

# The Epistle

**THE NEWSLETTER OF APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**Gloucester [www.apostles-elca.org](http://www.apostles-elca.org) | [www.facebook.com/ApostlesELCA](https://www.facebook.com/ApostlesELCA) | December 2024**

Our Mission is to be a Caring Inclusive Christian Community responding to God's grace through Worship, Service, and Sharing the Gospel



**All Saints  
Sunday  
November  
3, 2024**

## *Opportunities for Worship in December*



Advent Worship Services with Lighting the Advent Wreath—**December 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd at 10:00 AM**

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## **World Hunger Advent Resources**



Please help yourself to a World Hunger Bible study and/or World Hunger Advent calendar—they are on the table in the narthex. Also remember that the third Sunday of every month is World Hunger Sunday—please remember your offering to help feed those in need.

***Until All Are Fed!!***



Blue Christmas Service—A Service of Comfort, Remembrance and Hope—**Sunday, December 22nd at 7:00 PM**



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Holy Communion—**Tuesday, December 24th at 7:00 PM**



First Sunday of Christmas—**Sunday, December 29th at 10:00 AM—A Service of Lessons and Carols**

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## **Decorating The Sanctuary for Christmas**

Please make plans to stay after worship on **Sunday, December 15th**, to help put up the Christmas tree and decorate the sanctuary for Christmas!!





## A Word From Pastor Jay



A mighty fortress is our God  
Now comes an infant child,  
A sword and shield victorious  
So tender, meek and mild.

He breaks the cruel oppressor's rod  
Found lying in a manger  
And wins salvation glorious  
While constantly in danger.

The old satanic foe  
The power of death and sin  
Has sworn to work us woe  
How can this baby win?

With craft and dreadful might,  
The child so small and weak,  
He arms himself to fight,  
The savior whom we seek.

On earth he has no equal.  
On earth he has no equal.

No strength of our can match his might  
How can our hope begin  
We would be lost, rejected,  
With no room in the inn

But now a champion comes to fight  
As only shepherds came  
Whom God himself elected  
To witness angel's claim

You ask who this may be  
In Bethlehem's stall you'll see  
The Lord of hosts is he  
God's gift for you and me.

Christ Jesus, mighty Lord  
This child so roughly kept  
God's only son adored  
In a feeding trough he slept.

He holds the field victorious  
He holds the field victorious.

Though hordes of devils fill the land  
God's love is all we need  
All threatening to devour us  
This child will sow love's seed.

We tremble not, unmoved we stand  
Now gather 'round the child  
They cannot overpower us  
So tender, meek and mild.

Let this world's tyrant rage  
And watch the baby sleep  
In battle we'll engage  
In Mary's arms to keep

His might is doomed to fail  
We see with our own eyes  
God's judgment must prevail  
How God beats evil's lies.

One little word subdues him.  
One little word subdues him.

God's word forever shall abide  
This child will grow to save  
No thanks to foes who fear it  
Life's victory o'er the grave

For God himself fights by our side  
In weakness God shows power  
With weapons of the spirit  
That faith in us might flower

Were they to take our house  
A barn is just the place  
Goods, honor, child or spouse  
For Christ to start this race

Though life be wrenched away  
Which ends on Calvary  
They cannot win the day  
That Easter's tomb sets free

The kingdom's ours forever!  
The kingdom's ours forever!



## ***Blue Christmas Service***

Apostles will again hold a “Blue Christmas Service” on **Sunday, December 22nd, at 7:00 PM**. This is a service of remembrance, comfort and hope. We will be making luminaries to line the entrance into the church for the service—please take a minute to write names of loved ones on a white bag—the display is on the table in the narthex.

