



Church of the Apostles
United Church of Christ

July 2026

THE CROWN NEWS

Vol. 50 No. 7



*"In their hearts humans plan
their course, but the
LORD establishes their steps"*
- Proverbs 16:9

Celebrations Across Our Campus

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Let's Be Friends



@ApostlesUCC

As we slip past the midpoint of 2026, we pause to give thanks for all God has done through the people of Church of the Apostles. From outreach ministries and community partnerships to renovations and special events, this year has been filled with opportunities to live out Christ's call to love our neighbors and care for creation.

January brought exciting new beginnings as we welcomed Jennifer Isenberg as our new Finance Coordinator and finalized plans for the Sanctuary Renewal Project. Through our Mission to the Homeless offering, we supported Milagro House with a gift of \$280. The Marietta Avenue sign expanded its message to include sermon themes, invitations, and messages of hope.

In February, we celebrated the many Women of COA and raised \$950 through our Souper Bowl collection to support local hunger ministries.

March was filled with generosity and community connections. Members contributed \$450 to One Great Hour of Sharing, and our Easter Egg Hunt welcomed more than 60 children and family members to campus. Youth Group members and residents from Homestead Village stuffed over 500 eggs. We also started updates to the newly renamed Retreat Center, creating a refreshed space for fellowship and ministry.



In April, we journeyed together through Holy Week and celebrated another successful Garage Sale, raising over \$7,000 to support Anchor Lancaster which provides support and dignity to those they serve. ACP celebrated its 60th anniversary and we marked Earth Day with hands-on activities, environmental advocacy opportunities, and ways to care for our church property and community.

Continued on Pg. 3

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

4
AUG

Millersville National Night Out
📍 100 Municipal Drive from 6-8 PM
Connecting neighbors, first responders, and local organizations.

9
AUG

15th Annual Back-to-School Event
📍 Penn Medicine Park at 12 PM
Lancaster County students should pre-register by August 3rd.



"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven."
- Ecclesiastes 3:1

SUMMER PAUSE

As I write this piece, Summer is in full swing, with longer days, family vacations, and gardens producing their bounty. It seems like a good time to pause and reflect.

Looking back over the first six months of the year, I am reminded that there have been joys and challenges, celebrations and disappointments. **Through it all, God has remained faithful.** Even when we don't always notice it at the moment, God's presence accompanies us through every season.

The summer season invites us to slow down, take a breath, and appreciate the beauty and blessings that surround us. A gorgeous sunrise, a slice of watermelon, fireflies, the smell of freshly cut grass, coffee with a friend. These moments remind us of God's goodness in our everyday life.

This year, we also celebrate a significant milestone. The 250th anniversary of our nation's founding. **Anniversaries offer an opportunity to reflect on the past with gratitude and to consider the future with hope.** As Christians, we can be thankful for the freedoms we enjoy while acknowledging that the work is not yet finished. We are called to continue building communities marked by compassion, pursuing justice for all people, and being faithful stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us. In doing so, we help build a **stronger, more caring and inclusive nation for generations to come.**

As we enjoy the remainder of summer, may we take time to appreciate our blessings and to remember that the journey continues, and that God is with us every step of the way.

Warmly,

Michele Wherley (Board President)

JOIN OUR BOOK CLUB!

Book Club meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at **2 PM** in the Parlor, 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!

★ July 14th, 2026: The Judges Tale by Jill Kintner

★ Aug. 11th, 2026: The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon

★ Sept. 8th, 2026: Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus

An American Flag for Rader Park

Celebrating a Generous Gift & Community

On Sunday, July 26, 2026, at 11:30 AM, Church of the Apostles will celebrate the official raising of a new flag in Rader Park. We are grateful to **Team River Runner Susquehanna Valley** for generously donating the flag and flagpole, helping make this special addition to our property possible. Following worship, gather with us at the pavilion as we celebrate this symbol of community and connection. Please note that parking at the Retreat Center will be limited; attendees are encouraged to park near the Garden Sheds or in the main parking lot on Apostle Way and walk to the pavilion.

Celebrations Continued

May brought milestones and new beginnings. We collected baby supplies for the LGH Healthy Beginnings Baby Shower, began Sanctuary renovations, moved worship to the Bachman Center, and celebrated our graduates.

In Rader Park, children and families explored God's creation through **Science in the Park**



and Faith Formations, enjoying hands-on learning, nature study, and outdoor adventures.

