

The Epistle

THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

Gloucester www.apostles-elca.org | www.facebook.com/ApostlesELCA | April 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 quickly move through the days of Lent, heading toward Holy Week, we take time to assess honestly what it

means to be a child of God. Lent comes from an Old English word, *lencten*, which meant “Spring season.” It is, as others have said, the “Springtime of the soul.” As Spring prepares nature for the fulness of life in Summertime, Lent is a season of preparation for the church’s season of life- Easter. It might be helpful, then, to take a look at the season of Lent and refresh our memories about some of the important days during this journey to the cross.

Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday is the day on which the season of Lent begins. The season of Lent lasts forty days, excluding Sundays (which always are feast days in remembrance of Easter). At worship, we are called into each year’s Lenten journey to the cross and to the disciplines of Lent, especially prayer, fasting, repentance and works of charity. During the worship service, ashes are placed on our foreheads as the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall remain” are spoken over us as a reminder of our mortality. In the ancient church, it was the day of expulsion, when those undergoing church discipline were excommunicated temporarily

until the forty days ended. Traditionally, no baptisms were held during the season of Lent, but were kept for the celebration of the Resurrection.

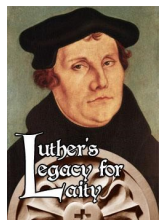
Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion. This day marks the beginning of Holy Week, the week leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. During the service, we remember with palm branches the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem with shouts of “Hosanna!” The worship service turns more somber half-way through, as the focus of the worship centers on the suffering of Jesus, as the whole passion narrative is read and we are reminded of the entire story of the arrest, trial, scourging, crucifixion and burial of Jesus. This sets the tone for the rest of the week.

Maundy Thursday. Maundy Thursday begins the great three days of worship surrounding the greatest mysteries of our faith, traditionally called the Triduum. The word “Maundy” comes from the Latin word *mandatum*, which means commandment. Our Gospel reading for the day shares with us the story of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet and includes the “new commandment” that Jesus gives to his disciples, “love one another as I have loved you.” On this night on which Jesus is betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, we recognize what is about to come by stripping our altar during worship.

Good Friday. Good Friday is a day of meditation and prayer which focuses on the crucifixion. It is called “good” because it centers our understanding of God on this central event by which God comes to us and takes on our greatest threats, including death. The cross shows what great suffering God will endure to restore relationship with us and walk with us through the trials of our own lives. The worship for this day is austere, omitting communion and reducing musical interludes so that periods of silence may bring us to fruitful reflection.

Holy Saturday. This day is not commemorated traditionally in the church until the Easter Vigil in the evening. We have begun the practice, started last year, of gathering on this day to meditate on the reality of the death of Jesus and to contemplate what the cross has cost God.

Easter. The day of resurrection. On this day, we stand with Mary at the tomb and hear her say, “*Rabbouni,*” which means teacher, as she realizes that Jesus is alive. We rejoice in a God who defeats death in order to give us life. Then, one week later, we shout out with Thomas, “My Lord and my God!” when he witnesses the resurrected Christ. We, too, then become the speakers of this great message, the story of a God whose love is so great this God will do whatever is necessary to be a part of our lives and give us abundant life. We recognize ourselves as God’s Easter people, unleashed upon the world to love one another as Christ has loved us as we take this good news to the ends of the earth.



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Luther’s Legacy for Laity

Luther’s Legacy for Laity be taking a break until after Easter. It will resume in May. Stay tuned!!

Happy Anniversary to . . .

Robert and Krystle McMahan April 19

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Happy Birthday to . . .

Ann Albert	April 3
Ray Kendzierski	April 5
Jennie Hawkins	April 5
Pam Moore	April 5
Jack Baur	April 5
April Anby	April 6
Barbara Runk	April 7
Carson Riordan	April 9
Doug Dalager	April 10
Jamie Serafin	April 18
Marina Allen	April 19
Shawn Anby	April 21
Mary Leunig	April 25
Willow Crocker	April 27

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Happy Baptismal Anniversary to . . .

Rich Bitting	April 1
Abel Britt	April 18
Margaret Grimes	April 19
Tyler Britt	April 21
Sarah Anby	April 25

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Holy Communion Record

Please take a minute and fill out one of these cards and put it in the offering plate – they are in the pew rack. You only need to fill one out a year – this will help with the statistics needed for the parochial report that has to be completed once a year – thank you from the Worship Ministry Team!!

