

The Epistle

THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

*"Everything that is done
in the world is done by
hope." (Martin Luther)*

As we approach our
celebration of the

Reformation each year during the month of October, I imagine it is important for us to think about why we would celebrate this occasion year after year. Certainly, it is an important historical event, especially among those of us who consider ourselves Christians of the "Lutheran" persuasion. Many of us have grown up hearing of the figure of Martin Luther and have read and heard about the Reformation which he helped to bring about. There are great theological doctrines and discourses which have been passed down, generation after generation, to us who consider ourselves modern day heirs of this tradition of Reformation, and that, in itself, probably qualifies as a reason to celebrate the reformation, as we base our theology in these "reforming" ideas and our practice in our efforts to share these ideas with the world. However, among the towering, sturdy trees of Lutheran theology and practice which shape our ideas of Christian ecclesiology (understanding of what the church is) I find that the Luther quote from above serves as a spring of the water of life running among these sturdy trees. When Martin Luther posted the 95 Theses in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, he hardly

could have known what kind of storm this would produce throughout all of Western Christianity. He simply wanted to share in a conversation about the nature and mission of the church (Ecclesiology). He had read enough of Scripture and had experienced enough of the human condition that he felt compelled to want to help the church understand its call, its mission in the world in a deeper, more Christ-like way. He did not want to fracture the church, or to start a new denomination. In fact, on that day, he had no idea how this simple act, a call for debate and conversation, would change the world. All he had was simple hope. He hoped for a Church which was bound and freed by the gospel alone to present the truth of resurrection life, in all its fullness, unleashed upon the world. He hoped that the Church could return to its basic mission to share the love of Christ active in the world so that individual, regular human beings, children of God, could hear and believe and feel that God's limitless love through Christ was real in their lives. He wanted to replace a broken ecclesiology with one which aided the individual believer to grasp the truth of God's love and never to let go.

We know that this single call for conversation in the Church spread like a wildfire and became the Reformation. A simple, small-town monk, priest and scholar, known only to a few people who lived near him, expressed his hope and changed the world. Still, why should we marvel

at this? Isn't this the way God often works? He who can turn a childless couple into the parents of a nation (Abraham and Sarah), who could take a farmer and tender of sycamore trees and make him a prophet (Amos), who could enter the world as a baby in a stable, who could take a handful of country folk in first century Galilee and make them the builders of the first church (Apostles) can do amazing things with a willing heart and some hope.

We live in trying times. We needn't feel sorry for ourselves, because generations of Christians before us have faced difficulties and hardship. In the midst of trying times, they did what they were called to do. They continued to be the Church. They shared the love of God actively. They remained true to their mission to make the love of God through Christ known to all. It wasn't easy. Sometimes they failed. Sometimes they got it wrong, and had to step back, regroup and try again. We are the church today, however, because they didn't give up. They lived and served with hope. They hoped in things they could not see, believed in promises held in faith and overcame the obstacles which hindered their way forward. They handed the gospel to us. Now it is our turn to hope in what we cannot see and to believe with faith in our shared mission and ministry. Now it is our turn to understand that God works through regular people like you and me to accomplish what God wishes to accomplish. They may be deeds great or small, they may be softened by our limitations, they even may not feel all that "God-inspired," but as we remain true to our calling to share the love of Christ, God takes our acts of love and uses them to great effect. At times, we might disagree about what our mission forward should be in real and practical ways, but buoyed by our faith in the one who can open our eyes to the possibilities before us, and who can take our imperfect abilities and create Gospel reality, we can move forward with confidence. As God used a simple monk filled with hope to reform the church, God can use us, hope intact, to be the church here.

"Everything that is done in the world is done by hope."

New Members

We will be taking in new members on Sunday, October 19th—if you are interested in becoming a member of Apostles Lutheran Church, please talk to Pastor Jay.

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Happy Birthday to .

Heidi Henderson	October 11
David Albert	October 12
Lillian Jaeger	October 17
Sue Turner	October 18
Bayleigh Albert	October 20
Sarah Anby	October 22
Lilly Frost	October 23
Michael Schlemmer	October 23
Betty Hanson	October 23
Roy Ryman	October 28
Lynn Jaeger	October 28
Aleya McCurry	October 30

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Happy Anniversary To. . .

