

December 7, 2025

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

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 us as we worship our Lord together!

INTRODUCTION: *Bible Focus for Advent and 2026!*

Each Sunday we are blessed to read, hear, and ponder a reading from one of the Gospels. For most of 2025, our readings were from the Gospel of Luke. Now, we turn to the Gospel according to Matthew. You'll be able to appreciate the readings and the sermon more if you have a sense of context - so throughout the year, Pastor will provide quick overviews that will help you connect more with God's Word for your life.

*Matthew was written to early Christians who were mostly Jewish but in a Church that was increasingly of non-Jewish (Gentile) backgrounds. Jewish Christians were steeped in the promises given through Moses and the Exodus from slavery in Egypt. They would recognize when Jesus was quoting their Scripture (we Gentiles call it the "Old Testament" but it's very much active and alive). God's Law, like the 10 Commandments, is not discarded by Jesus - rather he is the **fulfillment** of the Law, the history, the prophets, and the promises that the Jewish Christians loved.*

*But both Jews and Gentiles were welcomed into the new promises given through Christ, and so Matthew's Gospel, written around 85 AD or 50 years after the crucifixion, was also a gift to teach new believers how to worship and live. From chapter 1:23 to the end of chapter 28:20 (Matthew's whole Gospel!), we will hear how **in every age** Jesus brings new vision and hope for us as we share in mission and as we grow ever deeper in relationship with Jesus, "God With Us," Emmanuel.*

WELCOME

Rev. Wendolyn Trozzo

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Veni, Emmanuel

by Flor Peeters

Please stand as you are able.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose salvation is sure. **Amen.**

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Long-expected God, we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We become weary and impatient. Teach us to love you and to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust that we may abound in hope. **Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. + You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace. May you be ready to welcome the Savior - just as the Savior welcomes you. **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN

O Day of Peace

ELW #711

GREETING

The advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, the presence of God, and unity in the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

KYRIE

(front pages of hymnal) ELW S156

HYMN OF PRAISE

ELW S159

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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

GREET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Please be seated.

PSALM 72:1-7, 18-19 (read responsively)

- ¹ Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;
- ² **that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;**
- ³ that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
- ⁴ **Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**

⁵ May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.

⁶ **Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.**

⁷ In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

¹⁸ **Blessed are you, LORD God, the God of Israel;
you alone do wondrous deeds!**

¹⁹ And blessed be your glorious name forever,
and may all the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. Amen.

READING: Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David's royal line (the stump of Jesse). Gifted by the spirit of God, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peaceful coexistence.

¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see
or decide by what his ears hear,

⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb;
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together,
and a little child shall lead them.

⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze;
 their young shall lie down together;
 and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
 and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹ They will not hurt or destroy
 on all my holy mountain,
 for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
 as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the
 nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

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

Please stand as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

P: The Living Word speaks to us.

C: Allelujah!

P: Lord, to whom shall we go?

C: You have the words of eternal life. Allelujah!

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

GOSPEL: Matthew 3:1-12

Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord;
 make his paths straight.' "

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all

Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

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

Please be seated.

SERMON

Rev. Wendolyn Trozzo

Please stand as you are able.

ADVENT AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in the coming of the Light that shatters all darkness and brings love to all people. We believe in peace, and that one day all nations shall enter the house of God, where love and mercy flow like a mighty river.

We believe in a hope that casts out fear. We believe in waiting patiently for the coming of the Lord, knowing it is Christ who restores us and leads us to salvation. We believe in being ready, for Christ comes at unexpected times and places, in the form of strangers, friends, and family. We believe that we are called to welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed us.

We believe that the Holy Spirit helps us live in harmony with one another, and we prepare our hearts and our lives for the birth of a Child who is called “Prince of Peace,” “Emmanuel,” “God with us.” Amen.

Please be seated.

JOYFUL NOISE OFFERING

Our monthly special noisy offering for the month of December is CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children).

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

A Rose E'er Blooming by Evelyn R. Larter
Instrumentalist: Andrew Ehrhardt

Please stand as you are able.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* **ELW #257 verse 4**

OFFERING PRAYER

Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. Amen.

Please be seated.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P: We come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation. *Brief silence.*

A: Grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to care for your people. Grant steadfastness and encouragement in all trials. We lift our prayer requests now, aloud or in our hearts: *(pause)*
Lord, hear our prayer, **"And in Your merciful love, answer."**

A: Grant us counsel and strength to care for the natural world. We pray for creation: *(pause)*
Lord, hear our prayer, **"And in Your merciful love, answer."**

A: Grant us righteousness and faithfulness in communities of all sizes. We pray for peoples near and far: *(pause)*
Lord, hear our prayer, **"And in Your merciful love, answer."**

A: Grant us good hospitality and a spirit of reconciliation. We pray for those who are isolated or divided: *(pause)*
Lord, hear our prayer, **"And in Your merciful love, answer."**

A: Grant us joy and peace as we remember our ancestors in the faith. We especially thank you for the dearly departed who have shaped our lives:
(pause)

Lord, hear our prayer, “**And in Your merciful love, answer.**”

P: Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all our prayers, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION (*Setting Five*)

GREAT THANKSGIVING ELW S161

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY ELW S162

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD’S PRAYER ELW S163

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life. God is with us! Come, receive what God has promised.

