



## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Thank you to all those who helped prepare the Sanctuary for Christmas Eve services and those who participated in the worship services.

**REMINDER:** The Church Office will be CLOSED  
December 25—31. Reopens January 3.

**PLEASE NOTE PASTOR ALTHEA WILL BE ON VACATION DECEMBER 25 -JANUARY 2.**  
She will be available for pastoral emergencies only during that time at 484-345-0399.

### Dedications

#### CANDLES

Thanking God for his many Blessings  
Given by Meredith and Holly Henry

#### BULLETINS

In Loving Memory of Ron  
Given by Mary



**Sunday, December 26, 2021**  
**Online Service ONLY**  
**No In-Person Worship**

Website: [www.gracelutheranspnj.org](http://www.gracelutheranspnj.org)

### Lessons & Carols

**Sunday, January 2, 2022**  
**10:15 am Service ONLY**  
**In person & Livestreaming**

**Sunday, January 9, 2022**  
**Regular Worship resumes.**

**8:00 am - Spoken Service (Lounge)**  
**8:45 am - Adult Sunday School**  
**10:15 am Worship - Sanctuary**  
**(In Person and Livestreaming)**



Christmas Eve

December 24, 2021



**5:00 pm & 7:00 pm**

## Grace Lutheran Church

Shore Road @ Dawes & Meyran Aves.

11 East Dawes Ave, Somers Point, NJ 08244

Office: 609-927-3082 † Fax: 609-927-6672 † Food Pantry: 609-927-9982

Website: [www.gracelutheranspnj.org](http://www.gracelutheranspnj.org)

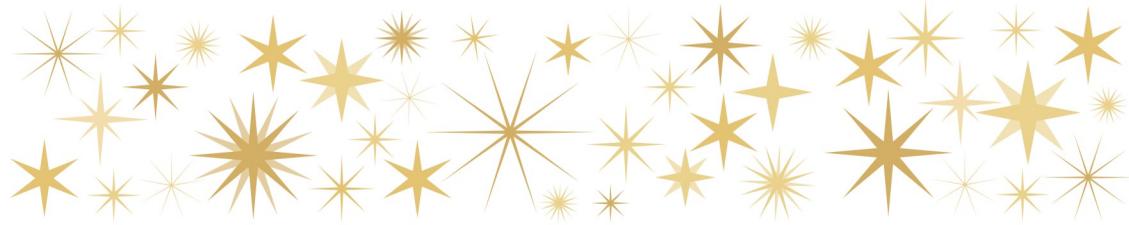
Email: [office@gracelutheranspnj.comcastbiz.net](mailto:office@gracelutheranspnj.comcastbiz.net)

**Pastor:** Rev. Althea Albright

**Music Director:** Scott J. Breiner

**Church Secretary:** Diana McArdle

**Sexton:** Andrew McCarrick



## WELCOME TO GRACE'S FAMILY OF FAITH

We welcome you this day as we prepare our hearts and minds for a new year ahead. We want you to feel comfortable in this place, and we hope you come again soon. Everyone may join us 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.

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

Pastor Althea also invites you to contact her if you would like to receive prayer or more information about our faith, our worship style, or our church.

**Please sign our Visitor Book located in the lobby** (Narthex area) especially if you would like Pastor Althea to get in touch with you.

No matter where your head and heart may be thinking and feeling this holiday season, we, here at Grace, wish you a very **Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year!**



## \*SENDING HYMN

## Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

ELW # 270

1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king;  
 2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
 3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous - ness!

peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."  
 late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.  
 Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;  
 Veiled in flesh the God - head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!  
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
 Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!  
 born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

*Keyran*  
 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king!"

# Sending

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 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 God's 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 Emmanuel.

**Amen.**

*Please stand as you are able*

### \*BLESSING

May Almighty God bless you and keep you.

May the presence of the Messiah give you comfort and peace.

May the Holy Spirit light a fire within you and ✠ give you everlasting hope. **Amen.**

**\*SENDING HYMN**          Hark! The Herald Angels Sing          **ELW # 270**

*Please be seated for the postlude.*

**Take this time to listen to the music and contemplate the Christmas Message.**

**POSTLUDE**                  *For Unto Us a Child is Born*          arr. By Henry Smart

### DISMISSAL

*Pastor:* Go and tell everyone that the Messiah is born! Merry Christmas!

