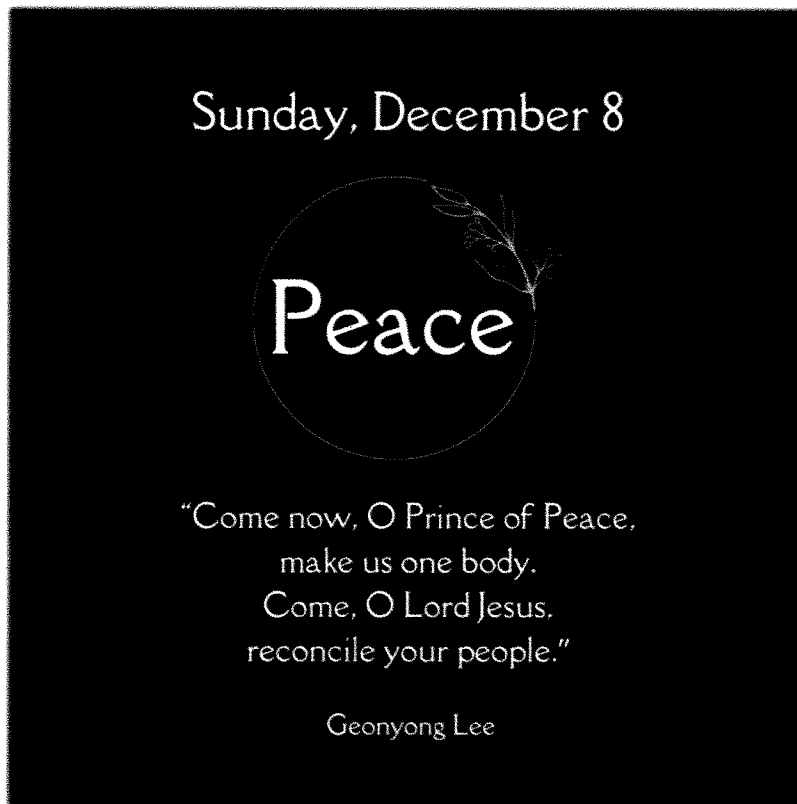


December 8, 2024

2nd Sunday of Advent



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

11 East Dawes Avenue, Somers Point, NJ 08244

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Interim Pastor † Wendolyn Trozzo, 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



WELCOME

James Ehrhardt

PRELUDE

Savior of the Heathen, Come

by J. S. Bach

Please stand as you are able.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon. **Amen.**

Today, as we confess our sin, we recognize how easily we overlook the gifts God gives, and we accept the sad truth that our limitations often create the conditions for sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Let us pray.

God, we want a faith that feels like more than words, but we lack your power to embody goodness. We hear your call to serve others yet feel too worn out to set the table. We hunger to taste justice but fear the burning spice of the meal. We want our place at your table but resist sitting beside a stranger. We have lost our appetites for the fullness of your grace. Forgive us and restore us with the healing wholeness of your presence.

My friends, God knows you are imperfect, but God did not invite you here today for what you have done or how you behaved. God loves you. God always cared much more for you than for your shortcomings. God forgives you all your sins.

Now repeat after me.

We accept God's forgiveness. **We accept God's forgiveness.**

We take our place in God's purpose. **We take our place in God's purpose.**

Amen. **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

ELW #254

GREETING

Greetings to you in the name of the triune God, the one whose word always accomplishes: The Shaper of life, the Savior of Humanity, the Spirit of Renewal.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH



1. When twi - light leaves the even - ing sky and night re - veals the
 2. When bit - ter days and bar - ren ground sap strength and pow - er and
 3. When rough ter - rain makes prog - ress hard, God lev - els what's in the



stars, the far ho - ri - zon hope of God comes sing - ing to our hearts.
 voice, ten - a - cious faith will hold us fast; God's hope will say, re - joice!
 way; a ten - der jus - tice will car - ry us, and care will not de - lay.



Your love is more than words, O God, a flame you kin - dle, a seed you sow, a



rose that blooms in the snow, and we will mag - ni - fy your love.

