



APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE REVEREND JAY SERAFIN

7092 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061

(804) 693-9098 | apostles-elca.org | facebook.com/ApostlesELCA



EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

A parable of doing God's will (Matthew 21:23-32)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026 | 10:00 AM

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



RECONCILING *in* CHRIST



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

WELCOME TO APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH!

It is an honor to worship God with you this morning. We pray you experience the Spirit's loving presence as we share our words, our actions, and the Holy Meal.

If this is your first time worshipping with us, please fill out a card in the pew rack with your contact info. A restroom can be found by exiting the rear door of the worship space. It is directly in front of you to the right. Additional restrooms can be found in the back corner of the fellowship area, near the Pastor's office.

RECONCILING *in* CHRIST

We, the people of Apostles Lutheran Church, follow Paul's message to the Galatians (3:28): "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Believing that because we are all one in Christ, and created in God's image, all are welcome as beloved children of God. We welcome into the full life of the church all those whom God sends us. **Rejoicing in God's amazing diversity, we welcome people of all ages, races, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, and physical and mental abilities.** Centered in Christ, we commit ourselves to racial equity, breaking down dividing walls and building a community where all are beloved.

FOR PASTORAL CARE

The Reverend Jay Serafin is our pastor. Pastor Jay's **schedule is noted in the calendar on the back of this bulletin.** Call Pastor Jay at 570-205-7506 or email him at j80j84@msn.com (preferred) or pastor.apostles@gmail.com. Messages can also be left on the Apostles answering machine 804-693-9098.

PRAYGROUND

Welcome to our youngest members! The area in the front of our sanctuary is for families and young children. There are quiet toys, books and drawing materials. **We ask two things: 1) sit in the front pews near your children and 2) please sit with your children in the pews during the sermon.** They may return immediately after. Thank you and welcome!

NAME TAGS

Please wear your nametag! Guests: please fill out and put on a name tag before worship today. Blank nametags are in the baskets located in the pews.

GATHERING

In today's gospel reading, Jesus tells a vineyard parable, which serves as an image of Israel, the prophets' mission, and Christ's death. For Christians, the vineyard also speaks of God's love poured out in the blood of Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. Grafted onto Christ the vine at baptism, we are nourished with wine and bread so that we may share Christ's sufferings and know the power of his resurrection.

SILENT PRAYER

*Martin Luther said of music: "Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world." Please take a moment to **silence all cell phones**.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please rise in body or in spirit.

GATHERING HYMN

ELW #638

"Blessed Assurance"



- 1 Bless-ed as-sur-ance, Je-sus is mine! Oh, what a fore-taste of glo-ry di-vine!
- 2 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, per-fect de-light, vi-sions of rap-ture now burst on my sight;
- 3 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, all is at rest; I in my Sav-ior am hap-py and blest,



Heir of sal-va-tion, pur-chase of God, born of his Spir-it, washed in his blood.
an-gels de-scend-ing bring from a-bove ech-oes of mer-cy, whis-pers of love.
watch-ing and wait-ing, look-ing a-bove, filled with his good-ness, lost in his love.

Refrain



This is my sto-ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long:



this is my sto-ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long.

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820–1915

Music: ASSURANCE, Phoebe P. Knapp, 1830–1908

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

Sit

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 5:1-7

The prophet sings a sad, parable-like love song about the relationship between God and Israel. In this song Israel is compared to a promising vineyard. Despite God's loving care, the vineyard that is Israel has brought forth "rotten grapes" of injustice and distress, when fine grapes of justice and righteousness were expected.

¹ I will sing for my beloved
my love song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.

² He dug it and cleared it of stones
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes,
but it yielded rotten grapes.

³ And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and people of Judah,
judge between me
and my vineyard.

⁴ What more was there to do for my vineyard
that I have not done in it?
When I expected it to yield grapes,
why did it yield rotten grapes?

⁵ And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.

I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.

⁶ I will make it a wasteland;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and it shall be overgrown with briers and thorns;
I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.

⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah
are his cherished garden;
he expected justice
but saw bloodshed;
righteousness
but heard a cry!

Response after the First Reading

The word of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

The gospel is announced.

All are invited to make a small cross over your forehead, lips, and chest, inviting Jesus the Word into your heart, mind, and speech.

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the 20th Chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders who are plotting his death, revealing that their plans will, ironically, bring about the fulfillment of scripture.

[Jesus said:] ³³ "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went away. ³⁴ When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵ But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again he sent other slaves, more than the first, and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷ Then he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' ³⁹ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰ Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" ⁴¹ They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."

⁴² Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures:

'The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

this was the Lord's doing,

and it is amazing in our eyes?'

⁴³ "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces its fruits. ⁴⁴ The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

The gospel concludes:

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON

PASTOR JAY SERAFIN

Silence is kept after the reflection.

