

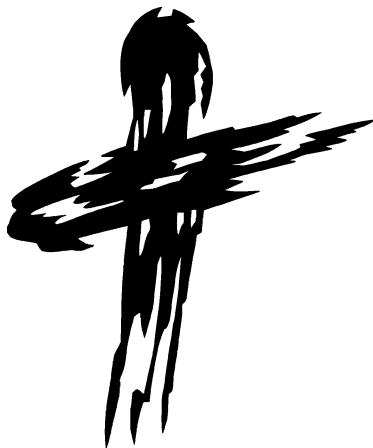


# APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH

**THE REVEREND JAY SERAFIN**

7092 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061

(804) 693-9098 | [apostles-elca.org](http://apostles-elca.org) | [facebook.com/ApostlesELCA](https://facebook.com/ApostlesELCA)



## ASH WEDNESDAY

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025 | 7:00 PM**

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



RECONCILING *in* CHRIST



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

# WELCOME TO APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH!

It is an honor to worship God with you this morning. We pray you experience the Spirit's loving presence as we share our words, our actions, and the Holy Meal.

**If this is your first time worshipping with us, please fill out a card in the pew rack with your contact info.** A restroom can be found by exiting the rear door of the worship space. It is directly in front of you to the right. Additional restrooms can be found in the back corner of the fellowship area, near the Pastor's office.

## RECONCILING *in* CHRIST

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.

## FOR PASTORAL CARE

The Reverend Jay Serafin is our pastor. Pastor Jay's **schedule is noted in the calendar on the back of this bulletin.** Call Pastor Jay at 570-205-7506 or email him at [j80j84@msn.com](mailto:j80j84@msn.com) (preferred) or [pastor.apostles@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.apostles@gmail.com). Messages can also be left on the Apostles answering machine 804-693-9098.

## PRAYGROUND

Welcome to our youngest members! The area in the front of our sanctuary is for families and young children. There are quiet toys, books and drawing materials. **We ask two things: 1) sit in the front pews near your children and 2) please sit with your children in the pews during the sermon.** They may return immediately after. Thank you and welcome!

## NAME TAGS

**Please wear your nametag!** Guests: please fill out and put on a name tag before worship today. Blank nametags are in the baskets located in the pews.

## **GATHERING**

*On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.*

*Please rise in body or in spirit.*

### **GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **WORD**

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

*Sit*

### **FIRST READING**

**JOEL 2:1-2, 12-17**

*Because of the coming Day of the Lord, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God’s power to save.*

<sup>1</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
    sound the alarm on my holy mountain!  
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,  
    for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—  
<sup>2</sup>a day of darkness and gloom,  
    a day of clouds and thick darkness!  
Like blackness spread upon the mountains  
    a great and powerful army comes;  
their like has never been from of old,  
    nor will be again after them  
    in ages to come.

<sup>12</sup>Yet even now, says the Lord,  
    return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;  
    <sup>13</sup>rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the Lord, your God,  
    for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,  
    and relents from punishing.

<sup>14</sup>Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,  
    and leave a blessing behind him,  
a grain offering and a drink offering  
    for the Lord, your God?

<sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
    sanctify a fast;  
call a solemn assembly;  
    <sup>16</sup>gather the people.

Sanctify the congregation;  
    assemble the aged;  
gather the children,  
    even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,  
    and the bride her canopy.

<sup>17</sup>Between the vestibule and the altar  
let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep.  
Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord,  
and do not make your heritage a mockery,  
a byword among the nations.  
Why should it be said among the peoples,  
'Where is their God?'"

*Response after the First Reading*

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM**

## **PSALM 51:1-17**

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;  
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.  
<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,  
and cleanse me | from my sin.**  
<sup>3</sup>For I know | my offenses,  
and my sin is ev- | er before me.  
<sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil | in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak and right | in your judgment.**  
<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my | mother's womb.  
<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**  
<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.  
<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear | joy and gladness;  
that the body you have broken | may rejoice.**  
<sup>9</sup>Hide your face | from my sins,  
and blot out | all my wickedness.  
<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean | heart, O God,  
and renew a right spir- | it within me.**  
<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away | from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.

