



Church of the Apostles  
United Church of Christ

April 2026

# THE CROWN NEWS

Vol. 50 No. 4



*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" - John 15:5*

## Rooted in the Past, Growing into the Future

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*Let's Be Friends*



@ApostlesUCC

Spring reminds us that new life often begins quietly, as roots stretch deeper and seeds push through the soil. At Church of the Apostles, we are entering just such a season. For fifty years this congregation has been rooted in faith and community, and from those strong roots, **new growth is emerging**. One literal sign is the Native Plant Garden near the Memorial sign, where seeds planted by the Environmental team, are already sending up their first shoots.

Inside, a renewal is also taking shape. The former Youth Center has been refreshed and **reimagined as a small Retreat Center**. With new paint and flooring, it now offers a peaceful space where small groups can gather for reflection, while enjoying the beauty of Radar Park.

On an even larger scale, the *Where Welcome Grows: 50-Year Renewal Campaign* looks toward the future of ministry at COA, focusing on refreshing the sanctuary with updated materials, smoother flooring transitions, and refreshed colors.

All of this reflects the deeper work already happening at COA. From our Outreach team, to our Compassion team and our Inclusive team, **we welcome and affirm every person**, just as Jesus welcomes all into God's love. These teams continue to nurture growth, so our congregation may flourish and bear lasting fruit for God's beloved community. Together, we can continue to nurture a church where faith, welcome, and community flourish for generations to come

In Peace,

*Melissa Kosman*

Church Administrator

# UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

11  
APR

## Community Game Night

📍 Main Lobby at 6 PM

Bring a game, snack, and friend for a fun night of fellowship at COA.

12  
APR

## Prayer Vigil for Healing

📍 Grandview Church at 4 PM

A time for expressing hope and praying for peace and healing for our country.

**H O L Y**

**W E E K**

**PRESS PAUSE & LISTEN**

APR 2 AT 7 PM MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

APR 3 AT 7 PM GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

APR 5 AT 7 AM SUNRISE EASTER SERVICE

APR 5 AT 10 AM EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE

## BOARD NEWS

Happy Spring! It feels so good to be stepping out of winter and into a season of new life. Spring has a way of reminding us that **renewal is always possible**, that even after long stretches of darkness, something beautiful can begin again.

In the life of the church, we feel this especially as we move through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and into the joy of Easter. These services always move me. They tell a story we return to again and again: that love is stronger than fear, and that even the hardest moments can give way to hope.

Let's be honest, there's a lot in our world right now that can feel heavy. It's easy to feel overwhelmed or to want to retreat into what's comfortable. I've felt that, too. In March, Pastor Kuhn and I went to a rehearsal for the Singing Resistance in Lancaster. It would have been easier to stay home, but we went, and I'm so glad we did. I walked out feeling energized, connected, and reminded that **we don't have to face hard things alone**. On March 28th, we united our voices to participate in the No Kings Rally. If you would like to add your voice to the resistance, please reach out to me or Pastor Kuhn. We would love to have COA represented!

There may not be much any one of us can do on our own, but together? **Together, we can create something powerful**. As an open and affirming community, that's part of who we are, people who show up, who care, and who bring light into the world in both big and small ways.

So this season, I wonder: where might you be called to bring a little more beauty, hope, or connection into the world?

Blessings, *Johanna Baker* (Board Secretary)

## 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.



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

★ April 14th, 2026: The Measure by Nikki Erlick

★ May 12th, 2026: Year of Wonders by Geraldine Brooks

## April Mocktails & Meaning™

### *Mental Health in Young Men*

April's Mocktails & Meaning™ on April 16th at 6:30 PM invites you into an honest and important conversation with Ben Faro from the Samaritan Center as we focus on Mental Health in Young Men. In a world that often teaches boys to stay silent about their struggles, this session will explore the pressures young men face, the warning signs we should not ignore, and the ways families, churches, and communities can foster openness, resilience, and hope. We'll gather over a festive Easter Punch mocktail while creating space for thoughtful dialogue and meaningful questions. Come ready for a conversation that encourages courage, compassion, and connection. Register by the QR Code.



## April Inclusive Church Topic

### *Standing in Solidarity with Other Faith Communities*

Another synagogue was physically attacked in March. The 2025 survey conducted by the American Jewish Center (AJC) indicates that 93% of American Jews feel that antisemitism is a problem in the US and 70% of the general public agree with that statement. Since the Hamas attack, 86% of American Jews and 63% of the general public believe that antisemitism has increased.