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### ***Happy Birthday to . .***

|                        |               |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Daniel Gomez           | December 2nd  |
| Taylor Badger          | December 5th  |
| Ellie Crocker          | December 13th |
| Irene Albert           | December 16th |
| Cynthia Lowe           | December 23rd |
| Christina Allen Badger | December 30th |

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### ***Happy Anniversary To . .***

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|---------------------|--------------|
| Ray and Lynn Scholz | December 2nd |
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### ***Happy Baptismal Anniversary To.***

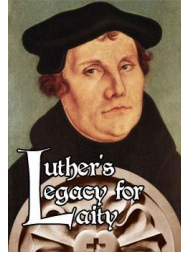
|                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| CK and Chase Ambrose    | December 1st  |
| Linda Hodges            | December 15th |
| Irene Albert            | December 17th |
| Savannah and Kiera Anby | December 21st |
| Robert McMahan          | December 23rd |
| Sue Turner              | December 25th |

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### ***Poinsettias for Christmas***



Please take a minute to signup to purchase a poinsettia to adorn our sanctuary during the season of Christmas—the cost is \$14 and the deadline to order is December 15th. If you have any questions, please contact Janet Gomez.



## ***Luther's Legacy for Laity***

Luther's Legacy for Laity will be taking a break in December and will resume in January. Future topics will include How Active is God in the World, Wisdom to Serve the Neighbor, Luther's Incarnational Understanding, Christianity and Other Religions, Christians and Jews with Darrell Jodock and Luther on Sin and Ethics Part 1 and 2 with Kathleen Kleinhans. Come learn with us!!

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### ***Congregation Council Meeting in December***

The Congregation Council will be meeting on **Monday, December 9th at 7:00 PM**—anyone is welcome to attend.

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### ***Ministry Team Meetings***

The following Ministry Team will meet in November:

+ **Worship**—Wednesday, **December 18th**, at 5:00 PM

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### ***Save The Dates!!***

+ The Jubilee Churches are planning a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service on **Thursday, January 24th, at 7:00 PM** at the Church of St. Therese Roman Catholic. Please save the date and make plans to attend!



+ **Mid-Winter Power In The Spirit**—February 3-5 on Zoom—the theme for this year is: “Gifts of Faith, Hope, and Love” based on 1 Corinthians 13:13.

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### ***New Women's Group Forming***

Betsy Liljeberg and Janet Gomez cordially invite all women (and friends) to attend a brief brainstorming meeting on **Sunday, January 12th**, after the worship service to discuss the possible formation a new women's group. We would LOVE to have you join us!!



## Jubilee Churches News

The Jubilee Churches of Gloucester, a coalition of 17 congregations in Gloucester (including Apostles), will be meeting on **Wednesday,**

**December 11th at 9:30 AM** at Bellamy United Methodist Church on Chestnut Fork Road. The Rev. Dr. Ed Walker, pastor of Bellamy United Methodist Church, is the new covener of the Jubilee Churches of Gloucester. The Jubilee Churches recently assisted a client with restoring Dominion Power back to her home. She has struggled with mental health and addiction which ended her up in jail recently. Once released, she has been working hard to be able to live back in her home that she owns with her husband. Due to the time she spent away, the condition of the trailer became inhabitable and she owed a significant amount on Dominion Power. With collaboration from Salvation Army, Jubilee Churches was able to pay the remaining balance so she could have power back on in her home. She was also referred to Gloucester Exchange Club to see if they would help with the handy work on getting furniture hauled away. This is a great example on how collaboration from other community resources and Jubilee Churches are working together to help our community! This client is also very willing to volunteer to help give back and wanted to send her gratitude. In November, \$3,813 has been given by the Jubilee Churches to help individuals with rent, Dominion power bills, and heaters to keep folks in tents warm. **Please check out the display in the fellowship hall for more information about what the Jubilee Churches are doing and ways you can help!!**

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## World Hunger Sunday

Don't forget your world hunger offering on **Sunday, December 15th** – **\$2,043** has been given this year by Apostles—what a wonderful way to celebrate the 50th anniversary of ELCA world hunger!



## Christmas Gift Tree for the GUEST Shelter

Please check out the Christmas tree in the narthex and select an ornament to purchase the item listed—we are purchasing ponchos, winter scarves, Hot Hands (hand and toe warmers) and hand lotion and lip balm for the clients of the GUEST shelter. Please place the purchased item in a gift bag and attach the ornament with the item listed to the bag—thank you!!

