

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

December 21, 2025-December 28, 2025

4th Sunday of Advent 12/21/25

8:00AM Spoken Worship
8:45AM Adult Forum
10:15AM Traditional Worship
Gospel-Matthew 1:18-25

MONDAY 12/22/25

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

TUESDAY 12/23/25

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

WEDNESDAY 12/24/25

Food Pantry Closed

11:30AM Bayside Duplicate Bridge
6:00PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

6:00PM AA Book Study
7:00PM Narcotics Anonymous

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS
This week:
Mon-Wed 10:00-3:00

THURSDAY 12/25/25

Office & Food Pantry Closed
2:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous
6:00 AA 12-Step
7:00PM Al-Anon

FRIDAY 12/26/25

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

SATURDAY 12/27/25

7:30AM & 8:30AM Weight Watchers
1st Sunday of Christmas 12/28/25
10:15AM Service of Stories & Carols
(No 8 AM Service)



December 21, 2025

4th Sunday of Advent



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.org

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 – this year we will read through the Gospel of Matthew, albeit not in order. There are some **key themes that Matthew wanted to get across** to the early Church. One theme, for Jesus' followers who were Jewish, was how to know what commands and traditions in the Hebrew Scriptures (we call them the Old Testament) were essential to keep, and what to let go in changing circumstances. Jesus certainly changed the circumstances of his followers' life and community!*

*We as Church need the Gospel to help us know what rules and traditions to keep, and where to see God moving in the world and changing our assumptions. A simple thing Matthew did was note where Jesus said "Kingdom of Heaven" in place of the phrase "Kingdom of God" in Mark and Luke's Gospels. Maybe he did that as **hospitality** to Jewish Christians who strongly protected any use of God's name; but it **changes us**, too. Our assumptions about Heaven being "out there" instead bring us to see the Kingdom of Heaven **here on earth**, when we see and participate in peace-making, reconciliation, and the formation of communities where the Kingdom becomes a "kin-dom" of connected believers. The world certainly changes; God's call to us remains: cling to the Testament of salvation, freedom and love.*

WELCOME

Rev. Wendolyn Trozzo

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Savior Of The Nations Come

by Helmut Walcha

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.

"United in Praise" Choir Festival

Celebrating Christian Unity Week

Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 3:00 PM

(Snow date: January 25)

Grace Lutheran Church

11 E. Dawes Ave. Somers Point



Enjoy hearing music and scripture
shared by local churches,
an expression of being truly
"United in Praise!"

Light refreshments will be served.

***Please bring non-perishable food items to donate to the
Grace Place Food Pantry!***

Sponsored by Thrivent

Up-Coming Dates to Mark on Your 2026 Calendar:

January 11: **Youth Re-Launch**
 10:15 Service - Sunday School grades K-12
 12:00-2:00 Youth Pizza Lunch and Photo Service Project at Grace
 Grades 6-12

January 18: **Budget Hearing**
 at end of 10:15 AM Worship

January 18: **United in Praise Choir Festival**
 3:00 PM here at Grace
 (See flier on next page.)

February 1: **Annual Congregational Meeting**
 immediately following the 10:15 AM Worship Service

Book exchange throughout the month of January

There will be a table in the Social Hall for you to bring in and place any books you no longer want. You may exchange them for any books on the table you haven't read which capture your interest!

Join us for coffee hour and fellowship

January 11 and February 8!

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 *Fling Wide The Door* **ELW #259**

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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father 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 80:1-7, 17-19 (read responsively)

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
 shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

² **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
 stir up your strength and come to help us.**

³ Restore us, O God;
 let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁴ **O LORD God of hosts,
 how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

- ⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears;
 you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
⁶ **You have made us the derision of our neighbors,
 and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**
⁷ Restore us, O God of hosts;
 let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
¹⁷ **Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
 the one you have made so strong for yourself.**
¹⁸ And so will we never turn away from you;
 give us life, that we may call upon your name.
¹⁹ **Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
 let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

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!

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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.



Please turn in your red stockings with your dimes/donations for WELCA!

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Wednesday, December 24

6:00 PM: Worship Service in the Sanctuary

Christmas Eve Poinsettias

We will have poinsettias decorating the front of the sanctuary on Christmas Eve. They will be available for purchase after the 6:00 PM Candlelight Service for \$15 each.

Sunday, December 28

Next Sunday, December 28, there will be no 8:00 AM Worship and no Adult Forum.

All are welcome to attend our 10:15 AM Worship for a service of Christmas readings and carols!



If you have not yet done so, please pick up your offering envelopes in the narthex. They are arranged alphabetically by last name. Please make sure that the envelopes you take have your name on them.

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.

BENEDICTION

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

Joy To The World

ELW #267

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

POSTLUDE

Fling Wide The Door

by Robert Buckley Farlee

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: Kevin Thomas

The flowers sponsor this week is: one of our members in honor of Pastor Wendolyn's birthday this week!

The candles, wine, bulletins and music
are sponsored in loving memory of Else Fetter, from her family.



P: Lord, to whom shall we go?

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

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 1st chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and Joseph named him Jesus.

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.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day* arr. by Howard Helvey
Stephen Gring: Piano

Please stand as you are able.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* **ELW #257 verse 1**

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

Savior Of The Nations Come

ELW #263

Verse 1, 4, 6 ALL, Verse 2 WOMEN, Verse 3 CHOIR, Verse 5 MEN

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