

The Epistle

THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

In his Small Catechism, Martin Luther writes a section on Baptism in a question and answer format and includes the

following:

What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit...

An important part of Luther's understanding of Baptism is drawn from Romans 6: 3-4, **"³Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?**

⁴Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." St. Paul's words evoke an understanding of Baptism as a participation in the death and resurrection of

Christ, in which this death is the destruction of the old Adam, the old Eve within us. As we rise up out of the waters of Baptism we rise to the new life Christ has given us in Easter. As God's Easter people, we walk in the newness of life that God has given us by grace and promise. We no longer live our lives through the lens of our former sinful self, but are refocused and redirected toward this new life that comes through this promise. Our response to this gift, this promise, simply is to trust that it is true. Luther reminds us that, without the Word of God, the water in the baptismal font simply is water. However, empowered and sanctified by the Word of God, by promise and grace, this water becomes life-giving which unleashes us to walk in this newness of life that Paul envisions. Promise reveals the commitment of a loving God who, through what we know in Christ, is fully invested in relationship with us and walks with us into the journey before us. God's love and grace grant us life, forgiveness and salvation, reassuring us that God cares deeply for each of us and loves us as the individuals we are. That is the promise which comes with Baptism, the promise which speaks to us every moment of our lives. Our response is to hear this promise and know that truly it does belong to us.

Unleashed by this grace, this love, this promise, we are empowered to walk in this newness of life. That's what Martin Luther wanted to communicate to the world, both to the institution called "the Church" and to each

individual Christian. It was this understanding which was the foundation and the power of the Reformation. God's grace, love and promise are real. In Baptism, this promise is spoken individually to us and calls us to live as an Easter child of God. We won't always get things right. The old Adam/Eve will continue to try to influence us, to claim us. But as baptized children of God we are oriented in a new way. In this section of the Small Catechism on Baptism, Luther calls on the Christian to enter into daily repentance, a daily exercise in orienting ourselves once again toward God and the grace, love and mission God has granted us. Each day we can remember that we are baptized, that we have died to sin and rise to newness of life, complete with God's love, God's grace and God's promise.

Both Paul and Luther knew the Christian life is not always easy. The joy of life, however, rested upon the wonderful promises which God has spoken to us and the opportunities we have to share God's love and God's promises. No matter what struggles we face, no matter what difficulties come our way, in our joys and sorrows, God's promises last, and those promises belong to you and to me.

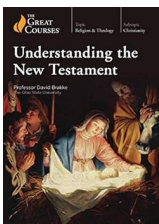
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World Hunger Sunday

Don't forget your world hunger offering on **Sunday, October 18th – UNTIL ALL ARE FED!!**

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Adult Bible Study

Our current Bible study, "Understanding the New Testament" is currently on hold—we will let you know when it will resume.

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Congregation Council Update

The Congregation Council will be having their regular meeting will be on **Monday, October 5th at 7:00 PM.** Anyone is welcome to attend!!

An Important Message About Pastor Jay's Upcoming Surgery

Pastor Jay will be undergoing ankle surgery on October 7 to repair long-standing ligament, tendon and bone/cartilage damage. Recovery will consist of 4 weeks of non-weight bearing on the foot, then 4 more weeks in a boot with gradually increasing physical therapy. During the first four weeks of recovery, Pete Liljeberg and Janet Gomez will alternate delivering the sermon and Pete will lead the liturgy. Also, they will be available in the event pastoral assistance is needed. If recovery proceeds well enough, Pastor Jay will try to be available the last Sunday in October and the first Sunday in November to do the communion part of the liturgy. This will be done from in front of the altar rail as this will be in the non-weight bearing stage of recovery. Pete and the Lay Assisting Minister will distribute communion for these services. The second and third Sundays of October will be Service of the Word without communion. During the non-weight bearing weeks Pastor Jay will be available by phone but will not come to the church for office hours. After that, office hours will depend upon recovery. Except for the week of the surgery, **Pastor Jay will lead a "Prayer Chat" via zoom each Thursday evening at 7 PM.** This will consist of a Scripture reading, a responsive reading and a prayer. Following this brief worship, all who join will be able to take part in group conversation. It is anticipated that the Prayer Chat will last about an hour. During this time Pastor Jay will be available for conversation and invites your sharing of concerns or questions. The Prayer Chats will last until Pastor Jay is able to resume office hours. We will try to be as transparent as possible during this time to let the congregation know about events, worship and Pastor Jay's availability. Unfortunately, we can't know all the details ahead of time and may need to play some things by ear. **Please keep the congregation in your thoughts and prayers as we navigate through a few weeks when things may not match what we normally do.**



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, October 15th, 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, October 17th, at 10:00 AM**—ALL women of Apostles are invited to attend. .

