

Grace Lutheran Church
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Messenger

August-September 2025

From the Pastor's desk...

My beloved at Grace, I continue to be blessed so extraordinarily by our community. I've had a couple of questions asked often of me recently, and so I'll share them here!

Q. How are you? Your plate is so full.

A. Whew. These past months have been a LOT. Two car accidents (from which I am uninjured and thanking God!). My first summer working in an ambulance in the heat (the AC does not do much!). A son who needs to do college visits (it's senior year for Cade!). Life in general!!! I am now putting my energy into dialing back my role at Grace, specifically in terms of planning events. I love events because they give us opportunity to learn about each other, to connect with faith outside of worship, and to invite others into our warm and generous community. But, events are not best planned by a half-time pastor, and several members have lovingly reminded me that I am not expected to do as much as I have been doing. The call of a Pastor is to Word and Sacrament, and I will be re-centering myself on those. Word and Sacrament means preaching and communion during worship, as well as bringing the Sacrament to those who cannot join us at worship and baptism preparations. Pastoral care (hospital visits, counseling, and caring communication) is another expression of Word and Sacrament.

I'm truly grateful that our congregation cares about me as Pastor and as person, and is acting to sustain my ministry in such loving ways. Also by the time this newsletter is printed, I'll have had my annual physical completed. I promise that I am taking care of my body, mind, and spirit as faithfully as I know how to!

Q. How long are you here?

A. I am not on any kind of contract with an end date. I am here as long as Grace has need of me and my life is centered in South Jersey. *(continued on page 2)*

Staff at Grace

Rev. Wendolyn Trozzo, Interim Pastor
Scott J. Breiner, Music Director
Corinne Rhodes, Administrative Assistant
Heidi Toth, Church Treasurer

Joseph Martin, Church Council President
Jim Dolan, Church Council Vice President
Chris Dennis, Church Council Secretary
Alison Toth, Social Media Consultant

The call committee continues their work, but there are few pastors seeking congregations. The Bishop's office will send us a pastor to interview as soon as they find someone who is available and a good match for Grace ... and I've made sure the Bishop's office knows that Grace is a fantastic congregation, healthy, loving, and active in mission.

We have a member who has been willing to work with the Synod on leading or co-leading our congregation, but that direction did not fit the Synod's criteria; this was disappointing to say the least (and we can grieve that which feels like loss to us). The Church is always finding its way - congregation, synod, denomination, and universal Church. We are not perfect, but we receive Christ's love that sustains us and gives us hope.

The Bible talks about time in two ways - Chronos and Kairos. Chronos is measurable time on a clock or calendar - but my time at Grace does not have a timer that is winding down. Kairos is God's time, it waits on the movement of the Spirit when beautiful things happen. You and I at Grace are in Kairos time, blessing each other as God prepares a path forward. We can't measure Kairos time but we can live together in it. Thus I am joyfully planning for Christmas at Grace. You may have a new pastor by then, or the plans we are making might be lived out together. Please continue to pray for the future that we are living into!

With gratitude and love,

Pastor Wendolyn

A prayer for our Call process:

God of Grace,

As we await opportunities to call a pastor to our congregation, we give you thanks for this, our Church home, our Church family. Bless the ministries that are sharing your love now, and the ministries that build for the future. We thank you for our Council, our property team, those who tend to our finances; we thank you for dedicated and wise staff; we thank you for each person that passes through our doors or receives our communications. We ask that you would bless pastors and those training for ordained ministry, and that you would prepare for us a pastor who will shepherd, encourage, and inspire us in love toward you and in service to our neighbor.

In Christ's name we pray - Amen.

GOOD OL' DAYS -

Others bring "old" while we bring the "good"!

Last year we hosted a booth at our town's annual September festival. We are seeking volunteers to help us do it again - and here's why:

-- Of all the booths there, we were the only Church. If you add up all the minutes we spent greeting passers-by, we had over 1,000 contact minutes where we could

look our neighbors in the eye, listen to their questions, reflect together on what life is about, and just be together. Instead of waiting for people to come to us, we went to where the people were. Where else does the Church get to do that?

-- (Disclaimer - there was one Church selling 50/50 raffle tickets, but that was their only message. While they had good purpose for their fundraising, we got to teach people about the true purpose of all that we do together - God's perfect love.)

-- Pastor W'yn is an extrovert and evangelist but she needed people at the booth to talk to the people she brought in. Our volunteers got to help people tie prayer ribbons on our tree, color shells with kids and youth, and say hello to strangers as well as folks they knew.

-- This year we're adding a corn-hole style game and using up some of our Easter kids' crafts. It will be good fun, and if we can add 4 more volunteers (for only a 2-hour shift), we will spread the load among returning volunteers.

-- We have so much to share! Food Pantry, worship invites, pamphlets about the variety of our ministries, and an encounter with members of Grace so that people walk away with a new understanding of Church as a vibrant, engaging, listening place. We need you to come and help us share the love!

The exact date and times have not yet been updated. We will share those details as soon as they are available. We will have a sign-up sheet for volunteers as soon as we have the information.

1st Communion Class– 3rd grade & up: Sunday August 10th

1:30-3:30 PM here at Grace.

A NJ Treasure ... 45 minutes north of Grace!

As Pastor, I share Good news based in Scripture; but I want to share with you a treasure my husband found, just in case you want to explore your local world a little more!

