

The Epistle

THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.apostles-elca.org | www.facebook.com/ApostlesELCA | August 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

As we go through the final weeks of summer, I thought I would keep things light and share with you some riddles I created.

All of these have a reference to the Bible. See if you can name the Biblical character or item used by a character described in each.

1. **My friends** told me amazing tales,
I harbored major doubt,
Until I saw the hands, the feet,
"My Lord, My God," I'd shout.
2. **I did not** wear a singlet then
But wrestled just the same,
As Jacob I began the bout,
To this, was changed my name.
3. **As water** I have ceased to be,
When new, old skin I burst,
Poor Noah had enough of me
Most serve the good one first.
4. **In flames** have I come roaring through
Yet peaceful as a dove
I speak in different languages
The message of God's love.
5. **My purpose** is to carry forth
It's what I hold that counts
Words written on two stone tablets
Or life in vast amounts.
6. **The legions** come and legions go
To occupy, control,
They claimed my body, pestered me,
Until Christ freed my soul.



The Competition is On!

The Virginia Synod Hunger Team is challenging all congregations to a pasta meal collection contest. Each congregation is asked to collect food offerings related to pasta meals. Summers are often a time when food pantries receive fewer donations which makes this an opportune time to collect food. Apostles is hoping to get in the running for one of the grand prizes which is a \$250 grant to be given to the food ministry of our choice. Here is a list of suggested items:

- **Dried or ready to eat pasta** (gluten free options as well)
- **Cans or jars of spaghetti sauce** (with and without meat)
- **Canned pasta meals** such as ravioli or spaghetti with meatballs
- **Boxed macaroni and cheese**
- **Parmesan cheese in a shaker**

Food offerings can be brought in throughout August. All food items will be weighed and brought to Bread for Life food pantry. The congregation collecting the most pounds per worshipping adult wins.....and so do the people of their communities!

Let's go Apostles! We can do it!

US SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL (1776-2026) Celebration

Thanks to everyone who helped with our 4th of July celebration—we had a special liturgy during our worship service and then enjoyed a picnic afterwards. It was GREAT!!



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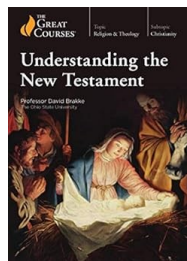
World Hunger Sunday

Don't forget your world hunger offering on **Sunday, August 16th – UNTIL ALL ARE FED!!**

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Adult Bible Study

Our current Bible study is "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. **We will be taking a break in August and resume in September on September 9th.** Bring a sandwich for dinner at 6:00 PM and the study begins on 6:30 PM—please make plans to join us!!



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Congregation Council Update

The Congregation Council will be having their regular meeting will be on **Monday, August 10th.**

Happy Anniversary to . .

Nate and Ingrid Peterson	August 5
Ben and Michelle Slider	August 14

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Happy Baptismal Anniversary to . .

Reagan Jay	August 26
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Happy Birthday to . .

Keith Sturdy	August 2
Bern Runk	August 3
Betty Hauch	August 3
Ingrid Peterson	August 5
David Muse	August 6
Emmaleigh Hautz	August 6
Mia Slider	August 9
Samantha Good	August 11
Donald Jaeger	August 12
George Thomas	August 15
Benjamin Slider, IV	August 19
Lena Woodlief	August 24
Chase Ambrose	August 28

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Please Keep In Your Prayers

Rich Bitting, Manning Freeman, Don Garfield, Heidi Henderson, Ellen Kendzierski, Doug Leip, Cyndi Lowe, Ellen Quirk, Michael Schlemmer, Ray Scholz, Keith & Juanita Sturdy, George Thomas, Jewel Thomas, Lena Woodlief and our sponsored children in Guatemala—Amayra, Hugolino, Manuela, and Pablo. Prayers have also been requested by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land for Natalie Abudayyeh, a 21-year-old university student who has now been held in Israeli prison for nearly two months.

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Agape Worship Sunday, August 9th

Please join us for an "agape" worship service on **Sunday, August 9th**—it will be held in the fellowship hall—please bring a dish to share!!



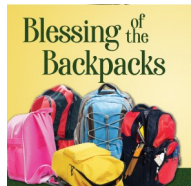
ReconcilingWorks will be holding a monthly Bible study online via Zoom on the **third Thursday** of every month through December—the next study will be **Thursday, August 20th. At 4:00 PM.** Registration is required and information to register can be found at ReconcilingWorks. The Zoom link will be emailed two days in advance to those who register. The Bible Study is led by a rostered leader. The text for the Bible Study is for the Sunday ten days after the Bible Study Zoom gathering.

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Women's Group Meeting

Apostles Women's Group will be meeting on **Saturday, August 8th at 10:00 AM**—ALL women of Apostles are invited to attend. .

