out; judge righteously; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

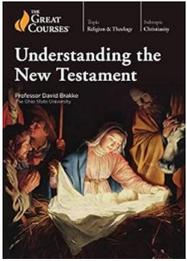
Jesus implores us to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. We can do these things in many ways. Some of us donate food, time at the GUEST shelter, or give monetary donations to World Hunger. These good works are needed for the health and wellbeing of our neighbors and the community as a whole.

The church and people of faith can only contribute so much, we also need to rely on our government to act with integrity to care for the people of the nations. When our government, whom we support with our taxes, is reluctant to care for others it is time to speak out and share our concerns.

An Offering of Letters allows us to be heard and to share with our legislators our concerns from a Christ centered point of view. We have seen people experiencing food insecurity and homelessness. We can share those stories and demand assistance.

The US Congress is currently debating the Farm Bill which includes food programs such as SNAP (supplemental nutrition assistance program) and WIC (women infant and children program). These programs are vital for lifting families out of poverty and providing a good start for young children.

On **April 19th**, Apostles will be conducting an offering of letters. You will have the opportunity to offer your time to write your representatives and to speak for those whose voices are unheard. Please consider joining this important event. Until all are fed,
Betsy Liljeberg



New Adult Study to Start in April

A new adult study will begin in April on the 22nd—"Understanding the New Testament." The class will be led by Pastor Jay—it will be held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month—bring a sandwich for dinner at 6:00 PM and the study will begin on 6:30 PM—please make plans to join us!!

+++++

Congregation Council Update

The Congregation Council will be meeting on Monday, April 6th.

+++++

Happy Birthday To...

Ray Kendzierski	April 5
Jennie Hawkins	April 5
Pam Moore	April 5
Barbara Runk	April 7
Doug Dalager	April 10
Jamie Serafin	April 18
Marina Allen	April 19
Mary Leunig	April 25
Willow Crocker	April 27

+++++

Happy Baptismal Anniversary

Rich Bitting	April 1
Abel Britt	April 18
Margaret Grimes	April 19
Tyler Britt	April 21

+++++

Please Keep In Your Prayers

Rich Bitting, Manning Freeman, Don Garfield, Heidi Henderson, Ellen Kendzierski, Doug Leip, Ellen Quirk, Michael Schlemmer, Ben Slider (IV), Keith & Juanita Sturdy, George Thomas, Jewel Thomas, and Lena Woodlief.

+++++



World Hunger Sunday

Don't forget your world hunger offering on Sunday, April 19th – UNTIL ALL ARE FED!!

Ministry Team Meetings

The following Ministry Team will meet in April:

- + Reconciling in Christ-April 20th, 7:00 PM
- + Worship-April 22nd, 5:00 PM

+++++

Apostles Women's Group

All women of Apostles are invited to attend the Women's Group meeting on Saturday, April 11th at 10:00 AM. We would LOVE to have you join us!!

+++++



Please join us for our annual Easter Brunch following the Easter Sunday service on Sunday, April 5th. A sign-up sheet is available in the narthex to sign up to bring a dish.

+++++

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 mis-understanding. 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. Look forward to seeing you as we journey through Holy Week—March 29th—April 5th.



Jubilee Churches News

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

again on Wednesday, April 15th, at Abingdon Episcopal Church. The Rev. Dr. Ed Walker, pastor of Bellamy United Methodist Church, is the covener of the Jubilee Churches of Gloucester. In March, Jubilee Churches assisted 6 households with \$2,877.16 in Dominion Power assistance. In March, we worked with someone who was at risk of eviction after losing a long-term job. She did everything she could to stay on track—using her savings, picking up new work, and continuing to push forward even when things got hard. But like many people starting over, catching up proved to be the toughest part. For the first time, she reached out for help. With support from multiple community partners—and because of funding made possible by you, local churches—we were able to step in and help her stay in her home. She’s now working consistently and making a plan to keep things stable moving forward. Sometimes the difference between losing everything and holding on is just a little bit of support at the right time. Thank you for being part of these stories. Your kindness is changing lives in real and lasting ways. **If you would like to learn more about Jubilee Churches, please contact Pete Liljeberg or Janet Gomez.**

+ + + + +

Reconciling In Christ News

The Reconciling Ministry team has scheduled **PRIDE Sunday for Sunday, June 7th.** The team has designated the first Sunday of each month as RIC Sunday and will soon start having brief educational discussions during fellowship on “Reconciling Scripture for Lutherans: On Sexuality and Gender Identity.” Stay tuned!