The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) states that Islamophobia is at an all-time high in the US. In 2024, CAIR registered the highest number of anti-Muslim complaints since it started publishing data in 1996. CAIR also noted that employment discrimination reached a new high, comprising 15.4% of all reported complaints.

A large majority of American Jews report hearing one or more antisemitic comments online and/or in person. 21% felt physically threatened by those comments. In the AJC survey, 46% of the non-Jewish population said they saw one or more antisemitic comments either online or in person, but 76% of those people were silent and did not report it.

How can we, as followers of Jesus, help create a community that provides security to those who are not Christians? It can be hard for us to know what to say and how to say it when you face a situation like that. Spend some time now thinking about how you might react and how you might be an ally in that situation.

*From the Inclusive Church Team*

## Prayer Vigil for Peace & Healing

### *Standing Together, Bridging the Divide*

In response to the division and injustice we see in our country, local faith communities are gathering for prayer, healing, and hope. Church of the Apostles will host a gathering on April 26th at 5 PM in the Sanctuary. All are welcome to join in this time of reflection and prayer.

# YOUTH

## PRIMARY FAITH FORMATION (AGES 3 - 3RD GRADE)

### *April Schedule*

Our Primary Faith Formation class for ages 3 through 3rd grade meets **after Children's Time** in worship in Rm 304. This April, we'll be celebrating Easter and diving into the joys of spring together!

- **April 5:** Happy Easter / Celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus
- **April 12:** Walking with Jesus
- **April 19:** Breakfast on the Beach
- **April 26:** Apostles Earth Day Celebration

## ROOTED IN FAITH (4TH - 8TH GRADE)

### *Small Actions, Big Impact*

The ROOTED in Faith youth (grades 4+) spent time in March talking about how **they can help care for God's creation** as we prepare for COA's Earth Day celebration on April 26. Here are a few simple ways they're making a difference:

- **Reduce & reuse:** Bring a reusable water bottle to church and school, use reusable bags, and cut back on single-use plastics.
- **Be mindful at home:** Turn off lights, consoles, and electronics when not in use, and conserve water during daily routines.
- **Make small, everyday choices:** Eat leftovers, avoid waste, and pick up trash to care for your community.

Even small actions can make a big impact. ROOTED students remind us that by making thoughtful choices each day, we can all help protect and care for our planet together!

## Celebrate Our 2026 Graduates

Church of the Apostles wants to honor all 2026 graduates, high school, trade school, college, graduate school, or vocational programs, on **Sunday, May 24th!** We want to celebrate your accomplishments and future plans.



If you are graduating, please **email the office at [office@apostlesucc.org](mailto:office@apostlesucc.org)** with your full name, a photo, where you're graduating from, and any future plans you'd like to share so we can recognize you properly.

High school and trade school graduates planning to continue their education can also apply for the **Ken Bernhardt & Helen Elmer Scholarships**. Applications are available in the office or **[online](#)** and are due **by May 18th**. We can't wait to celebrate your achievements together!



After a long, cold winter, we were eager for sunshine and warmer temperatures and for a few days in early March, we finally got them! We took full advantage of the mild weather and headed back outside for the first time in several months. Our preschoolers (and teachers!) truly needed the fresh air, and we are looking forward to many more bright, sunny days as we move into the final weeks of the preschool year.

During March, we kicked things off by celebrating Read Across America Week with fun spirit days like Topsy Turvy Tuesday and Wacky Wednesday.

Our Pre-K classes also hosted a special event, welcoming dads, grandfathers, and other important male role models for a memorable day together. Later in the month, teachers held parent-teacher conferences to share the wonderful progress our preschoolers have made. Our Pre-K enrichment class, *Nature Explorers*, has also returned to Rader Park on Tuesday afternoons, where the children are observing the signs of spring and enjoying time outdoors in nature.

This month we also marked a very special milestone, **60 years of serving the Lancaster community!** To celebrate, our Parent Council hosted a festive carnival day for our families. Children enjoyed a magic show, games, a balloon twister, face painting, delicious snacks, and special birthday cupcakes. It was a joyful celebration, and we are very grateful to our Parent Council for organizing such a wonderful event.

