



Church of the Apostles  
United Church of Christ

January 2025

# THE CROWN NEWS

Vol. 49 No. 1



*"For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven." – Ecclesiastes 3:1*

## PASTOR'S CORNER

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### Let's Be Friends



@ApostlesUCC

As we approach 2025, Church of the Apostles begins a year of celebration and anticipation, reflecting on our past and looking forward to what lies ahead. This year marks the 50th anniversary of our congregation, and we will commemorate this milestone throughout May, with special focus on our official anniversary date, Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, with a special service and a dinner on Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

With the congregation's approval of new bylaws this past fall, we are transitioning to a new governance structure. Ministry teams are actively working within our community and congregation to share our message of love and welcome. Meanwhile, our Board—formerly known as the Council—will focus on discerning God's direction for our future and lining out our priorities.

In addition, we must address practical needs, such as potential repairs to the choir stage, sound system, and sanctuary flooring. At the same time, we will explore funding options for these projects while continuing to support our regular ministries. We are also evaluating how to use our property in ways that demonstrate both environmental and financial stewardship.

As we move into the new year, our core values—inclusive refuge, compassionate justice, and environmental advocacy—remain central to guiding our efforts. Happy New Year!

Blessings & Peace,

*Pastor Kathryn Kuhn*

# UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

11  
JAN

## Community Game Night

📍 Narthex, 1850 Marietta Ave.

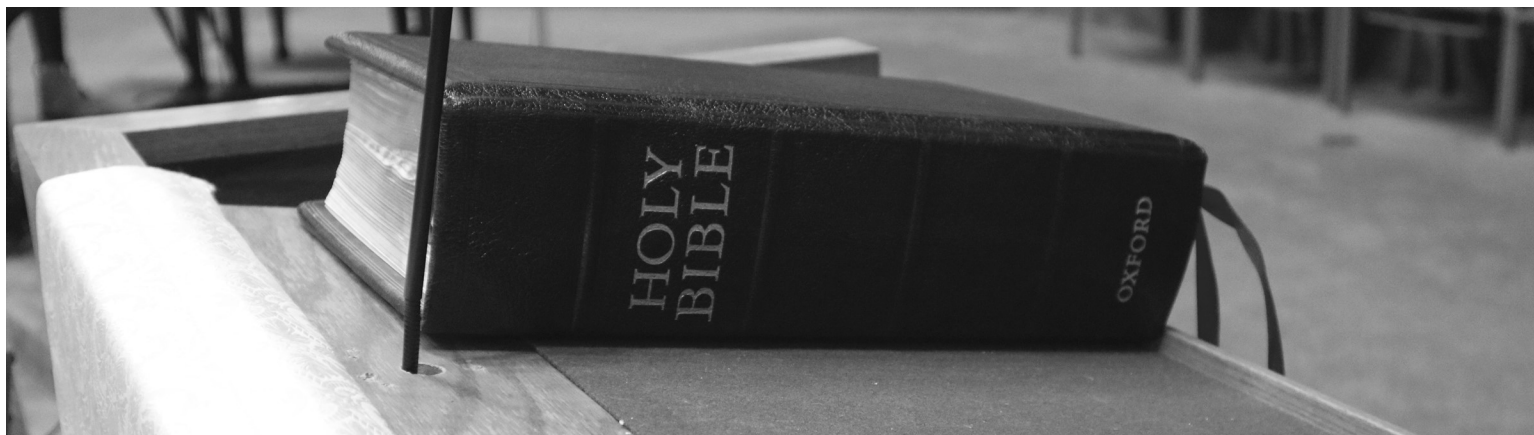
Bring your favorite board or card game and a friend.

8  
FEB

## Winter Reflection Retreat

📍 Youth Center, 1899 Apostles Way

How do you see God working in our World? RSVP on Realm



*"See, I am doing new things! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." - Isaiah 43:19*

## COUNCIL NEWS

Happy New Year! As we enter a new season at Church of the Apostles, we're excited about opportunities for growth, transformation, and deepening our commitment to our Vision and Mission. Beginning this month, Council will be known as the Board. The Board will work closely with staff to ensure a collaborative approach in guiding the church forward through key policy decisions. We are also streamlining the roles of our property and stewardship committees to improve decision-making and responsiveness to our needs.

A major focus this year will be our budget, with an emphasis on responsible stewardship and the effective use of our resources. We aim to support ministry programs, outreach efforts, and continue being an inclusive refuge for all. As part of this, we encourage everyone to consider the convenience of electronic giving. This method ensures steady and secure financial support, while also allowing for greater flexibility in giving, helping the church plan and budget more effectively.