CK and Donna Ambrose	October 8
David and Mary Leunig	October 8
Ray and Ellen Kendzierski	October 10
Samantha and Michael Crocker	October 15
George and Jewel Thomas	October 21

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Happy Baptismal Anniversary To..

Nancy Wagner	October 1
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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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Sunday School Resumes



Sunday School will resume on **Sunday, October 26th**—this is a curriculum for all ages—for more information, please contact Linda Hodges at 804-694-9111.



Apostles Oktoberfest!
You are happily invited to Dinner and a Movie
Friday, October 24, 2025
Dinner beginning at 5:30 PM
Movie to start at 7:00 PM
To celebrate Reformation, we will see the
inspiring 2003 film 'Luther'

German Menu:

Brezeln
Bratwurst
Jägerschnitzel
Goulash
Frikadellen
Rotkohl
Kartoffelsalat
Sauerkraut
Lebkuchen Herzen
Glühmost
Limonade



English Menu:

Soft Pretzels
German Pork Sausage on a bun
Breaded Chicken Cutlet w/Mushrooms
German-style Beef Stew
Juicy Beef and Pork seasoned Meat Patties
Red Cabbage
Potato Salad
Sauerkraut
Soft Gingerbread-like Cookie Hearts
Mulled Cider
Lemonade



Blessing of the Animals

The custom of blessing of the animals is conducted in remembrance of Saint Francis of Assisi's love for all creatures. Born into the family of a wealthy merchant, Francis gave up his inheritance to serve poor people. He formed the Order of Friars Minor (called Franciscans), who took on poverty and the task of preaching "using words if necessary." Francis had a spirit of gratitude for all of God's creation. The blessing of the animals will be on **Sunday, October 12th, at 12:00 PM**. And since a pet blessing can be difficult for those who have lost dear pets, please consider bringing a photograph to the blessing so that we can remember them together. We hope you can join us!



Jubilee Churches News

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

October on October 8th at 9:30 AM at Newington Baptist Church. The Rev. Dr. Ed Walker, pastor of Bellamy United Methodist Church, is the covener of the Jubilee Churches of Gloucester. In September, Jubilee Churches assisted 9 households with \$3,507 in rent and Dominion Power assistance. In September, Jubilee Churches were able to step in and help a neighbor who was facing the threat of losing her home. After faithfully working as an assistant manager at a local convenience store, she suddenly saw her hours reduced in August when sales dropped. With less income, she quickly fell behind on her rent. By September, she had received a five-day eviction notice with a balance of \$1,860, which included a \$130 late fee. But thanks to the support of Jubilee Churches, we were able to act quickly. The client herself contributed \$500 from her paycheck, showing her commitment to regaining stability. The Samaritan Group stepped in with \$400. Together, these efforts lowered her balance to \$830. With her hours now fully restored for September, she confidently told us she will be able to cover October's rent without issue. This family was able to avoid homelessness and keep a roof over their heads. Stories like this remind us that even a short setback can put hardworking families at risk—but with compassion and partnership, we can make all the difference. **If you would like to learn more about Jubilee Churches, please contact Pete Liljeberg or Janet Gomez.**

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World Hunger Sunday

Don't forget your offering for World Hunger Sunday—we collect a special offering for world hunger on the 3rd Sunday of the month—**Sunday, October 18th.**

UNTIL ALL ARE FED!!



ELCA World Hunger



GUEST News

- + **Needed supplies** at the GUEST homeless shelter include coffee, creamer, and sugar.
- + **A shelter client** will be into her own apartment with Bay Aging at the beginning of October. She needs a Swiffer, broom, soup pot, a non-skid bath mat, and a mat for outside her shower.
- + **Apostles** will be providing lunch for the clients of GUEST the **week of November 17th**—stay tuned for details.
- + **Apostles** will be hosting the GUEST winter shelter the **week of February 23rd**—stay tuned for ways to help!

