

Grace Lutheran Church
11 East Dawes Avenue
Somers Point, NJ 08244
www.gracelutheranspnj.org

Church Office: 609-927-3082
office@gracelutheranspnj.com
Food Pantry: 609-927-9982

Holiday Messenger December 2024

Congrats to Pastors Trozzo!

This September, Pastors Wendolyn and Eric will celebrate 25 years of marriage. Back in 2000, their honeymoon was a seminary class trip to study the Christian rock industry- and write a 25 page paper together! During their 10th anniversary trip - their second honeymoon attempt, they were evacuated from the Virgin Islands due to a hurricane. For their 25th anniversary, they're hoping to finally have a real honeymoon! They are headed to Adelaide, Australia for three weeks in late January/early February. We give thanks for a special couple and pray for a joyful adventure!



STAFF AT GRACE

Rev. Wendolyn Trozzo, Vice Pastor
Scott J. Breiner, Music Director
Corinne Rhodes, Administrative Assistant
Heidi Toth, Church Treasurer
Ruth Bowden, Sandy Piskun, Financial Secretaries

Joseph Martin, Church Council President
Mary Goodman, Church Council Vice President
Dale Kredatus, Church Council Secretary
Alison Toth, Social Media Consultant

Scholarship Opportunity for Lutheran Students

A wonderful college scholarship is available due to the lifelong generosity of a saint named Blanche Harffey. She was a member of Reformation Lutheran Church in Absecon, and the fund in her memory has supported 87 students so far!

Applications (new or renewal) must be submitted by March 31 and copies of the application are available in the Church office. Members of Reformation and Grace are invited to apply! You can learn more about the scholarship, which encourages continuing Church activity among young adults as part of the growing-up experience, from our members Phyllis Phelps and Clare Brick, or from the Church office.

Christmas Gift Ideas

to share the faith you love (Pastor Wendolyn's Favorites)

Very young: A nativity playset is fun for hands-on learning and storytelling! Fisher Price, Playmobil, Melissa & Doug, and Christian Book Distributors have wonderful sets. (~\$30; Advent calendar versions available)

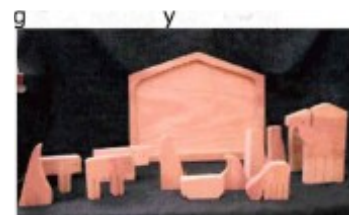


Pre-k - Elementary school: The Rhyme Bible Storybook is just amazing. It tells kids great stories through catchy rhymes, while adults helping kids to sound out words might see new insights into familiar stories. (\$7 board book, \$13 original version)

Youth - Young adult: "Dwell Differently" temporary tattoos help to memorize one Bible verse each month through temporary tattoos, stickers, keychains, as well as digital devotions and phone/watch lockscreens. Faith tools for a generation with a lot of ink on their skin and screens in their hands! (\$10 monthly subscription)



General: Search the internet for "Scroll Saw Nativity Puzzles." Buy as a gift or make our own!



For the person who has everything: a Kiva micro-finance gift loan. At Kiva.org, you can loan \$25 to an entrepreneur or applicant from countries around the world.

Choosing a loan is fascinating, and getting updates on how your loan is making a difference is a real gift. Once your loan is repaid (usually 1-2 years), you can re-lend it or withdraw the funds.

REPORT FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT, JOE MARTIN

Council met on October 17, 2024. Council discussed a report provided by the investment committee and asked them to investigate a couple of options that they had suggested to provide a better return on the church investments and report back to council.

It was reported that the painting and storm window projects are complete and everyone noted how nice the church looks. Fire doors are soon to begin being installed as requested by the 2023 state fire inspection.

Council also reviewed the proposed 2025 budget as provided by support.

WELCA

WELCA is collecting winter hats, gloves and mittens for children in need in our community. These items may be brought in throughout the month of December, and can be placed in the designated basket in the narthex.

Red stockings may be brought in throughout the month of December and placed in the appropriate basket in the narthex.

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE

The new Church Directory is almost completed! It will be ready to distribute soon! We will have an electronic version, as well as hard copies, and will let you know as soon as they are ready!

CALL COMMITTEE (REPORTED BY STEPHEN GRING, CHAIR)

The Call Committee met on October 24 at which time the committee discussed a strategy for conducting interviews with prospective applicants. The committee members decided upon areas of interest ranging from the spiritual to the financial. After a very open discussion, committee members felt better prepared to conduct an interview.

