



# APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

**THE REVEREND JAY SERAFIN**

7092 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061

(804) 693-9098 | [apostles-elca.org](http://apostles-elca.org) | [facebook.com/ApostlesELCA](https://facebook.com/ApostlesELCA)



## THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2025 | 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](mailto:j80j84@msn.com) (preferred) or [pastor.apostles@gmail.com](mailto: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

*A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.*

## PRELUDE AND 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. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.*

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Long-expected God,

**we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake.**

**Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised.**

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness.

† You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

**Amen.**

## "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for  
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -  
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when  
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for  
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is  
 all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so  
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.  
 qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;  
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.  
 crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -  
 mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -  
 Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in  
 Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and  
 kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to  
 won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and  
 sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.  
 shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.  
 weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.  
 bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen

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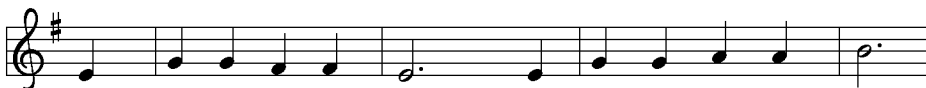
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## APOSTOLIC GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## KYRIE



- 1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
- 2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
- 3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.  
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.  
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## ADVENT DEVOTION & LIGHTING OF THE WREATH

**ELW #240**

**"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah", Verse 3**



- 3 Light three can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah: let the light ban - ish dark - ness.



Lift your heads and lift high the gate - way for the King of glo - ry.

**Thank you to the Slider Family for lighting the wreath today!**

# WORD

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

*Sit*

## FIRST READING

## ISAIAH 35:1-10

*The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.*

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus <sup>2</sup> it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and shouting.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.]]

<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup> Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
"Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you."

<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

<sup>6</sup> then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert;

<sup>7</sup> the burning sand shall become a pool  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;

the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

<sup>8</sup> A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

<sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.

<sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the LORD shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

*Response after the First Reading*

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM**

## **PSALM 146:5-10**

<sup>5</sup> Happy are they who have the God of Jacob | for their help,  
whose hope is in the | Lord their God;

<sup>6</sup> **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that | is in them;  
who keeps promis- | es forever;**

<sup>7</sup> who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to | those who hunger.  
The Lord sets the | captive free.

<sup>8</sup> **The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who | are bowed down;  
the Lord | loves the righteous. R**

<sup>9</sup> The Lord cares | for the stranger;  
the Lord sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way | of the wicked.

<sup>10</sup> **The Lord shall | reign forever,  
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. | Hallelujah! R**

## SECOND READING

## JAMES 5:7-10

*In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.*

<sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup> You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup> Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

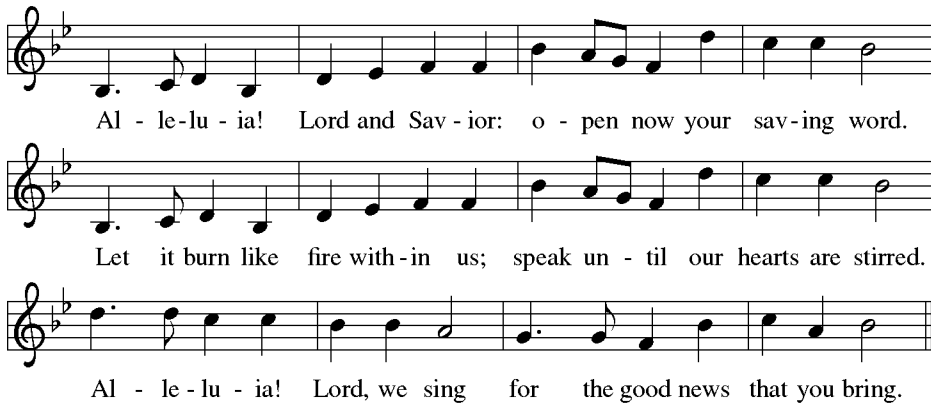
*Response after the Second Reading*

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Please rise in body or in spirit.*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.

Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.

Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

*The gospel is announced.*

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**



## GOSPEL

## MATTHEW 11:2-11

*John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.*

<sup>2</sup>When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

<sup>7</sup>As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup>What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup>What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup>This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.'

<sup>11</sup>"Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

*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 #264**

### "Prepare the Royal Highway"



- 1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
- 2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing; your own e - ter - nal king!
- 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
- 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!  
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!  
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.  
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!  
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:  
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

#### *Refrain*



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*

Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.

