

The Epistle

THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

"Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, and there

are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12: 4-7)

One of my greatest joys since coming to Apostles has been getting to know individuals who worship and share in the ministry we do here. God has blessed Apostles richly and abundantly, and this is especially true in the varieties of gifts which God has given to our congregation through the individual talents and motivations of our members. St. Paul is very clear that he envisions each congregation as a manifestation of "the body of Christ," enabled by God through the workings of the Holy Spirit to equip, create and enact real ministry in the name of Christ... essentially, to make Christ's presence real in the life of the congregation and the community. Our great gift of God's grace at baptism carries with it a calling to serve as part of this body of Christ to make Christ's love known. Just as there are a variety of gifts present in our members' talents, there are a variety of ways these talents might be used to serve our congregation's ministry and share in the community of the faithful here at Apostles.

Each way in which we serve blesses the body of Christ and fulfills a part of the promises made when membership vows are taken, either in Baptism, Confirmation or joining the congregation.

At our retreat this past June, the Congregation Council spent a good deal of time looking forward toward where the ministry of Apostles may lead and tasking the Ministry Teams with discerning goals and ways to reach these goals in the future. This will be an ongoing process which will be revealed from time to time by each Team's initiatives and programming. As these efforts are brought forward, the entire congregation will have the opportunity to be involved in moving our ministry and service forward.

In addition, each Team was tasked with defining or re-defining those ministry opportunities through which individuals in our congregation may serve. Over the years, this has been known as Time and Talent surveys. The Teams have been working through the process of editing previous Time and Talent forms to pinpoint better the ways in which each individual may use gifts or talents to share in the congregation's ministry. In the month of October the Team's will present these Time and Talent forms to the congregation along with brief Temple Talks at worship services, all designed to re-familiarize the congregation with the Team's ongoing ministry and the opportunities individuals have to serve the

congregation through that Team's mission. The hope is that the congregation will hear these updates, see the important work each Team is doing and consider as individuals where you might be willing to serve by volunteering on the Time and Talent form and letting us know where your interest and talent meet God's Spirit at work at Apostles.

St. Paul is very clear that as we receive God's grace through Baptism and through the proclamation of the Word of God, we are graced also by God's Holy Spirit with gifts, talents and time which we can use for the "common good." As we move forward into the future, we greatly appreciate the talents of our members here at Apostles and look forward to the many ways, new and old, we can manifest God's love in our ministry here. This can happen only with the generous service of our members who step forward to share of themselves through time and talent for the building up of the body of Christ. Please feel free to talk to our Council members or Team members about how we are moving forward in ministry, sharing your insights and questions. Also, please prayerfully consider how you might use the gifts God has given you to serve in the ministry and mission we share.

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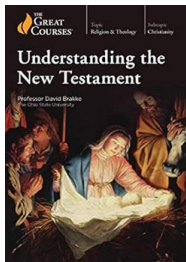


World Hunger Sunday
Don't forget your world hunger offering on **Sunday, September 20th – UNTIL ALL ARE FED!!**

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Adult Bible Study

Our current Bible study is "Understanding the New Testament" will resume in September on **September 9th and 23rd**. Bring a sandwich for dinner at 6:00 PM and the study begins on 6:30 PM—please make plans to join us!!



Congregation Council Update

The Congregation Council will be having their regular meeting will be on **Monday, September 14th**. Anyone is welcome to attend!!

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Happy Birthday to. .

Jason Lowe	September 7
Ben Grimes	September 12
Linda Hodges	September 30

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Happy Anniversary To. . .

Heinz and Irene Albert	September 14
Donald and Lynn Jaeger	September 16
Keith and Juanita Sturdy	September 26
Jim and Judy Wright	September 28

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Happy Baptismal Anniversary To..

Doug Dalager	September 3
Jewel Thomas	September 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, Judy Wright 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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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.



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, September 17th, 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, September 12th, at 10:00 AM**—ALL women of Apostles are invited to attend. .

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Adult Choir Resumes

Adult choir will resume on **Wednesday, September 16th at 7:00 PM** after a summer break. We would LOVE to have you come and sing with us. The choir will also practice on **Wednesday, September 30th**.

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Outdoor Worship

Sunday, September 27th!!

