

# The Epistle

THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.apostles-elca.org](http://www.apostles-elca.org) | [www.facebook.com/ApostlesELCA](https://www.facebook.com/ApostlesELCA) | May 2026

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*

**"There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given to believers by the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve.**

**But they all come from the same Lord. There are different ways the Spirit works. But the same God is working in all these ways and in all people. The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all.**

**(1 Corinthians 12: 4-7)**

When you cook a meal, do you like to follow a recipe? There are many wonderful cooks who enjoy pulling out a recipe and working through its details in order to put together a magnificent dish, confident that if all the instructions are followed, the result will win over any who try it. Or are you a cook who likes to work off the cuff, blending together various ingredients, spices, inspirations and techniques in order to make something completely new and, by the way, delicious. Perhaps, however, you fall somewhere in between. You like to pull out a recipe, yet as you read through the ingredients and techniques it recommends, you wonder to yourself, "Hmmm. I wonder what this would taste like if I cut the amount of onions in half and sautéed a cup of chopped fennel into the recipe instead?" These little tweaks, you imagine, will make the resulting dish more interesting. Or, maybe you fall into another

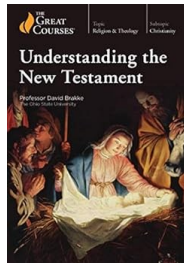
group who doesn't get cooking at all, won't open a cookbook, and finds chopping and braising and stirring and baking all to be tedious concepts. For you, food is an end product you eat, whether prepared by a loved one, or ordered at a local restaurant. To keep the cooking metaphor for one more moment, "Variety is the spice of life" as they say.

Thank goodness we all are different. One thing I believe and have expressed on numerous occasions is that the world would be a boring place if we all were the same, having the same talents, tastes and interests. I think the same idea extends into the church. Thank goodness God has made us as individuals, each of us having our own interests, our own talents, our own passions, our own identities, our own ideas about what is fun and what is important. These differences are a strength for the church, because it allows us to fill in the gaps, to cover areas where one person's talents end and another's begins. As we move toward the season of Pentecost, we become more conscious of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is the Spirit who animates our faith, who brings the Gospel to life in our hearts, and it is the Spirit who pushes and prods us to share our faith, active in our daily lives. St. Paul understood very well that each Christian is an individual, yet each Christian is a valuable asset for the whole body of Christ, which is the church. Paul saw that we each are different, with differing gifts used in differing ways. Yet,

Paul says, "The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all." In truth, we will look at our Christian faith differently, will live our Christian lives differently, will serve Christ differently. Yet, as Paul tells us, it is the same God working in us, using the different ways we serve, who will cause the church to flourish and the mission of the church to succeed. But we cannot miss the greater point. As God's gift of life and salvation come to us, God's call comes to us as well. That call is an expectation that we **will use** the talents, passions and time we are given to serve "for the good of all."

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***Easter at Apostles!!***



***Join Us for New Adult Study***

A new adult study has begun—"Understanding the New Testament." The class is being led by Pastor Jay—it is being held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month (May 13th and 27th) —bring a sandwich for dinner at 6:00 PM and the study begins on 6:15 PM—please make plans to join us!!

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***Congregation Council Update***

The Congregation Council will be meeting on **Monday, May 11th.**

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***Happy Birthday To...***

- |                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Gerald Britt   | May 6  |
| Ben Slider V   | May 9  |
| Jewel Thomas   | May 12 |
| Juanita Sturdy | May 13 |
| Nicholas Allen | May 16 |
| Pete Liljeberg | May 19 |

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***Happy Baptismal Anniversary***

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|--------------|--------|
| Tina Britt   | May 1  |
| Gerald Britt | May 9  |
| Mary Leunig  | May 19 |

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***Please Keep In Your Prayers***

Rich Bitting, Manning Freeman, Don Garfield, Heidi Henderson, Ellen Kendzierski, Doug Leip, Jason Lowe, Ellen Quirk, Michael Schlemmer, Keith & Juanita Sturdy, George Thomas, Jewel Thomas, Jim Wright, and Lena Woodlief.

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***World Hunger Sunday***

Don't forget your world hunger offering on **Sunday, May 17th – UNTIL ALL ARE FED!!**



Join us for a Cinco de Mayo feast ...including a virgin margarita and the movie Coco on Friday, May 8th beginning at 5:30 PM. Dinner will be available from 5:30 -6:45. Coco will begin at 7 PM.

