

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

July 16, 2023—July 23, 2023

6th SUNDAY OF PENTECOST 7/16/23

8:00AM Spoken Worship
8:45AM Adult Forum Group
10:15AM Traditional Worship
4:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

MONDAY 7/17/23

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

TUESDAY 7/18/23

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

WEDNESDAY 7/19/23

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

THURSDAY 7/20/23

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
12:00PM Chat & Chew
5:00PM Choir Rehearsal
7:00PM Al-Anon

FRIDAY 7/21/23

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

SATURDAY 7/22/23

No events

7th SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

7/23/23

8:00AM Spoken Worship Service
8:45 AM Adult Forum Group
10:15AM Traditional Worship
4:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

MON-WED 10:00AM-3:00PM
FRI 10:00AM-2:00PM

PASTOR OFFICE HOURS

MON-THURS 10:00AM-2:00PM

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

July 16, 2023

7th Sunday of Pentecost



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

Rev. Althea Albright, 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.
Our hymn songs are found in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship
red hymnal found in the pews.*

GATHERING

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

Introduction

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.

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.

WELCOME

Rev. Althea Albright

PRELUDE

On What Has Now Been Sown

by: Barbara Harbach

Please stand as you are able.

GREETING

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Gracious God, **have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may**

DISMISSAL Go in peace. Share the love of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

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

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We thank all those serving in worship today!

Reader: Kevin Thomas

The flowers and candles sponsor this week is: Mary Goodman,
in loving memory of Vince, "Happy heavenly 50th birthday!"

Pictures for the Church Directory

If you need to have your picture taken for the church directory, please sign up for a date and time that works for you. Sign-up sheets are on the table in the narthex. If you are signing up a family (more than a couple), please sign up for 2 back-to-back time slots, to allow more time for photographing. If you already have a nice family photo you would like to submit and use for the directory, you may send that photo to the following email: gracelutheranmedia24@gmail.com

the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table for all are welcome. Amen.

COMMUNION HYMN *Lamb of God* *white booklet page 7*

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

EVERYONE IS INVITED to come forward at the direction of the ushers. If you are unable to come to the altar, you may remain seated and the pastor will bring you communion after everyone has come forward. Children may come forward to receive a blessing.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious God, in you we live and move and have our being. With your word and this meal of grace, you have nourished our life together. Strengthen us to show your love and serve the world in Jesus’ name. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING

Please stand as you are able.

SENDING BLESSING

Beloved children of God, as we are sent from this place, know that God loves you. Christ’s presence is with you wherever you go. Finally, know that the Spirit is with you whenever you call on the Lord. Amen.

SENDING HYMN *On What Has Now Been Sown* ELW #550

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

POSTLUDE *For the Fruit of All Creation* by: Frank Stoldt

live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

OPENING HYMN *Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty* ELW #533
VERSES 1, 3, & 5 ALL, VERSE 2 WOMEN, VERSE 4 MEN

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 *white booklet page 2*

NOW THE FEAST *white booklet page 3-4*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

You are great, O God, and greatly to be praised. You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Grant that we may believe in you, call upon you, know you, and serve you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Please be seated

WORD

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.

¹⁰For 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,
¹¹so 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.

¹²For 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.

¹³Instead 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



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

²**To you, the one ¹ who answers prayer,
 to you all ¹ flesh shall come.**

³Our sins are strong- ¹ er than we are,
 but you blot out ¹ our transgressions.

⁴**Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your ¹ courts to dwell
 there!**

**They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the
 holiness ¹ of your temple.**

⁵Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of ¹ our
 salvation,

O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the oceans ¹ far away.

⁶**You make firm the mountains ¹ by your power;
 you are girded a- ¹ bout with might.**

P: Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the
 name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our
 Savior. **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

GREAT THANKSGIVING

white booklet page 5

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.

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:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

white booklet page 6

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting
 and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and
 gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this
 is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he 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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us,
 full of grace and truth. All praise and glory are yours, Almighty God, now
 and forever. **Amen.**

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**

OFFERING**OFFERTORY***All Good Gifts*

arr. by: Richard Walters

*Please stand as you are able.***PRESENTATION OF GIFTS** As The Grains Of Wheat *white booklet pg.5***OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **We praise you, God, Creator of the universe. We thank you for all of the blessings in our lives and in the lives of those around us. Take these gifts and use them for your holy work. Grant us opportunities to serve those in need. Send your Spirit to watch over us and guide us in all that we do through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

*Please be seated***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation. *Brief silence.*

A: Guide your church, O God, to sow seeds of forgiveness and righteousness on good soil. Direct your people to proclaim your love in this congregation and throughout the world. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Sustain your creation, O God, by sending favorable weather, causing trees, plants, and fields to grow, protecting waterways and air from pollution. Instill in all people the desire to be good stewards. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: Heal those who are sick, O God *especially all those we name aloud or in our hearts...* Guide health care workers to care for those who suffer, scientists to conduct lifesaving research, and counselors to care for victims of sexual and physical abuse and exploitation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Answer the prayers of those gathered in worship, O God. Protect those who travel near and far, accompany visitors to this congregation, and nurture our faith. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

⁷You still the roaring ¹ of the seas,
the roaring of their waves, and the clamor ¹ of the peoples.

⁸**Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your ¹ marvelous signs;**

you make the dawn and the dusk to ¹ sing for joy.

] ⁹You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is ¹ full of water.

You prepare the grain, for so you provide ¹ for the earth.

¹⁰**You drench the furrows and smooth ¹ out the ridges;
with heavy rain you soften the ground and ¹ bless its increase.**

¹¹You crown the year ¹ with your goodness,
and your paths over- ¹ flow with plenty.

¹²**May the fields of the wilderness be ¹ rich for grazing,
and the hills be ¹ clothed with joy.**

¹³May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak them- ¹ selves with grain;
let them shout for ¹ 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.

¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³For 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, ⁴so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For 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. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For 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, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But 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. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ 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

white booklet page 4

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.

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

¹⁸"Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When 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. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet 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. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³But 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. Althea Albright

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

For the Fruit of All Creation

ELW# 679

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.

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

GREET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Take a brief moment to share that peace by greeting someone sitting near you. Verbal greetings are appropriate if you are not comfortable shaking hands or touching.