

CHRISTMAS EVE DECEMBER 24, 2024



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

11 East Dawes Avenue, Somers Point, NJ 08244

Church Office: 609-927-3082 **Food Pantry:** 609-927-9982

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Rev. Wendolyn Trozzo, Interim Pastor †

Scott J. Breiner, Music Director

Corinne Rhodes, Administrative Assistant

Alison Toth, Social Media Consultant

We welcome you to worship at Grace!

WELCOME TO GRACE'S FAMILY OF FAITH

We welcome you this holy night as we prepare our hearts for what God may be up to in this world. We hope you feel comfortable in this place, and we invite you to come again soon! Everyone is welcome here - whether you are a member, friend, neighbor, or just plain curious how we worship here.

We are all human. We are not perfect and we are each unique. You are welcome whether you like to sing or worship in silence. You are welcome whether you are struggling with your faith or love the God of your understanding with all your heart. All are welcome in this place. We believe God is present with us as we come together to worship especially on this holy night when we celebrate Jesus' birth.

*For where two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there among them. Matthew 18:20*

Pastor Wendolyn also invites you to contact her with your prayer requests or needs, or for information about our faith, worship style, or our Church. **Please sign our Visitor Book located in the lobby** before you leave tonight. We, here at Grace, extend to you wishes for a **Joyful Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!**

This bulletin is your worship guide.

Congregation responses are in **bold** print.

Hymns are in the red book in your pew.

Please feel free to remain seated even as others stand.

any special needs can be conveyed to our ushers.

GATHERING

WELCOME

Rev. Wendolyn Trozzo

CHORAL PRELUDE

Night of Silence

arr. by John Ferguson

Please stand as you are able.

CALL TO WORSHIP

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

The Christmas tree is lit.

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

To us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray:

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH AND CHRIST CANDLE
WITH PRAYER**

GATHERING HYMN

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ELW # 283

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.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of your Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence, and on the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Blanketed in God's Love

7:00 PM

WORD

A hymn to invite us into the Story:

Angels we have Heard on High

verse 2

ELW #289

**Shepherds why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo
GLORIA in excelsis Deo!**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. This Old Testament promise from Israelite history is one in which we hear of the coming Messiah in a new testament (meaning promise).

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Gloria in excelsis Deo
GLORIA in excelsis Deo!

Please be seated.

SERMON 7:00 PM *The Christmas Spider* Rev. Wendolyn Trozzo
9:00 PM *Gift of Love, Given to Love* Rev. Wendolyn Trozzo

HYMN **7:00 PM** *Away in a Manger*

ELW #277

CHOIR ANTHEM 9:00 PM *Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day*
 arr. by Michael Dicie
 flutist: Andrew Ehrhardt

Please stand as you are able.

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Please be seated.

OFFERING

We are thankful for however you are able to support our ministry at Grace. Financial offerings may be received in person, through the mail, church office, or Simply Giving online. We are also grateful for offerings of volunteer time, of shared skills, and of prayer. Please call the church office if you would like to get involved, need assistance with Simply Giving, or have any questions or concerns. We praise God through joyful giving!

OFFERTORY 7:00 PM *Cradle Song* by Gilbert Martin
9:00 PM *In the Bleak Mid-Winter* by Vernon Hoyle
 Soloists: Patricia Angarano & Andrew Ehrhardt

Please stand as you are able.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS *What Child Is This*
 VERSE 3

ELW# 296

OFFERING PRAYER: Let us pray. God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.

Please be seated.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Wendolyn Trozzo

Pastor: Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people. *Brief silence.*

Response to each prayer: God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

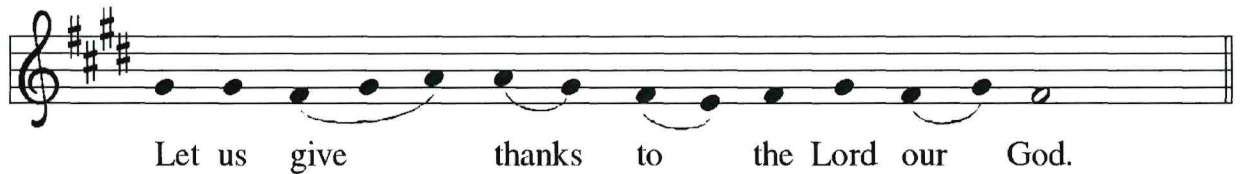
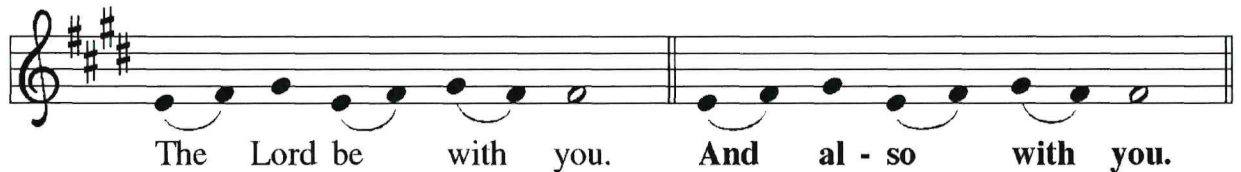
Pastor: We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

