

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

November 19, 2023—November 26, 2023

25th Sunday of Pentecost 11/19/23

8:00AM Spoken Worship
8:45AM Adult Forum Group
10:15AM Traditional Worship
**Joyful Noise Offering-Somers Point
Police Sunshine Fund**
4:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

MONDAY 11/20/23

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

TUESDAY 11/21/23

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

WEDNESDAY 11/22/23

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

THURSDAY 11/23/23

**Thanksgiving Holiday: Church
Office Closed**
7:00PM Al-Anon

FRIDAY 11/24/23

**Thanksgiving Holiday: Church
Office Closed**
10:30AM Grace Stitches
7:30PM Alcoholics Anonymous

SATURDAY 11/25/23

No events

CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY 11/26/23

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

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

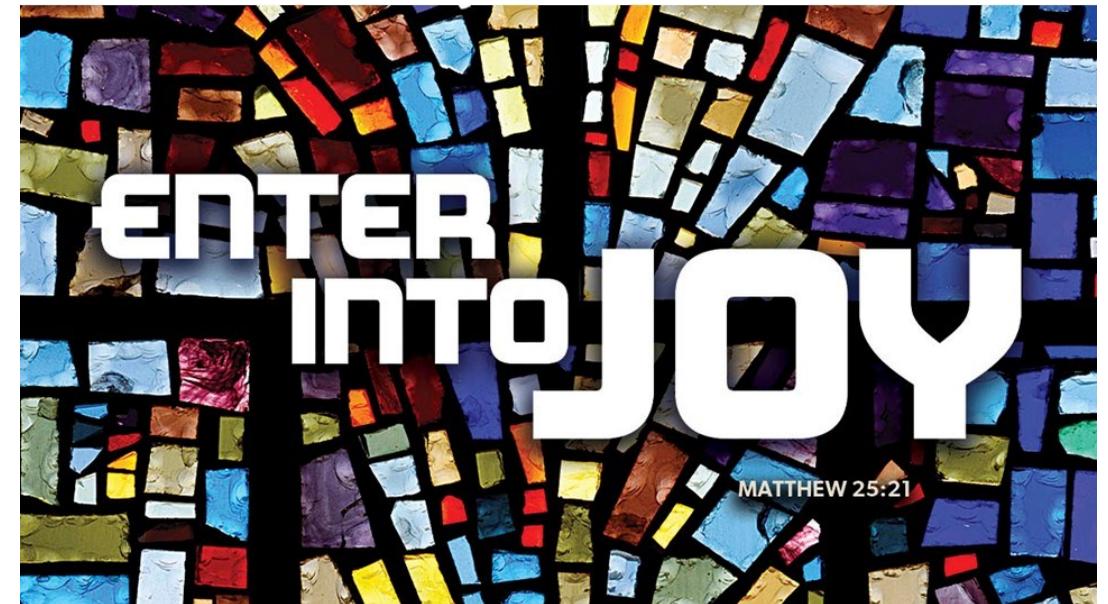
MON-WED 10:00AM-3:00PM
FRI 10:00AM-2:00PM

PASTOR OFFICE HOURS

Varies—Pastor Althea is always
available by appointment.

November 19, 2023

25th 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
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

Our readings during November speak of the end times. Zephaniah proclaims that the coming day of the LORD will be filled with wrath and distress. Paul says it will come like a thief in the night and urges us to be awake and sober. Jesus tells the parable of the talents, calling us to use our gifts, while we still have time, for the greater and common good. In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope—word, water, bread, and wine—eager to welcome the good news of Christ’s coming among us.

WELCOME

Rev. Althea Albright

PRELUDE

Houston

by Wayne L. Wold

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.**

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 *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light* **ELW #815**

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

POSTLUDE

Trumpet Tune

by David N. Johnson

DISMISSAL Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

We thank all those serving in worship today! Reader: James Ehrhardt

The flowers sponsor this week is: Mary Goodman, in loving memory of her husband, Ron.

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

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

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

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

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

ELW #632

VERSES 1, 3, 5 ALL, VERSE 2 WOMEN, VERSE 4 CHOIR, VERSE 5 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

WOV page 12

HYMN OF PRAISE

WOV page 14

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, 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

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.