In June, our Inclusive Team engaged the community at the Lititz Pride Festival. A few weeks later, at the **Lancaster Pride Festival**, they handed out 1,000 Pride pins and connected with attendees through an interactive display that sparked meaningful conversations and a strong emotional response.

So far this year, our ministries have continued to foster connection and care throughout the community. **Mocktails & Meanings™** wrapped up another successful season, welcoming more than 100 participants for meaningful conversation, spiritual exploration, and fellowship. Meanwhile, our **Saturday Morning Breakfast Ministry** has served 543 neighbors experiencing food insecurity, supported by a dedicated team of more than a dozen volunteers who gather on the first Saturday of each month.

These accomplishments are possible because of the volunteers who give their time, donors who share their resources, and members who answer God's call with willing hearts. As we look to the second half of the year, we invite everyone to find their place in our shared ministry through serving, giving, advocating, or simply offering kindness. Thank you for being part of the mission and ministry of Church of the Apostles.



Melissa Kosman

Church Administrator

INCLUSIVE CHURCH FOCUS

VISION IMPAIREMENT & BLINDNESS

During the month of July, the Inclusive Church Team is turning their focus to individuals who are vision impaired or blind. We've chosen July to coincide with the **Team River Runner activities happening in Rader Park** which are geared towards individuals who are vision impaired or blind.



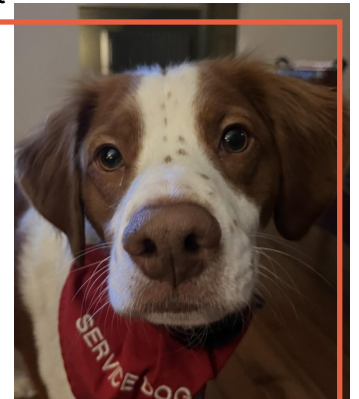
What does it mean to be vision impaired or blind? While **approximately 7 million Americans have significant vision impairments**, only about 18% experience total blindness. Most individuals retain some degree of residual vision, though that vision can vary greatly from person to person. Some may be able to detect light, locate windows, or distinguish shapes and movement, while others may have clear central vision but limited peripheral vision, or vice versa. Some individuals are even more comfortable in darker environments due to light sensitivity. Because **vision loss affects everyone differently**, two people with the same diagnosis may have very different experiences and needs in their daily lives.

Understanding this diversity can help us avoid assumptions and better support one another.

Strategies and tools you may see or hear an individual with vision impairment or blindness utilizing at a COA service or community event include but are not limited to a lighted hand-held magnifier or a portable video magnifier, voice output on a smart device such as an iPhone, monocular or bi-optics for distance viewing, long white canes, human or dog guides.

As members of Church of the Apostles, we can help create **a more welcoming environment for individuals with vision impairments and blindness** through simple acts of awareness and inclusion.

- Introduce yourself by name when greeting someone, and remember that it is always best to ask before offering assistance.
- When giving directions, use specific words such as left, right, or straight ahead rather than phrases like "over there."
- Be patient, avoid moving personal belongings without permission, and clearly describe where items are located if you do assist.
- Accessibility also extends to our communications. Printed materials should use clear, easy-to-read fonts, and images or words displayed during worship should be described aloud whenever possible.



Jen's Service Dog, River

Small, thoughtful actions can help ensure that everyone feels **welcomed, included, and able to fully participate in the life of our congregation.**

Jennifer Eaton and the Inclusive Church Team

For more information on vision impairments and blindness you can reach out to COA member, Jennifer Eaton, at jeaton@visioncorps.net or by calling her at (717) 617-7549.

SUMMER IN LANCASTER COUNTY



America 250 Independence Day Celebration

Penn Medicine Park | July 3rd

The Lancaster Stormers will host their largest Independence Day celebration yet as part of the America 250 festivities. The event will feature family-friendly activities including bounce houses, a petting zoo, pony rides, wrestling exhibitions, a classic car show, historical reenactments, contests, vendors, and more. Food and beverages will be available throughout the evening. The celebration concludes with a performance by the Lancaster Symphony at 8:45 PM, followed by a spectacular fireworks display at 10 PM.

Washington Boro Tomato Festival

Washington Boro Community Park | July 11th & 18th

The annual Washington Boro Tomato Festival is held every year on the second and third Saturday of July at the Washington Boro Community Park. It benefits Blue Rock Fire Rescue and celebrates the area's tomato-growing heritage. The festival features food, games, music, and plenty of fun for the whole family.



Lancaster International Piano Festival

Franklin & Marshall College | July 17th through 27th

The annual Lancaster International Piano Festival features seven public concerts from world-renowned guest artists.

