

Grace Lutheran Church
11 East Dawes Avenue
Somers Point, NJ 08244
www.gracelutheranspnj.org

Church Office: 609-927-3082
office@gracelutheranspnj.com
Food Pantry: 609-927-9982

Holiday Messenger December 2025

A Note from the Pastor's Desk...

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thanksgiving is such a fascinating time of year. Outside the trees are going bare and the darkness comes earlier, but into this season we choose to celebrate harvests of what really matters. Family and friends gather, recipes old and new are brought out, we find time in our impossibly busy lives to set a table and give thanks.

Like most years, at this time people want to be generous. It's beautiful to see. I think that over the year, people strive to be generous, but in November we get to see it happen so much and so often that we can open up to goodness in ways we don't during, say, spring or summer. Especially in these days with questions about broader safety nets, we are seeing local people stop in and ask how they can help.

Being in the Church office, and hearing from Corinne, we are seeing two simultaneous peaks: a surge in numbers of people asking for help, with a rise in numbers of people bringing donations. People are coming in off of the street to drop off gift cards and carts of food. Volunteers are working together to prepare the shelves and to care for people in need. Congregations are making special collections. It's not a one-to-one ratio, but each contribution makes a difference. People are coming to Grace so that a table can be set for Thanksgiving.

This is what it can mean to be Church: to open a door for the needy to come in, be treated with care, and sent out with at least some needs met. Church is a place where people can help others know: If I enter here, I will be part of doing good. At Church, the hunger to help meets hunger for support. We are brought together and we are all changed.

I pray that in this season of Thanksgiving you will experience many reasons to give thanks: Those who can give will find joy in giving; those who receive will be blessed by their time here and the food they carry out; and all who seek hope will

see that in being brought together we can say to the Giver of all Good Gifts,
“Thank you!”

In Christ,
Pastor Wendolyn

COOKIE WALK

Saturday, December 13, 2025

9:00 AM-12:00 PM or until sold out



If you are willing and able to bake for this event, please sign up in the narthex before or after church so we know what we can expect. We need an abundance of cookies!

If you have any Christmas items you no longer need or want, please donate them to be sold at the white elephant table at the Cookie Walk.

We nearly sold out last year, so inventory is low!

Helpers are needed the day before the Cookie Walk to receive and organize trays of cookies and baked goods. Helpers are also needed the day of the event. If you or anyone you know would be interested in a vendor table, please let us know. Only \$25 per table!

If you have any questions or wish to reserve a vendor table, please contact Heidi Toth 609-233-4156 or Sandy Piskun 609-226-5591.

CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Call Committee received a candidate for review during the month of November. The review process is underway. The call committee members will approach their task with a high commitment to the Gospel and to be faithful representatives of the congregation. Updates will be provided as the process moves forward.



1st Communion

Members of Grace Lutheran celebrated the first Holy Communion of Rylie Davis & Anna Kreuz on August 24, 2025, and Sean Martin on November 2, 2025, along with their families!



GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

The Grief Support Group will continue to meet the **1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM in the lounge**. The last meeting for the year will be **Monday, December 15**. There will be a break for the month of January, and the group will reconvene on **Monday, February 2, 2026**.

WELCA

Remember to put 12 dimes in your red stocking at the beginning of December. Please turn in your red stocking with your dimes/donation by the end of December.

WELCA is collecting hats, gloves, and mittens again this year to be given to a local elementary school in January for children who lose these items or simply don't have them. There is a basket in the narthex for these donations. They are very much appreciated!

The WELCA Holiday Luncheon will be held on Tuesday, December 9 at Shore Diner at 12:00 Noon. Anyone is welcome to attend. RSVPs are appreciated to have an accurate head count for the table reservation. Please RSVP to Roberta 609-927-1654 or call the church office 609-927-3082.

Sponsorships for Altar Flowers and Other Worship Items

The 2025 and 2026 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)

Worship Assistants for the remainder of the 2025 year:

11/30 Mary Ann Gring
12/7 Edna Cordery
12/14 Choir-led worship with assigned readers.
12/21 Kevin Thomas
12/28 James Ehrhardt

GRACE PLACE FOOD PANTRY

Grace Place Food Pantry continues to provide food to our neighbors in need who live in the communities of Northfield, Linwood and Somers Point!

We are now preparing for our Holiday Basket distributions (Thanksgiving and Christmas), which is going to be a large undertaking this year. 2025 has been challenging, to say the least. Each month we continue to see a large increase in people dealing with food insecurity. We receive a monthly delivery from the Community Food Bank located in Egg Harbor Township but they have seen big changes in what they receive and that trickles down! I submit a monthly wish list but not all requested items are received. We shop weekly in order to supplement what we receive from the Food Bank so that we can continue to offer a variety of food items.

Grace Place is extremely fortunate in that we receive so much support by way of cash donations or food items from area churches, businesses, various organizations and generous individuals! Through the month of October, once a week, we had one individual shop at Santori's for fresh fruits and vegetables! You can imagine how well received that was! We have regular friends of *Grace Place* who stop in on a weekly basis to contribute bread, eggs, butter and anything else they happen to feel our neighbors would enjoy.

Just a reminder - our local ShopRite and Acme stores offer a free turkey should you spend a certain amount of money. If you do qualify for a turkey but are not planning to use it, please consider donating it to *Grace Place*. We would be very appreciative!

In closing, we are very grateful to Grace Lutheran Church (and its congregation) for housing this pantry for over thirty years. Everyone helps in so many ways and we are truly blessed!

Happy Holidays,

Jim Cordery, Director, *Grace Place* Food Pantry



December

12/4	Adalyn Bilello
12/8	Jim Merce
12/9	Holly Henry
12/10	Elizabeth Hoelter
12/13	Chris Dennis
12/13	Erica Johnson
12/15	Ruth Bowden
12/22	Pastor Wendolyn Trozzo
12/24	Herbert Kreuz
12/25	Eddie Thompson
12/28	Inger Reynolds
12/31	Robert Bartholomew

January

1/1	Rev. Dr. Eric Trozzo
1/7	Robin Johnson
1/7	Heidi Toth
1/10	Kathi Krattenmaker
1/10	Ruth Kruger
1/14	Linda Rihl
1/17	Bernie Somers
1/18	Meredith Henry
1/23	Sherril Kleuser
1/25	Dick Fetter
1/28	Stephen Gring
1/31	Rich Krattenmaker



December

12/2 Deidre & Herbert Kreuz

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.

SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Please note that our annual congregational meeting will take place on **Sunday, February 1st, 2026** immediately following the 10:15 AM Worship Service.

ACTIVITIES & WORSHIP SCHEDULE

November 30: 1st Sunday in Advent 8:00 AM & 10:15 AM

December 7: 2nd Sunday in Advent 8:00 AM & 10:15 AM

December 11: Christmas Tree Lighting and Carols 4:00 PM-5:30 PM

December 18: Blue Christmas 6:00 PM dinner & 6:30 PM Worship

December 14: 3rd Sunday in Advent - 1 Worship Service at 10:15 AM
Special Choir-Led Worship

December 21: 4th Sunday in Advent 8:00 AM & 10:15 AM

December 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Choir 6:00 PM

December 28: Regular Spoken Worship 8:00 AM

Worship Service of Readings and Carols 10:15 AM

The 6:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be livestreamed.

Staff at Grace

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

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