We REALLY wouldn't like celebrating

# ***Cinco De Mayo***

**without YOU!**

Please join us for dinner and the animated movie "Coco"

**Friday, May 8, 2026, 5:30 PM**

## Menu:

**Tacos with all the fixings**

**Chili**

**a colorful, healthy 'confetti'**

**Salad (delicious, too)**

**Chicken enchiladas**

**Tres Leches Cake**

**Churros**



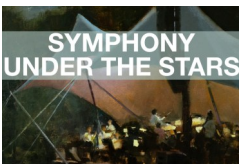
## ***Jubilee Churches News***

The Jubilee Churches of Gloucester, a coalition of several congregations in Gloucester (including Apostles), will be **meeting on again on Wednesday, June 10th, at New Mount Zion Baptist Church.** The Rev. Dr. Ed Walker, pastor of Bellamy United Methodist Church, and Pete Liljeberg are the co-moderators of the Jubilee Churches of Gloucester. In April, Jubilee Churches assisted 6 households with \$3,922.40 in rent, Dominion Power assistance and move-in costs. In April, the love and generosity of Jubilee Churches made a life-changing impact for several neighbors in our community. Families facing crisis received assistance with eviction prevention, Dominion Power bills, and urgent housing needs—bringing hope during incredibly stressful times. One especially meaningful success story came from a couple staying in our overnight emergency shelter. Like many we serve, they were working hard to rebuild their lives but faced one major barrier: the upfront cost of securing stable housing. Because of Jubilee Churches' compassionate partnership, funds were provided for their first month's rent, allowing them to move into their own apartment and begin a new chapter together. What was once uncertainty and homelessness has now become safety, stability, and renewed hope. Your support does more than pay bills—it restores dignity, creates opportunity, and reminds people they are not alone. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Christ in our community and for helping make stories like this possible. **If you would like to learn more about Jubilee Churches, please contact Pete Liljeberg or Janet Gomez.**

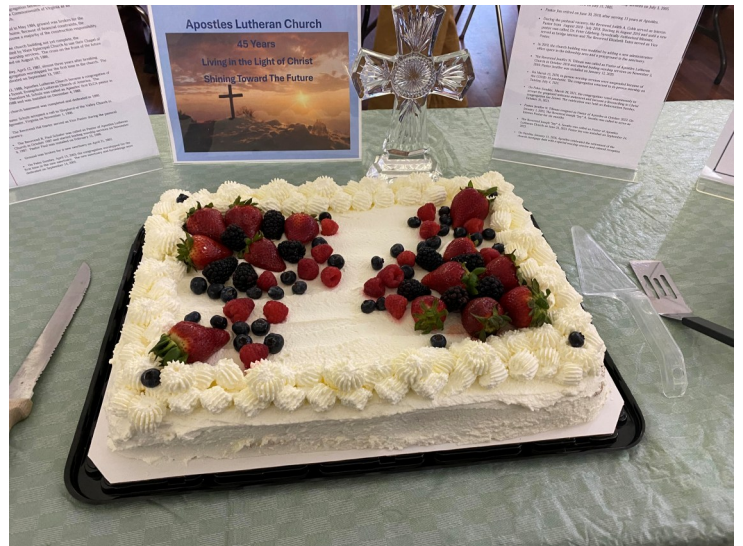
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### ***Save the Date***

**Symphony Under the Stars** will be **Saturday, June 6th**—please make plans to join us for this annual concert!!



## ***Happy 45th Anniversary, Apostles!!***





*News*  
**From GUEST**

+ GUEST has scheduled a work day at the day

shelter on Friday, May 15th, from 9-2. We will be cleaning up both inside and outside the day shelter (located on Moose Drive). Ladders and power washers will be needed. We would LOVE to have your help!!

+ The GUEST Volunteer Appreciation dinner was held on Thursday, April 23rd at Flatiron Crossroads—Pete Liljeberg’s band, Tidewinders, provided the entertainment.



- + There is a BIG need for volunteers at the day shelter—if you are interested in helping, please contact Barbara Runk or Janet Gomez.
- + Needed items at the day shelter include pop tarts, Nutri grain bars, muffins, any pop top canned meals, liquid creamers, paper towels, laundry pods, sunblock, bug spray, body wipes, medical supplies like Neosporin, peroxide, and fly swatters.



**ReconcilingWorks**  
LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION

**Reconciling In Christ News**

- + The Reconciling Ministry team has scheduled PRIDE Sunday for Sunday, June 7th. The team has designated the first Sunday of each month as RIC Sunday and will soon start having brief educational discussions during fellowship on “Reconciling Scripture for Lutherans: On Sexuality and Gender Identity.” Stay tuned!
- + The Gloucester Arts Festival is holding a “Let’s Go To The Movies” event on Friday, June 26th at 7:00 PM. They will be showing the 18 minute film with Gloucester native Ellis Finney, its writer/director, and Jeff Lichtenstein, the movie’s producer. An aging black high school football star, living a quotidian life and married to his high school sweetheart in a small town, reminisces over a long-lost lover - a man he once shared the football field with. Registration is required for this free event –go to <https://www.gloucesterartsfestival.com/sport-star>.
- + The Virginia Synod held it’s first RIC Ministry Interest Group led by Betsy Liljeberg in March—stay tuned for additional meetings.