As we enter the final six weeks of school, we are looking forward to many more special moments and activities with our preschoolers. Stay tuned for our final update in the May *Crown Newsletter!*

*Maggie Biggs*

Preschool Director

[mbiggs.acp@gmail.com](mailto:mbiggs.acp@gmail.com)



@Apostles\_Community\_Preschool



# OUTREACH

## Baby Shower for LGH Healthy Beginnings Program

This spring, Church of the Apostles is hosting a Baby Shower to support the **Healthy Beginnings** program at LGH. Healthy Beginnings provides vital support to **more than 800 families** at any given time throughout Lancaster and surrounding counties, walking alongside mothers from pregnancy through a full year after birth. Through healthcare guidance, education, and emotional support, the program helps ensure that no mother has to navigate pregnancy alone.

This effort reflects our mission of **compassionate care**. By sharing in this baby shower, we can offer practical support and a reminder that our community surrounds these mothers and their babies with love.

From April through May, you can participate by selecting a tag from the poster on the Outreach bulletin board, purchasing the listed baby item, and placing it in the **Caring Cart in the Narthex** by May 31.

Your gift helps provide essentials for new mothers while reminding them that they are supported, valued, and cared for during this important season of life.

### OUR IMPACT

# \$450

One Great Hour of Sharing

### Donations as of Publishing



2025 Donations

CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES

# GARAGE SALE

APRIL 10 & 11, 2026

FRIDAY 8 AM - 2 PM  
SATURDAY 8 AM - 1 PM

For More Information: [www.apostlesucc.org](http://www.apostlesucc.org)



# A MUSICAL NOTE

With Music Director, Lars Potteiger

The Adult Choir is singing an anthem for Easter this year that has a very interesting story behind its creation. "Now the Green Blade Rises" is a hymn that beautifully evokes springtime and Easter, as the natural world bursts forth with growth and new life. The text for this hymn was written in 1928 by John MacLeod Campbell Crum, an Anglican priest in England.

Crum drew on agricultural imagery from Gospel of John 12:24, where Jesus says that a grain of wheat must fall into the earth and die in order to bear fruit. This passage becomes the central image of the hymn:

*Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain,  
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;  
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.*

Crum's choice of tune for his text is also interesting. He paired the words with the French Christmas carol Noël Nouvelet, which dates from the 15th century. This combination, a Christmas melody with an Easter text, creates a beautiful metaphor of birth, death, and resurrection within the same hymn. In many ways, it reflects what it means to walk with Christ throughout our Christian journey.

As the choir shares this anthem on Easter, may its message remind us that God is always bringing new life where we least expect it.

May your Easter season be filled with joy, renewal, and rebirth!

Blessings,

*Lars Potteiger*

## UPCOMING APOSTLES ACADEMY CONCERT

Join us for an inspiring afternoon of music as the Kutztown University Choirs present a diverse and engaging choral concert on **Sunday, April 12th, at 3 PM** in the Sanctuary.

Enjoy the talent and artistry of these exceptional student vocalists as they share a wide-ranging program sure to uplift and move you. This event is **free to attend**, with a free-will offering taken in lieu of tickets.



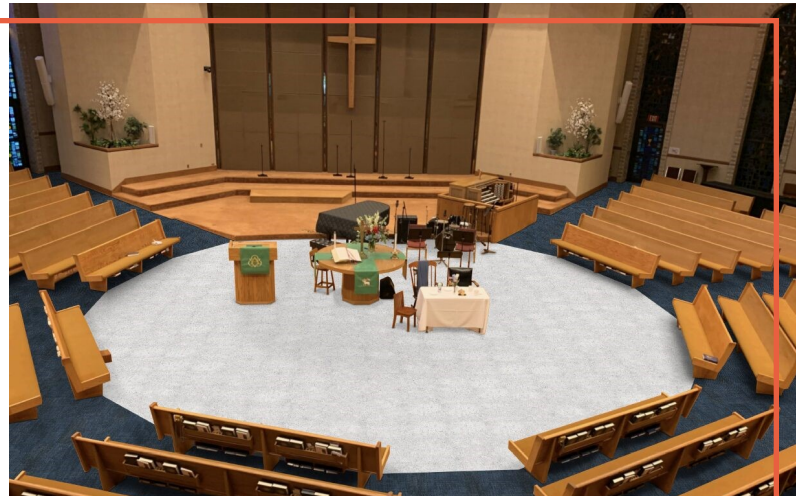
# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Nearly two years after we first began imagining what a renewed sanctuary could be, that vision is about to become reality. In February, we completed our final walkthrough with Dessco Construction, and we are excited to share that **construction is scheduled to begin on May 20**, with completion anticipated by mid-to-late August.