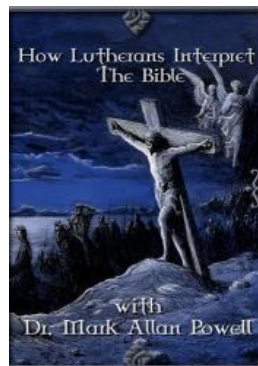
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Mathew's Lions Club Fundraiser

The Mathew's Lions Club is having a fundraiser—they are selling pork butts and coleslaw on **Saturday, October 11th**—the cost of tickets are \$45. If you are interested in getting tickets, 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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How Lutherans Interpret the Bible

A new adult study will begin on **Wednesday, October 8th**—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 will be led by Pete Liljeberg and Pastor Jay. It will be held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month—we would LOVE to have you join us!!

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Choir Will Resume in October

Resuming choir had to be rescheduled because of vacations, etc. Choir will resume practice on **Wednesday, October 15th, at 7:00 PM**—choir will be singing during worship on Sunday, October 26th. Please join us!!!

*From Your Treasurer,
Doug Dalager*

August 2025

<i>Planned Income</i>	<i>\$ 9,610.24</i>
<i>Actual Income</i>	<i>\$10,531.80</i>
<i>Delta</i>	<i>\$ 921.38</i>

Year to Date

<i>Planned Income</i>	<i>\$76,883</i>
<i>Actual Income</i>	<i>\$74,325</i>
<i>Delta</i>	<i>\$(2,558)</i>

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Congregation Council Update

Congregation Council will be meeting on **Monday, October 13th at 7:00 PM**. Anyone is welcome to attend.

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God's Work,

Our Hands—Saturday, October 25th



Get ready! Apostles Lutheran will once again be helping our friends and neighbors in and around Gloucester. As in years past we will be doing yard work and power washing for folks in our community in need. We will meet in the parking lot at 9:00 AM on October 25th and head out to do the work. We plan on finishing by 1:00 PM and return to church for lunch. We need volunteers for the outdoor work team as well as some folks to make lunch for all the workers. Keep your eyes open for the sign up sheet in the narthex! Jesus commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves. This is your opportunity to answer God's call!

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Apostles Women's Group

Apostles Women's Group will be meeting on **Saturday, October 11th**—all women are invited!!



Church Mortgage Payoff

If you would like to contribute to our mortgage payoff plan, you can (1) place your contribution in an envelope and mark the envelope with the words "mortgage payoff", (2) use one of the envelopes found in our narthex entrance already noted as "mortgage payoff campaign", or (3) if you contribute electronically, make a note on the annotation line directing the contribution to the "mortgage payoff fund." Congregation Council has announced that anyone who designated offering in the last 2 years for the "building fund" and meant for it to be applied to the mortgage contact a member of Council so that the offering can be applied to the mortgage instead of the building fund. At the end of September, the balance on the mortgage was around \$8,400!!

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Our Deepest Sympathy To...



Linda Hodges upon the death of her husband, Spencer, on September 7th. Spencer was born on September 13, 1938—he was 86 years old. A funeral was held on what would have been Spencer's 87th birthday on September 13th at Mathews Baptist Church.

Please keep Linda, daughter Katherine and their family in your prayers.

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Gathering of the Ministerium

The Gathering of the Ministerium is an annual event for the rostered ministers, interns, vicars, SAMS (actively serving), and spouses who are living or serving in the Virginia Synod. They will be meeting in Virginia Beach on September 29th–October 1st to reconnect, worship, relax, learn, sing, pray and play together while overlooking the ocean.

Congratulations To . .



Amanda Kenzierski upon the birth of daughter, Kelly Elizabeth, on September 3rd—little Kelly weighed 6 pounds, 12 ounces.

Pete and Betsy Liljeberg upon the birth of grandson, Mikko Christopher, on August 29th—Mikko weighed 9 pounds, 8 ounces.

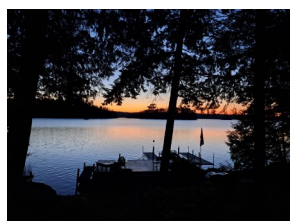


News From The Pews



Barbara and Bernie Runk recently travelled to Hawaii—they are pictured here in a cave at the black sand beach on Maui.

