

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

December 3, 2023—December 10, 2023

1st Sunday of Advent 12/3/23

8:00AM Spoken Worship
8:45AM Adult Forum Group
10:15AM Traditional Worship
Healing and Anointing
4:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

MONDAY 12/4/23

7:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

TUESDAY 12/5/23

6:30PM Narcotics Anonymous
7:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

WEDNESDAY 12/6/23

11:30AM Bayside Duplicate Bridge
7:00PM Narcotics Anonymous

THURSDAY 12/7/23

5:00 Choir Rehearsal
7:00PM Al-Anon

FRIDAY 12/8/23

10:30AM Grace Stitchers
7:30PM Alcoholics Anonymous

SATURDAY 12/9/23

9:00AM Cookie Walk

2nd Sunday of Advent 12/10/23

8:00AM Spoken Worship Service
8:45 AM Adult Forum Group
10:15AM Traditional Worship
**4:00PM Catechism Class at
Reformation**
4:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

MON-WED 10:00AM-3:00PM
FRI 10:00AM-2:00PM

PASTOR OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Althea is often in the
office and she is always
available by appointment.

SHORE DINER

Present this bulletin on a Sunday
and Shore Diner will donate 20% to Grace
Lutheran Church. Present this on
any other day, and we will donate 10%.

Shore Diner
6710 Tilton Road
Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234
609-641-3669

December 3, 2023

1st Sunday of Advent



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

11 East Dawes Avenue, Somers Point, NJ 08244
Church Office: 609-927-3082 **Food Pantry:** 609-927-9982
Website: www.gracelutheranspnj.org
E-mail: office@gracelutheranspnj.comcastbiz.net

Rev. Althea Albright, Pastor ☩ Scott J. Breiner, Music Director
Corinne Rhodes, Administrative Assistant
Alison Toth, Social Media Consultant

We welcome you to worship here at Grace!

*Note that all text written in **bold** is for congregation participation.
Our hymn songs are found in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship
red hymnal found in the pews.*

~ GATHERING ~

Thank you for joining with us as we worship our Lord together!

Introduction

Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

WELCOME

Rev. Althea Albright

PRELUDE

Veni, Emmanuel

by Flor Peters

Please stand as you are able.

GREETING

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God, **We confess that we have turned away from you. We have not trusted in your promises to hear us. We have doubted that you are by our side. We are careless with your creation. We let worry and fear consume us. We do not always treat our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, have mercy on us. Turn our hearts again to you, so that we are glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.**

16th Annual Christmas



Saturday, December 9th

Cookie Walk

9:00 am until sold out!

Home Made Pies

Crafts & Vendors

Other novelties



DATES TO REMEMBER:

- 12/12/23** WELCA Christmas Lunch at Shore Diner 12:00PM
Please RSVP to Roberta Blumenthal 609-927-1654
- 12/17/23** Cape Shore Chorale Concert: The Bells of Christmas
6:30PM at Church of the Redeemer in Longport
- 12/21/23** Light Supper at 6:00PM
Blue Christmas Service at 7PM
- 12/24/23** Christmas Eve Services at 7:00PM & 9:00PM with
choir

Red stockings are due by the end of December to WELCA.

POSTLUDE *Merton* by Malcolm archer

DISMISSAL Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

*We are glad for your presence today.
We hope you come again soon!*

We thank all those serving in worship today! Reader: Corinne Rhodes



The flowers sponsor this week is: Kathy Wopatek-Nigsch
“Happy heavenly birthday to my dad, Wally Wopatek!” Love, Kathy

The candles sponsor this week is: Linda Rihl, “Remembering my dear grandparents, Herman and Viola Gratz who led me to this church.”

The music sponsor is: Marlene Doerr, in memory of Raymond.

THE CAPE SHORE CHORALE PRESENTS:

The Bells of Christmas Concert

December 3 at 3:00 PM

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Ocean City

Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God’s covenant is eternal, and God’s blessing rests upon us all. **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN *Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!* **ELW #246**
VERSES 1, 3, 5 ALL, VERSE 2 MEN, VERSE 4 WOMEN

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.**

Kyrie

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy, have mer - cy.

HYMN OF PRAISE

GLORIA

5

Glo - ry, glo - ry to God in the high-est, and peace to his peo - ple on earth.

Lord God, hea - venly King, al - migh - ty God and Fa - ther. We

wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry, we

praise you for your glo - ry, Lord, Lord Je - sus Christ,

on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, you

take a - way the sin of the world, have mer - cy on us, You are se - ted

at the right hand of the Fa - ther, re - ceive our pray'r re - ceive our pray'r.

For you a - lone are the Holy one, you a - lone are the Lord.