Please rise in body or in spirit.

HYMN OF THE DAY

ELW #742

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"



- 1 What a friend we have in Je - sus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
- 2 Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Is there trou - ble an - y - where?
- 3 Are we weak and heav - y - lad - en, cum - bered with a load of care?



What a priv - i - lege to car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged—take it to the Lord in prayer.
Pre - cious Sav - ior, still our ref - uge—take it to the Lord in prayer.



Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit; oh, what need - less pain we bear—
Can we find a friend so faith - ful who will all our sor - row share?
Do your friends de - spise, for - sake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.



all be - cause we do not car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak - ness—take it to the Lord in prayer.
In his arms he'll take and shield you; you will find a so - lace there.

Text: Joseph Scriven, 1820–1886

Music: CONVERSE, Charles C. Converse, 1832–1918

APOSTLES CREED

With the whole church, let us confess our faith in the words of the Apostles Creed.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the
power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was
buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right
hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge
the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Seeking the Spirit of God who makes all things new, we pray for the church and the world.

Each portion of the prayers ends with these words:

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Trusting in your boundless grace, O God, we lift up these spoken prayers and those in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We share a sign of Peace with our neighbors saying **Peace be with you** to which we respond **And also with you.** Please know that it is fine if you do not want to shake hands but would rather just share a sign of peace.*

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Sit

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

To give online:

✚ Visit apostles-elca.org/contributions

✚ From your mobile phone, text the word GIVE to 844-215-5453

Please rise in body or in spirit.

OFFERTORY HYMN

ELW #186

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923
Music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

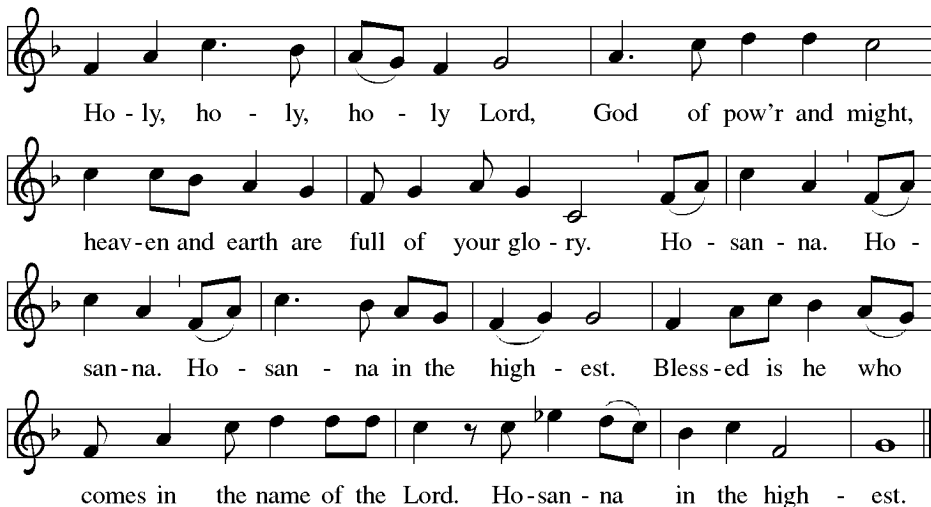
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The great thanksgiving continues.

... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Christ invites you to this table.

All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

Sit

COMMUNION

All are invited to join us at the Lord's table to receive the presence of Jesus through the bread and wine. Jesus himself invites you and Jesus turns no one away.

Distribution will take place at your table as you remain seated. The communion will be brought to you by the pastor and assisting minister. Receive the bread and consume it. Leave your empty glass on the table and it will be collected following worship.

After all have returned to their places, all rise in body or in spirit.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission back into the world.

BLESSING

The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus.

Amen.

The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit.

Amen.

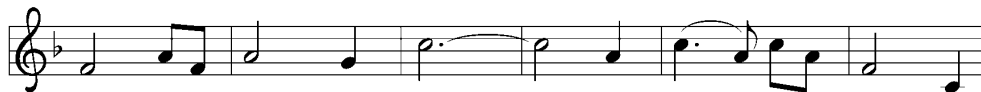
The God of grace ☩ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

"Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound"



1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found; was blind, but now I see.
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt., sts. 1–4; anonymous, st. 5

Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

DISMISSAL

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

WORSHIP LEADERS

	Serving Today	Serving Next Week
Worship Leader/Preacher	Pastor Jay Serafin	Pastor Jay Serafin
Lay Assisting Minister	Linda Hodges	Irene Albert
Lector	Linda Hodges	Judy Wright
Acolyte	-	Tegan Goetz
Accompanist	-	Janet Gomez
Altar Care	-	Alberts
Communion Bread	Donna Ambrose	Alberts
Flowers	Angie Goetz	Alberts
Greeter/Usher	Heinz Albert	Heinz Albert
Technology	-	Doug Dalager

