



APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE REVEREND JAY SERAFIN

7092 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061

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



SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 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

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

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, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace.

Amen.

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,

we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; we have not always embraced your message of peace.

We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear. We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones; our reluctance to embody your good news.

Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.

God's grace upon grace flows over you. † Christ's presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

ELW #861

"When Long before Time (The Singer and the Song)"

1 When long be - fore time and the worlds were be - gun,
 2 The si - lence was bro - ken when God sang the Song,
 3 The sounds of the crea - tures were one with their Lord's,
 4 Though down through the a - ges the Song dis - ap - peared,
 when there was no earth and no sky and no sun,
 and light pierced the dark - ness and rhy - thm be - gan,
 their har - mo - nies sweet and be - fit - ting the Word;
 its har - mo - nies bro - ken and al - most un - heard,
 and all was deep si - lence and night reigned su - preme,
 and with its first birth - cries cre - a - tion was born,
 the Sing - er was pleased as the earth sang the Song,
 the Sing - er comes to us to sing it a - gain,
 and e - ven our Mak - er had on - ly a dream—
 and crea - ture - ly voic - es sang praise to the morn.
 the choir of the crea - tures re - ech - oed it long.
 our God - is - with - us in the world now as then.

5 The Light has returned as it came once before,
 the Song of the Lord is our own song once more,
 so let us all sing with one heart and one voice
 the Song of the Singer in whom we rejoice.

6 To you, God the Singer, our voices we raise,
 to you, Song Incarnate, we give all our praise,
 to you, Holy Spirit, our life and our breath,
 be glory forever, through life and through death.

Text: Peter W. A. Davison, b. 1936

Music: THE SINGER AND THE SONG, Peter W. A. Davison

Text and music © Peter W. A. Davison, admin. Augsburg Fortress

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APOSTOLIC GREETING

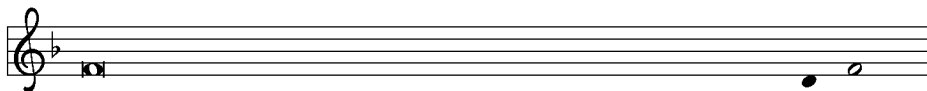
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE



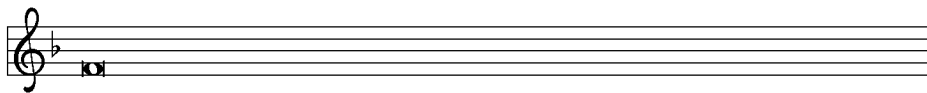
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



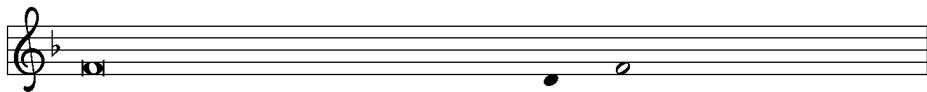
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



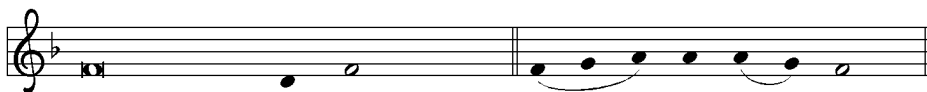
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



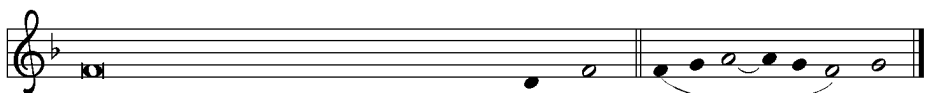
Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb

who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich-es, wis - dom, and

strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of

God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,

glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was

slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

Final refrain

This is the feast of vic - to-ry for our God.

Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

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

Sit

FIRST READING

JEREMIAH 31:7-14

God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gift of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.

⁷ Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
"Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel."

⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
those with child and those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

⁹ With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."

¹¹ For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,

over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall become like a watered garden,
and they shall never languish again.
¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
and the young men and the old shall be merry.
I will turn their mourning into joy,
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.
¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,
says the LORD

Response after the First Reading

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

PSALM 147:12-20

¹² Worship the LORD, | O Jerusalem;
praise your | God, O Zion,
¹³ **who has strengthened the bars | of your gates
and has blessed your chil- | dren within you.**
¹⁴ God has established peace | on your borders
and satisfies you with the | finest wheat.
¹⁵ **God sends out a command | to the earth,
a word that runs | very swiftly. R**
¹⁶ God gives | snow like wool,
scattering | frost like ashes.
¹⁷ **God scatters | hail like bread crumbs.
Who can stand a- | gainst God's cold?**
¹⁸ The LORD sends forth the | word and melts them;
the wind blows, and the | waters flow.
¹⁹ **God declares the | word to Jacob,
statutes and judg- | ments to Israel.**
²⁰ The LORD has not done so to any | other nation;
they do not know God's judgments. | Hallelujah! **R**

SECOND READING

EPHESIANS 1:3-14

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

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, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

The gospel is announced.

