

September 13, 2026

Pentecost 16



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.org

Reverend † Elizabeth Frey, Pastor, 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!

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

WELCOME

Rev. Elizabeth Frey

PRELUDE

II. Brother Sun by James Woodman
(from *All Creatures of Our God and King*)

Please stand as you are able.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God, we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others.

Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hear this good news: We have peace with God through + Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace. **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN *All Creatures, Worship God Most High!* **ELW #835**
Verses 1, 2, & 3

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

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

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

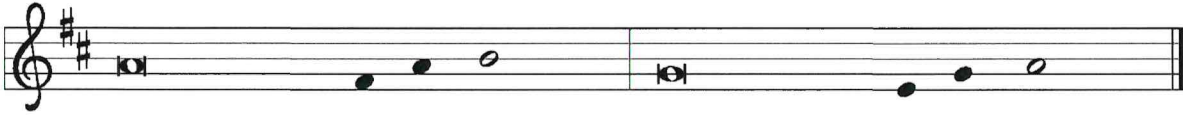
GREET YOUR NEIGHBOR**CHILDREN'S SERMON****BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS***Please be seated.***FIRST READING: Genesis 50:15-21**

After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.

¹⁵ Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶ So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷ 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹ So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

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

PSALM 103:8-13



- ¹ Bless the LORD, | O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God's | holy name.
- ² **Bless the LORD, | O my soul,**
and forget not | all God's benefits—
- ³ who forgives | all your sins
and heals all | your diseases;
- ⁴ **who redeems your life | from the grave**
and crowns you with steadfast | love and mercy;
- ⁵ who satisfies your desires | with good things
so that your youth is renewed | like an eagle's.
- ⁶ **O LORD, you provide | vindication**
and justice for all who | are oppressed.
- ⁷ You made known your | ways to Moses
and your works to the chil- | dren of Israel.
- ⁸ **LORD, you are full of compas- | sion and mercy,**
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love;
- ⁹ you will not al- | ways accuse us,
nor will you keep your an- | ger forever.
- ¹⁰ **You have not dealt with us according | to our sins,**
nor repaid us according to | our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as the heavens are high a- | bove the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for | those who fear you.
- ¹² **As far as the east is | from the west,**
so far have you removed our transgres- | sions from us.
- ¹³ As a father has compassion | for his children,
so you have compassion for those who fear | you, O LORD.

SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12

This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷ For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written,

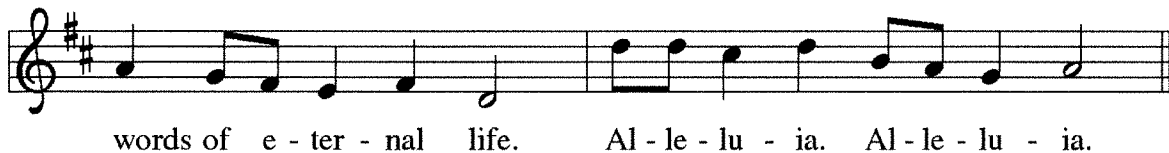
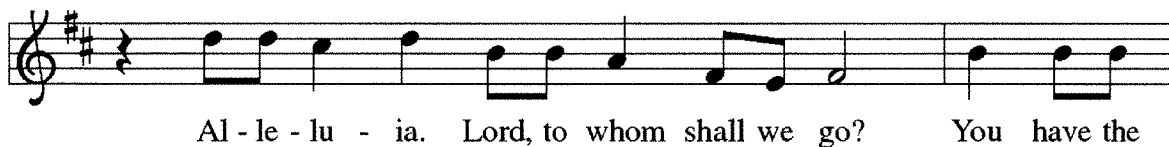
“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

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

Please stand as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 18th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

²¹ Peter came and said to [Jesus,] “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³ “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

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 *All Creatures, Worship God Most High!* **ELW #835**
Verses 4, 5, & 6

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.

NEW MEMBER WELCOME

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *Bless the Lord, O My Soul* by Mikhail Ippolitof-Ivanof
Please stand as you are able.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Create in Me a Clean Heart O God* **WOV #732**

OFFERING PRAYER

God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. Amen.

Please be seated.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P: Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us. *Brief silence.*

A: Move your church throughout the world away from judging and despising others. Lead us to embody the forgiveness you have given us in Jesus. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: The endless beauty of your creation reminds us of your mercy. Protect those who care for farms and ranches. Guide those who lead us to wonder at your creation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Raise up leaders to hold all in authority accountable for any misuse of the power entrusted to them. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: Calm the fears of all in need with your promises. Compassionately free the lives of any who feel bound by their failures. Remember your children in need *especially all who are on our prayer list and all those we name aloud or in our hearts...* Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Ground this congregation in the welcome you show us in forgiving our sin. Inspire each of us to welcome others for your honor and glory. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: With you is found the joy and promise of eternal life. Keep us in that joy as we remember all those who have gone before us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name. **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

Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

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

Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as you are able.

BLESSING

The God of grace + bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

In Thee Is Gladness

ELW #867

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

POSTLUDE

In Thee Is Gladness

by J. S. Bach

DISMISSAL Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.
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: Shirley Blankenship**

**The flowers sponsor this week is: Ingaborg Carlson, in memory of
loved ones.**



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

September

Starting **Thursday, September 17**, please join us for Bible Study with Pastor Liz Frey! This will be held every **Thursday at 9:30 AM**. **Sunday School will start on September 20**. Please spread the word! All ages are welcome! If you are interested in helping with Sunday School, please contact Ellie Hull at 609-287-6550.

Grief Support Group will start on Monday, September 21 at 6:30 PM and they will continue to meet the 3rd Monday of each month through the end of December.

ATTENTION ALL WORSHIP ASSISTANTS AND ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE A WORSHIP ASSISTANT:

Please plan to attend one of our Worship Assistant Trainings on Sunday September 20 or Sunday September 27 following 10:15 AM worship in the sanctuary.

October:

The Installation for Pastor Liz will be on October 11
at our 10:15 worship service with Bishop Compton. We will have a special luncheon for Pastor Liz following that worship service at 11:30. We are asking all who attend to please RSVP so we know how much food to order and please bring a can of soup for our food pantry in honor of our SOUPer pastor!

4th Annual Oktoberfest
Tickets are now on sale: \$30 for adults and \$15 for children under 12
Friday October 16 from 5:00-7:00

Volunteers are needed to prepare German potato salad, German honey cookies and apple strudel for Oktoberfest! A sign-up sheet, recipes and containers are in the church office. Please stop by during office hours to sign up and pick up what you need for what you wish to prepare.

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

September 13, 2026-September 20, 2026

16th Sunday of Pentecost 9/13/26

8:00AM Spoken Worship
10:15AM Traditional Worship
Blessing of Backpacks

MONDAY 9/14/26

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

TUESDAY 9/15/26

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

WEDNESDAY 9/16/26

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

THURSDAY 9/17/26

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

FRIDAY 9/18/26

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

SATURDAY 9/19/26

7:30AM & 8:30AM Weight Watchers

17th Sunday of Pentecost 9/20/26

8:00AM Spoken Worship
10:15AM Traditional Worship
Sunday School Starts
Worship Assistant Training following
worship

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

Office Hours This Week:

Mon-Tues 10:00-3:00

Thurs-Fri 10:00-3:00