SERVANTS FOR THE WEEK

	Serving This Week	Serving Next Week
Cleaning Team	Bonnie Hanson	Alberts
Tellers	Linda Hodges/Barbara Runk	Nate Peterson/Barbara Runk
Fellowship Set Up	Picnic	Caring Community
Fellowship Food	Picnic	Alberts
Fellowship Clean Up	Donna Ambrose/Barbara Runk	Alberts

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY
NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

First Reading: Isaiah 5:1-7

The song of the vineyard

Psalms 80:7-15

*Look down from heaven, O God; behold and
tend this vine.*

Second Reading: Philippians 3:4b-14

Nothing surpasses the value of knowing Christ

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-46

*The parable of the vineyard
owner's son*

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS

**Rich Bitting, Don Garfield, Ellen Kendzierski, David Leunig, Cyndi Lowe,
Ellen Quirk, Michael Schlemmer, Ray Scholz, George Thomas,
Lena Woodlief, and Judy Wright**

OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Natalie Abu Dayyeh, Patricia Armentor (mother of Arlene, Executive Director of Gloucester Mathews Care Clinic), **Paul Bauer, Karen Bell** (Pam Moore's sister), **Bob & Dixie, Calli Bonfey, Patricia Boyd & Brad Zelmer, Amanda Brown, David Brown, Dennis & Dorothy Brown, Sally Burkholder, Juan Carlos, Amy Carter, Laura Clodfelter, Jackie Collier, Ben Davis** (friend of Donna Ambrose), **Tommy & Kathie Davis, Jenny DeSha, Linda Edwards, Colton Elliot** (Michael Schlemmer's cousin), **Teresa Floersheim-Miller** (Ingrid Peterson's mother), **Suzanne & Frank Gibson, Steven Godwin** (Juanita Sturdy's grandson), **Jimmy & Fay Gray** (Chris Hawkins' family), **Carl Greene, Karen Guire, Melvin Hawkins** (Chris Hawkins' father), **Chaneice & Daniel Hayden, Rosie Heins, Carl & Kaleb Hess, Aris Hibbs** (friend of Ray Scholz), **Ray Hughes, Scott Jeffery, Suzanne Kinkade** (friend of Ellen Quirk), **Terri Larsen, Marion Lucier, Wayne Mathews, Wayne McCormick, Sylvia Midgett** (Krystle McMahan's grandmother), **Debbie Minteins, Keith Morgan, Gary Mowery, Jamie Mullaney, Carol Pascale** (Lynn Jaeger's mother), **Chastity Perkins** (co-worker and friend of Donna Ambrose), **Brad Person** (Lilly Frost's uncle), **Dick Peterson & his brother, the Prusa Family, Joan Ritter, Glen Robertson, Pastor Wendy Roundy, Carol Schlemmer, Daniel Schmidt, Michael Scholz** (Ray Scholz's nephew), **Joseph Serafin** (Pastor Jay's father), **Kathy Shackleford, Elana Sierson, Fred Smith, Tammy Smith, Jean Sterling, Skye Sulton, Marier Upshrie, Keegan Walls, Williams Walters, Chuck Webb** (Tina Britt's father), **Makenzie Webb** (Tina Britt's niece), **Elizabeth & Steven White, Vicki Williams, Cory Woodlief, Jim Wright** (Judy Wright's husband), **Logan & Shannon Wymer, Derek Zwiers** (friend of CK Ambrose)

OUR SPONSORED CHILDREN IN GUATEMALA

Amayra, Hugolino, Manuela, and Pablo

PRAYER REQUESTS

There is a book located at the rear of the worship space for you to write any prayer requests you have for today. Fill out a "Prayer Request" (on the back of each pew) and place it in the offering plate to add a prayer request to the "Prayer List" included in the bulletin and the newsletter. **Please print legibly!**

THIS WEEK AT APOSTLES

SEPTEMBER 27, 2026 – OCTOBER 4, 2026

TODAY	10:00 AM	Outdoor Worship Service
	11:00 AM	Picnic

MON, SEP 28 – WED, SEP 30:

Pastor Jay taking part in Gathering of the Ministerium

MONDAY	6:00 PM	Al-Anon/AA
TUESDAY	6:00 PM	Al-Anon/AA
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	Adult Choir Practice
FRIDAY		Girl Scouts
SATURDAY	5:30 PM	Young and Sober
SUNDAY	10:00 AM	Worship Service & Reception of New Members
	11:00 AM	Coffee Fellowship

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ...

Linda Hodges – Wed, Sep 30

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO ...

Judy and Jim Wright – Mon, Sep 28



From Sundays and Seasons (sundaysandseasons.com). Copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress.
Reprinted with permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SB149543,
ONE LICENSE #A-717259, and CCLI License #A-21183732. All rights reserved.