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Ministry Team Meetings

The following ministry teams will meet in April:
 + **RIC**—Monday, April 21st, 7:00 PM (Zoom)
 + **Worship**—Monday, April 28th, at 7:00 PM

Our Deepest Sympathy To:

+ Ben and Margaret Grimes upon the death of Ben’s brother, **Bill Grimes**, on January 16, 2025. Bill’s funeral was held on January 24th in Annapolis, Maryland—Bill was 74 years old.



+ **Ray and Lynn Scholz** upon the death of Ray’s brother, **Richard Scholz**, on March 4, 2025, in Katy, Texas. Richard was 82 years old.

+ **Barbara and Bernie Runk** upon the death of Barbara’s brother, **Jon**, on March 5th. Jon was 69 years old.

O God of grace and glory, we remember before you today Bill, Richard and Jon. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn.

Give us faith to see that death has been swallowed up in the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may live in confidence and hope until, by your call, we are gathered to your heavenly home in the company of all your saints; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

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Holy Week Schedule

- April 13 Palm/Passion Sunday
10:00 AM**
- April 17 Maundy Thursday
7:00 PM**
- April 18 Good Friday
7:00 PM**
- April 19 Holy Saturday
The In-Between Time
Noon**
- April 20 Easter Sunday
Holy Communion
10:00 AM
Easter Brunch**

***Christ Is Risen
Christ Is Risen Indeed!***

Easter At Apostles

+ Flowers for the Easter Cross

Don’t forget to bring fresh flowers on Easter Sunday to adorn our Easter cross.

+ Easter Brunch

Please join us for an Easter brunch after the worship service—everyone is asked to bring a “brunch” dish to share.



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Easter Lilies

We are taking orders for Easter lilies to adorn our sanctuary for Easter—the cost is \$15—if you would like to purchase one, please signup on the signup sheet in the narthex at the church. The deadline to order is **Sunday, April 13th.**

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Apostles Members Speak For Those Without A Voice

Ben and Margaret Grimes and Pete and Betsy Liljeberg made a visit to Representative Wittman’s Yorktown office to ask for full funding for WIC, Medicaid and USAID nutritional and health programs. A member of Mr. Wittman’s staff was available. Margaret shared personal stories, from her years of teaching, about the importance of good nutrition and it’s effect on a child’s ability to learn. We shared stories from our experiences working at Bread for Life and GUEST. Betsy left letters written by members of the congregation that will be delivered to Mr. Wittman. Everyone felt that our time was well spent especially during this time when advocacy is so important.



Jubilee Churches News

The Jubilee Churches of Gloucester, a coalition of 17 congregations in Gloucester (including Apostles), will be meeting again in April on

April 9th, at 9:30 AM at Bellamy United Methodist Church. The Rev. Dr. Ed Walker, pastor of Bellamy United Methodist Church, is the covener of the Jubilee Churches of Gloucester. Jubilee Churches has made a tremendous impact by preventing power shutoffs for three households and helping two clients avoid eviction through rent assistance payments. But there's more—Jubilee also played a pivotal role in helping a long-term shelter client secure permanent, stable housing! During the hot summer months, a 45-year-old man found himself in the unfortunate position of having to live in the woods. After losing his last rental and facing the hardships of homelessness, including camping in the woods and relying on GUEST as an emergency shelter, he persevered. Despite these challenges, he maintained steady employment, established primary care to manage his health, and has now secured housing! A heartfelt thank you to Jubilee Churches for providing the funding that has allowed this dedicated, hard-working client to finally have a home of his own again!

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Please Keep In Your Prayers

Heinz Albert, Rich Bitting, Manning Freeman, Don Garfield, Betty Hauch, Ellen Kendzierski, Ellen Quirk, Michael Schlemmer, Keith and Juanita Sturdy, George and Jewel Thomas, Nancy Wagner and Lena Woodlief.

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Save the Date!!



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."



Apostles Hosted GUEST Winter Shelter

Apostles hosted the GUEST Winter Shelter again the week of March 10th. Over 34 people (not including the Boy and Girls Scouts who provided diner) volunteered to help take care of the guests. A big THANK YOU to everyone who made this possible!!

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On Sunday, March 16th, health kits for the Guatemala Medical Mission trip were assembled and then on Sunday, March 23rd, the team was commissioned and the health kits blessed during the worship service. The team will be in Guatemala the week of March 30th.



The Season of Lent at Apostles

Please join us on **Wednesday, April 9th at 7:00 PM** for the last of our mid-week meal of soup and bread at 6:00 PM and worship service at 7:00 PM. The theme of the worship services is “The Church in Time.” Pastor Jay, Pete Liljeberg, Ingrid Peterson and Janet Gomez have been leading the worship services and sharing their reflections on this theme. Pastor Jay will have a concluding reflection on April 9th—please join us!!