Please be seated.

~ **WORD** ~

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

Zephaniah (like the prophet Amos in last week's first reading) presents the day of the LORD as one of judgment and wrath. Descriptions of the last day in the New Testament include details taken from Old Testament accounts of the day of the LORD.

⁷Be silent before the Lord GOD!

For the day of the LORD is at hand;
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice,
he has consecrated his guests.

¹²At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people
who rest complacently on their dregs,
those who say in their hearts,
“The LORD will not do good,
nor will he do harm.”

¹³Their wealth shall be plundered,
and their houses laid waste.
Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them.

¹⁴The great day of the LORD is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter,
the warrior cries aloud there.

¹⁵That day will be a day of wrath,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
¹⁶a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

¹⁷I will bring such distress upon people
that they shall walk like the blind;
because they have sinned against the LORD,
their blood shall be poured out like dust,
and their flesh like dung.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Let us turn our hearts to God, our breath and life, as we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *Brief silence.*

A: Gracious God, you give talents and gifts to all your people, and you equip the church to serve. Turn us from fear and self-serving ways, that we use our talents to glorify you and encourage our neighbor. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: You have been our dwelling place from one generation to another. Sustain the life of the planet; protect farmlands and harvests. Direct all people in wise stewardship of all the earth’s resources. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: You call us to honesty and integrity. Instill these values in the hearts of all nations and their leaders. Free any who are oppressed, expose corruption, and bring redemption to victims of injustice. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: You teach us to cherish our days that we may appreciate our blessings. Where there is sickness or sorrow, bring healing, and where there is loneliness, reveal your love in community. We remember before you *especially all those we name aloud or in our hearts...* Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: We pray for the faith formation ministries of our church. Give to all children, youth, and adults who study your word the breastplate of faith and love. Shape us by your love and show us how to encourage one another. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: We offer our spoken prayers and those held in our hearts trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

~ **HOLY COMMUNION** ~

GREAT THANKSGIVING

WOV page 22

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.

they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

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 *God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending* **ELW #678**

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.**

OFFERING

CHOIR ANTHEM

Gloria

From Twelfth Mass

Please stand as you are able.

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

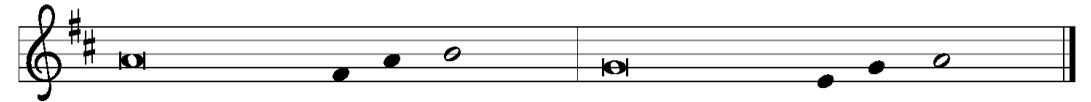
OFFERING PRAYER

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.

¹⁸Neither their silver nor their gold
will be able to save them
on the day of the LORD's wrath;
in the fire of his passion
the whole earth shall be consumed;
for a full, a terrible end
he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.
The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

PSALM 90:1-8 [9-11] 12



¹Lord, you have | been our refuge
from one generation | to another.

²**Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the | earth
were born,**

from age to age | you are God.

³You turn us back to the | dust and say,
“Turn back, O child- | ren of earth.”

⁴**For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when | it is past
and like a watch | in the night;**

⁵you sweep them away | like a dream,
they fade away suddenly | like the grass:

⁶**in the morning it is | green and flourishes;
in the evening it is dried | up and withered.**

⁷For we are consumed | by your anger;
we are afraid because | of your wrath.

⁸**Our iniquities you have | set before you,
and our secret sins in the light | of your countenance.**

[⁹When you are angry, all our | days are gone;
we bring our years to an end | like a sigh.

¹⁰**The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength | even
eighty;
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away
quickly and | we are gone.**

¹¹Who regards the power¹ of your wrath?
 Who rightly fears your¹ indignation?
] ¹²**So teach us to num-¹ber our days
 that we may apply our¹ hearts to wisdom.**

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Though we do not know and cannot calculate the day of Christ's return, we live faithfully in the here and now as we anticipate the day when we will be given eternal salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

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.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 5th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:14-30

Jesus tells a parable about his second coming, indicating that it is not sufficient merely to maintain things as they are. Those who await his return should make good use of the gifts that God has provided them.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁴“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what