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Blessing of the Backpacks

Students of every age are asked to bring their backpacks to worship on **Sunday, August 30th** for a special blessing—we will also have a special gift for all students. "God, bless this bag and the one who will use it. Let them not be scared, be with them as they learn and grow this year. In Jesus name. Amen."

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New Members

We will be taking in new members in the near future – **if you are interested in becoming a member** of Apostles Lutheran Church, please talk to Pastor Jay.

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Ministry Team Meetings

The following ministry teams will meet in August:

+ **Worship**—Monday, August 17th, 2:30 PM



Theologian in Residence

Please join us for a Theologian In Residence program at St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Williamsburg on **Saturday, September 26, 2026 at 9:30 AM.**

The theologian is Kimberly Knowle-Zeller, writer, pastor and author exploring faith, creation and everyday wonder. She will be speaking on "God of the Cosmos: How God Walks with Us in Our Everyday Lives." If you would like additional information, please contact Janet Gomez.

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From Your Treasurer Doug Dalager

June 2026	
<i>Planned Income</i>	\$ 9,194.75
<i>Actual Income</i>	\$ 6,999.51
<i>Delta</i>	\$ (2,195.24)
Year to Date	
<i>Planned Income</i>	\$ 55,168.50
<i>Actual Income</i>	\$ 52,342.42
<i>Delta</i>	\$ (2,826.08)

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All Lutheran Women's Retreat



It's time to register for the All Lutheran Women's Retreat!! The theme is "**Sacred Stores, Sacred Lives**" and will be held at Drury Plaza Hotel in Richmond on **November 5th-7th**. Through storytelling, guided reflection, and gentle conversation, retreat leader, Beth Dunwody, will help participants recognize the sacred in the ordinary and reclaim their own narratives as sources of healing, courage, and connection. You can register at <https://alwretreat.org/retreat/>.



Jubilee Churches News

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

on Wednesday, August 12th, at 9:30 AM at Gloucester Seventh Day Adventist (SDA). The Rev. Dr. Ed Walker, pastor of Bellamy United Methodist Church, and Pete Liljeberg are the co-moderators of the Jubilee Churches of Gloucester. Jubilee Churches work together to prevent homelessness crises for our neighbors in Gloucester County. In July, Jubilee Churches received a referral form from one of the churches for a family needing rental assistance. In talking with the wife, it became obvious that the family income was more than sufficient to meet family need even with just the husband working. The client explained that she had been diagnosed with an aggressive cancer and had gone in for quickly scheduled surgery. Immediately after recovery she would begin chemo. The loss of her income coupled with the significant number of co-pays and medications put them behind and they couldn't make June rent. At this point they were also behind July but were only asking for \$800, the amount of June rent, to prevent action on eviction. In talking to the management company representative, the family situation was not simply as presented. Just days after the wife's diagnosis, their daughter and son-in-law, who lived next door with their 2 kids, were in a car accident and he was killed. The parents were doing everything they could to support their daughter and grandchildren through this while coping with the shocking cancer diagnosis. Jubilee was able to provide resources and language needed to talk with insurance companies and health care providers so the family could more readily anticipate medical expenses while making manageable payments, Jubilee also paid the June and July rent to prevent eviction and set the family back on a level foothold. This family asked that you all be aware of how grateful they were. Please be in prayer for this family in the midst of their grief and health struggles.



News From GUEST

- + There is a BIG need for volunteers at the day shelter—if you are interested in helping, please contact Barbara Runk or Janet Gomez.
- + **Bottled water is needed**—it can be dropped off at the day shelter (6536 Moose Drive) on Tuesday, Thursday or Friday from 9-5.
- + **SAVE THE DATE**—Apostles will be hosting the GUEST winter shelter the week of February 15th, 2027. Stay tuned for opportunities to help!!

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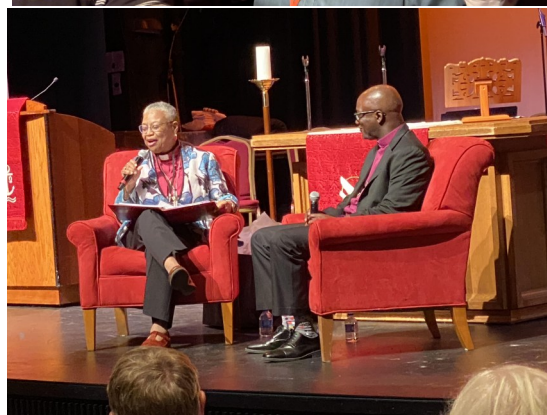
Meet the Virginia Synod's New Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

The Virginia Synod is excited to announce that the Virginia Synod Council has called **Pastor Tina Toburen** to serve as the next Director for Youth and Young Adult Ministry. Pastor Toburen will begin serving on August 1, 2026. She will be taking over from the Rev. Dr. Dave Delaney who is retiring. Over the years, Dave has touched countless lives through his leadership, mentorship, and commitment to nurturing faith among young people and young adults across our synod. Dave was honored at Power In The Spirit for his 25 years of serving in this position.