Albert Hall in Waretown is a bluegrass/folk music venue, open every Saturday night from 6-9pm. For just a \$6 admission ticket, you get to hear 5 different bands share traditional songs as well as ones they've written themselves. Albert Hall seats about 350 people, plus they have a freeflowing mix of musicians on their porch and in the "Pickin' Shed" who are making music together. They also have Amish desserts for sale and the best \$5 cheeseburger I've ever had.

It may be a little glimpse of what the Kingdom of God is like... a place like Grace that is warm and welcoming, helping people to share their varied gifts and to meet people from outside of their usual circles, bringing joy and inspiration to make our days that much more wondrous. Learn more at www.AlbertHall.org !

Pastor will be on vacation from August 16-23. Should you need immediate Pastoral care, please contact the Church office for the on-call pastor.

DONATIONS TO HELP THE FLOOD VICTIMS IN TEXAS

Our church will be accepting donations to help support those affected by the Texas floods. If you wish to donate to this cause, please turn in or send your donation to the church in an envelope separate from your regular offering and specify what it is for. You can simply write something like, "Texas flood donation". **Please make any checks payable to: Grace Lutheran Church.** We will send one big check for the total amount after we have received all donations. We would like to have all donations by **Tuesday, August 5.**

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

The Grief Support Group will be taking a recess for the remainder of the summer. They will reconvene their meetings every **1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM in the lounge starting September 15.** All who are grieving the loss of a family member, friend, pet, job, etc. are welcome and encouraged to attend. You do not have to go through this alone. Meet with others who are on this difficult journey, share your stories, discuss and share resources and coping strategies, and support each other.

WELCA

WELCA, our church's women's group will reconvene their monthly meetings beginning Tuesday, September 9 at 12:00 noon in the lounge. All women of the church are invited and encouraged to participate in this ministry!

Sponsorships for Altar Flowers and Other Worship Items

The 2025 sponsorship charts are available for sign-up on the downstairs bulletin board across from the elevator. You may sign-up or call the church office and let us know what dates and items you would like to sponsor. The items and cost are as follows:

Flowers (\$30), Candles (\$10), Wine (10),
Bulletins (\$15), Music (\$50), and Messenger (\$50)

August Worship Assistants:

8/3 Edna Cordery
8/10 June Jordan
8/17 Kevin Thomas
8/24 James Ehrhardt
8/31 Mary Ann Gring

September Worship Assistants:

9/7 Ruth Bowden
9/14 Shirley Blankenship
9/21 Meg Markkanen
9/28 Meg La Spina

NAVIGATING SENIOR LIVING WORKSHOP

Sunday, October 12 following worship, at noon. Lunch will be served.
Details to follow.



OKTOBERFEST 2025

This year's Oktoberfest will be
Friday, October 17 from 5:00-7:00PM!

Tickets are \$35 per person
which includes a variety of German music, dinner and beverages, games, and 50/50 raffle. Get ready for a night of fun for all ages! Tickets may be purchased in person or by using a QR Code which will be available soon!

GRACE PLACE FOOD PANTRY

Grace Place Food Pantry is continuing strong in its mission of providing food for our neighbors in need who live in the communities of Northfield, Linwood and Somers Point!

Recently, *Grace Place* joined other pantries in New Jersey by updating how we do our record keeping! We enlisted the help of our main Community Food Bank and we now participate in the Oasis Program they offer. It's done online and eliminates hours of paperwork each week! While I was initially a little reluctant to participate, we are managing quite well. It is still a 'work in progress' though!

As you may know, aid to various programs who provide aid and assistance to food banks has been cut dramatically. *Grace Place* is very fortunate in that we have so many who contribute on a regular basis to assist our neighbors. We are an Ecumenical Food Pantry and that means many of our area churches donate. There are those who have food drives twice a year to benefit our pantry! We have individuals who come weekly with their contributions of bread, butter, eggs and much more. We know most by name! Others bring in fresh produce they grow in their own gardens! Who doesn't like fresh vegetables? Occasionally, we get bagels from one of our donors and ice cream from another!

All of us at *Grace Place* want to thank everyone for the donations we receive! We are so fortunate! This is a total community endeavor!

We look forward to continuing to feed our neighbors in 2025 and we are sincerely grateful to Grace Lutheran Church for housing this pantry for thirty plus years!

Sincerely,
Jim Cordery, Director, *Grace Place* Food Pantry



August

8/4	Ray Hunsicker
8/4	Diana McArdle
8/4	Bob Reilly
8/4	Toim Wigglesworth
8/5	Johanna Reilly
8/11	Jane Thompson
8/15	Maureen Dewees-Cahn
8/18	Sue Somers
8/19	Bruce Hoelter
8/20	Dale Rader
8/21	Al Johnson
8/23	Lisa Merce
8/24	Carolynne Rusek
8/28	Ingeborg Carlson

September

9/1	Karsen Bilello
9/6	Jorge Perez
9/7	Pam Mele
9/8	Alex Piskun
9/9	Barry Levine
9/10	Donald Brown
9/17	Mike Piskun
9/20	Mary Ellen Bartholomew
9/22	Carol Landes
9/22	Lauren Piskun
9/23	Jim Ehrhardt
9/25	Jason Berenotto
9/29	Edna Cordery

HAPPY Anniversary!

August

8/8	Ruth & Charles Bowden
8/18	Nancy & Joe Bilello

September

9/8	Johanna & Bob Reilly
9/9	Kristin & Eric Horox
9/11	Sue & Bernie Somers
9/13	Miranda & Matthew Bilello
9/27	Donna & Mike Berenotto

Are we missing your birthday or anniversary or do we have it wrong? If so, please call the church office (609-927-3082) and let us know so we can update your information.