As with many projects over the past year, rising costs have had an impact. Due to an 11% increase from inflation, the total project cost is now **\$289,000**. And yet, because of your incredible generosity, we are so close to reaching this goal.

To fully fund the renovation through donations alone, we need to raise an additional \$17,400. To date, **we have received \$230,131, with \$41,500 in pledged gifts still to come**. This is a powerful testament to the faith, commitment, and shared vision of this community.

This renovation is about more than updating a space, it's about who we are and who we are becoming. Together, we are creating a sanctuary that reflects God's welcome: accessible to all, with a redesigned stage that includes a ramp, improved flooring to support those with mobility and vision challenges, and refreshed pews to offer comfort for all who gather. This is an investment not only in our present, but in the next 50 years of ministry, connection, and belonging.



Mock-Up of Sanctuary Flooring

If you have already given, thank you. Your generosity is helping to build a future rooted in welcome and inclusion. If you are still considering a gift, there is still time to be part of this transformation. Gifts of any size make a difference and may be given over time in a way that is meaningful for you.

## Ways to Give:

- **Check:** Please include "Capital Campaign" in the memo line
- **Online (Realm):** Select "Capital Campaign"
- **Cash:** Please mark the envelope "Capital Campaign"

Above all, we ask for your prayers, that Church of the Apostles will continue to grow as a place of deep welcome, faithful service, and community for generations to come.

With heartfelt gratitude,

*Melissa Kosman*

Church Administrator

# A VISIBLE SIGN OF WELCOME

## A Gift of Pride and Partnership

Church of the Apostles recently received a meaningful and heartfelt gift from Sparta United Methodist Church in New Jersey, a **Pride flag**, now proudly displayed in our lobby. This gift came in celebration of our congregation's adoption of the Open and Affirming (ONA) Covenant, recognizing this step as both courageous and deeply rooted in faith.



In their letter, Rev. Dr. Steven G. Bechtold and the Sparta UMC congregation shared their joy, writing, *"We rejoiced...as your congregation has taken this courageous and grace-filled step—publicly affirming the welcome of all persons."* As a Reconciling Congregation themselves, they understand the importance of this commitment and the responsibility to live it out **through love, learning, and action.**

The flag they sent is more than a symbol, it is a reminder that **we are not alone** in this journey. It represents a shared calling among faith communities to embody "the inclusive, liberating love of Jesus Christ" and to stand in solidarity as places of refuge, affirmation, and hope.

Hanging this flag in our lobby is a proud and significant moment in the life of COA. It is a visible expression of who we are and who we strive to be: a church that welcomes, supports, and affirms all people. As the

letter beautifully reminds us, *"It is a symbol of our shared commitment, our prayers, and our gratitude for your bold witness."*

May it continue to inspire us to live fully into our mission of inclusive refuge and compassionate care.

## Earth Day at COA

On Sunday, April 26th, stop by the lobby before and after worship for a special celebration of God's creation! Explore opportunities to care for our church property, enjoy hands-on activities for all ages, and connect with our community. We're excited to share this time of learning, fun, and stewardship with everyone!



## April Birthdays

- 4.2 ~ Barbara Bimson
- 4.3 ~ Sallie McMinn
- 4.4 ~ Michael Buckwalter
- 4.4 ~ Aria Rampaul
- 4.4 ~ Lois Schousen\*
- 4.5 ~ Beth Buckwalter
- 4.6 ~ Jim Eaton
- 4.6 ~ Allison Weiser
- 4.6 ~ Sunshine Whittington
- 4.7 ~ Mark Szalczyk
- 4.11 ~ Jane McCartney
- 4.13 ~ Kristi Newport
- 4.14 ~ Ethan Smith
- 4.14 ~ David Miller
- 4.15 ~ Peter Schmiechen
- 4.16 ~ Joyce Baker
- 4.16 ~ Katherine Seiler
- 4.18 ~ Milo McCooley
- 4.20 ~ Richard Millhouse
- 4.20 ~ Ashley Laymon
- 4.22 ~ Kamron Fickes
- 4.23 ~ Lou Gaudioso
- 4.23 ~ Janice Morris
- 4.28 ~ Dawn Zipko

\*90+ Birthday's

## April Anniversary's

- 4.7 ~ Holly & Jon Kleimo
- 4.14 ~ Don & Pat Hess\*

\*50+ Anniversary's

# 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)

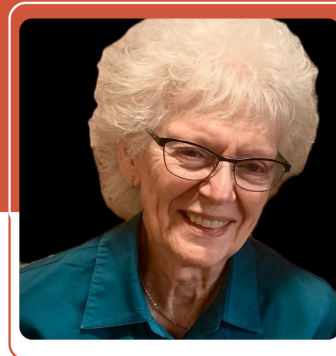
or complete a form in the Church office. The suggested donation is \$60, but any amount is appreciated.