Please join us for an **outdoor worship service** on **Sunday, September 27th, at 10:00 AM**. We will gather outside under the big oak tree for worship and then **enjoy a picnic lunch** afterwards in the fellowship hall. Come and enjoy God's creation as we worship!! **Bring a chair!!**



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

July 2026

Planned Income	\$9,194.75
Actual Income	\$8,586.78
Delta	\$ (607.97)
Year to Date	
Planned Income	\$64,363.25
Actual Income	\$60,929.20
Delta	\$ (3,434.05)

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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, October 14th, at 9:30 AM at Bellamy United Methodist 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. Jubilee Churches work together to prevent homelessness crises for our neighbors in Gloucester County. Recently, Jubilee Churches were able to help an unhoused client who was moving into permanent housing - the client had an old outstanding \$350 water bill that Jubilee Churches was able to pay so the client could proceed to move. Also, Jubilee Churches were able to help a mother with small children - the mother's boyfriend moved out and she is in the process of requesting child support and looking for full-time employment. Jubilee Churches was able to pay her outstanding Dominion bill and get her back on track. Jubilee Churches had 23 requests in July - 6 people were helped with \$4,600; so far in August, there have been 9 requests for help - 2 people have been helped and 4 requests are being worked on - the balance of the Jubilee Fund is \$12,430. Jubilee Churches hope to have a guest speaker from the Salvation Army at the meeting in October - she will share information about the impact of upcoming changes to SNAP, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act. Finally, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be January 18-25, 2027 - there will be a joint worship service as well as daily prayer services. eld each day during that week.

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Lay Ministry Academy

Applications for the next Lay Ministry Academy Cohort are now open.

Applications and all supporting materials, including the \$50 application fee, are due

on September 20. Questions can be sent to Pastor Colleen Hetrick at hetrick@vasynod.org.



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.
- + Needed supplies include deodorant for men and women, lotion, small shampoo and conditioner, women's underwear of all sizes and trash bags (kitchen and contractor size). Supplies can be dropped off at the day shelter (6536 Moose Drive) on Tuesday, Thursday or Friday from 9-5.
- + GUEST is having a special fundraiser - "Change a Life with Your Spare Change Piggy Bank Fundraiser" - details will be forthcoming.
- + 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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Sunday School Resumes

FAITH 5



We are trying something a little different this year—we will be meeting once a month on the first Friday of the month starting on Friday, October 2nd from 6:00 PM–7:30 PM. We will be using the "Faith 5" curriculum—Share, Read, Talk, Pray and Bless. We will also have dinner. If you would like to help or need more information, please contact Linda Hodges.

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News From The Pews

Barbara and Bernie Runk are on an epic road trip out west—they left in early August and will return early in September.





The Competition is On!

Betsy reports that so far we have collected 108 pounds of food - WOW!! The current collection will be taken to the Bread for Life Food Pantry this week **but now the table is empty and needs to be refilled!!** 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 through **September 6th**. All food items will be weighed and brought to Bread for Life food pantry. The congregation collecting the most pounds per worshiping adult wins.....and so do the people of their communities!

Let's go Apostles! We can do it!



Effective Practices for Innovative Congregations

The Virginia Synod's EPIC workshop series is moving online for 2026-2027.

Starting on Monday, September 21, the Virginia

Synod will offer a series of monthly Zoom workshops designed to support the ministry of local congregations. Each workshop runs from 7 PM to 8:15 PM and is free. Here's the schedule for the 2026 online EPIC workshops:

September 21 at 7 PM: What Records We Should Keep? - Pastor Mary Anderson

October 19 at 7 PM: Planned Giving - Pastor Paul Walters

November 16 at 7 PM: Treasurer's Workshop - End of Year Preparations - John Krallman and Pastor John Wertz

Registration is required for each workshop—go to vasynod.org.

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Get to Know Eagle Eyrie!!

Are you new to our synod or getting ready to send a youth to a Virginia Synod youth event for the first time? If you would like to get the lay of the land before you do, consider

visiting the Eagle Eyrie Conference Center with our staff on **Saturday, October 3, from 10-3**.

Register at vasynod.org before September 16.

The cost to attend is \$25.00. This event is for 5th, 6th, and 7th graders and their family members to visit Eagle Eyrie Conference Center in Lynchburg and get to know the facility. You will also get to know the synod's youth leaders and get answers to any questions you may have on upcoming youth events: Lost and Found (for 7th and 8th graders, Friday evening through Sunday noon, Nov. 20-22) and Seventh Day (for 5th and 6th graders, Saturday noon to Sunday noon, March 6-7).

Ink Cartridges Needed!!

Chapter B.W. of Philanthropic Educational Organization (P.E.O.) (many members of Apostles belong) is collecting ink cartridges for a fundraiser for educational projects. They have to be HP or Canon only. They are sent to a company that recycles them and they pay P.E.O. for spent cartridges. It's not a lot of money, but every penny counts and the cartridges won't end up in a landfill.

The Six P.E.O. Educational Projects are

- **P.E.O. Educational Loan Fund (ELF):**

Provides low-interest loans to qualified women for higher education.

- **P.E.O. International Peace Scholarship Fund (IPS):** Offers scholarships for international women to pursue graduate studies in the U.S. or Canada.

- **P.E.O. Program for Continuing Education (PCE):** Grants need-based financial assistance to women whose education was interrupted.

- **P.E.O. Scholar Awards (PSA):** Provides merit-based awards for women pursuing doctoral degrees.