My personal wish for this year is to engage more members in the life of the church through increased community involvement. Our new governance structure allows us to create ministry teams around shared passions, helping build meaningful relationships and share the love of Christ in tangible ways.

As we embrace these changes, we trust that God is leading us into a season of abundant growth and blessing. Thank you for your continued support and prayers. Together, we can make a lasting impact in our church and community.

Blessings,

*Johanna Baker (Board President)*

## JOIN OUR BOOK CLUB!

Book Club meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 2 PM in the Narthex, and we'd love for you to join us! Whether you've read the book or not, you're welcome to come for engaging discussions and fellowship.



You can participate for one month, every month, or even suggest a book for an upcoming discussion! See the list of our upcoming books and meeting dates below.

For questions, contact Clara Kosmela at (717) 569-9960. Happy reading!

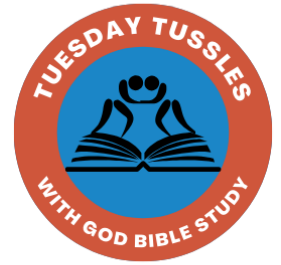
★ January 14th, 2025: The Great Divide by Christina Henriquez

★ February 11th, 2025: In the Garden of the Beasts by Erik Larson

## Tuesday Tussles w/ God

### Exploring Ecclesiastes

Tuesday Tussles With God (TTWG) kicks off the new year with January 2025 sessions beginning January 7th. This four-week study will dive into **Ecclesiastes**, one of the Bible's most candid and philosophical books. Known for its curmudgeonly yet reflective tone, Ecclesiastes offers wisdom on life's biggest questions, blending mindfulness, consolation, and a call to enjoy God's gifts.



Co-led by Church of the Apostles members, Les Helmeczi, a retired pastor, and Mark Achtermann, a Lancaster Seminary Master of Divinity student, sessions are held Tuesdays at 10:30 AM in the Burkholder Chapel.

To receive preparation materials in advance, contact the church office at (717) 392-5718 or [office@apostlesucc.org](mailto:office@apostlesucc.org). Walk-ins are also welcome! Affiliation with Church of the Apostles is not required—come join the conversation!

## January Mocktails & Meaning

### Lanc. Public Library: Don't Close the Book on Us

Start the new year with inspiration and connection at Mocktails & Meaning on **Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 6:30 PM!** This month, we welcome **Lissa Holland**, Executive Director of the Lancaster Public Library, and **Jon Heinly**, Community Engagement Manager, for an engaging discussion titled *Lancaster Public Library: Don't Close the Book on Us*.

Libraries are far more than buildings filled with books—they are gateways to information, centers of community, and beacons of hope. Join us to learn how Lancaster Public Library is evolving to meet the needs of today's society and why their work remains vital.

Enjoy a refreshing **Orange Cranberry Spritzer**, our featured mocktail for the evening, while connecting with others in a



welcoming, thought-provoking setting.

Save your spot now by scanning the QR code below!

Looking ahead: In February, Mocktails & Meaning will feature Author **Jamie Beth Cohen** and Educator **Sam Schindler** for an enlightening session on *What Christians Should Know About Judaism*. Stay tuned for details in the next Crown!



**Register Now!**

# OUTREACH



Gifts overflowing from our Caring Cart.

As 2024 came to a close, the Holiday Gifting Ministry at Church of the Apostles demonstrated our commitment to compassionate care in the community by providing Christmas gifts to **40 students at Martin Elementary School**. This ministry, made possible by the incredible generosity of our congregation, brightened the season for low-income families in need. This heartfelt effort was a meaningful way to "wrap up" 2024, and we're excited to see how our generosity will grow in 2025. Thank you to everyone who made this ministry possible and for sharing the true spirit of the season!



While we celebrate the New Year and reflect on our blessings, we are reminded of those in urgent need. Lancaster County has declared a state of emergency for sheltering the homeless, with a **13.5%** increase in homelessness since 2023.

Our January **Mission to the Homeless** offering is a chance to give back to those with the greatest need in our community. Last year, our congregation doubled its giving from \$500 to \$1,000. Let's aim to make an even greater impact in 2025! Donations can be made using your giving envelopes, **Realm**, or **Vanco**.

## OUR IMPACT

**\$1,220**

For the UCC Christmas Fund

**\$485**

For Bethany & Hoffman Homes

Donations as of Publishing



Gifts were dropped off with the amazing staff at Martin Elementary.



