

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

October 8, 2023—October 15, 2023

18th SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

10/8/23

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

MONDAY 10/9/23

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

TUESDAY 10/10/23

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
12:00 WELCA

5:00 Oktoberfest Debrief Meeting

6:30PM Narcotics Anonymous
7:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

WEDNESDAY 10/11/23

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
11:30AM Bayside Duplicate Bridge
7:00 PM Financial Support Meeting

7:00PM Narcotics Anonymous

THURSDAY 10/12/23

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
5:00PM Choir Rehearsal
7:00 Antique Club
7:00PM Al-Anon

FRIDAY 10/13/23

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

SATURDAY 10/14/23

No events

20th SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

10/15/23

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

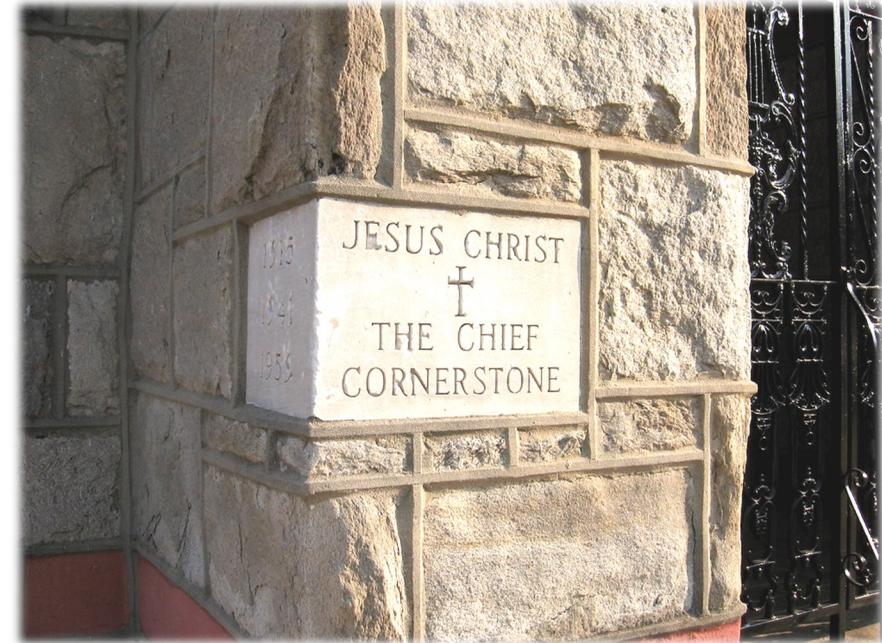
PASTOR OFFICE HOURS

MON-WED 10:00AM-12:30PM
THURS varies

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October 8, 2023

19th Sunday of Pentecost



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Church Office: 609-927-3082 **Food Pantry:** 609-927-9982
Website: www.gracelutheranspnj.org
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Rev. Althea Albright, Pastor ✝ Scott J. Breiner, Music Director
Corinne Rhodes, Administrative Assistant
Alison Toth, Social Media Consultant

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

In today's gospel reading, Jesus tells a vineyard parable, which serves as an image of Israel, the prophets' mission, and Christ's death. For Christians, the vineyard also speaks of God's love poured out in the blood of Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. Grafted onto Christ the vine at baptism, we are nourished with wine and bread so that we may share Christ's sufferings and know the power of his resurrection.

WELCOME

Rev. Althea Albright

PRELUDE

Rhosymedre by R. Vaughan Williams
Please stand as you are able.

GREETING

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

Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Most merciful God, **we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**
Amen.

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

Blessed be your name, O God, **for we have feasted on your goodness. You are our hope and joy. Strengthen us by this food, and send us to share with the world your love and welcome others to your house, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as you are able.

SENDING BLESSING

May Almighty God, † Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, watch over you, guide you, and give you faith for the journey now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

My Song Is Love Unknown
VERSES 4-6

ELW #343

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

POSTLUDE *Allegro* by Nikolaus Bruhns, edited by Gilbert M. Martin

DISMISSAL Go in peace. Be the hands and feet of Christ in the world!
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! Reader: James Ehrhardt

The flowers sponsors this week are: Robert & Mary Bartholomew, in honor of their 68th Wedding Anniversary!

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

WOV page 22

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.