**<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of | your salvation  
and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.**

<sup>13</sup>Let me teach your ways | to offenders,  
and sinners shall be re- | stored to you.

**<sup>14</sup>Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of | my salvation,  
and my tongue shall sing | of your righteousness.**

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, o- | pen my lips,  
and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.

**<sup>16</sup>For you take no delight in sacrifice, or | I would give it.  
You are not pleased | with burnt offering.**

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit;  
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will | not despise.

## **SECOND READING**

## **2 CORINTHIANS 5:20B–6:10**

*The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.*

<sup>20b</sup>We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>6:1</sup>As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.

<sup>2</sup>For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,  
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! <sup>3</sup>We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup>but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup>beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup>by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup>truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup>in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

*Response after the Second Reading*

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Please rise in body or in spirit.*

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Return to the Lord, your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

*The gospel is announced.*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

## **GOSPEL**

## **MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21**

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.*

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

<sup>2</sup>“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>16</sup>“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and

where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

*The gospel concludes:*

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Sit*

**SERMON**

**THE REV. JAY SERAFIN**

## **INVITATION TO LENT**

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

## **CONFESSION OF SIN**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. Most holy and merciful God,

**we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**



We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

**Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

## **IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*People may come forward and kneel or stand to receive the ashes. The minister marks the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying **Remember that you are dust, and to dust your shall return.***

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,  
**that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,  
**bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

**Amen.**

*Please rise in body or in spirit.*

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

*Each portion of the prayers ends with these words:*

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

# MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

*Sit*

## OFFERING

## CHOIR ANTHEM

**“Create in Me”**

*An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need. To give online:*

 Visit [apostles-elca.org/contributions](https://apostles-elca.org/contributions)

 From your mobile phone, text the word **GIVE** to **844-215-5453**

*Please rise in body or in spirit.*

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*The thanksgiving continues with the preface for the day or season.*

... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of power and might,**

**heav'n and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest,  
hosanna in the highest.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread.

*Sit*

## **COMMUNION**

*All are invited to join us at the Lord's table to receive the presence of Jesus through the bread and wine. Jesus himself invites you and Jesus turns no one away.*

*You will be invited to come forward either to receive the elements or to receive a blessing. For those receiving the elements, after receiving the bread, please take a glass from the tray held by*

*the acolyte. There are pre-filled glasses of grape juice in the tray for those who do not drink wine. Gluten free wafers are also available upon request.*

## **LAMB OF GOD**

**Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;  
you suffered death our lives to save: have mercy now, we pray.**  
**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;  
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mercy now, we pray.**  
**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;  
eternal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.**

*Please rise in body or in spirit.*

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray. Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **SENDING**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission back into the world.*

## **BLESSING**

God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit,  
✠ bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share your bread.

**Thanks be to God.**

\*\*\*\*\*

## WORSHIP LEADERS

	Serving Today
Worship Leader .....	Pastor Jay Serafin
Lector .....	Sue Turner
Acolyte .....	Ray Scholz
Accompanist .....	Janet Gomez
Altar Care .....	Janet Gomez
Choir Director .....	Sue Turner
Communion Bread .....	Janet Gomez
Greeter/Usher .....	Heinz Albert
Tellers .....	Ben Grimes/Ray Scholz
Technology .....	Doug Dalager

## HYPOCRITES IN GOOD COMPANY

Critics of Christianity often point out that Christians are hypocrites. Christians publicly espouse a certain set of rules for living—including care for creation, serving God and neighbors in need, and loving our enemies—and, just as publicly, fail to live up to those rules every day and in every way.

Pastor Tony Campolo often tells the story of people who say they don't want to go to church because of all the hypocrites. He reassures them that they should feel right at home. Church is for real people, and real people fail to do and say the right things—real people are hypocrites. Campolo argues that the Christian ideal is to know you're a hypocrite and earnestly work at being less hypocritical.