**Thanks be to God! Merry Christmas!**

*"Christmas is more than just a festival or holiday,  
it is a witness to the coming of Christ to lighten our world and our  
lives with hope and joy. The true Christmas story is God becoming human so that  
we may become children of God."*

## Christmas Eve Worship with Holy Communion

**Congregation responses in bold print.**

**\*Please stand as you are able\***

**Please silence your phones.**

# Gathering

## WELCOME

Rev. Althea Albright

## PRELUDE

*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

by Albert D. Schmutz

*Please stand as you are able.*

## \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Let us come together in this holy place to feel the warmth of God's presence.

**We are here to worship our Creator and listen for the Spirit.**

We are called to trust in our Creator and Redeemer. God calls us to listen once again for the voice of the Spirit speaking to us in our lives.

**We find ourselves weary and broken. Only You can heal us and refresh us.**

**Only You can open our hearts and minds.**

Let us remember who created us and loves us just as we are. Let us worship together as we celebrate the coming of the Messiah. **Amen.**

### \*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Let us pray.....Almighty God, you know us inside and out. You are with us in our past, present, and future. We cannot escape your presence.

You know us before we were born. You watch over us day and night, and always hear our prayers. We come before you now asking for forgiveness when we stray. Bring us closer to your Holy Spirit once again. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

God of Love,

**We confess that we have turned away from you, God. We have not trusted your promises to hear us. We have doubts sometimes that you are by our side.**

**We let worry and fear consume us. We do not always treat our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may know your deep love for us again and glorify your holy name in all that we say and do. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was crucified and died for us and for all our sins. As a minister of the church of Christ, I declare to you that God forgives all of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. God has never left you. Return to the Lord your God, with joyful hearts, ready to accept God's gift of grace. **Amen.**



### CELEBRATION OF THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

The prologue to the Gospel of John describes Jesus as the Word of God made flesh, the one who reveals God to be "full of grace and truth."

#### \*LESSON OF LIGHT: John 1:1-14

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

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup>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.

#### \*Carol

#### "Silent Night"

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, heav'nly 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.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885

*Please be seated*

**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 the meal.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Youth, who are receiving First Communion, will come forward first with their family. Then, those in the Social Hall will receive Communion followed by those in the Sanctuary.

*Please stand as you are able*

**\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray together..... **We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us from your very self with the body and blood of Christ. Through this mystery, send us forth to proclaim your promise to a world in need, through the same Jesus Christ, our Messiah. Amen.**

**\*GATHERING HYMN**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

**ELW # 283**

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O  
 2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of light e - ter - nal,  
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,  
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
 born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;  
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!  
 Je - sus, to thee be . . . glo - ry giv'n!

come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:  
 Son of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing!  
 Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:  
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

*Refrain*

Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,  
 O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,

ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.  
 O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4, tr. unknown, st. 2  
 Music: ADESTE FIDELIS, attr. John Francis Wade

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,

heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.

Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes

in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

## 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.**

May all glory and praise, honor, power, and might be to you, our God, forever and ever.

**Amen**

## Meal

Follow the direction of pastor for the taking of communion elements  
after singing the Lamb of God

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And al - so with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh  
you have opened the eyes of faith  
to a new and radiant vision of your glory,  
that, beholding the God made visible,  
we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.  
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 OF PRAISE

This is the feast

*Refrain*  
Assisting minister

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.

All

1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us  
free to be peo - ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and  
strength, and hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.

*Refrain*

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.

2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the  
hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing and hon - or and glo - ry and  
might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

*Final refrain*

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain  
has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

**\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray together....**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 Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*Please be seated*

**Word****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. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!*

- <sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.
- <sup>3</sup>You 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.
- <sup>4</sup>For 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.
- <sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
- <sup>6</sup>For 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.
- <sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.  
The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?  
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.

Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?  
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead-ing.  
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.

This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an-gels sing;  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;

haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun - tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.

*Refrain*  
Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo - ri - a

ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!  
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.  
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893  
Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

### \*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*

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

## SERMON

Please stand as your are able.

## \*SERMON HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ELW # 279

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove  
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!  
 4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.  
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.  
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.

yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.  
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
 No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,  
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

Rev. Althea Albright

Rev. Althea Albright

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The holy gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

## \*GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

*God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.*

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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