## APOSTLES COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL UPDATES



The children at Apostles Community Preschool had a fun, festive, faith-filled month of December! They learned about the true meaning of Christmas and celebrated the birth of Jesus through hands-on activities and sharing their blessings by giving to others.

At any given moment this month, you could hear the sweet sound of children's voices singing "Silent Night," "Go Tell it on the Mountain," and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas!" The children also performed "Joy to the World" for our annual Christmas Performance. They did a fabulous job and certainly sang their little hearts out. This year residents from Homestead Village came to watch our Christmas Show!

We wish everyone a very blessed and happy New Year!

**2025-2026 Registration:** Church members and former ACP families can register now by contacting Jeannie Clausen, [jclausen.acp@gmail.com](mailto:jclausen.acp@gmail.com). Registration will open to the general public on January 6th, 2025.



@Apostles\_Community\_Preschool





# A MUSICAL NOTE

With Music Director, Lars Potteiger

As with gladness men of old  
Did the guiding star behold;  
As with joy they hailed its light,  
Leading onward, beaming bright,  
So, most gracious Lord, may we  
Ever more be led to thee.

"As With Gladness Men of Old" is a delightful hymn traditionally sung during Christmas and Epiphany. Written in 1858 by English hymnist William Chatterton Dix, the hymn emerged from a period of personal illness and deep spiritual reflection. Inspired by the biblical account of the Magi in Matthew 2:1–12, it draws a poignant parallel between the Magi's journey to worship the Christ child and the spiritual journey of believers seeking to honor Christ. The hymn is set to the tune Dix, originally composed by Conrad Kocher in 1838 and later adapted by William Henry Monk. The same melody is also used for the hymn "For the Beauty of the Earth."

## UPCOMING APOSTLES ACADEMY CONCERT

Don't miss Rizzetta's Tones live in concert on January 19th, 2025, at 3 PM. This **Celtic Americana band** features a diverse range of instruments and vocals, offering a **unique blend of traditional and original music** from Ireland, Scotland, and the USA. Enjoy an exciting journey of instrumental and vocal experiences. This free concert is generously provided by the Apostles Academy of Arts & Science, with a free-will offering in lieu of tickets.



# A Fond Farewell to the Generina Family

It is with heartfelt sadness that the Refugee Welcome Team announces the upcoming move of the Generina family from Lancaster to Macon, Georgia.



**The Generina Family  
arrives in Lancaster  
(2022)**

The Refugee Welcome Team was established in early 2022 in response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where decades of armed conflict, human rights violations, and gender-based violence have displaced over 7 million people. With the assistance of Church World Services, the Bilombele family arrived in Lancaster in May 2022, followed by the Generina family—Mlasi and her four children—in June of that year.

For two years, the generosity of our congregation has provided essential support to both families, including Christmas gifts, winter coats, and rental assistance. Two extraordinary volunteers who have made a lasting impact are Linda & Tom Lewis, longtime members of COA and dedicated members of the Refugee Welcome Team. Their kindness and dedication created a sense of belonging for the families in Lancaster.

Sadly, due to job loss and challenges finding new employment in the area, Mlasi has made the difficult decision to move her family to Georgia, where her brother resides. While we are deeply saddened to see the Generina family

leave, we send them with our prayers, well wishes, and hopes for a bright future as they continue their journey in America.

If you would like to say goodbye, we invite you to write a card for the family. Cards can be dropped off at the church office and will be delivered to the Generina family through Linda Lewis.

Even as we bid farewell to the Generina family, our commitment to the Bilombele family—Bilomanga and her sons Vincent and Shukuru—remains strong. We continue to seek volunteers and financial support for the Refugee Welcome Team as we provide compassionate care to our refugee families.

To contribute to the Refugee Fund, please mark your envelope or check with "Refugee Fund" or donate through **Vanco**. Thank you for your unwavering generosity and support for this vital ministry.



**The Generina Children, Jango,  
Salome, Auser and Toshe.  
(Summer 2024)**

# YOUTH

## ROOTED IN FAITH

### *Youth Kick Off 2025 with Exciting Plans!*

After their successful Advent movie series, ROOTED, COA's Christian Formation class for grades 4-8, is diving into 2025 with engaging new experiences. January begins with a study of the "hidden things" of the Apocrypha, exploring the origins of Hanukkah and its traditions, including sampling delicious foods. This ties into their ongoing study of Acts, where they learn how following Jesus's teachings brings freedom to hearts and minds.



