

July 12, 2026

Pentecost 7



## 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](http://www.GraceLutheranSPNJ.org)

**E-mail:** [office@GraceLutheranSPNJ.org](mailto:office@GraceLutheranSPNJ.org)

Reverend † Elizabeth Frey, Scott J. Breiner, Music Director  
Corinne Rhodes, Administrative Assistant

**We welcome you to worship here at Grace!**

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

*S=service music in the front part of the hymnal.*

## GATHERING

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

*God's word is like the rain that waters the earth and brings forth vegetation. It is also like the sower who scatters seed indiscriminately. Our lives are like seeds sown in the earth. Even from what appears to be little, dormant, or dead, God promises a harvest. At the Lord's table we are fed with the bread of life, that we may bear fruit in the world.*

**WELCOME**

Rev. Elizabeth Frey

**PRELUDE**

*Largo from Opera Xerxes*

by Handel

*Please stand as you are able.*

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity,+ one God, whose compassion endures forever.  
**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin to God.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

**Compassionate God, we confess to you all our sins. Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves. In your mercy, call us back to you. Your yoke is easy and your burden is light. Restore us to dwell in your peace. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.**

Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

In the name of God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven.  
Rest in God's love. **Amen.**

**OPENING HYMN**

*Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty*

**ELW #533**

### 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 S138**

**HYMN OF PRAISE**

*This is the Feast*

**ELW S140**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

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

**GREET YOUR NEIGHBOR****CHILDREN'S SERMON**

*Please be seated.*

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:10-13**

*God's word to Israel's exiles is as sure and effective as never-failing precipitation. Their return to the Holy Land in a new exodus is cheered on by singing mountains and by trees that clap their hands.*

<sup>10</sup> For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven  
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,

giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
<sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,

but it shall accomplish that which I purpose  
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

<sup>12</sup> For you shall go out in joy  
and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
shall burst into song,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

<sup>13</sup> Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle,  
and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial,  
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

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

**PSALM 65:[1-8] 9-13** (*read responsively*)

<sup>1</sup> You are to be praised, O God, in Zion;  
to you shall vows be fulfilled.

<sup>2</sup> **To you, the one who answers prayer,  
to you all flesh shall come.**

<sup>3</sup> Our sins are stronger than we are,  
but you blot out our transgressions.

<sup>4</sup> **Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell  
there!**

**They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the holiness of  
your temple.**

<sup>5</sup> Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of our  
salvation,

O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the oceans far away.

<sup>6</sup> **You make firm the mountains by your power;  
you are girded about with might.**

<sup>7</sup> You still the roaring of the seas,  
the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples.

<sup>8</sup> **Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your  
marvelous signs;**

**you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.**

<sup>9</sup> You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous;  
the river of God is full of water.

You prepare the grain, for so you provide for the earth.

<sup>10</sup> **You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges;  
with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.**

<sup>11</sup> You crown the year with your goodness,  
and your paths overflow with plenty.

<sup>12</sup> **May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing,  
and the hills be clothed with joy.**

<sup>13</sup> May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak  
themselves with grain;

let them shout for joy and sing.

**SECOND READING: Romans 8:1-11**

*There is no condemnation for those who live in Christ. God sent Christ to accomplish what the law was unable to do: condemn sin and free us from its death-dealing ways. The Spirit now empowers proper actions and values in our lives and gives us the promise of resurrected life.*

<sup>1</sup> Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot, <sup>8</sup> and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

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

*Please stand as you are able.*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the

words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

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

### GOSPEL: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

*In Matthew's gospel, both Jesus and his disciples "sow the seed" of God's word by proclaiming the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near." Now, in a memorable parable, Jesus explains why this good news produces different results in those who hear.*

<sup>1</sup> That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup> Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup> And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup> Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup> Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup> If you have ears, hear!"

<sup>18</sup> "Hear, then, the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path.

<sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word

and immediately receives it with joy,<sup>21</sup> yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.<sup>22</sup> As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this age and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing.<sup>23</sup> But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

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

*Please be seated.*

**SERMON**

Rev. Elizabeth Frey

*Please stand as you are able.*

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*We Plow the Fields and Scatter*

ELW #680

**THE APOSTLE’S 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.**

**JOYFUL NOISE OFFERING**

*Our monthly special noisy offering for the month of July is Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Atlantic County.*

**OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY** *There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy* by David Schwoebel  
Clarinet: Andrew Ehrhardt

Congregation, please join in singing verse 3 on you bulletin insert.

