

March 30, 2025

4th Sunday in Lent



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

Interim Pastor † Wendolyn Trozzo, 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 us as we worship our Lord together!

INTRODUCTION

The psalm sets the tone this day: “Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!” Happy are those who have “become the righteousness of God” in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has “rolled away . . . the disgrace” of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus’ sake. Rejoice!

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Glenn Schoenberger

PRELUDE *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound* by Philip Gehring

Please stand as you are able.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God’s abiding love.

Silence is kept for reflection.

O Lord, our God, you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. *Pause for reflection.*

O Lord, our God, We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. *Pause for reflection.*

O Lord, our God, We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. *Pause for reflection.*

O Lord, our God, Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross. **Amen.**

Beloved in Christ, God’s arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In † Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God’s house forever. **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* **ELW #807**

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

ELW (front) #138

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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.

FIRST READING: Joshua 5:9-12

By celebrating the Passover and eating the produce of the promised land instead of the miraculous manna that had sustained them in the desert, the Israelites symbolically bring their forty years of wilderness wandering to an end at Gilgal.

⁹ The LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt.” And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰ While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

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

PSALM 32



- ¹ Happy are they whose transgressions | are forgiven,
and whose sin is | put away!
- ² **Happy are they to whom the LORD im- | putes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there | is no guile!**
- ³ While I held my tongue, my bones with- | ered away,
because of my groaning | all day long.
- ⁴ **For your hand was heavy upon me | day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the | heat of summer.**
- ⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con- | ceal my guilt.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." Then you
forgave me the guilt | of my sin.
- ⁶ **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in | time of
trouble;**
when the great waters overflow, they | shall not reach them.
- ⁷ You are my hiding-place; you preserve | me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts | of deliverance.
- ⁸ **"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that | you should go;
I will guide you | with my eye.**
- ⁹ Do not be like horse or mule, which have no | understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will | not stay near
you."
- ¹⁰ **Great are the tribulations | of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust | in the LORD.**
- ¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice | in the LORD;
shout for joy, all who are | true of heart.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

One way to describe the gospel is the promise that in Christ everything is transformed into newness. All mistakes, all deliberate sins, all

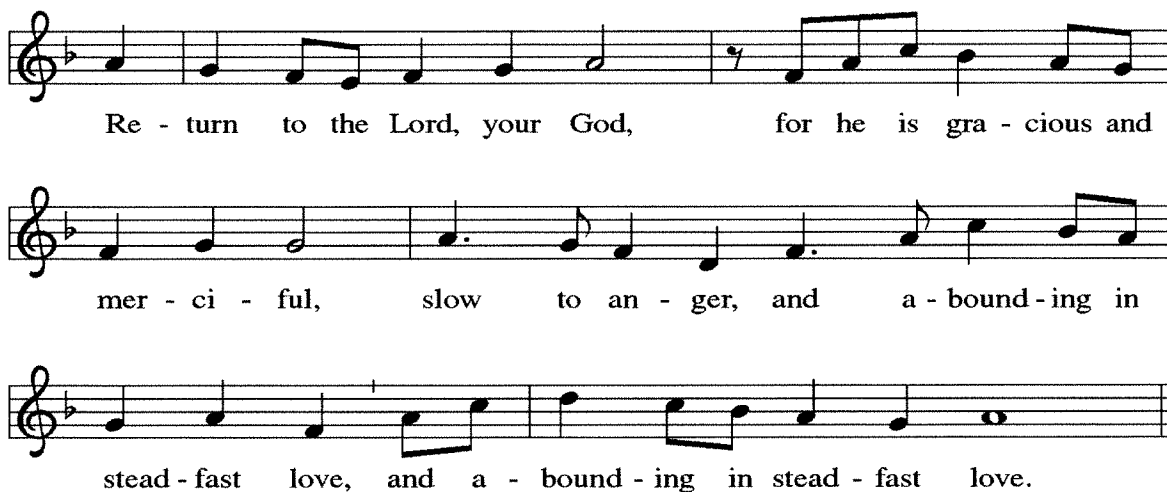
old history is reconciled with Christ's resurrection. This is Paul's strong message to the congregation in the city of Corinth.

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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

Please stand as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 15th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Jesus tells a parable about a son who ponders his father's love only after he has spurned it. The grace he receives is beyond his hopes. That same grace is a crisis for an older brother who believes it is his obedience that has earned his place in the father's home.

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³ So he told them this parable: ^{11b} “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe

and sound.’²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him.²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends.’³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’³¹ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.’³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’ ”

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

Please be seated.

SERMON

Rev. Dr. Glenn Schoenberger

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Our Father, We Have Wandered

ELW #606

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.

Please be seated.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Sweet Spirit, Comfort Me

by Crawford R. Thoburn

Please stand as you are able.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS *Create in Me a Clean Heart* **WOV #732**

OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious Provider, you set your **immense treasures among us**, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Please be seated.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P: Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need. *Brief silence.*

At the end of each prayer petition when the worship assistant or pastor says, "God, in your mercy," please respond with "receive our prayer."