Power In The Spirit 2026

What a WONDERFUL 3 days!! Over 260 people from across the Virginia Synod came together at Roanoke College for worship, fellowship, workshops and wonderful keynote addresses and Bible study. Special guest was the ELCA's new Bishop, Yehiel Curry.



Save the dates: Midwinter Power in the Spirit— February 1-3, 2027; Summer Power in the Spirit—July 8-10, 2027.

Podcast and Study Available - Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust Reconsideration

The task force leading the ELCA in the reconsideration of one section of the social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* is excited to share two important opportunities to engage with. The task force is releasing a podcast called *Learn and Discern* as an educational tool for this church as we journey together through the reconsideration process. The podcast's episodes will explore the following topics:

- A history of the ELCA's social teachings and ministry policy on human sexuality.
- The nuances of Lutheran theological ethics.
- A deeper look at the history of the Lutheran understanding of "the bound conscience."
- The sources of agreement and disagreement on human sexuality in the church.
- Lutheran approaches to faithful conversation.

This five-episode podcast is a companion to the study "Conscience and Conversation" (described below). Individual episodes will be released in audio and video over the summer at elca.org/reconsiderations. The task force has released a new study to foster conversation across this church and to generate feedback that will guide its work. The study, "Conscience and Conversation: A Study During the Reconsideration of the Social Statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," invites reflection on agreement and disagreement through "the unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:3). There is a survey link for participants to share feedback with the task force. Your input is essential as the task force prepares a first draft of the reconsidered subsection of the social statement for the church to consider. The survey is open until September 30. We understand this is a short period for feedback during a busy time of year. Please know that feedback, comments and questions can be shared with the task force at any time by mailing Reconsiderations@elca.org. In addition, there will be a longer period for public comment on the draft reconsidered social statement once it is released next year.



On Sabbath and the Stewardship of Time

I hope this note finds you on vacation, just back from vacation or packing for vacation, beloved. And even if not a long, formal vacation, I hope this note finds you taking a more relaxed pace in these days where my Celtic ancestors encouraged us to spend more time outside in the “House of Light.” Many folks see summer as vacation season and rightfully so. Sabbath is not just a gift given by the Divine; it’s a command. And while most folks think “Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy” means “go to church,” that’s actually not the commandment (though worship is certainly a part of sabbath). The commandment is to remember that humans are not just meant to be producers and consumers; that’s a capitalistic way of thinking often imposed upon God’s economy. The commandment reminds us that we are worthy and worth something in this life not because we produce but because we are produced by a God who makes us worthy. In other words, when we think of how we steward time, it’s important to plan fallow time in there. Vacation. Sabbath. God has given it not just as gift but as commandment. It can be both. So how, beloved, are you encouraging your people and yourself to steward sabbath time? And how are you connecting that to the discipleship practice of stewardship? Remember that when we talk about stewardship only in reference to money or pocketbooks, we truly shortchange (pun intended) the discipleship life that God in Christ invites us into. Everything that has value is something to be stewarded, and certainly time has value. Indeed, it is the least renewable resource we have as mortals.

So, beloved, I’ll ask again: how are you stewarding your time in these summer months? How are you encouraging the people in your life to steward their time as disciples, finding God in the fallow moments?

And if no one else has ever told you: you are worthy, by God, not because of what, how and how much you produce but because you are the product of a God who loves you, for Christ’s sake, and will not let you go.

The Rev. Tim Brown

Director of Congregational Stewardship Support for the ELCA

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News From The Pews



Congratulations to **Nate Peterson**, who has been appointed as the next Assistant Principal of Peasley Middle School. He recently completed his master’s degree in Educational Leadership.



Sue Turner recently visited George and Jewel Thomas at Gloucester House – George looks great!!



Sue Turner and Janet Gomez got to meet the new ELCA Bishop when they attended Power In The Spirit.

(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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Hot Water Is Back!!!

A big THANK YOU to Ray Scholz, Doup Leip and Danny Joyce for replacing the hot water heater.

The Spirit in Action



Because of your partnership in shared ministry, we're seeing the Spirit move in powerful and meaningful ways across our Virginia Synod. From Power in the Spirit and the commissioning of new lay ministers to LAUNCH, the ordination of the Rev. Elisabeth Chapin, and so much more, God continues to call, equip, and send people for ministry. It's the Spirit in action!

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Save the Date!!

Our Caring Community Ministry Team is planning their next event—it will be a International Fall Feast on **October 30th**. The Team will be helped by PEO (Philanthropic Education Organization).

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Our Deepest Sympathy To...

Keith and Juanita Sturdy upon the death of Keith's grandson. *Loving God, your heart overflows with compassion for your whole creation. Please surround the family of Keith's grandson as they mourn his death. Help them to know that you claim them as your own and deliver them from fear and pain; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our healer and Lord. Amen.*