EVERYONE IS INVITED to come down the center aisle at the direction of the ushers. If you are unable to come up to the front, you may remain

seated and the pastor will bring you communion after everyone has come forward. Children or those who have not received a first communion are welcome to come for a blessing. Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING : PREFACE



It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, ...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:

HYMN *Angels We Have Heard On High* *verse 1*

ELW #289

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o're the plains,
And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo
GLORIA in excelsis Deo!**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Holy God, you have filled all of creation with light and life. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. You are faithful to your people in every age and sent the gift of your Son, Jesus, so that we may not die, but live because of your grace and love.

On the night before Jesus would face suffering and death he sat with his disciples, gave thanks, broke bread, and said: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, Jesus 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.

God of all time, as we celebrate Jesus' birth in this Christmas meal, we pray for the gift of your spirit to be among us in our gathering, among your people, and throughout the world.

Let us pray:

Blessed God, shed your grace brighter than starlight on us, that we may bear your good tidings to all and renew the wary world in your name: the name of Emmanuel, God-With-Us, to whom we give honor and glory in joy, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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

Your Word, O God, is revealed in a manger, and you are with us in this bread and wine. Come meet Christ in this meal. **Amen.**

Communion will be offered continuous at the chancel step. Please come forward down the middle aisle at the direction of the ushers to receive the bread and wine (white grape juice will be in the center ring of the tray). You may then return to your seats using the outer aisles.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Lamb of God

WOV #39

COMMUNION MUSIC

9:00 PM *Christmas Symphony* by J. S. Bach, arr. by W. A. Goldsworthy
pianist: Stephen Gring

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Please stand as you are able.

CELEBRATION OF THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

The light is passed, candle to candle; for safety please dip UNLIT candle into other candle's flame.

GOSPEL READING: John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not

of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

HYMN *Silent Night* Text: Joseph Mohr; tr. John F. Young ELW #281

1 Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing, alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

3 Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

At this time, we invite you to create memories to celebrate by quietly taking photos of the sanctuary, of your family, of this moment. You may use phone cameras or simply take pictures in your mind. We conclude this time by singing verse 1 of Silent Night once more.

**Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

SENDING

SENDING PRAYER: Let us pray. Dearest Lord Jesus, in this time of holy worship you have refreshed us with your holy Word. We find hope and joy again because of Your love come down in Jesus. Send us forth now as witnesses of the Good News of your birth, that we also may be light for the world, in the name of Jesus, our Messiah. **Amen.**

Please extinguish your candles at this time.

BLESSING

May Almighty God bless you and keep you, may † Jesus grant you comfort and grace, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

ELW # 270

*Please be seated for the postlude.
Take this precious time to listen to the music
and contemplate the Christmas Message.*

POSTLUDE

Noël

by Theodore Dubois

DISMISSAL

Go and tell everyone that the Messiah is born! Merry Christmas!
Thanks be to God! Merry Christmas!

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

We thank all those serving in worship today:

Worship Assistants 7:00 pm: Alex Piskun & Michael Piskun

Worship Assistant 9:00 pm: Ruth Bowden

Altar Guild: Brenda Traa, Clare Brick

Ushering Team: John Staples, Jim Foreman, Karl Suckiel,
Chris Dennis, Zavier Shea

WELCOME TO ALL VISITORS!

If you are a visitor please fill out a *VISITOR CARD* in the pews if you are new to our church. Pastor Wendolyn would love to meet you and get in touch with you.



SPONSORSHIPS:

Our candles and wine sponsor is: Michelle Zelig,
In memory of Martha June Becker,
and in memory of Thomas Stewart, Margaret, & Charles,
from Michele, Rick, Brooke, Bryce, and Camryn.

Our Music Sponsor is: Brenda Traa,
"In honor of our anniversary on December 26th."

PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following people in your daily prayers:

Members of Grace: Debbie K., Renee P., Bettie C., Diana M., Bruce H., Bonnie C., Ruth K., Lois R., Barry L., Don B., Bob G., John S., Brenda T., Family & Friends of Lorraine Moore, Family & Friends of Dona-Lee Hughes

Our family and friends: Eileen, Jeff, Tad, Skip (Ruth T.), Ric, Jeanne, Cody, Logan (Ruth B.), Marilyn (June J.), Catherine, Ana, Sal, Ronna (Corinne R.), Carrie (Ray H.), Sue (Carol L.), Linda, Dana (Edna C. & Patty D.), Bruce (Brenda T.), Jody M. (Mary Ann G.), Karen H. (Mary G.), Tyler, Megan (Carol G.), Michael, Jim (Meg L.), Bridget K. & Patrick, George M.