Happy 45th Anniversary, Apostles!!



Botetourt Masonic Lodge-April 26, 1981



Charter Sunday—September 1983

Apostles Lutheran Church (formerly 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. **Please join us on Sunday, April 26th, for worship and a fellowship celebration!!**

Welcome New Members!!!!



Angie and Tegan Goetz

We're Angie and Wes, celebrating 13 years of marriage this April. As a blended family with

six children, we're grateful to have our youngest, Tegan (9), at home. We homeschool her and enjoy cheering her on in theater, swimming, and softball. We love living a slower, intentional life surrounded by our dogs, cats, chickens, and ducks. Our days are often spent gardening, visiting museums or the beach, reading, and enjoying time in nature. When our adult kids are home from their travels or busy adult lives, family time is our favorite place to be. Some of my personal passions include health and wellness, weightlifting, sourdough baking, and herbal medicine.



Daniel Gomez

Daniel transferred his membership from The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity in Manhattan, NY to Apostles.

+++++

**Weaving Our Stories:
Justice for Women**

April 20, May 4,
May 18
7pm - Zoom

For more information and to register, go to vasynod.org.

Guatemala Medical Mission Trip

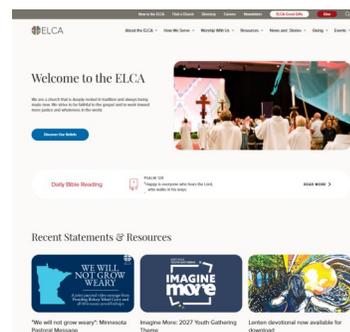


The medical mission team going to Guatemala was commissioned during the worship service at Apostles on March 1st - the team was in Guatemala the week of March 8th. The children in Sunday School wrote letters and wrapped gifts for the children that Apostles sponsors in Guatemala - the letters and gifts were taken to Guatemala by the team. (See page 7 of the newsletter for more pictures from the trip!!)

+++++

ELCA Launches New Website

The ELCA launched a new website at elca.org. It includes an enhanced search that incorporates pages on ELCA.org, the ELCA's resource library, congregation profile information, and Living Lutheran articles to provide more comprehensive results. It also provides a guided exploration that curates answers based on individual needs.



Save the Date!!



The Spirit Enlightens, Equips, Empowers

July 16-18, 2026
at Roanoke College

Bible Study Leader: The Rev. Susan Briehl
Keynote Presenter: The Rev. Drew Tucker
Musician: Michael Benshish
Special Guest: Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry



News From The Pews



Chase Ambrose has been in the news lately—he recently played in a charity basketball game at Mathews High School to raise money for the

school’s athletics program. The MHS varsity boys took on a team of coaches and faculty dubbed the “Devil Dawgs.” This fun game raised \$500 and ended in an 88-79 overtime win for the MHS boys. Chase was also featured in the Mathews High School newspaper, Anchor’s Away” on Chases’ pre-game rituals—tying his right shoe before his left and saying a prayer. *(Editor’s note: We LOVE to share stories about what you are doing outside of church—please send your pictures and stories to Janet at thezemogs@gmail.com.)*

New Assisting Ministers

Three new Assisting Ministers have been trained and will start serving during the worship services—Chase Ambrose, Tonia Fallin and Daniel Gomez. Our other Assisting Ministers are Irene Albert, Doug Dalager, Linda Hodges, Pete Liljeberg, David Leunig, Ingrid Peterson and Sue Turner. Sue Turner provides the training. If you are interested in serving in this way, please contact Sue.

+++++

Cinco De Mayo Event Coming!!



Movie and Dinner Night—Save the date for the Caring Community Ministry Team’s next event on May 8th, featuring a Cinco de Mayo Fiesta. As the date

approaches, we will provide a sign-up sheet in the narthex for needed items. We hope you can join us!!

Guatemala 2026 in Pictures!!