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Mid-Week Lenten Offering

The offering from our mid-week Lenten services has been designated for Global Refuge.



Global Refuge

(LIRS) will now be known to the world and the people they exist to help as “Global Refuge.” The decision to rebrand as Global Refuge is rooted in the growing worldwide need for

compassion and support. With millions of people displaced by war, famine, climate change, persecution, and more, their mission of providing the “long welcome” has become more crucial than ever. The accompanying growth in the demand for their essential, expanded suite of services has sparked the need to identify themselves ever more clearly and create a bigger table of supporters. You may have been one of over 21 million viewers of Michael Flynn’s outrageous comments on Elon Musk’s social media platform “X” regarding Global Refuge and other Lutheran affiliated organizations. Global Refuge said it “condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the false accusations lodged against our humanitarian work.” ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton defended the work of Lutheran agencies noting that Global Refuge has been doing this work for 85 years. You can view Bishop Eaton’s response at <https://www.elca.org/news-and-events/elca-presiding-bishop-responds-to-false-allegations>.



Church Work Day— Saturday, April 12th

Please make plans to come and help clean up inside and outside the church on Saturday, April 12th—we will start at 9:00 AM—remember, many hands make light work!

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Symphony Under the Stars 2025

This wonderful annual event will be held this year on Sunday, June 1st, starting at 6:00 PM—stay tuned for details!!



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New Women’s Group To Meet



The newly formed women’s group will not be meeting in April—the next meeting will be **Saturday, May 10th** at 9:30 AM—Nancy Wagner and Lynn

Scholz will be making a presentation on homelessness. We would LOVE to have you join us!!

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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 misunderstanding. 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—April 13th-20th.

*From Your Treasurer,
Doug Dalager*

February 2025	
Planned Income	\$ 9,610.42
Actual Income	\$ 7,549.89
Delta	\$ (2,060.53)
Year to Date	
Planned Income	\$ 19,221
Actual Income	\$ 15,209
Delta	\$ (4,012)

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7th Day—“No Lamb Left Behind”



An energetic group of 89 youth and adults (including our very own Christina Badger and her daughter Reagan Jay) gathered at Eagle Eyrie Conference center over March 1-2 for the Virginia Synod’s annual “Seventh Day” retreat for 5th and 6th graders. The weekend’s activities gave them multiple opportunities to explore the Parable of the Lost Sheep from Luke 15:1-7. Groups got to look for missing mini-sheep, make party hats for the celebration, herd each other into sheep-folds, and learn a whole set of



new songs about the theme of God leaving no one out. The evaluations and other comments showed how inspired our participants were and how excited they are to continue coming to Synod Youth Events.

LGBTQIA+ Tapestry Thread

LGBT Q&A:
Moderated Panel Event

May 5 & 12
7pm - Zoom

The LGBTQIA+ Tapestry Thread is excited to announce its 2025 event: LGBT Q&A. This special two-week question and answer panel will be moderated by Co-Thread Leaders George Donovan and Pastor Colleen Hetrick, and will be a time of openness, learning and reflecting. Participants may submit questions now through April 22. Questions can be about an LGBTQIA+ experience, faith as an LGBTQIA+ person, or a related topic. The moderators will recruit panel members and find trusted resources to answer as many of the questions submitted as possible. While not required to include your name with the questions, participants may choose to include their email in case the moderators have any clarifying questions. Each of the evenings will include prayer, moderated panel question and answer, and small group processing time. Registration for the event will close on April 30. You do not need to submit a question in order to attend the event. More information can be found at vasynod.org.

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Sunday School Schedule

There will be no Sunday School on April 6th— Sunday school will resume on Sunday, April 13th.

News From The Pews



Jason and Cynthia Lowe recently attended “Riverdance” in Washington DC. They had a wonderful time except for the trip home—a lot of traffic delays!

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Update on Mission Outreach Fund

The Mission Outreach Fund supports one-time projects and on-going efforts to tangibly express the love of God for all people. The fund is overseen by Linda Hodges, Donna Ambrose and Doug Dalager. Funds available for local needs in 2025 are \$5,096 and funds available for global outreach in 2025 are \$2,524.

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Presiding Bishop Eaton Messages to “Church”



ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton responded to the executive order on immigration that rolled back guidance to immigration authorities in protected areas such as places of worship, schools and hospitals. You

can view her message at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnho5l8iNoU>.



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Congregation Council Meeting

The Congregation Council meeting for April will be Monday, April 14th at 7:00 PM—anyone is welcome to attend.

Happy 44th Anniversary, Apostles!!

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.