The Holy Gospel according to Saint John the First Chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL

JOHN 1:[1-9]10-18

He Shows Goodwill Tells The Good Story

Creator's Word Comes Down

¹⁻²Long ago, in the time before all days, before the creation of all things, the one who is known as the Word was there face to face with the Great Spirit. This Word fully represents Creator and shows us who he is and what he is like. He has always been there from the beginning, for the Word and Creator are one and the same. ³Through the Word all things came into being, and not one thing exists that he did not create.

⁴Creator's life shined out from the Word, giving light to all human beings. This is the true Light that comes to all the peoples of the world and shines on everyone. ⁵The Light shines into the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it or put it out.

⁶⁻⁷Into the wilderness of the Land of Promise (Judea) came a man named Gift of Goodwill (John). He was sent by the Great Spirit to tell what he knew about the Light so everyone could believe. ⁸He was not the Light but came to speak the truth about the Light. ⁹The true Light that shines on all people was coming into the darkness of this world.

¹⁰He came down into this world, and even though he made all things, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹Even his own tribe did not welcome or honor him. ¹²But all who welcome and trust him receive their birthright as children of the Great Spirit. ¹³They are born in a new way, not from a human father's plans or desires, but born from above—by the Great Spirit.

¹⁴Creator's Word became a flesh-and-blood human being and pitched his sacred tent among us, living as one of us. We looked upon his great beauty and saw how honorable he was, the kind of honor held only by this one Son who fully represents his Father—full of his great kindness and truth.

¹⁵Gift of Goodwill (John) told what he knew about him and cried out with a loud voice, "The one I have told you about is here! He comes after me, but is much greater—*my elder! He has more honor, for even though he is thought to be younger*, he existed before I was born."

¹⁶From the fullness of his being we have all had many gifts of kindness poured out on us.

¹⁷Drawn from the Water (Moses) gave us our tribal laws, but the gift of great kindness and truth came from Creator Sets Free (Jesus), the Chosen One.

¹⁸No one has ever seen the Great Spirit, but the one Son, who is himself the Great Spirit and closest to the Father's heart, has shown us what he is like.

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 #296

"What Child Is This"



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

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

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

Each portion of the prayers ends with these words:

O God,

Your mercy is great.

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

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

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.

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Please rise in body or in spirit

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

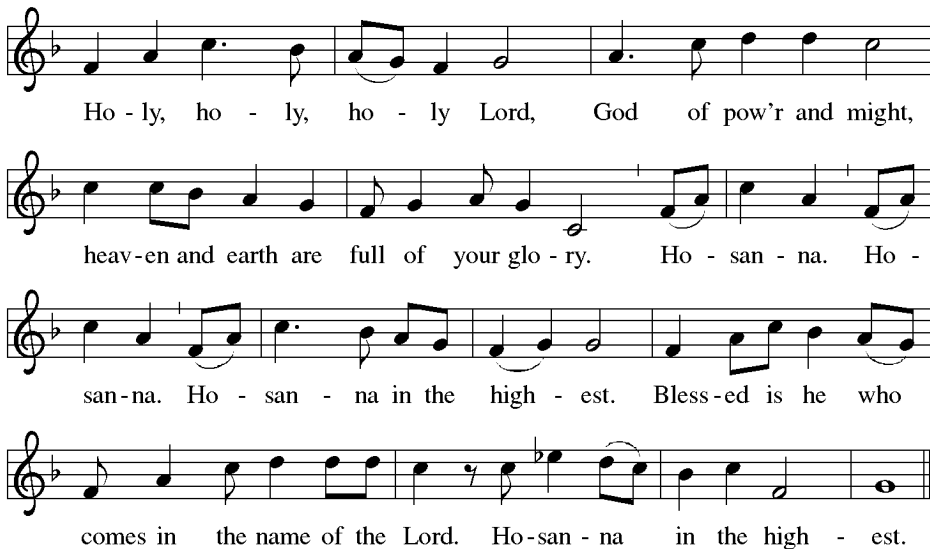
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

... 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.

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

God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

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

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

HYMN DURING COMMUNION

ELW #285

"Peace Came to Earth"

1 Peace came to earth at last that cho - sen night
2 And who could be the same for hav - ing held
3 You show the Fa - ther none has ev - er seen,
4 How else could I have known you, O my God!
when an - gels clove the sky with song and light
the in - fant in their arms, and lat - er felt
in flesh and blood you bore our griefs and pains,
How else could I have loved you, O my God!
and God em - bod - ied love and sheathed his might—
the wound - ed hands and side, all doubts dis - pelled—
in bread and wine you vis - it us a - gain—
How else could I em - brace you, O my God!