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.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, 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 the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the banquet of Christ. All are welcome. **Amen.**

COMMUNION HYMN

Lamb of God

WOV page 25

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

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

My Song Is Love Unknown

ELW #343

VERSES 1-3

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

WOV page 12

HYMN OF PRAISE

WOV page 14

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Please be seated

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 5:1-7

The prophet sings a sad, parable-like love song about the relationship between God and Israel. In this song Israel is compared to a promising vineyard. Despite God's loving care, the vineyard that is Israel has brought forth "wild grapes" of injustice and distress, when fine grapes of justice and righteousness were expected.

¹Let me sing for my beloved
my love-song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.

²He dug it and cleared it of stones,
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes,
but it yielded wild grapes.

³And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and people of Judah,
judge between me
and my vineyard.

⁴What more was there to do for my vineyard
that I have not done in it?
When I expected it to yield grapes,
why did it yield wild grapes?

⁵And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.

⁶I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;
I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.

⁷For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah
are his pleasant planting;

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Trusting in the transformative power of God's loving Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need. *Brief silence.*

A: God of all grace, you are the source of life and joy. Strengthen the resolve of your church throughout the world, that together we continue to work for your kingdom. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: God of all creation, you plant and nourish the earth as your own precious vineyard. Bless fields and orchards and the hands of those who labor in them, that your people are fed with an abundant harvest of good fruit. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: God of all the earth, you desire peace and justice between nations and peoples. Guide leaders of nations, states, provinces, and cities, that they faithfully govern your people with wisdom, integrity, and compassion. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

P: God of all compassion, in Christ, you lovingly poured yourself out like wine for your people. Have mercy on all who mourn, who struggle with their mental health, who cry out for justice, who hunger, and all who are in any need *especially all those we name aloud or in our hearts...* God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: God of all steadfastness, you set Christ as the cornerstone and foundation of the church. Build up this congregation as living stones, that it stands in the community as a witness to your enduring faithfulness and love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

P: Gracious God, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and amazing grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

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 the peace by greeting someone sitting near you. Verbal greetings are appropriate if you are not comfortable shaking hands or touching.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *Jesus Loves Me* arr. by Michael Hassell
Andrew Ehrhardt: Saxophone

Please stand as you are able.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS *Let the Vineyards* *WOV page 21*

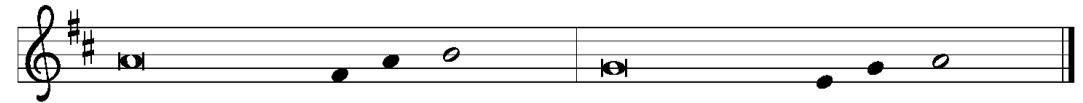
OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. **God of power, God of plenty, all things belong to you.
We bring these gifts to the table, that all might be fed. Form us into the
body of your beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

Please be seated

he expected justice,
but saw bloodshed;
righteousness,
but heard a cry!
The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 80:7-15



⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
⁸**You have brought a vine out of Egypt;
you cast out the nations and planted it.**
⁹You cleared the ground for it;
it took root and filled the land.
¹⁰**The mountains were covered by its shadow
and the towering cedar trees by its boughs.**
¹¹You stretched out its tendrils to the sea
and its branches to the river.
¹²**Why have you broken down its wall,
so that all who pass by pluck off its grapes?**
¹³The wild boar of the forest has ravaged it,
and the beasts of the field have grazed upon it.
¹⁴**Turn now, O God of hosts,
look down from heaven;**
¹⁵behold and tend this vine;
preserve what your right hand has planted.

SECOND READING: Philippians 3:4b-14

Paul reviews some of his supposed credentials, which no longer have any bearing in comparison to the right relationship he has been given through the death of Christ. The power of Christ's resurrection motivates him to press on toward the ultimate goal, eternal life with Christ.

[Paul writes:] ^{4b}If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹²Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

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

Please stand as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 21st chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: : Matthew 21:33-46

Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders who are plotting his death, revealing that their plans will, ironically, bring about the fulfillment of scripture.

[Jesus said to the people:] ³³“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ³⁴When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ ³⁹So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” ⁴¹They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

⁴²Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’?”

⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

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 *The Church of Christ, in Every Age* ELW #729
VERSES 1,3,5 ALL, VERSE 2 MEN, VERSE 4 WOMEN