- **P.E.O. STAR Scholarship:** Recognizes and awards exceptional high school senior women entering post-secondary education.

- **Cottey College:** An independent, accredited women's liberal arts and sciences college in Nevada, Missouri, owned by the sisterhood. The proceeds from all the fundraisers are equally divided among these educational projects. If you need more information, please contact Irene Albert.

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Attention All Youth!!

Gloucester Youth in Unity will have a **Back To School Game Night on Friday, September 25th, from 6:00-8:00 PM at St. Therese** located at 6262 Main Street—All youth in grades 6-12 are welcome to come and bring a friend!!

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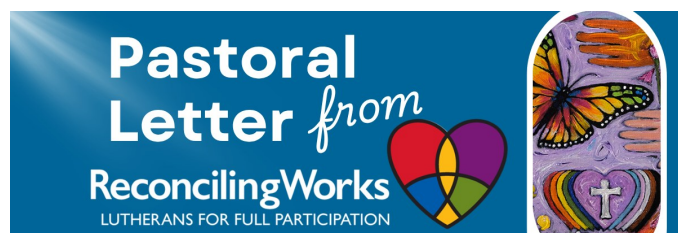
Answers to Last Month's Riddles from Pastor Jay

1. Thomas the Apostle; 2. Israel; 3. Wine; 4. Holy Spirit; 5. An ark; 6. the Gerasene Demoniac. How did you do????

Save the Date!

The 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). The menu looks DELICIOUS!! This will be your chance to sample cuisine from around the world!! **Irish** Shepherd's Pie, **Swedish** Meatballs with Noodles and Red Cabbage, Carrots and Green Beans, **Italian** Baked Ziti with Big Tossed Salad, **Greek** Gyro Platter with Tzatziki, Pita, and fixings and breads and rolls. There will be sign up sheets posted soon for the congregation to bring desserts and side dishes. For more information, please contact Karen Johnston, Irene Albert or Judy Wright.

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ReconcilingWorks has released a new Pastoral Letter on the ongoing work of the ELCA Task Force and revisions to the Human Sexuality Social Statement, now publicly available on the ReconcilingWorks website. For more than 50 years, ReconcilingWorks has advocated for the acceptance, full participation, and liberation of people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions within the Lutheran Church. As the ELCA continues this important process of discernment, we remain steadfast in that commitment. This pastoral letter shares our theological grounding, concerns about the current language of the social statement, and hopes for a Church that more fully reflects the expansive diversity of God's creation. We invite you to read the letter which can be found at <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/pastoral-letter-2026/> and use it as a resource as you provide feedback to the ELCA Task Force. Together, we continue working toward a Church where every person knows: You are beloved. You are seen. You belong.

2026

2027

VIRGINIA SYNOD ELCA YOUTH EVENTS



Sept. 26,
2026

Roanoke College Lutheran Visit Day

For high school youth and parents to learn more about our church's college and about discerning the Christian calling to higher education.

Get to know Eagle Eyrie

An opportunity for 4th, 5th, and 6th graders and their families to see Eagle Eyrie Conference Center where the synod's youth events are held.

Oct. 3,
2026

Nov. 20-22,
2026

Lost and Found

For **7th and 8th graders** and their adult advisors at Eagle Eyrie Conference Center, Lynchburg, VA. Early Registration discount ends October 26, 2026.

Winter Celebration

For **9th -12th graders** and their adult advisors at Eagle Eyrie Conference Center, Lynchburg, VA. Early Registration discount ends Dec. 21, 2026.

Jan. 29-31
2027

Mar. 6-7,
2027

Seventh Day

For **5th and 6th graders** and their adult advisors at Eagle Eyrie Conference Center, Lynchburg, VA. Early Registration discount ends Feb. 8, 2027.

Youth Assembly

Each congregation of the Synod is invited to send two delegates to the Youth Assembly. Delegates can be in **grades 7 through 12**. Congregations may register another delegate if there is space. Look for updates on the Synod website in early 2027.

June 11-13,
2027

July 18-23,
2027

Kairos

For rising **9th through 12th graders** at Roanoke College. Application forms will be available starting Feb. 2027 and are due back to the Synod by May 1, 2027.

LAUNCH

For **just graduated high school seniors**, held at Roanoke College. Watch for details in early 2027.

SUMMER
2027

Virginia Synod-ELCA



@virginiasynod



The **ELCA Churchwide Youth Gathering** is **June 27- July 2, 2027** in Minneapolis. Information for planning and registering is available NOW at

<https://www.elca.org/gathering>



STARTING AUGUST 1ST:
CONTACT SYNOD YOUTH DIRECTOR PASTOR TINA TOBUREN AT
toburen@vasynod.org

Scan this code to access the VA
Synod Youth Ministry webpage.

Contact Our Camps!
Year-round meeting &
retreat opportunities!

hungrymother.org



carolinefumace.org