P: Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life. **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW (front) #144

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW (front) #144

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Together, we pray as our Lord taught us, saying:

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

All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread.

COMMUNION HYMN *Lamb of God* **ELW (front) #146**

COMMUNION HYMNS *Softly and Tenderly, Jesus is Calling* **ELW #608**

Amazing Grace **ELW #779**

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

We will have continuous communion in front of the steps today. EVERYONE IS INVITED to come down the center aisle at the direction of the ushers and return to your seats via the side aisle. 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.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as you are able.

SENDING

BLESSING

God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit ✚ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN *My Life Flows On in Endless Song* **ELW #763**

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

POSTLUDE *Trumpet Tune* by Henry Purcell

DISMISSAL **Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.
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:
Worship Assistant: Ruth Bowden**

**The candles sponsor this week is: Linda Rihl,
“Happy birthday to Meg La Spina!”**

*Special thank you to Pastor Glenn Schoenberger for leading us in
worship!*

Bread and Broth Supper throughout Lent

Join us Thursdays at 6:00PM



This Thursday will be hosted here at Grace.

A short worship service will follow starting around 6:30. Coming a bit late? Eat as we worship. Come and be blessed!

April 3 will be hosted here at Grace.

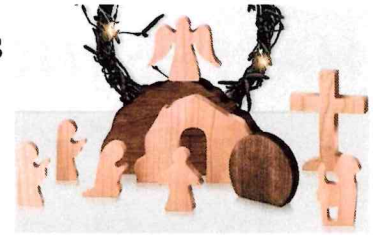
Please sign up to bring bread, soup, or a salad so we know what food we will have each week. Call the church office or sign up in the narthex on the sign up sheet on Sundays.

April 10 will be hosted at St. John's in Ocean City and they will provide supper.

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS:

- Egg Hunt & Holy Story– Palm Sunday 4/13, 3:00 PM
Hosted by Ellie Hull & Pastor Wendolyn

- Can any woodworkers create an Easter Creche like this one? *If so, please contact Pastor Wendolyn.*
- Sunday School Re-Start “tester”- Sundays 4/27-6/1
Seeking teachers, aides, and people to invite families. Contact Miranda Bilello 609-470-1882
- Volunteers needed to host Coffee Hour on Sunday, April 27.
- Volunteers needed for Tik Tok (Table cloths & Keurig/drinks) set-up and clean-up for Coffee Hours.



Lay Leadership -The Future of the Church

Saturday, March 29: Check in at 9:00 ~ Program 9:30-3:30

St. Mark Lutheran Church, 350 White Horse Ave. Hamilton, NJ 08610

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dr. Eric Trozzo

\$50.00 donation includes lunch

For information and to register, please email Ellen J. Lindemann at:

Ellen.Lindemann@raritanval.edu.

The Atlantic County Roundtable of Historical Organizations Presents: HOUSES OF WORSHIP IN OLDE ATLANTIC COUNTY

**Sunday, March 30 at 2:00 PM at the Atlantic City Historical Society
907 Shore Road, Somers Point**

And again on:

**Sunday April 6 at 2:00 PM at the Canoe Club
100 Sports Drive, Hammonton**

Please see the flier in the narthex for details.

**We are accepting donations of 1st Aid Products for Bridge of Peace
Lutheran Church & Food Pantry in Camden, NJ.**

There will be a designated place for these in the narthex.

**Saturday, April 5 at 10:00 AM the NJ State WELCA is having their
bi-annual gathering at St. John's in Ocean City.**

Lunch will follow the worship service and workshop on prayer.

Please RSVP to St. John's 609-399-0798.

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

March 30, 2025–April 6, 2025

4th Sunday in Lent 3/30/25

8:00AM Spoken Worship
10:15AM Traditional Worship

MONDAY 3/31/25

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
7:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

TUESDAY 4/1/25

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
6:30PM Narcotics Anonymous
7:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

WEDNESDAY 4/2/25

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
11:30AM Bayside Duplicate Bridge
6:00PM AA Book Study
7:00PM Narcotics Anonymous

THURSDAY 4/3/25


9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
12:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous
5:00PM Choir Rehearsal
6:00 AA 12-Step
6:00PM Bread & Broth at Grace
7:00PM Al-Anon
7:00PM Sisters of Hope
Narcotics Anonymous
FRIDAY 4/4/25
10:30AM Grace Stitchers
7:30PM Alcoholics Anonymous

SATURDAY 4/5/25

7:30AM & 8:30AM Weight Watchers

5th Sunday in Lent 4/6/25

8:00AM Spoken Worship
8:45AM Adult Forum
10:15AM Traditional Worship
Joyful Noise Offering:
Habitat for Humanity

 <p>SHORE DINER</p>
<p>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%.</p>
<p>Shore Diner 6710 Tilton Road Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234 609-641-3669</p>

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Mon-Tues 10:00AM-3:00PM

Thurs-Fri 10:00AM-3:00PM