All the same, we don't want to be hypocrites or show-offs. We question the motives behind our public and private spiritual practices; we question our neighbors' motives too. In today's gospel we hear about fasting cheerfully and praying in secret. And yet, as we leave the church building we bear a public and very noticeable sign of faith right on our foreheads. Lent begins with a bold, visible, unmistakable reminder of who we are: simultaneously mortal dust and baptized children of God. Simultaneously saint and sinner. Simultaneously hypocrites and earnest, hopeful Christians.

## **PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS**

**Heinz Albert, Rich Bitting, Manning Freeman, Don Garfield, Betty Hauch, Ellen Kendzierski, Ellen Quirk, Michael Schlemmer, Keith & Juanita Sturdy, George Thomas, Jewel Thomas, Lena Woodlief**

## **OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

**Patricia Armentor, Paul Bauer, Karen Bell** (Pam Moore's sister), **Bob & Dixie, Calli Bonfey, Patricia Boyd & Brad Zelmer, Amanda Brown, David Brown, Dennis & Dorothy Brown, Sally Burkholder, Amy Carter, the Clements family, Laura Clodfelter, Jackie Collier, Ben Davis** (friend of Donna Ambrose), **Tommy & Kathie Davis, Jenny DeSha, Linda Edwards, Colton Elliot** (Michael Schlemmer's cousin), **Emily, Laura Fleige** (Janet Gomez's sister), **Teresa Floersheim-Miller** (Ingrid Peterson's mother), **Suzanne Gibson, Steven Godwin** (Juanita Sturdy's grandson), **Jimmy & Fay Gray** (Chris Hawkins' family), **Karen Guire, Mike Hall, Melvin Hawkins** (Chris Hawkins' father), **Chaneice Hayden** (Daniel Hayden), **Rosie Heins, Sherry Helpap, Carl & Kaleb Hess, Adam Hewko** (nephew of the Hansons), **Aris Hibbs** (friend of Ray Scholz), **Spencer Hodges, Ray Hughes, Wendy Isernia** (Heinz and Irene's daughter), **Suzanne Kinkade** (friend of Ellen Quirk), **the Little Family, Marion Lucier, Manuel, Lotte Mathias, Wayne Mathews, Wayne McCormick, Michael, Sylvia Midgette** (grandmother of Krystle McMahan), **Debbie Minteins, Keith Morgan, Gary Mowery, Carol Pascale** (Lynn Jaeger's mother), **Chastity Perkins** (co-worker and friend of Donna Ambrose), **Brad Person** (Lilly Frost's uncle), **Dick Peterson & his brother, Monique Raposa, Joan Ritter, Glen Robertson, Carol Schlemmer, James Schollian** (friend of Nancy Wagner), **Michael Scholz** (nephew of Ray Scholz), **Scott, Erin Seamonson** (Lara Jaeger), **Joseph Serafin** (Pastor Jay's father), **Kathy Shackleford, Elana Sierson, Fred Smith, Tammy Smith, Jean Sterling, Susie, Dave Wagner** (husband of Nancy), **Cathy Walker** (friend of Linda Hodges), **Wayne McCormick, Chuck Webb** (Tina Britt's father), **Makenzie Webb** (niece of Tina Britt), **Elizabeth & Steven White, Cory Woodlief, Jim Wright** (Judy Wright's husband), **Logan & Shannon Wymer, Greg Yvonovich** (friend of Margaret & Ben Grimes), **Derek Zwiers** (friend of CK Ambrose)

## **OUR SPONSORED CHILDREN IN GUATEMALA**

**Amayra, Hugolino and Manuela**

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

There is a book located at the rear of the worship space for you to write any prayer requests you have for today. Fill out a "Prayer Request" (on the back of each pew) and place it in the offering plate to add a prayer request to the "Prayer List" included in the bulletin and the newsletter. **Please print legibly!**

# THE REMAINDER OF THIS WEEK AT APOSTLES

## MARCH 5, 2025 – MARCH 10, 2025

**FRIDAY**

Girl Scouts

**SATURDAY**

6:30 PM

AA Young Adult

**SUNDAY**

10:00 AM

Worship

11:00 AM

Coffee Fellowship



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