Who could but gasp: Im - man - u - el!
 Who could but sigh: Im - man - u - el!
 Who could but see: Im - man - u - el!
 Who could but pray: Im - man - u - el!

Who could but sing: Im - man - u - el!
 Who could but shout: Im - man - u - el!
 Who could but thrill: Im - man - u - el!
 Who could but praise: Im - man - u - el!

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, b. 1919

Music: Paul Manz, b. 1919

Text © 1984 Concordia Publishing House

Music © 1991 Eerdmans Publications, a div. of MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc.

SCHNEIDER

10 10 10 8 8

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. Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

Amen.

SENDING

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

BLESSING

The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, ✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

ELW #269

"Once in Royal David's City"



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and Lord of all,
3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;
4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,



where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed;
and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;
for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;
we shall see him; but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;



Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
with the poor and meek and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.
there his chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo - ry crowned.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818–1895
Music: IRBY, Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805–1876

DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest!

And peace to God's people on earth!

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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.

WORSHIP LEADERS

	Serving Today	Serving Next Week
Worship Leader/Preacher	Pastor Jay Serafin	Pastor Jay Serafin
Lay Assisting Minister	Irene Albert	Linda Hodges
Lector	Irene Albert	Chase Ambrose
Acolyte	Ray Scholz	Chase Ambrose
Accompanist	Janet Gomez	Janet Gomez
Altar Care	The Alberts	Jamie Serafin
Communion Bread	The Alberts	The Lowes
Greeter/Usher	Heinz Albert	Cynthia Lowe
Technology	Chris Hawkins	Jason Lowe

SERVANTS FOR THE WEEK

	Serving This Week	Serving Next Week
Cleaning Team	Albert/Runk	Gomez/Grimes
Tellers	Ray Scholz/Chris Hawkins	Barbara Runk/Ben Grimes
Fellowship Set Up	Ray Scholz	Jennie Hawkins
Fellowship Food	Alberts	Ellen Quirk/Donna Ambrose
Fellowship Clean Up	Alberts	Donna Ambrose/Barbara Runk

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY

First Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

The servant of the LORD brings justice

Psalm 29

The voice of the LORD is upon the waters

Second Reading: Acts 10:34-43

Jesus' ministry after his baptism

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

Revelation of Christ as God's servant

REFLECTING THE GRACE OF GOD

In sharp contrast to the image of Jacob, who wrestles with an angel and prevails, in today's first reading the Lord redeems Jacob from hands too strong for him. Jacob does not always prevail. We too are reminded this day that it is not our own strength but God's power that blesses, strengthens, fills, gives, and grants peace. God has the power to bring together and to scatter. God creates family not because we are God's blood relatives but through adoption. In baptism we are claimed, redeemed, and forgiven. We receive wisdom and are lavished with grace. We are marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit. We receive an inheritance. Through God's powerful gift, we are gathered up, become children of God, and receive grace upon grace.

Receiving this gift of grace we are called to live as children of the light. In this holy calling we have John the Baptist as our guide. You can tell the story of Jesus leaving out all sorts of important details. In John's gospel the shepherds, angels, and manger are all absent. But the gospel writers agree, you cannot tell the story of Jesus without John the Baptist. You simply must have the one who comes solely to point others to Jesus. This is our calling as well. We who are forgiven and redeemed, we who are claimed and called, are the ones who point to Jesus. We do this with our lives; we do this with our words. We point to Jesus when we feed the hungry, when we invite those we know and love to know the gift of grace we see in Jesus. We point to Jesus when we allow the holy light of the season to shine through all we do and all are.

APOSTLES WOMEN'S GROUP

All women (and friends) are cordially invited to attend the women's group this Saturday at 10:00 AM. We would LOVE to have you join us!!

RETIREMENT OF A DEBT CELEBRATION

Please join us for a "Retirement of A Debt Celebration" next Sunday to celebrate paying off the church mortgage. We will have a special celebration during the worship service and a catered lunch reception after the service – please join us!!

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

JANUARY 4, 2026 – JANUARY 11, 2026

TODAY	10:00 AM 11:00 AM	Worship Service Coffee Fellowship
MONDAY	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM 7:00 PM	Pastor Jay in the office AA
TUESDAY	7:00 PM	Al-Anon/AA
WEDNESDAY	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM 7:00 PM	Pastor Jay in the office Choir Practice
THURSDAY	2:00 PM	Preaching Guild
FRIDAY		Girls Scouts
SATURDAY	10:00 AM 6:30 PM	Apostles Women's Group Young and Sober
SUNDAY	10:00 AM 11:00 AM	Worship Service Retirement of Debt Celebration

HAPPY BIRTHDAY To ...

Anders Peterson – Jan 6th | **Heinz Albert** – Jan 12th

HAPPY BAPTISMAL BIRTHDAY To ...

Ellie rocker – Jan 5th

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