ROOTED Students using Canva

Some students will deepen their faith at the **Penn Central Conference's Winter Youth Retreat**, held January 17th-19th at Hartman Center. Registration is still open, and thanks to scholarships from PCC and COA, the retreat is **FREE** for COA youth! Contact [office@apostlesucc.org](mailto:office@apostlesucc.org) for scholarship details or scan the QR code to register.



ROOTED will wrap up January with a **Kitchen Takeover** on Sunday, January 26th, where youth will showcase their talents and teamwork.

## PRIMARY FAITH FORMATION

### *Focusing on Jesus' Early Life & Ministry*

January's Faith Formation classes will center on the early life and ministry of Jesus, with a spotlight on **Luke 12:22-24** and the spiritual practice of "Help Me" prayers. Children will also enjoy learning new songs, including *Wide, High, Long & Deep* and *God's Love is All Around*.

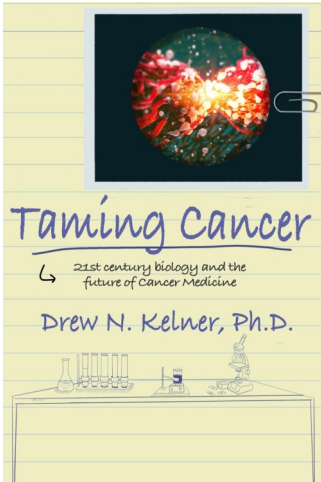
Here's what's happening each Sunday in January:

- **January 5:** A tour of the church building to explore what people learn and do in different spaces.
- **January 12:** Learning about Jesus' baptism and discussing how various churches practice this sacrament. We'll also create colored sand candle holders.
- **January 19:** Discovering how Jesus brought good news to outsiders in Nazareth and practicing reading blessings.
- **January 26:** Hearing about Jesus teaching from Simon Peter's boat and inviting the fishermen to be "fishers of men." Children will enjoy a Follow Jesus hopscotch game.

We're excited for a month filled with learning, creativity, and spiritual growth as we journey through Jesus' life together!



# Save the Date: Souper Bowl Sunday - Feb. 9th



## COMPASSION TEAM'S BOOK OF THE MONTH

**Taming Cancer** by microbiologist Drew Kelner (2024) offers an insightful look at cancer at the cellular level, breaking down the complexities into something more understandable. The book explores what happens during treatments like surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy, while also highlighting groundbreaking advancements in using our own biochemistry to combat cancer's effects.

**Mark your calendars!** On Sunday, February 9th, Church of the Apostles will host our annual **Souper Bowl Sunday** collection after the 10 AM worship service. This year, our Primary Faith Formation and Rooted in Faith classes are teaming up to gather donations for the COA Breakfast Ministry.

### What is the Breakfast Ministry?

Every first Saturday of the month, COA serves a hearty breakfast at First Reformed UCC on Orange Street. Guests receive breakfast sandwiches, peanut butter sandwiches, cereal, snacks, milk, juice, coffee, and more. Your support directly helps us continue this vital outreach!

### Want to get involved?

We're always seeking volunteers (no experience necessary!) to help serve on these Saturdays from **8–10:30 AM**. If you're interested, reach out to [office@apostlesucc.org](mailto:office@apostlesucc.org).

Let's come together on Souper Bowl Sunday to support this meaningful ministry. We can't wait to see you there! Don't forget to bring your donations!



In 2024 we raised \$422

## Introducing the Compassion Team

### *Donna Carr*

**A** dedicated member of COA for over 50 years, Donna Carr is a retired RN, holds a master's degree and has been an active community volunteer throughout her nursing career. She has served on the Parish Life Commission and helps facilitate the New Moms Support ministry. About a year ago, she participated in a day-long Mental Health training focused on involving faith communities in mental health outreach—an initiative closely aligned with the work at COA. She welcomes inquiries about the goals of the Compassion Team and is happy to share more information.



## January Birthdays

- 1.2 Dick Cunningham
- 1.3 Cathie Oliphant
- 1.4 John Wylie
- 1.6 Ashley Walburn Hull
- 1.7 Chris Braun
- 1.7 Dean Witmer
- 1.8 Bernice Ochs
- 1.10 Arlene Gaudioso
- 1.11 Wende Stenman
- 1.12 Dorothea Greenawalt\*
- 1.14 Liam Dubbs
- 1.16 Donald Koontz\*
- 1.17 Vincent Kuhn
- 1.17 Delayne Breslin
- 1.19 Karen Helmeczi
- 1.21 Carol Burkholder
- 1.22 Jennifer Eyrich
- 1.24 Andree Goldman\*
- 1.24 Weston Koehler
- 1.29 Lois Millhouse
- 1.30 Jack Stoltzfus
- 1.30 Caela McCooey
- 1.31 Chuck Erisman
- 1.31 Andy Smith

\*90+ Birthday's

## January Anniversary's

No January Anniversary's

## New Payment & Deposit Procedures for 2025

Happy New Year! We hope your Christmas was filled with joy and blessings.