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## Please Keep In Your Prayers

Rich Bitting, Manning Freeman, Don Garfield, Ellen Kendzierski, Ellen Quirk, Michael Schlemmer, Keith and Juanita Sturdy, George and Jewel Thomas, and Lena Woodlief.

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## “Live From The Streets of Bethlehem”



Please join us on **Sunday, December 22nd** during the 10:00 AM worship service for the Christmas program, “Live From the Streets of

Bethlehem,” A Children’s Musical for Christmas, under the direction of Linda Hodges. Play practice will be held on Saturday, December 7th and 21st at 10:00 AM and after worship on Sunday, December 15th.

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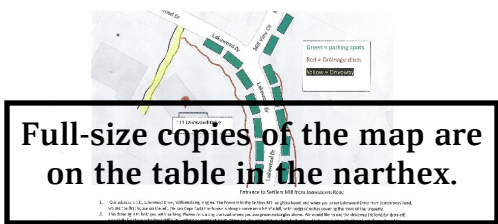
## 2025 Ministry Spending Plan Approved

A 2025 ministry spending plan of \$115,000 was approved by the congregation on November 17th. We had a wonderful Agape worship service and meal before the meeting. A BIG thank you to Doug Dalager, our Treasurer, for putting everything together, to David Leunig and Chris Hawkins for running the meeting and to everyone who made the wonderful food and to those who set up and cleaned up.

## Open House Invitation

To : Our friends at Apostles Lutheran  
From: Pastor Jay and Jamie Serafin

Hi everyone. Jamie and I would like to extend an invitation to you to come to Williamsburg for an open house at our home. Where: 111 Lakewood Drive, Williamsburg, VA 23185 When: Saturday, December 14 from 3 PM-6 PM. With this invitation we have included a parking map and instructions for the event. You may park on the side of the road, but please note that there are drainage ditches on both sides of the road, about 6-7 feet off the edge of the road. We will try to help with some lighting for the event, but please be careful. You may drop folks off in our driveway and then proceed to park along Lakewood Drive. We have two front entrances to the house, facing toward the bushes and road. You are welcome to use either entrance. Both entrances include about 3 steps. We will have plenty of food and different kinds of drinks, so please do not bring any food or desserts for the event. You are welcome to stay at the event as long as you'd like between 3-6, whether for five minutes or all three hours. We simply would be happy to see you there. We only ask that you let us know you are coming either by signing up on the sheet in the narthex at the church or by emailing me with your information. We would like you to share name and number of people coming with you. This is to get an approximate count so we have enough to eat and drink. If you sign up and can't come, that is fine. If you don't sign up, but find your evening free, you are happily welcome to join the party. If you have any questions, please let me know. My contact information is as follows: Phone: 570-205-7506 Email: j80j84@msn.com Jamie and I hope you can join us.  
Pastor Jay



## Reconciling in Christ Welcome Statement Changes Approved

Apostles Congregation Council approved a couple of changes to Apostles Reconciling in Christ Welcome Statement—the Welcome Statement now reads (additions are in **bold**): 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.

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**PPCC**  
Peninsula Pastoral  
Counseling Center

**Apostles  
Becomes A  
Partner Church**

## with Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center (PPCC)

Apostles is now a Partner Church with the Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center located in Newport News. This partnership will allow Apostles access to workshops, pastoral leadership groups and counseling. If you would like to learn more about the PPCC, please contact either Pastor Jay or Ingrid Peterson.

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## Pastor's Discretionary Fund Needs Help!!

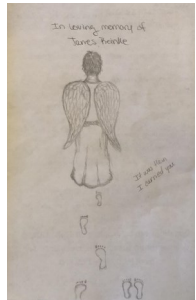
The discretionary fund that Pastor Jay uses at his discretion to provide financial assistance to people in need is very low. If you would like to make a donation to this fund, please mark your check for "Pastor's Discretionary Fund." Thanks!