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## **NICENE CREED**

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation**

**he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

*Each portion of the prayers ends with these words:*

God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

**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.*

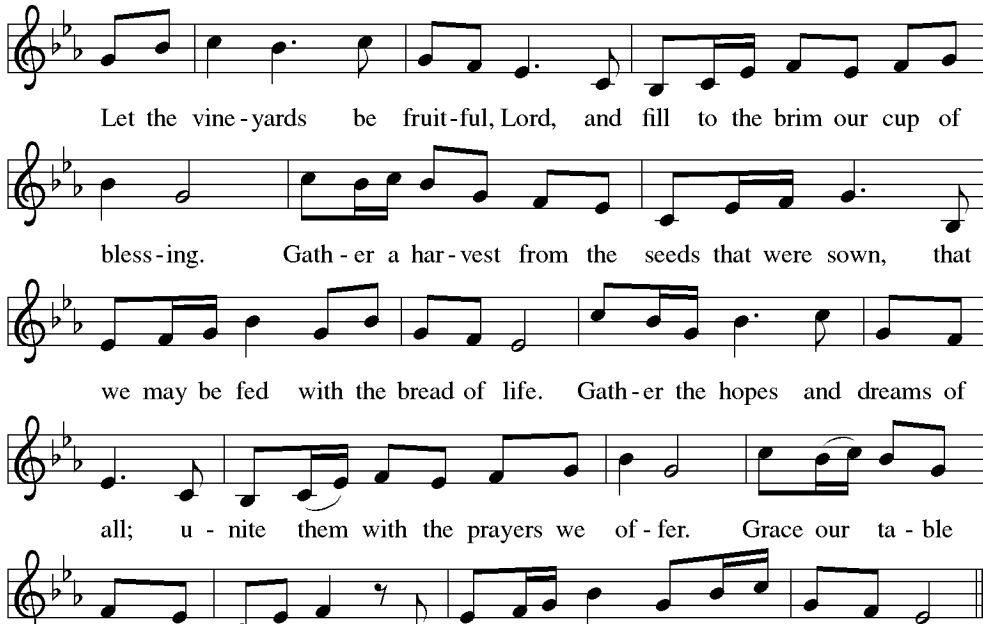
*To give online:*

✝ **Visit [apostles-elca.org/contributions](https://apostles-elca.org/contributions)**

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

## OFFERTORY HYMN

ELW #184



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that  
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of  
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble  
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980

Music: Ronald A. Nelson, b. 1927

Text and music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

*Please rise in body or in spirit*

## OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come.

**Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

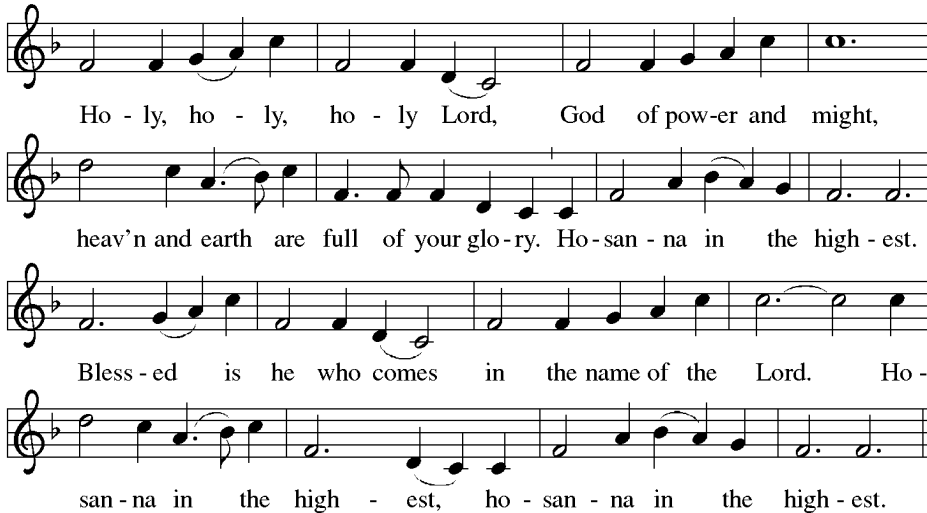
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*The thanksgiving continues with the preface.*

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



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.

*The great thanksgiving continues.*

... Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

*The great thanksgiving continues.*

... We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

*The great thanksgiving continues.*

... Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

*The great thanksgiving concludes.*

... All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **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**

Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

*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.*

*You will be invited to come forward either to receive the elements or to receive a blessing. For those receiving the elements, after receiving the bread, please take a glass from the tray held by the acolyte. There are pre-filled glasses of grape juice in the tray for those who do not drink wine. Gluten free wafers are also available upon request.*

## LAMB OF GOD



- 1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;  
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;  
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.  
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.  
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

## HYMN DURING COMMUNION

**ELW #254**

**"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"**



- 1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;  
2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.  
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,  
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.  
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835



*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.**

## **POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE**



Now, Lord, you let your ser-vant go in peace: your word has been ful -

filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre-pared in the

sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: a light to re-veal you to the na - tions

and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.