As we start the new budget year, we're introducing an updated Payment Request and Deposit procedure to help keep our finances accurate and running smoothly.

- **Expense Submission:** Please submit any church-related expenses as soon as possible, ideally within the same month they occur.
- **Deposits:** All deposits should be submitted the same day funds are received. If the office is closed, place the funds and a completed deposit form in the money box outside the office.

Your time, talent, and dedication are deeply appreciated, and these small steps will ensure we stay on track financially. Thank you for your cooperation!

## Money Counters Needed

Are you available Monday mornings to help count collections? This vital task is simple and greatly needed. If you're available, please contact the Finance Office at [finance@apostlesucc.org](mailto:finance@apostlesucc.org).

	November 2024	November 2023
YTD Revenue	\$351,296.47	\$344,665.97
YTD Investment Transfers	\$291,940.00	\$199,772.47
YTD Operating Expenses	\$643,594.46	\$620,792.49
Net YTD Operating Income	-\$357.99	-\$76,354.05

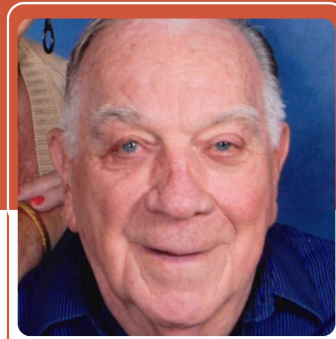
# WORSHIP FLOWER SPONSORSHIP

Enhance our worship with the beauty of flowers by sponsoring them in honor or memory of a loved one. To sponsor, email [office@apostlesucc.org](mailto:office@apostlesucc.org) or complete a form in the Church office. The suggested donation is \$60, but any amount is appreciated. Contributions can be made via check, cash, Vanco, or Realm.



SPONSOR THROUGH VANCO

## IN LOVING MEMORY



### DANIEL FICKES

August 1935 - October 2024

MEMORIAL FUND DONATIONS MADE BY:

Louis & Arlene Gaudioso,

Wanda Hebel,

Barbara Steinmetz,

Yvonne M. Duncan,

Susan D. Wolf,

Audrey Harman,

William L. Daugherty,

Holly Kleimo,

and the Apostles Adult Choir

## 2025 Giving Envelopes

Please pick up your 2025 giving envelopes in January. Interested in switching to online giving? Contact April in the Finance Office at [finance@apostlesucc.org](mailto:finance@apostlesucc.org).



## Christmas Greetings

What a joy to hear from our former Associate Pastor Jonathan Paredes this Christmas! Sending love and holiday cheer from Jonathan, Lucy, Milo, and Luca to our COA family. Merry Christmas!

# STAFF

## Senior Pastor

Rev. Kathryn Kuhn

## Church Administrator

Melissa Kosman

## Communications Coordinator

Paityn Nissly

## Finance Coordinator

April Fisher

## Music Director

Lars Potteiger

## Adult Choir Director

Nathan Sheffer

## Children's Choir Director

Elizabeth Stoltzfus

## Technology Specialist

Jaben Jury

## Property Manager

Eric MacLaren

## Sexton

Larry Rongione

## Sexton 2

Tasha MacLaren

To contact our staff directly  
visit [apostlesucc.org/staff](http://apostlesucc.org/staff)

## SHARE YOUR STORY

*Be featured in the next Crown Newsletter!*

We want to hear from you! Share how you're living out our Vision & Mission, making an impact in our community, or contributing to our ministries. To submit your story, email the Communications Coordinator, Paityn Nissly, at [office@apostlesucc.org](mailto:office@apostlesucc.org) by the 15th of the month for consideration in the next issue. Space is limited, but we'll do our best to feature as many articles as possible.



## PRAYER REQUESTS

*Let us Pray with You!*

We are honored to pray for you through life's ups and downs. You can share your prayer requests on your connection card during Sunday services or email them to [office@apostlesucc.org](mailto:office@apostlesucc.org). Please let us know if your request can be shared or should remain private for our prayer chain. Together, we lift our hearts in prayer to support and encourage one another.