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From Your Treasurer

Doug Dalager

July 2026

August 2026	
<i>Planned Income</i>	\$ 9,194.75
<i>Actual Income</i>	\$ 8,528.24
<i>Delta</i>	\$ (666.51)
Year to Date	
<i>Planned Income</i>	\$ 73,558.00
<i>Actual Income</i>	\$ 69,457.44
<i>Delta</i>	\$ (4,100.56)

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Please Keep In Your Prayers

Rich Bitting, Don Garfield, Ellen Kendzierski, Cyndi Lowe, David Leunig, Ellen Quirk, Michael Schlemmer, Ray Scholz, George Thomas, Lena Woodlief, Judy Wright and our sponsored children in Guatemala—Amayra, Hugolino, Manuela, and Pablo.



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/>.

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Happy Birthday to. .

Heidi Henderson	October 11
Sue Turner	October 18
Lilly Frost	October 23
Michael Schlemmer	October 23
Lynn Jaeger	October 28

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Happy Anniversary To. . .

CK and Donna Ambrose	October 8
David and Mary Leunig	October 8
Ray and Ellen Kendzierski	October 10
Samantha and Michael Crocker	October 15

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Our Deepest Sympathy To. . .

George Thomas upon the death of his beloved wife, Jewel, on September 17th. *Loving God, your heart overflows with compassion for your whole creation. Please surround George and his family as they mourn the death of wife and mother, Jewel. 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.*

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Blessing of the Backpacks





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. In August, Jubilee Churches helped a single mother and her five children with rent. The mother works providing elder care and recently had reduced and inconsistent hours. She is presently providing care for one family and was having a hard time finding additional work that would dovetail with the hours required by that client. She has found supplemental work but had gotten behind in rent while waiting for income to start from new employment. Jubilee's help allowed this family of six, including four school aged children, to get through a difficult financial period without being displaced from the security of housing. Jubilee Churches had 12 requests in August - 5 people were helped. The Jubilee Fund balance is \$9,982. 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 held each day during that week.

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The Christmas Musical is Back!!

"Away from the Manger" is an original play about those who didn't visit the manger due to a variety of excuses. It is a musical with solo and ensemble parts for children and adults. Linda Hodges is coordinating the production for a December performance. Stay tuned for details!!



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, trash bags (kitchen and contractor size) and water. You can drop off supplies at the Day Shelter located at 6536 Moose Drive on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9-5.
- + GUEST is having a special fundraiser - "Change a Life with Your Spare Change Piggy Bank Fundraiser" - Apostles will be participating starting the week of October 31st—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

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–8:00 PM. Dinner is part of the program. This gives parents 2 hours of free time in addition to the opportunity for children to participate in Apostles' children's ministry. We will be using the "Faith 5" curriculum—Share, Read, Talk, Pray and Bless. If you would like to help or need more information, please contact Linda Hodges. Many thanks to Linda for leading our children's ministry—we appreciate you!!



Virginia Synod Churches Donate More Than 16,000 Pounds of Food to Local Pantries

The Summer campaign helped neighbors facing high grocery bills and persistent food insecurity. Churches across the Virginia Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America donated 16,170 pounds of food to local pantries through Pasta with a Purpose, a summer campaign to help neighbors facing hunger. That amount is equivalent to approximately 13,475 meals. The donations come as many families continue to struggle with grocery bills. Hunger remains a persistent problem in Virginia: Feeding America estimates that 12.1% of Virginians—about one in eight—experienced food insecurity in 2023, meaning they did not always have reliable access to enough food. Through Pasta with a Purpose, congregations collected pasta and related foods during June, July, and August, when children have lost access to school meals and pantry donations often slow. Each congregation delivered its collection to a pantry in its own community. “Our congregations helped stock pantry shelves this summer, and that food matters to families right now,” said the Rev. Dr. Phyllis Blair Milton, Bishop of the VA Synod. “Our faith also calls us to listen to our neighbors, better understand why so many struggle to afford food, and work for changes that will allow every family to thrive.” The Virginia Synod offers congregations resources for hunger education, prayer, advocacy, community engagement, and giving. Learn more at vasynod.org/resources/world-hunger.