*Please stand as you are able.*

**OFFERTORY RESPONSE** *Create in Me a Clean Heart O God* [WOV #732](#)

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever. Amen.

*Please be seated.*

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

P: Trusting in God's steadfast love for all God has made, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation. *Brief silence.*

A: God our gardener, you scatter grace like seed across the world. Continue to cultivate the garden of your church with your abundant Spirit. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: God our joy, your bountiful creation reflects your commitment to life despite our actions disregarding its wonder. We look toward Isaiah's vision, when all creation rejoices, and the trees will clap for joy at your salvation. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: God our life, you give us the same Spirit by which you raised Christ from the dead. Set our minds on that Spirit whenever fear or condemnation overwhelm throughout the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

P: God our host and table, we pray for children who hunger and rely on school meals, for all who toil under the hot sun without refreshment, for the chronically ill who have exhausted their resources, and for local concerns *especially all who are on our prayer list and all those we name aloud or in our hearts...* God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: God our source, tend this assembly with your grace throughout this summer season. May those who travel for work or recreation do so safely, and may visitors find refreshment among us. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: We give you thanks that the roots of your goodness run deep throughout history. We remember those saints who have gone before us in faith. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

P: Grateful for your abundant provision and trusting in your goodness, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundant grace of Christ Jesus.  
Amen.

## HOLY COMMUNION

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

ELW S144

**PREFACE**

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

ELW S144

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**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**

Heaven has come near. Come, share in the feast!

**DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION**

*EVERYONE IS INVITED to receive Holy Communion. The ushers will invite worshippers forward to receive communion in front of the altar steps. Once you have received the wafer and the red wine/white grape juice, place your empty cup in the tray and return to your pew via the side aisles. If you do not wish to receive communion, or are worshipping with children who have not had First Communion, we welcome you to come forward for a blessing and cross your arms over your chest to show your preference to the pastor.*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever. Amen.**

## SENDING

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Please stand as you are able.*

### BLESSING

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, + one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always. **Amen.**

### SENDING HYMN

*Sent Forth By God's Blessing*

**ELW #547**

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

### POSTLUDE

*Just a Closer Walk with Thee*

arr. by Albert Gamse

### DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

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

**We thank all those serving in worship today:  
Worship Assistant: Shirley Blankenship**



**The flowers sponsor this week is: Carol Gallagher, "Happy 46th birthday to my wonderful son, Patrick!"**

**Special thank you to Stephen Gring for providing  
the music for worship!**

*Pastor Althea extends a heart-felt thank you to the congregation of Grace Lutheran Church for the flowers, and to all who have sent cards, texts and messages. She appreciates your prayers and concern for her well-being.*

Please be sure to sign up for a time to meet with Pastor Liz if you have not done that yet. She would love to get to know everyone, even if she has already met you. The sign-up sheets are in the narthex (back of the church). You may also call the church office to set up a time with her.

We are in the process of updating our prayer list. If you or a loved one have been on our prayer list, please call or email the church office at your convenience to give us an update on how you/they are doing, and let us know which names can be removed and which names you would like us to keep. Thank you!

# HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

## July 12, 2026-July 19, 2026

### 7th Sunday of Pentecost 7/12/26

8:00AM Spoken Worship  
10:15AM Traditional Worship  
**Joyful Noise Offering: Big Brothers/  
Big Sisters of Atlantic County**

### MONDAY 7/13/26

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

### TUESDAY 7/14/26

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

### WEDNESDAY 7/15/26

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

### THURSDAY 7/16/26

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry  
12:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous  
5:30PM AA 12-Step  
7:00PM Al-Anon  
**7:00PM Church Council Meeting**

### FRIDAY 7/17/26

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

### SATURDAY 7/18/26

7:30AM & 8:30AM Weight Watchers

### 8th Sunday of Pentecost 7/19/26

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

**Office Hours:**  
**Mon-Tues 10:00-3:00**  
**Thurs-Fri 10:00-3:00**

<b>SHORE DINER</b> 
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