UPCOMING APOSTLES ACADEMY CONCERT



Everyone is invited to join us in Rader Park on **July 12th at 3 PM** for a community concert featuring **Harmony 3**, a New York City-based reed trio, joined by internationally acclaimed jazz vocalist **Yaala Ballin**. Together, they'll present a joyful and inspiring program celebrating women's voices through music, storytelling, and artistic collaboration.

Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy an afternoon of beautiful music and community in the park! This event is **free to attend**, with a free-will offering taken in lieu of tickets.

OUTREACH



OUR IMPACT

1000 Pins

Handed Out at Lancaster Pride
on June 20th

Donations as of Publishing

This July and August, our outreach collection will support one of our very own ministries, **Apostles Community Preschool**. As ACP prepares to welcome students for the **2026-2027 school year on September 14**, we're invited to help provide the supplies needed for a successful year of learning, creativity, and growth.

The preschool has created an Amazon Wishlist filled with classroom needs to help make shopping easy.

View the ACP Amazon Wishlist: <https://conta.cc/4vWhZK9>

If you prefer to shop in person, some of ACP's most-needed items include Elmer's glue sticks, Crayola Pipsqueaks washable markers, Ticonderoga My First Pencils, clear thermal laminating sheets, and Scotch Magic Tape, along with many other classroom essentials.

Donations may be dropped off **on Sundays outside the Church Main Entrance**, in the Narthex during office hours (Monday - Thursday, 9 AM - 1 PM), or shipped directly to the church through the Amazon Wishlist (1850 Marietta Ave., Lancaster, PA 17603).

Thank you for helping us prepare our youngest Apostles for a wonderful year of learning, growth, and discovery!





A MUSICAL NOTE

With Music Director, Lars Potteiger

One of my favorite hymns is “This Is My Song.” While it may not be one of the first hymns that comes to mind when I think of patriotic hymns, it is a hymn that speaks to a love of one’s homeland while affirming peace and unity among all nations. As we prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation, I would like to explore the history of this wonderful hymn and the powerful message found in its text.

Lloyd Stone wrote the text for this hymn in 1934, with a later verse added by Georgia Harkness in 1939. The text was set to the melody of Finlandia, composed by Finnish composer Jean Sibelius in 1899.

Stone wrote the first two verses in the years following World War I, and the text reflects a yearning for peace and harmony among the nations after the tragic loss of life experienced during that war:

*This is my song, O God of all the nations,
a song of peace for lands afar and mine;
this is my home, the country where my heart is;
here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine:
but other hearts in other lands are beating
with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.*

An interesting and beautiful part of this text is the way **Stone reflects on his own hopes and dreams** while also acknowledging that people in other lands can have aspirations similar to his own. What a powerful acknowledgment of our shared humanity that transcends conflicts, nations, and borders. It is possible to have much in common with people whom we perceive to be different from ourselves.

In our modern culture of inflammatory news headlines and internet discourse, which often pushes us to judge others before truly getting to know them as individuals, this hymn offers a refreshing reminder that **we likely have more in common with one another than we realize**. People with different worldviews from our own may ultimately desire many of the same things out of life.

The third verse, later added by Harkness, expands on this universal humanitarian worldview even further through text that carries a powerful message:

*May truth and freedom come to every nation;
may peace abound where strife has raged so long;
that each may seek to love and build together,
a world united, righting every wrong;
a world united in its love for freedom,
proclaiming peace together in one song.*

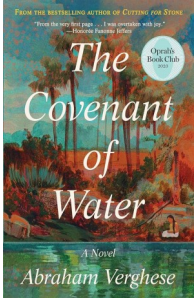
Amen, amen, amen. Seeking to love and build together while moving toward a more unified world is not easy. May we have the strength and patience to do so, even when the road is rough, because the effort is worthwhile and **reminds us of how deeply interconnected we all are as children of God**.

Peace,

Lars

BEACH BAGS & BOOKMARKS

What are the staff at COA reading this summer?



Rev. Kathryn Kuhn

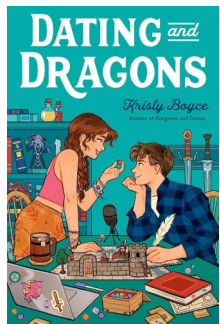
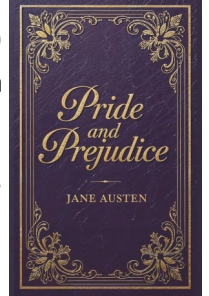
The Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese

Spanning generations and set in southern India, *The Covenant of Water* is a sweeping story of family, faith, resilience, and human connection. With rich characters and fascinating historical details, it's an engaging read that offers plenty to reflect on long after the final page.