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Ministry Team Meetings

The following Ministry Team will meet in October:

- + **Worship**—Tuesday, October 27th, 1:00 PM (Zoom)



Effective Practices for Innovative Congregations

The Virginia Synod’s EPIC workshop series is moving online for 2026-2027. The Virginia Synod is offering 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 information about the next EPIC workshops:

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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Thank You, Sue Turner!!

Sue Turner will be happily stepping down from directing the choir this year and taking a well deserved rest!! Sue has directed the choir many times over the years and we are so thankful for her ministry!! Please join us on Sunday, October 11th to honor Sue. Daniel Gomez will be taking over directing the choir. We would love to have you join us!!



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Our Newest Acolyte!!



Well done,
Tegan Goetz!!!
Thank you for
serving!!





World Food Day

World Food Day is Friday, October 16, 2026. World food day is a day set aside by the

United Nations to consider those in our communities, as well as our neighbors around the globe, who are food insecure or experiencing hunger. It is an excellent day to consider donating to Lutheran World Hunger <https://give.lwr.org/page/190057/donate> and to remember our neighbors with prayer. *"God of provision and plenty, you bless us and call us your own. Help us share your abundant love with people who are oppressed, hungry and experiencing homelessness. Open our hearts and hands to the needs of others. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.*

Amen.

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FALL FEAST

6 p.m. Friday, October 30th

Irish Shepherd's Pie

Swedish Meatballs with Red

Italian Baked Ziti with Salad

Greek Gyro with Tzatziki and fixings



The Caring Community Ministry Team is partnering with PEO for this International Fall Feast!! Signup sheets are in the narthex to sign up to help. Please join us!!

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Welcome New Members!!

Please join us on **Sunday, October 4th**, to welcome new members **Doris Bacon-Elsea and Kim and Mary Rudisill.**



God's Work, Our Hands 2026

This year's God's Work, Our Hands is scheduled for **Saturday, October 17th**. This year, we will spend an afternoon with the residents at the Mathews Convalescent Center. Many of the residents do not receive visitors

and they are appreciative of guests. Pastor Jay conducts bi-monthly worship at the Convalescent Center. We will host an event from **1:00 PM–4:00 PM**. It will include a cooking class, an arts and crafts activity, music and time to visit with residents both in the public areas and in their rooms. We would love for you to participate. Participation can be at the Convalescent Center or by helping prepare items for the event. The residents love snacks, fruit and sweet treats. A sign up sheet will be provided for items needed for the cooking class. **Please join us to bring joy to this group!!** Pastor Jay will be holding a service for the residents on Monday, October 5th.

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News From The Pews



Cyndi and Jason Lowe welcomed new granddaughter, **Abigail Wren King**, on August 5th. Abigail is shown with her big sister, **Amelia Grace**, who is overjoyed and a wonderful helper!

Sue Turner recently went to Scotland with son **Eric**—a beautiful and environmentally conscious country!



Emmaleigh Hautz was recently crowned Junior Miss Mathews. Emmaleigh is the daughter of **Mathew and Kayla Hautz** and granddaughter of **Lynn and Donald Jaeger**.

(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.)

October is Time & Talent Month at Apostles!!

During the month of October, the Ministry Teams of Apostles—Administration, Caring Community, Service and Sharing and Worship—will be presenting their Time and Talent forms to the congregation with brief Temple Talks at the 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. As Pastor Jay said in the September newsletter, 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.



Administration
Organizing and overseeing the administrative business of the church which includes building and grounds, communication and finance. Team Leader—Ray Scholz



Caring Community
Christian education, caring for member needs, fellowship activities, sharing our gifts and youth program. Team leaders—Karen Johnston, Irene Albert and Judy Wright



Service & Sharing
Encouraging, strengthening and coordinating outreach ministries and support members in living out their Christian calling of service. Team leader—Pete Liljeberg



Worship
Encouraging, and supporting the growth of members' worship of our triune God and focus on the Word. Team leader—Sue Turner

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News from the Virginia Synod

- **Attention Youth**—Subscribe to the bi-weekly newsletter—"The Friday Mixtape" and registration is open for "Lost & Found" being held on November 20-22nd at Eagle Eyrie for youth in 7th and 8th grade. Information can be found at vasynod.org

- **Commissioned Lay Ministers** from Virginia and North Carolina met for continuing education at Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville recently. If you would like information about this program, please contact Janet Gomez or Pete Liljeberg.