Those serving our country: Matthew Bilello, ANG, Cainan Johnson, USAF, & Daniel Casner, 3rd USN

The Shores at Wesley Manor: Eleanore Guire

Please notify the church office of any changes or additions to our prayer list.

ALL ARE WELCOME TO WORSHIP WITH US HERE AT GRACE!

Regular Sunday Worship times:

8:00 AM Spoken Worship

(casual, no music)

(Location: Lounge near Church Office)

8:45 AM Adult Sunday School

(discussion forum)

(Location: Conference Room near Church Office)

**10:15 AM Traditional Worship
with choir**

(Location: Main Sanctuary)

This worship service can be viewed online at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgW5_3afURfRRvd3P2VFxLw

First Sunday of Christmas

Sunday, December 29, 2024

Worship will be in person and livestreamed online at

10:15am ONLY

We will have a service of Lessons and Carols.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

The poinsettias in the sanctuary are available for purchase after the service at 9:00pm for \$10 each.

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE

WELCA IS COLLECTING WINTER ITEMS FOR LOCAL CHILDREN!

The WELCA (women of Grace) are calling on everyone to help collect winter HATS, GLOVES, AND MITTENS for local students. Please make sure to donate brand NEW items.

Deadline for these donations is January 21, 2024.

January 19, 2025 we will be distributing the new budget for the 2025 year.

February 2, 2025 is our **Annual Congregational Meeting** immediately following the 10:15am worship service.

DIRECTORIES

Directories have arrived and will be emailed as soon as we have the most updated electronic version. You may pick up a hard copy (one per family) in the office during office hours or in the narthex Sunday mornings. A \$12.00 donation for a hard copy is greatly appreciated.

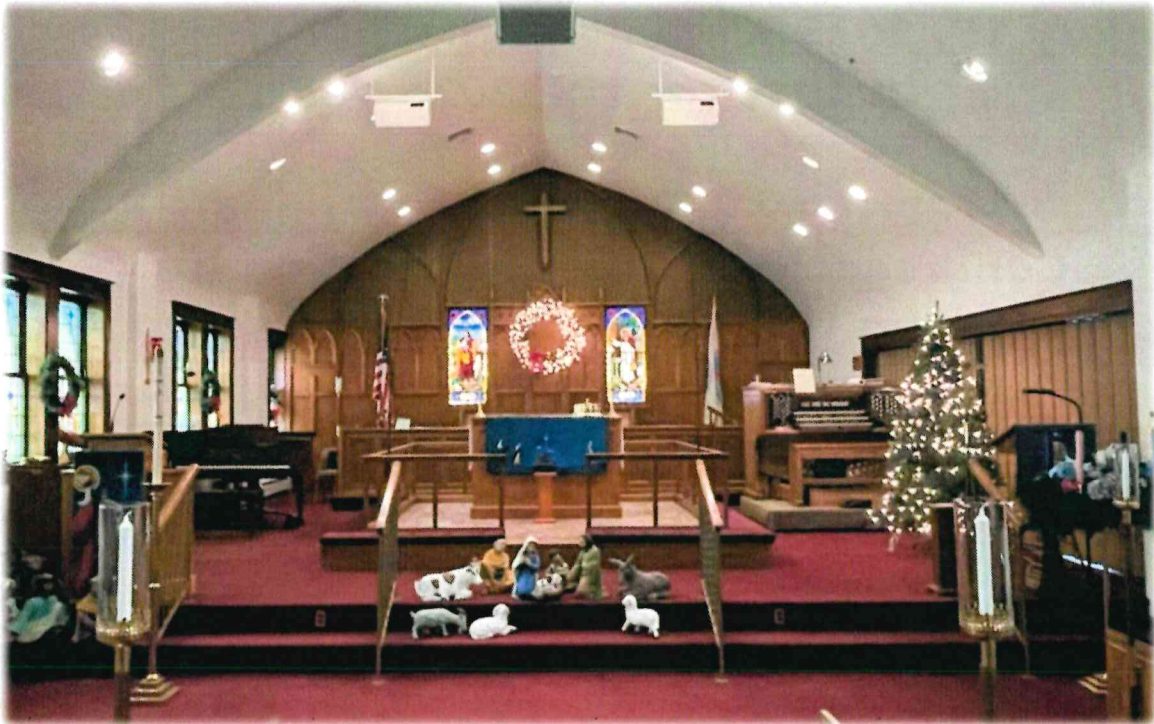
If you would like to be added to our weekly email list or you need us to update your contact information, please call or email the church office at:

609-927-3082

office@gracelutheranspnj.comcastbiz.net

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Thank you to all those who helped
prepare the sanctuary for Christmas.
We are blessed to host all who participated in
our worship services.



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