Melissa Kosman (Church Administrator)

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

A timeless favorite and my go-to recommendation when I'm not sure what to read next. *Pride & Prejudice* blends sharp wit, memorable characters, and a story that never loses its charm. It's the kind of book you can return to again and again and still find something new to enjoy each time.



Paityn Davis (Communications Coordinator)

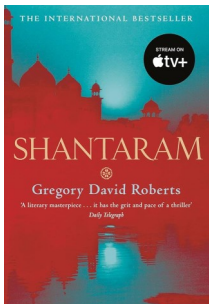
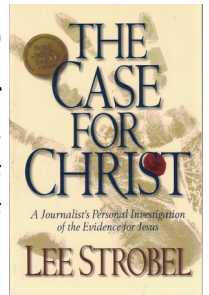
Dating and Dragons by Kristy Boyce

A playful, heartfelt romance that continues the story started in *Dungeons and Drama*, this series blends gaming, friendship, and love in a way that feels both fun and deeply relatable. It connects two worlds I love, romance novels and Dungeons & Dragons, and is a perfect summer read if you're looking for something light, joyful, and a little bit nerdy in the best way.

Jennifer Isenberg (Finance Coordinator)

The Case For Christ by Lee Strobel

One of my favorite books from high school, *The Case for Christ* follows journalist Lee Strobel as he investigates the evidence surrounding the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Written from a reporter's perspective, it invites readers to explore questions of faith and belief through interviews and research.



Lars Potteiger (Music Director)

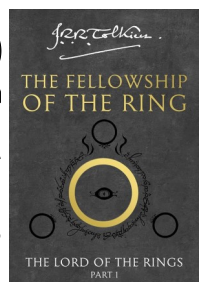
Shantaram by Gregory David Roberts

An unforgettable novel of adventure, resilience, and redemption, *Shantaram* follows an escaped convict as he builds a new life in the vibrant city of Mumbai. Filled with rich characters, unforgettable stories, and reflections on friendship, love, and the search for meaning, it's a book that stays with readers long after the last page.

Eric MacLaren (Property Manager)

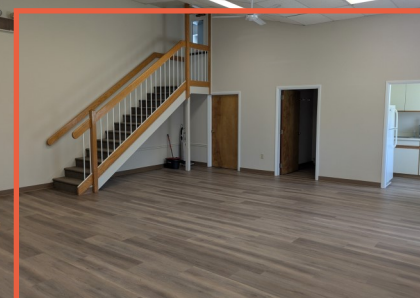
Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien

While I'm a big fan of the movies, I'd encourage readers to experience the original books and immerse themselves in Tolkien's incredible world of hobbits, elves, dwarves, and epic adventures. It's a classic journey of friendship, courage, and hope that continues to inspire generations of readers.



RADER PARK: A LIVING COMMUNITY HUB

Rader Park continues to be a vibrant part of Church of the Apostles' mission, and our Board is actively exploring even more ways we can use this beautiful space to serve both our congregation and the broader Lancaster community. Already, the park is alive with connection, learning, and care in countless ways.



Updated Retreat Center

The recently **updated Retreat Center** provides a welcoming space for gatherings, education, and reflection, offering rental opportunities that bring groups together in the heart of nature. The park is also home to the **pollinator garden**, lovingly maintained in partnership with the **Lancaster Town & Country Garden Club**, adding beauty while supporting local ecosystems.



Each year, children explore and learn through **Terrific Tuesdays** (formerly Wacky Wednesdays), engaging with nature in hands-on, creative ways. We also partner with Martin Elementary School for **Science in the Park**, offering meaningful outdoor learning experiences for young students in our community.

At the center of our environmental ministry is the **Seeds of Hope Garden**, faithfully tended by COA volunteers under the leadership of Carol Nielsen, with all produce donated to the Landisville community food bank, turning sunlight and soil into nourishment for neighbors in need.



Students Fishing (2025)

Beyond our own programming, **Rader Park is a gathering place for the wider community**. Events such as Team River Runner gatherings, VisionCorps programs, Schreiber's Ducky Run, the Echo Valley Art Group Art Auction, and many other community rentals bring new energy and life to the space throughout the year.

Rader Park is more than land, it is a shared ministry space where education, service, nature, and community meet. As we look ahead, we remain committed to deepening its impact and expanding the ways it can serve both COA and Lancaster County for years to come.