Now, Lord, you let your ser - vant go in peace.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray. God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

**Amen.**

# SENDING

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

## BLESSING

May God who comes among us, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always.

**Amen.**

## SENDING HYMN

**ELW #266**

**“All Earth Is Hopeful”**



- 1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!  
2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:  
3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;  
4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the  
“A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el”; she con -  
new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most  
This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how  
ceived him, “God with us,” our broth - er, whose birth re -  
here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All  
world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.  
stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.  
clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!  
Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946

Music: TODA LA TIERRA, Alberto Taulé

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**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Keep awake.  
Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE**

\*\*\*\*\*

**WORSHIP LEADERS**

	Serving Today	Serving Next Week
Worship Leader/Preacher.....	Pastor Jay Serafin .....	Pastor Jay Serafin
Lay Assisting Minister .....	David Leunig .....	Pete Lilejberg
Lector .....	Chase Ambrose .....	Linda Hodges
Acolyte .....	Chase Ambrose .....	Ray Scholz
Accompanist .....	Janet Gomez .....	Janet Gomez
Altar Care .....	Janet Gomez .....	Betsy Liljeberg
Communion Bread .....	Janet Gomez .....	Betsy Liljeberg
Greeter/Usher .....	Cynthia Lowe.....	Betsy Liljeberg
Technology .....	Jason Lowe .....	Doug Dalager

**SERVANTS FOR THE WEEK**

	Serving This Week	Serving Next Week
Cleaning Team .....	Gomez/Grimes .....	Liljebergs
Tellers .....	Ray Scholz/Chris Hawkins .....	Linda Hodges/Don Garfield
Fellowship Set Up .....	Jennie Hawkins .....	Ray Scholz
Fellowship Food .....	Ellen Quirk/Donna Ambrose.....	Scholz
Fellowship Clean Up .....	Donna Ambrose/Barbara Runk.....	Scholz

**READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY**

**First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16**  
*The sign of Immanuel*

**Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19**  
*Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved*

**Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7**  
*Paul's greeting to the church at Rome*

**Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25**  
*A God near at hand*

## LIVING IN THE NOW AND THE NOT YET

In this season of Advent we stand in the discomfoting quiet of waiting for the salvation of the Lord while simultaneously seeing that very salvation breaking into the world around us. Like John the Baptist we ask Jesus “are you here, or should we still wait?” The answer to this question is “yes.” Yes, Jesus is here among us in his body and blood at the eucharist. But we wait for the day when he returns. Yes, Jesus is here among us bringing peace and reconciliation. But we wait for the day when he will make *all* things new. The new life promised by the coming of a savior is both realized and still to come. We who live in the Christian faith do so as people searching the world around us for signs of God’s kingdom. Gathering as Christ’s body on earth, we have a sort of dual-citizenship in the now and the not-yet as we both proclaim that Christ is among us and also fervently pray “even so, come Lord Jesus.” As believers, our hope does not rest in the efforts of our piety or in the comfort of the hereafter. Rather, our hope is in the promises of a gracious, faithful God; promises fulfilled before our eyes and those not yet seen. We long for the day in which, like Isaiah’s vision of what will be, the blind see and the lame leap like deer. Yet we tell what we see and hear around us: that the dead are raised and the poor receive good news. The day is here and yet still we wait. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

## ADVENT HUNGER STUDY

Betsy Liljeberg is leading an Advent Hunger Study that will continue **today after worship** - the ELCA Advent Hunger study 2025 is a three-session guide titled **A Stable Lamp Is Lighted** that accompanies the short documentary **Intersections: Justice Ministry With ELCA Partners**. The study focuses on exploring the root causes of hunger and poverty. Please join us!!

## APOSTLES LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Today we gather on the original and ancestral homelands of the Pamunkey, Mattaponi, Chickahominy, Rappahannock, and Nansemond peoples and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

## ADVENT

The origin of Advent as a season of fasting to prepare for baptisms at Epiphany is particularly evident on the third Sunday. Whenever God comes—in the past in the history of Israel and the incarnation of Jesus, in the present in the word and sacrament of each Sunday, and in the future at the end of all things—a reorienting of our life is called for. The lectionary's readings stand in stark contrast to our society's partying and shopping for Christmas. The coming of Christ means to transform the world, saving all who are in need.

## LOTS GOING ON NEXT SUNDAY!!

- Please remember your offering for **ELCA World Hunger** next Sunday – UNTIL ALL ARE FED!
- The Caring Community Ministry Team is holding a **cookie exchange** next Sunday – please bring 4 dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies and join the fun!!
- We will be **decorating the sanctuary** next Sunday – please make plans to help – many hands make light work!!

## BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

We will holding our annual Blue Christmas service next Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, at 7:00 PM. This is a service of comfort, remembrance and hope. We are making luminaries to line the walkway to the church – please put names of loved ones you want to remember on a white bag.