You a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly

Spi - rit in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men. A - men. *poco rit.*

Jesus, Lamb of God

Je - sus, Lamb of God, have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, bear - er of our sins, have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, re - deem - er, re - deem - er of the world,

grant us peace, grant us peace.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of joy and refreshment, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as you are able.

SENDING BLESSING

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ✠ remain upon you now and forever. Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Soon and Very Soon

ELW #439

Please be seated. Enjoy the postlude music and meditate on how God spoke to your heart today.

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

Come to the banquet of Christ. All are welcome. **Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

EVERYONE IS INVITED to come forward at the direction of the ushers. If you are unable to come to the altar, you may remain seated and the pastor will bring you communion after everyone has come forward. Children may come forward to receive a blessing.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Blessed are you, God of Jacob, for you promise to transform weapons of war into implements of planting and harvest and to teach us your way of peace; you promise that our night of sin is far gone and that your day of salvation is dawning.

As we light the first candle on this wreath, wake us from our sleep, wrap us in your light, empower us to live honorably, and guide us along your path of peace. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord. Amen.

ADVENT HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

ELW #257

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel.**

PEACE The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

GREET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Take a brief moment to share the peace by greeting someone sitting near you. Verbal greetings are appropriate if you are not comfortable shaking hands or touching.

Please be seated.

~ **WORD** ~

FIRST READING: Isaiah 64:1-9

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
 so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
²as when fire kindles brushwood
 and the fire causes water to boil—
 to make your name known to your adversaries,
 so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
 you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
⁴From ages past no one has heard,
 no ear has perceived,
 no eye has seen any God besides you,
 who works for those who wait for him.
⁵You meet those who gladly do right,
 those who remember you in your ways.
 But you were angry, and we sinned;
 because you hid yourself we transgressed.
⁶We have all become like one who is unclean,
 and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
 We all fade like a leaf,
 and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
⁷There is no one who calls on your name,
 or attempts to take hold of you;
 for you have hidden your face from us,
 and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
 we are the clay, and you are our potter;
 we are all the work of your hand.
⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
 and do not remember iniquity forever.
 Now consider, we are all your people.
 The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19 *(read responsively)*

¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph ¹like a flock;
 shine forth, you that are enthroned up-¹ on the cherubim.

anointing have come forward and then are seated again the service will continue below.

~ **HOLY COMMUNION** ~

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.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
 heav-en and earth are full, full of your glo - ry.
 Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.
 Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

us on your promise to come among us and make all things new. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A: All creation signals your presence, O God: the vastness of the cosmos, the turn of the seasons, and living things that both rest and flourish. Rekindle our commitment to care for the earth. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A: Let the nations tremble at your holy presence, that justice and liberation prevail in all corners of the earth. Restore peace to nations in conflict, teach righteousness to corrupt leaders and systems, and bring stability to areas facing uncertain futures. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

P: Enrich the spirits of all who feel hopeless, fearful, or despairing. Stay close to those who await healing or relief *especially all those we name aloud or in our hearts...* Deliver all in any need. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A: Be with those who keep awake at night: nurses working overnight shifts, caregivers of newborns and aging adults, those who are anxious, or those who are traveling. Remind us of your presence among us even in dark places. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A: You have sent out your angels and gathered your faithful people from every time and place, calling them into one fellowship of saints. Bless the witness of those who dwell in your eternal presence. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

P: Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. **Amen.**

TIME FOR HEALING AND ANOINTING

During this time for healing and anointing, you are all invited to come forward as you are able for brief prayer with Pastor Althea and anointing with oil. Masks may be worn as you feel comfortable. Pastor will be using disposable cotton Q-tips for anointing. Do not feel rushed.

MEDITATION

Please meditate or pray quietly at your seat while others receive prayers in the front of the church. When all who wish to have prayer and

²**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come to help us.**

³Restore us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁴**O LORD God of hosts, how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

⁶**You have made us the derision of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

¹⁷**Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

¹⁸And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

¹⁹**Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand as you are able.

The Holy Gospel according to Mark the 13th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37

Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

[Jesus said:] ²⁴“In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

SERMON

Rev. Althea Albright

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

My Lord, What a Morning

ELW #438

THE APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,

creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

OFFERING

CHOIR ANTHEM

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

by John W. Finney

Flute: Andrew Ehrhardt

Please stand as you are able.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS *Create in Me a Clean Heart*

WOV #732

OFFERING PRAYER

God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God’s day of restoration. *Brief silence.*

A: Call your church into holy fellowship as we await the restoration of all things. Reenergize your faithful people to live with hope and compassion, especially those who serve as missionaries near and far. Center