Pete and Betsy Liljeberg are currently biking across Slovakia and Croatia.



David and Mary Leunig have spent the summer at their home in Maine—they will be back this month.



Supporting Affordable Housing

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy is offering a virtual workshop on **Thursday, October 2nd, at 6:30 PM.** The workshop is open to all individuals and faith communities that want to support affordable housing and focused on partnership and advocacy at both the local and state level. Hear from experts in the field and get equipped for action! You can register at <https://virginiainterfaithcenter.ourpowerbase.net/civicrm/event/info?id=434&reset=1>

Gene, Janet and Daniel Gomez made a “bucket list” trip to Niagara Falls in August.



Linda Hodges, Janet Gomez, Betsy Liljeberg and Jamie Serafin toured Mt. Cuba and Longwood Gardens in August.



Installation of New ELCA Bishop

The installation of the ELCA's new Presiding Bishop, The Rev. Yehiel Curry, will be livestreamed on **Saturday, October 4th, at 3:00 PM.** A link will be published on <https://www.elca.org/about/churchwide/office-of-the-presiding-bishop/presiding-bishop-installation>.

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Care of Creation

Join with the Virginia Synod Tapestry Team as we celebrate the Season of Creation with Zooms exploring the theme: For the Love of Creation. On Tuesdays, October 7 and 14, Co-Thread Leaders Dr. Bill Franz and Sister Phyllis Cox will lead two discussions. The first on how self-care is creation care. The second on creation, climate, and us. Register at vasynod.org. Registration will close on Oct. 1st.



“Ending at the Beginning” A Final Message From Bishop Eaton

I started my ministry as presiding bishop with these four emphases: We are church. We are Lutheran. We are church together. We are church for the sake of the world. I will end as I began.

We are church. There is no other institution on earth whose reason for being is the proclamation of the gospel. “It is also taught that at all times there must be and remain one holy, Christian church. It is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel” (Augsburg Confession, Article VII). That’s it. The works we do in service to the world are important, but they are not the essence of the church. The ELCA does not exist in order to work for justice. Rather, because we are nourished by word and sacraments, the ELCA is free and empowered to do so.

The church is also marvelously intricate and interconnected. “We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another” (Romans 12:5). There is no such thing as a solitary Christian. God’s love for us through Christ and poured into our hearts by the Spirit is for each of us. But each of us is just one member of the body of Christ. We understand the church in the same way. “This church shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent. Each part, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in an interdependent relationship with the others” (ELCA “Constitutions, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions” 8.11.).

We are Lutheran. The average Lutheran in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a woman in Tanzania. There are more Lutherans in Ethiopia, Indonesia and Madagascar than there are in the ELCA. The LWF has 150 member churches in 99 countries. What binds us

together? Certainly not one culture or cuisine. Rather, it is the clear witness of the gospel that sets us free. “It is taught that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God through our merit, work, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God out of grace for Christ’s sake through faith ...” (Augsburg Confession, Article IV). This is revolutionary. The standards of the world by which we are measured, or we measure others, are a figment. We don’t claim perfection for the church. We’re not there. But as Martin Luther said, “This life therefore is not righteousness but growth in righteousness, not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it, the process is not yet finished, but it is going on, this is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified” (“Defense and Explanation of All the Articles”). We know there is law and gospel, that we are saint and sinner, that we are bound and free, and we entrust that all to God.

We are church together. Paul wrote that we do not live to ourselves. We live in a time when fear is used to separate us. This is the tool of every authoritarian regime. The church is different. The Spirit calls, gathers and keeps the whole church on earth. We belong to God, we belong to each other, and we belong to the world.

We are church for the sake of the world. We are not only freed from sin, we are freed for service to the neighbor. Here is where the essence of the church—the proclamation of the gospel—gives power and shape to the work we do in Jesus’ name. We are church for the sake of the world not out of obligation or for reward but out of love. So there it is, dear church, my farewell address. We each have this ministry for a season. My season as presiding bishop has ended. Bishop-elect Yehiel Curry’s season is about to begin. Pray for him, his family and the churchwide staff. But be assured that the season for the ELCA is not over. God hasn’t finished with this church yet.