## News From The Pews



Gene Gomez presented a workshop at a recent Virginia Synod “Effective Practices for Innovative Congregations” on Ecclesiastical Art, specifically stained glass.

Janet Gomez, Linda Hodges, Betsy Liljberg, Barbara Runk, Jamie Serafin and Sue Turner attended the All Lutheran Women’s Retreat in Richmond in November—it was a wonderful event!!



Samantha Crocker drew this beautiful picture during a recent worship service in memory of her grandfather, Jim Reinke, who died on February 7, 2022—thanks to Jamie Serafin for sending in the picture!!

Irene Albert and Babs Zuhowski spent an entire day delivering free turkeys to clients of the Rural Housing Partnership, the organization where they work—what a blessing!!



Doug Dalager helped serve the annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner at Abingdon Episcopal on Thanksgiving. Doug said over 240 people attended—thank you, Doug!!

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## Virginia Synod Youth Event

Winter Celebration—January 24th-26th at Eagle Eyrie—this is the youth event for youth in 9th-12th grade. Registration information is at [vasynod.org](http://vasynod.org).



## A Note From Your Choir

During Advent this year, all of the hymns the choir will be singing are from the new hymnal supplement “All Creation

Sings.” One of the hymns the choir will be singing is “Filled With Hope and Gratitude.” Sue Turner met the composer, Paul Damico-Carper, a professional church musician and composer, on line during Covid. He and his wife, a pastor, held daily devotionals which included scripture and lots of singing. They were very helpful in getting many of us through those isolated times and they were able to test out some of his new music. The choir will be singing this hymn on Sunday, December 15th.

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## Christmas Gifts That Make A Difference

Here is a list of Christmas gifts that can make a difference:


+ \$10 can buy (1) a supply of magic markers or crayons for enCircle (formerly Lutheran Family Services) Minnick School students, (2) 52 pounds of food for the Bread for Life Food Pantry or (3) purchase a hygiene kit for a GUEST homeless shelter client

+ \$25 can provide (1) supplies for a Paint Night Party for 4-6 resident of one of enCircle’s group homes, (2) 130 pounds of food for the Bread for Life Food Pantry or (3) new work shoes and/or pants for a GUEST client for new employment

+ \$50 can purchase (1) a Family Pizza party for a new foster family to start building happy memories and positive emotional ties, (2) 260 pounds of food for the Bread for Life Food Pantry or (3) a rental application fee to help someone move into housing from GUEST.

Donations can made on these websites:

 enCircle [www.encircleall.org](http://www.encircleall.org)

 BREAD FOR LIFE [www.breadforlifepantry.com](http://www.breadforlifepantry.com)

 [www.guestshelter.org](http://www.guestshelter.org)

## More God's Work, Our Hands Outdoor 2024!!

The outdoor part of God's Work, Our Hands 2024 continued on Saturday, November 16th—there were a couple of projects that didn't get finished on the original day. A big thank you to everyone who helped!!



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June 13-15, 2025

## VIRGINIA SYNOD ASSEMBLY



Roanoke College

## Virginia Synod Assembly 2025

The Virginia Synod Assembly will be held at Roanoke College on June 13-15, 2025. More information will be coming soon!



## Woven Together: A Post-Election Message from Bishop Eaton

The day after the 2024 presidential election, Bishop Eaton reflected on the many expressions of our church being woven together as strands of a large tapestry, even as individual people are experiencing joy or grief. She reminds us that regardless of who is elected president or to other leadership positions in our country, our call to be Christ in the world doesn't change. "As we're moving through these next years, no matter what happens and what befalls ... imagine all of us woven together and in Christ, and we will continue to serve the gospel and to serve the world." Bishop Eaton's reflections can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4HrySysWAo>.

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## A Big THANK YOU To . . .

- + Everyone who donated items for the GUEST shelter during the month of November!! It is much appreciated!
- + Ben Grimes, Doug Leip, Pete Lilejberg, Jason Lowe and Ray Scholz for doing the fall cleanup around the church!! It looks GREAT!
- + Everyone who helped with the picture directory—stay tuned for details on getting your copy!!