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*From Your Treasurer*  
**Doug Dalager**

<b>March 2026</b>	
<i>Planned Income</i>	\$ 9,194.75
<i>Actual Income</i>	\$ 12,507.56
<i>Delta</i>	\$ 3,312.81
<b>Year to Date</b>	
<i>Planned Income</i>	\$ 27,584
<i>Actual Income</i>	\$ 27,825
<i>Delta</i>	\$ 241

Save the Date!!



# The Spirit Enlightens, Equips, Empowers

July 16-18, 2026  
at Roanoke College

Bible Study Leader: The Rev. Susan Briehl  
Keynote Presenter: The Rev. Drew Tucker  
Musician: Michael Benshish  
Special Guest: Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry



## News From The Pews

Janet Gomez recently attended “Womankind,” a 2-day retreat held at

St. James Episcopal Church. The theme was “One Body—Called to Unity, Empowered for Action.” Keynote speaker was Lisa Sharon Harper, author of “Fortune.” *(Editor’s note: We LOVE to share stories about what you are doing outside of church—please send your pictures and stories to Janet at thezemogs@gmail.com.)*

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## Your Help Is Needed!!

We are looking for **someone to take care of changing the outdoor sign periodically during the year.** Pastor Jay will help with what to put on the sign—we just need someone who will change it when needed (7-8 times during the year). If you are interested in helping, please contact Ray Scholz, Administration Ministry Team leader.

## Pastor Jay and The Convalescent Center

On Easter Monday, Pastor Jay led an Easter worship service at the Riverside Lifelong Health and Rehabilitation in Mathews. This was his second service for the residents. The residents enjoyed this opportunity to celebrate Easter and come together to worship and sing. Many have shared their gratitude for Pastor Jay. They appreciate that he shares a few words with each of them and always ask when he will return.

-Resident Sue Brooks enjoys the stories Pastor Jay shares in his sermons and his interactions with her.

- Activities Director Olivia Powell appreciates Pastor Jay. “Having a variety of services serves the variety of people in the facility. Limiting options makes them feel like less. I love his services because they love them.”

- Locust Grove offers the residents a bi-monthly service and Olivia has arranged a visit to the Church of Frances DeSales for a communion service.



## *Easter Message from Bishop Yehiel Curry*

I often hear this phrase when I'm visiting congregations or sitting in meetings: "We are an Easter church." I like that idea and the reasoning behind it. Who wouldn't want to live into the resurrection? We are a people who welcome the return of "Alleluia" with passionate voices, celebrating the renewed hope that death does not have the final word. That good news is the joy of Easter that everyone needs to hear, carrying us through our struggles and grief. But what if we don't feel like an Easter church? In this moment, it can seem like many of us are wondering if we aren't a Lenten church instead, dwelling in a place that is waiting and hoping for renewal, wondering when God will move us, yearning for that time when we felt God was with us.

Most of us know what it's like to want to skip ahead to the celebration. We want the resolution without the journey, the goal without the work, the "Alleluia" without the silence that Holy Saturday brings. But that isn't how life unfolds for us, and it surely isn't what Jesus' journey on earth looked like either.

The journey to the empty tomb didn't begin on the cross of Good Friday but in a manger decades earlier. Jesus was born with a purpose: to reveal God's love, demonstrate grace, and call us into a life of justice, mercy and compassion. It was a long journey, a ministry that spread across the hills of Judea, well beyond his birthplace in Bethlehem and his home in Nazareth. And along the way, he showed us what it means to be children of God.

We are a church willing to serve those in-between moments where we don't know what tomorrow will bring, doing the holy work that Jesus modeled long before the stone had rolled away.

During this time, Jesus met a woman at the well and offered her living water when she expected judgment. He told the story of a Samaritan as a model of mercy. He fed the hungry, welcomed the downtrodden, healed those who were brokenhearted, and called his followers to live in a grace and love that will not let go. He challenged systems that oppressed and questioned norms that did not serve God. This ministry wasn't to simply bring people into his fold, but an invitation to live a more radical, loving life.

Only after all of this—the work and wisdom of his ministry, the conflict among his followers and with those who felt threatened by his teachings—do we arrive at the final chapter of Jesus' earthly life. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and, finally, Easter Sunday, where the empty tomb weaves the entire ministry of Jesus Christ into a mission that continues for us all.

This is why I ask if we are not only an Easter church but also a Lenten church. We are a church willing to serve those in-between moments where we don't know what tomorrow will bring, doing the holy work that Jesus modeled long before the stone had rolled away. We are a church that trusts in a God that continues to make waves even when we are holding our breaths for that first "Alleluia" to be sung out.

The ministries we carry out in our congregations, our communities and everywhere we go to serve in God's name are not interruptions of our Easter but preparations for the resurrection already stirring within us. So let us keep walking this road of waiting, together, trusting in the God who is always there and serving with the confidence that hope is on the horizon. And when Easter dawns again and we start singing "Alleluia," may it rise not only from the triumph of the resurrection but from having lived the gospel in our seasons of waiting.