Each of our Advent candles represents God's generous goodness, the advent of Jesus, God's greatest gift, the Spirit's fluttering flicker of joy. As we light each candle, we recognize the gifts God has given us this week.

Together we pray:

As you light the candle for hope:
 God, we reach for unreasonable hope;
and you prepare an incomparable future.

As you light the candle for today, peace:

God, we breathe in your peaceful refuge,

for you have made a place where we can safely rest.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION/PRAYER OF THE DAY

Now that the warmth of God's presence fills this place, we pray that the Spirit will illuminate our lives through the words we hear, the songs we sing, and the pathways of prayer engraved on our hearts.

We pray: God, we feel threatened by painful truths, but you build the path to peace through the wilderness. Speak boldly to us today so we can construct true peace upon the foundation of your care.

God, we breathe in your peaceful refuge, **for you have made a place where we can safely rest.**

God, illuminate us. **Illuminate us. 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.

First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means "my messenger") will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God's people, as silver and gold are refined.

¹ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in

righteousness. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

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

PSALM: Luke 1:68-79 (*read responsively*)

⁶⁸ Blessed are you, Lord, the ¹ God of Israel,
you have come to your people and ¹ set them free.

⁶⁹ **You have raised up for us a ¹ mighty Savior,
born of the house of your ¹ servant David.**

⁷⁰ Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us ¹ from our enemies,

⁷¹ from the hands of ¹ all who hate us,

⁷² **to show mercy ¹ to our forebears,
and to remember your ¹ holy covenant.**

⁷³ This was the oath you swore to our ¹ father Abraham:

⁷⁴ to set us free from the hands of our ¹ enemies,

free to worship you ¹ without fear,

⁷⁵ **holy and righteous before you, all the days ¹ of our life.**

⁷⁶ And you, child, shall be called the prophet of ¹ the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to pre- ¹ pare the way,

⁷⁷ **to give God's people knowledge ¹ of salvation
by the forgiveness ¹ of their sins.**

⁷⁸ In the tender compassion ¹ of our God
the dawn from on high shall ¹ break upon us,

⁷⁹ **to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shad- ¹ ow of
death,**

and to guide our feet into the ¹ way of peace.

Please stand as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

Al - le - lu - ia. You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 3rd chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by “repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

¹ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. ³ He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

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

Please be seated.

MESSAGE

We Need A Little Christmas

James Ehrhardt

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Prepare the Royal Highway

ELW #264

Please be seated.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

God, we have turned to you today for a bit of quiet, a sliver of sabbath, a small moment to set down what we carry as we consider your word.

And into this minute of rest, you send your prophet with an axe for the root of the tree, and kindling for the burning fire.

Your call to action is surprising, and we are not always ready.

Yet we know we must help build the road where your people travel toward justice. Our offering is received.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Advent Peace Canon

arr. by Ruth Elaine Schram

Instrumentalist: Andrew Ehrhardt

Please stand as you are able.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*

WOV #35

OFFERING PRAYER

Together we pray.

Holy Spirit, please bless these small gifts we give. **You set the table with plenty of love.**

Prepare room in your home **for my neighbor and me.**

Prepare a place in your vision **for my neighbor and me.**

Prepare a seat at your table **for my neighbor and me.**

Holy Spirit, you have blessed these gifts we give. **You set the table with plenty of love.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P: As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence. *Brief silence.*

At the end of each prayer petition when the worship assistant or pastor says, "Lord, in your mercy," please respond with "receive our prayer."

P: Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

And we remember these gifts as we pray the way Jesus taught us.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as you are able.

SENDING

BLESSING

Where is the care in this world? Where is the faith we were promised? Where is the hope we desired, when peace moves into our homes, and joy is a constant presence, and justice is for everyone?

God, this world waits to know that your love is more than words.

People of God, you have already shared the advent of God's goodness. You carry the blessing of God - God, the First Whisper; Jesus, the Living Promise; Spirit, the Speaker of Hearts. Now go into this world expecting God's justice and nurturing God's peace.