COMMUNION HYMN *Lamb of God* ELW S164

COMMUNION HYMN *Blessed Be The God of Israel* ELW #250

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

EVERYONE IS INVITED to receive Holy Communion. The ushers will invite worshippers forward to fill the altar railings. Once you have received the wafer and the red wine/white grape juice, place your empty cup in the container on your way to return to your pew. If you do not wish to receive communion, or are worshipping with children who have not had First Communion, we welcome you to come forward for a blessing; as you kneel at the railing, cross your arms over your chest to show your preference to the pastor.

COMMUNION BLESSING

The Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as you are able.

BENNEDICTION

May God Emmanuel, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace even in darkness, and good news to share: today and always.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN*Prepare The Royal Highway***ELW #264**

*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. Serve the Lord.
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: Edna Cordery

The flowers sponsor this week is: Kathy Wopatek-Nigsch, in loving
memory of her father, Walter Wopatek.

The flowers sponsor this week is: Carol Gallagher, remembering her
mother, Lucy Chamberlain, in celebration of her 28 year anniversary into
heaven.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

COOKIE WALK HELPERS NEEDED

Thank you, those of you who signed up to bake for the Cookie Walk this Saturday, December 13! You may bring your cookies to the church on Friday, December 12 from 9:00 AM-4:00 PM. Volunteers are needed December 12 to receive and organize trays of cookies and baked goods. Helpers are also needed the day of the event.

If you'd like to volunteer to help or have any questions, please contact Heidi Toth 609-233-4156 or Sandy Piskun 609-226-5591.

WELCA is asking for donations of children's hats, gloves, and mittens, to be collected throughout the months of November and December. These items will then be donated in January to an elementary school for children who are in need or who lose them this winter.



The December meeting for WELCA will be held this **Tuesday, December 9 at noon at the Shore Diner**. All are welcome! Please RSVP to Roberta if you are able to attend 609-927-1654.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING & CAROLS **Thursday, December 11 4:00-5:30 PM**

4:00-5:00 PM: Meet in the Fellowship Hall to make ornaments and enjoy hot cocoa and cider.

5:00-5:30 PM: Christmas Tree Lighting and carols.

Sunday, December 14

Next Sunday, December 14, there will be no 8:00 AM worship service and no Adult Forum. We hope you will all plan to join us for a special Advent Service of Lessons and Carols at 10:15 AM!

BLUE CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICE

Thursday, December 18

6:00-6:30 PM: Dinner in Social Hall

6:30PM: Worship Service in the Sanctuary

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Wednesday, December 24

6:00 PM: Worship Service in the Sanctuary

Attention Church Council Members:

Please note that there is NO COUNNCIL MEETING the month of December. Your monthly meetings will resume in January.

Sunday, December 14

Next Sunday, December 14, there will be no 8:00 AM worship service and no Adult Forum. We hope you will all plan to join us for a special Advent Service of Lessons and Carols at 10:15 AM!

2026 Giving Envelopes



The giving envelopes for 2026 are ready for you in the narthex. They are arranged alphabetically by last name. PLEASE make sure that the envelopes you take have YOUR NAME on them.

If you do not have giving envelopes and would like to have a set, please call or email the church office and give Corinne your name. You will be contacted when your envelopes are assigned and ready.

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

December 7, 2025-December 14, 2025

2nd Sunday of Advent 12/7/25

8:00AM Spoken Worship
 8:45AM Adult Forum
 10:15AM Traditional Worship
Joyful Noise Offering-CASA
 Gospel-Matthew 3:1-12

MONDAY 12/8/25

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

TUESDAY 12/9/25

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
12:00 WELCA at Shore Diner
 6:30PM Narcotics Anonymous
 7:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

WEDNESDAY 12/10/25

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

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

This week:

Mon 10:00-3:00

Thurs-Fri 10:00-3:00

THURSDAY 12/11/25

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry
 2:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous
4:00-5:30 Tree Lighting & Carols
 5:00PM Choir Rehearsal
 6:00 AA 12-Step
 7:00PM Al-Anon

FRIDAY 12/12/25

Drop off cookies for Cookie Walk
 10:30AM Grace Stitchers
 7:30PM Alcoholics Anonymous

SATURDAY 12/13/25

9:00AM Cookie Walk
 7:30AM & 8:30AM Weight Watchers

3rd Sunday of Advent 12/14/25

No 8:00 AM Worship or Adult Forum
10:15AM Worship Service of Advent
Lessons & Carols
 Gospel-Matthew 11:2-11

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