**SPONSOR THROUGH VANCO**

Contributions can be made via check, cash, **Vanco**, or **Realm**.

### IN LOVING MEMORY



**BEV KELLER**

September 1940 - February 2026

MEMORIAL FUND

DONATIONS MADE BY:

Donna Carr,

Bev Moran,

Bonnie Eshbach,

& Mary Ellen Bachman

	February 2026	February 2025
YTD Revenue	\$67,403.24	\$68,273.05
YTD Investment Transfers	\$0	\$0
YTD Operating Expenses	\$103,922.77	\$110,961.59
Net YTD Operating Income	-\$36,519.53	-\$42,688.54

## PARISH LIFE: 50 YEARS OF CARING & CONNECTION

For 50 years, the Parish Life Committee helped our church family stay connected through care, fellowship, and hospitality. Their work touched nearly every corner of church life, often behind the scenes, but always with love.

They reached out to members who couldn't attend worship, offering rides to appointments, friendly visits, cards, and small holiday gifts. Volunteers from *Called to Care*, *Ministry to Others*, and *Abiders* made sure no one felt forgotten, while *Stephen Ministers* provided confidential, one-on-one support to those going through difficult times.

Parish Life also celebrated life's milestones, organizing meals for new parents, coordinating funeral luncheons, and bringing people together for special gatherings like our 40th Anniversary and church-wide celebrations.

Fellowship was always a priority. The committee kept the *Hospitality Table* stocked with treats, welcomed visitors at the *Welcome Center*, hosted *New Beginnings* for seniors, and supported groups like the *COA Book Club* and *Dinners for Eight*. Even the *Bazaar* and *Garage Sale* became opportunities to connect and serve together.

Behind the scenes, Parish Life looked after the kitchen, maintained first aid kits and AED machines, bought the coffee, and made sure birthday & anniversary cards were sent to members from the office.



**Funeral Reception Team  
(Arlene G. & Linda E.)**



As we look back, we give heartfelt thanks to all who served on the Parish Life Committee over the years, their dedication, creativity, and compassion made a lasting difference in our church community.

Though the committee has completed its work, the care and connection it fostered continue to shape who we are as a church, **welcoming, generous, and grounded in community.**

# STAFF

## Senior Pastor

Rev. Kathryn Kuhn  
[kathrynk@apostlesucc.org](mailto:kathrynk@apostlesucc.org)

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## Praise Band Director

Nathan Sheffer

## Children's Choir Director

Elizabeth Stoltzfus

## Technology Specialist

Jaben Jury

## Property Manager

Eric MacLaren  
[ericm@apostlesucc.org](mailto:ericm@apostlesucc.org)

## Sexton 2

Tasha MacLaren

## Office Hours & Staff Emails

### *Reach the Right Person at the Right Time*

Our church office is open **Monday-Thursday, 9 AM-1 PM**. Because not all staff are available during those hours, please call before stopping by to be sure someone can assist you.

The office is **closed on Fridays**, and staff are not in the building. For Friday needs, email is the best way to receive a response. To help us respond quickly, please double check that your email is going to the correct staff member. Thank you for helping us stay organized and connected!



## 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.

## Supporting Our Community

### *Ways the Compassion Team is Here for You!*

Our Compassion Team is dedicated to providing support, understanding, and care to everyone in our community, no matter where you are in your walk of life. We offer several confidential resources designed to help nurture your mental and spiritual well-being.

- **Confidential Listening Sessions** - Set up a private time of listening, understanding, and compassion with one of our trained Compassion Team members.
- **The Compassion Corner** - A collection of materials focused on mental health, grief, and other challenging life topics located in Rm 107.
- **Monthly Spiritual Support Group** - Meeting every 2nd Thursday at 10 AM, this gathering will provide a space for shared encouragement and community.

**WORSHIP WITH US EVERY SUNDAY AT 10 AM**  
**IN-PERSON OR ONLINE**