TRR Using Pavilion (2025)

July Birthdays

7.2 ~ Ellen Schellenberger
 7.3 ~ Tristin Neiderer
 7.5 ~ Frank Wilson
 7.6 ~ Earl Cardellino
 7.8 ~ Dustin Koehler
 7.10 ~ Julie Berkow
 7.10 ~ Eva Johnson*
 7.11 ~ Mischelle Van Buskirk
 7.11 ~ Oliver Hull
 7.13 ~ Andy Appel
 7.13 ~ Jared Braun
 7.15 ~ Nancy Payne*
 7.18 ~ Conall Romano
 7.20 ~ Joan Hansel*
 7.21 ~ Jean Heidig
 7.21 ~ Melissa Koehler
 7.22 ~ Judy Waltman
 7.25 ~ Doris Krammes
 7.25 ~ Carlos Cornielle
 7.26 ~ Brian Romano
 7.26 ~ Emily Sheffer
 7.27 ~ Jeannie Clausen
 7.27 ~ Harrison Hackenburg
 7.28 ~ Bonnie Bechtold
 7.31 ~ Will Newport

*90+ Birthday's

June Anniversary's

7.3 ~ Arlene & Lou Gaudio*
 7.5 ~ Julie & Don Berkow
 7.5 ~ Erin & Chris Rohrbaugh
 7.9 ~ Scott & Stephanie Moore
 7.10 ~ Abe & Leigh Breslin
 7.14 ~ Chuck & Marsha Erisman
 7.17 ~ Jim & Linda Eaton*
 7.17 ~ Bill & Kristi Newport

*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

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.

To the Church of the Apostles Congregation,

Thank you for your recent generous "baby shower" and the many beautiful baby supplies your congregation provided for our families in need at LGH Healthy Beginnings. We are so thankful for the kindness you all show your local community!

Many Thanks,

Carrie Bain



	May 2026	May 2025
YTD Revenue	\$153,792.57	\$166,509.04
YTD Investment Transfers	\$48,500.00	\$45,543.90
YTD Operating Expenses	\$269,467.88	\$267,204.05
Net YTD Operating Income	-\$67,175.31	-\$55,151.11

MOCKTAILS & MEANING™ RECAP

Mocktails & Meaning™ was established in October 2023 following approximately six months of preparation by its founder, Cathy Kenlin, supported by the Education Commission and Pastor Kathryn Kuhn. This initiative was launched to address concerns regarding the representation of certain topics in social and mass media, as well as the proliferation of misinformation. Its primary objective is to **provide a forum for community members to discuss relevant issues from the perspectives of those directly impacted**, to consider broader implications, and to evaluate potential roles at both local and national levels.



Showing of *"The Librarians"* w/
Lancaster Public Library (May '26)

Each month, participants gather to socialize with a specialized mocktail and snacks before listening to speakers who offer their expertise and share personal experiences related to the chosen topics. **Attendees are encouraged to ask questions** and develop a deeper understanding of all stakeholders involved, including beneficiaries, potentially marginalized individuals, and opportunities for engagement within these systems. Occasionally, the program includes additional sessions such as documentary screenings accompanied by panel discussions or community meals designed to foster dialogue around specific subjects.

Just to name a few, topics addressed to date include **Education Funding in Pennsylvania, Women's Healthcare, Bail Reform, Homeless Children and Youth in Lancaster County, White Christian Nationalism, Book Banning, and Artificial Intelligence.**

Mocktails & Meaning™ remains responsive to emerging issues, and we have also revisited prior topics to assess developments resulting from legislative or cultural changes.

Mocktails & Meaning™ has earned a strong reputation within the local community and regularly attracts participants from outside our congregation. **This contributes to increasing the church's visibility and impact in the community**, with positive feedback received regarding the program's value. Guided by our mission and vision to advocate for social justice, Mocktails & Meaning™ does not approach these topics from a single theological perspective. Instead, the focus is on how laws, processes, and cultural norms affect community members. Participants are also provided opportunities to further their knowledge on the topic, volunteer, or contribute financially to related causes.



Prof. Tracey Weis Presenting on Why
Black History Matters (Feb '26)

Because this series has become well-known within the community, the name **Mocktails & Meaning™** has been trademarked by both Church of the Apostles and its creator, Catherine Kenlin. We look forward to many years of presenting this series to our congregation and community members. We know there are no shortages of topics to explore!

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Praise Band Director

Nathan Sheffer

Technology Specialist

Jaben Jury

Property Manager

Eric MacLaren
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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. 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 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** - Members may 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