## HYMN OF THE DAY

Our hymn of the day is “Prepare the royal highway” (ELW 264). The text was written in the nineteenth century by the Swedish literature professor and later pastor and finally bishop Frans Mikael Franzén. The hymn ties together Advent, when we pray for coming of the king, and Palm Sunday, when we sing “Hosanna” on the way to the cross. The “peace and freedom and justice, truth, and love” in stanza 4 echo parts of each of today's three readings.

## COMMEMORATIONS

"The saints are to be remembered so that we may strengthen our faith when we see how they experienced grace and how they were helped by faith."

- On December 13<sup>th</sup>, we remember **Lucy**, a martyr who died in 304. Lucy was a young Christian of Sicily who was martyred during the persecutions under Emperor Diocletian. Her celebration became particularly important in Sweden and Norway, perhaps because the feast of Lucia (whose name means "light") originally fell on the shortest day of the year.
- On December 14<sup>th</sup>, we remember **John of the Cross**, a renewer of the church, who died in 1591. John was a member of the Carmelite monastic order, and worked to reform it. His writings reflect a deep interest in mystical thought and meditation.
- On December 20<sup>th</sup>, we remember **Katharina von Bora Luther**, a renewer of the church who died in 1552. Born to an impoverished nobleman, Katie eventually took vows as a nun, but around age twenty-four she and several other nuns who were influenced by the writings of Martin Luther left the convent. Six children were born to Katie and Martin.

## LAST SUNDAY TO ORDER POINSETTIAS

Today is the last day to order a poinsettia – the cost is \$15 – the signup sheet is in the narthex.

## **PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS**

**Rich Bitting, Manning Freeman, Don Garfield, Heidi Henderson, Ellen Kendzierski, Doug Leip, Ellen Quirk, Michael Schlemmer, Keith & Juanita Sturdy, George Thomas, Jewel Thomas, Lena Woodlief, and Nancy Wagner**

## **OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

**Patricia Armentor, 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, Amy Carter, Kate Casper, Laura Clodfelter, Jackie Collier, Ben Davis** (friend of Donna Ambrose), **Tommy & Kathie Davis, Jenny DeSha, Al DeWitt, Linda Edwards, Colton Elliot** (Michael Schlemmer's cousin), **Laura Fleige** (Janet Gomez's sister), **Teresa Floersheim-Miller** (Ingrid Peterson's mother), **Suzanne and Frank Gibson, Steven Godwin** (Juanita Sturdy's grandson), **Jimmy & Fay Gray** (Chris Hawkins' family), **Karen Guire, Mike Hall, Melvin Hawkins** (Chris Hawkins' father), **Chaneice Hayden** (Daniel Hayden), **Rosie Heins, Carl & Kaleb Hess, Aris Hibbs** (friend of Ray Scholz), the family of **Spencer Hodges, Ray Hughes, Wendy Isernia** (Heinz and Irene's daughter), **Suzanne Kinkade** (friend of Ellen Quirk), **Legend, the Little Family, Marion Lucier, Manuel, Lotte Mathias, Wayne Mathews, Wayne McCormick, Michael, Sylvia Midgette** (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, James Schollian** (friend of Nancy Wagner), **Michael Scholz** (Ray Scholz's nephew), **Joseph Serafin** (Pastor Jay's father), **Kathy Shackleford, Elana Sierson, Fred Smith, Tammy Smith, Jean Sterling, Dave Wagner** (Nancy's husband), **Wayne McCormick, 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, Greg Yvonovich** (friend of Margaret & Ben Grimes), **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**

## **DECEMBER 14, 2025 – DECEMBER 21, 2025**

<b>TODAY</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b> 11:00 AM	<b>Worship Service</b> Coffee Fellowship/Advent Study
<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>4:00 PM – 8:00 PM</b> 7:00 PM 7:00 PM	<b>Pastor Jay in the Office</b> Congregation Council AA
<b>TUESDAY</b>	7:00 PM	Al-Anon/AA
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>11:00 AM – 1:00 PM</b> 11:00 AM 12:00 PM 7:00 PM	<b>Pastor Jay in the Office</b> Worship/Caring Community Worship Choir Practice
<b>FRIDAY</b>		Girl Scouts
<b>SATURDAY</b>	6:30 PM	Young and Sober
<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b> 11:00 AM 11:00 AM 7:00 PM	<b>Worship Service – World Hunger</b> Coffee Fellowship/Advent Study Cookie Exchange/Decorate Blue Christmas Service

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY To ...**

**Irene Albert** – December 16<sup>th</sup>

### **HAPPY BAPTISMAL BIRTHDAY To ...**

**Linda Hodges** – December 15<sup>th</sup> | **Irene Albert** – December 17<sup>th</sup>

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