God, we will magnify your love. Thanks be to you! Amen.

SENDING HYMN *Let There Be Peace On Earth* by Jill Jackson & Sy Miller

Let there be peace on Earth,
and let it begin with me.

Let there be peace on Earth,
the peace that was meant to be.

With God as our Father,
children all are we.

Let us walk with each other
in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me,
let this be the moment now.

With every step I take,
let this be my solemn vow:

To take each moment
and live each moment in peace, eternally.

Let there be peace on Earth,
and let it begin with me.

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

POSTLUDE

Prepare the Royal Highway

by Paul Manz

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Encourage one another in Christ.
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: June Jordan

The flowers sponsor this week is: Bob Grant, to the Glory of God!

The bulletins sponsor this week is: Roberta Blumenthal

*Special thank you to Jim Ehrhardt for
leading our worship service!*

Announcements:

Cape Shore Chorale Christmas Concert

Directed by Scott Breiner

Holy Trinity Church in Ocean City today at 3:00 PM

Food Pantry Item for December:

Paper Towels and Kleenex/Tissues

These may be placed in the designated basket in the narthex.

WELCA is collecting donations of hats, mittens, and gloves for children in need this winter. Your donations are greatly appreciated and may be placed in the designated basket in the narthex.

The 17th Annual Cookie Walk is this Saturday at 9:00 AM!

Cookies can be dropped off at the church on Friday between the hours of 9:00AM-6:00 PM. They can be dropped on Saturday morning, no later than 8:30.

If you are helping the day of the event, please arrive by 8:00AM. The doors will open promptly at 9:00.

BLUE CHRISTMAS: December 19th at 7:00 PM

This is a service of comfort provided especially for anyone who is experiencing grief over a loved one's death, job loss, divorce, chronic disease, stress, or other challenges that cause one to ache.

GRAB BAG CHRISTMAS PAGEANT:

December 22 at 10:15 AM Worship Service

Children and adults of all ages will enjoy participating in this fun, interactive Christmas story! Be ready to laugh and get into the Christmas spirit!

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SCHEDULE:

7:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (Parents may bring children's favorite blanket for Pastor’s special children’s sermon.)

9:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Choir
This service will be livestreamed.



How many people did our Food Pantry feed on Thanksgiving?

We gave out 97 baskets this year – that means that 97 households were provided a frozen turkey and a bag with the can/box ingredients for a traditional Thanksgiving meal. Last year we gave out 64 baskets. We don’t track how many people are fed by each basket, but it is likely somewhere between 2-10 people per household.

		2 people	4 people	6 people	8 people	10 people
2023	64 baskets	128	256	384	512	640
2024	97 baskets	194	388	582	776	970

John 1:16 says, “For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.” What a gift that others could have full bellies through the grace we have been given, that Grace and Grace Place Food Pantry have chosen to share!

December numbers are about the same, so please contribute food, money, or time, as you are able!

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

December 8, 2024-December 15, 2024

2nd Sunday of Advent 12/8/24

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

MONDAY 12/9/24

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
 5:45PM Heather Croft HOA
 7:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

TUESDAY 12/10/24

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
**12:00 WELCA Luncheon at
 Shore Diner**

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

WEDNESDAY 12/11/24

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

THURSDAY 12/12/24

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
 12:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous
 5:00PM Choir Rehearsal
7:00PM Grief Support Group
7:00PM Facilities Meeting

7:00PM Antique Club

7:00PM Al-Anon

FRIDAY 12/13/24

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

SATURDAY 12/14/24

9:00AM Cookie Walk

3rd Sunday of Advent 12/15/24

8:00AM Spoken Worship Service
 8:45AM Adult Forum Group
 10:15AM Traditional Worship
Baptism of Jonathan Bori
12:30PM 100th Anniversary Gala
Atlantic City Country Club
 4:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Mon-Tues 10:00AM-3:00PM

Wed 9:30AM-1:00PM

Thurs 1:30PM-5:00PM

Fri 10:00AM-3:00PM