There was some confusion in communication regarding the filing of the Ministerial Site Profile; the Committee reviewed the requested changes that the bishop had requested at her meeting in September. In fact, these changes were

electronically recorded on September 20. Chris Dennis, Call Committee Secretary, resubmitted the MSP; we immediately received an electronic confirmation that the updated MSP had been received (again!). The Synod subsequently affirmed this. The application process is now activated. The Committee awaits receiving an applicant.

At the same meeting, Stephen Gring, the current Chair, announced he will step away from the Chair position on January 1 due to other outside obligations; he will remain a member of the Committee. A new Chair will be nominated from within the current committee membership.

SUPPORT COMMITTEE-GIVING WITH GRACE

In the last episode we discussed the gift of **CASH**. Cash is the easiest and quickest way to benefit Grace and get an immediate tax benefit for ourselves. We accumulate asset to provide income to tide us through that time when we no longer can or want to work for income. Sometimes we accumulate more than is necessary. When we have excess appreciated assets, however, we merely create unwanted tax obligation when sold or given to heirs.

Appreciated Securities:

An outright gift of Appreciated Securities to Grace creates substantial tax benefits to the giver. As an example, if you were in the 33% tax bracket and contributed \$10,000 worth of appreciated stock to Grace, you would realize a \$3,300 tax saving. Moreover, if you paid \$3,000 for the stock at least 12 months ago, you would also avoid a capital gains tax of \$1,050 (15% of \$7,000). Thus, the actual cost of the gift of long term appreciated assets to Grace, can be reduced to only \$5,650 (\$10,000 less the income tax saving of \$3,300, less the capital gains tax saving of \$1,050).

We have not talked about creating an income stream using those same appreciated assets. That is somewhat more complex but even more beneficial. We will save that topic for a future discussion. Next installment will discuss how gifts of **Tangible Personal Property** can benefit you and Grace at the same time.

As with all tax and investment advice, before you adopt any strategy outlined in these discussions, you should consult your own tax and financial advisors as to how the strategy fits into your own situation.

UP-COMING EVENTS IN DECEMBER

Food Pantry Item for December:
Paper Towels and Kleenex/Tissues



Cape Shore Chorale

and director of music

Scott J. Breiner

present

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON

Sunday, December 8, 2024 @ 3 P M

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church

30th & Bay Avenue

Ocean City, N. J.

Lite refreshments

Free will offering



Funding has been made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Cape May County Board of County Commissioners through the Cape May County Division of Culture & Heritage



17th Annual Christmas



Cookie Walk

Saturday, December 14th

9:00 am until sold out!



Also
Gently used
Christmas Decorations

Grace Lutheran Church
11 East Dawes Ave.
Dawes Ave. & Shore Road
Somers Point, NJ 08244
609-927-3082



Cookies
\$10.00
per pound



FRESH
SCONES

Decadent Hot Cocoa



100TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

Sunday, December 15 at the Atlantic City Country Club in Northfield
12:30 PM-3:30 PM
Reservations are now closed.



BLUE CHRISTMAS

Pastor Wendolyn will be holding the annual Blue Christmas Worship Service on Thursday, December 19th at 7:00 PM. This is a service of comfort provided especially for anyone who is experiencing grief, stress, or hardship of any kind.



Our 2024 Christmas "grab bag" pageant is fun for all ages (and actually needs more adults than kids)! It requires no rehearsal and has a role for everyone. Guided by a storyteller, the whole congregation can get in on the act in this memorable pageant celebrating Jesus' birth.



Because this pageant will be so much fun and is easy to join into, this is the **PERFECT time to invite** nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and all the children, youth, and adults that haven't been to Church in a while. Covid broke lots of faith habits, so getting back to Church even once literally "opens the door" to returning to the fellowship and exploration of faith that bring the gifts of Faith, Hope, Joy, and Love.

DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

December 1: 1st Sunday in Advent 8:00 AM & 10:15 AM

December 8: 2nd Sunday in Advent 8:00 AM & 10:15 AM

December 15: 3rd Sunday in Advent 8:00 AM & 10:15 AM

December 19: Blue Christmas 7:00 PM

December 22: 4th Sunday in Advent 8:00 AM & 10:15 AM

Grab Bag Christmas Pageant 10:15 AM

December 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7:00 PM

(Parents may bring children's favorite blankets for Pastor's special children's sermon.)

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Choir 9:00 PM

December 29: Regular Spoken Worship 8:00 AM

Worship Service of Readings and Carols 10:15 AM

**The 9:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
will be livestreamed.**

SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Please note that our annual congregational meeting

will take place on

Sunday, February 2nd,

immediately following the 10:15 AM

Worship Service.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS:

December

| | |
|-------|----------------|
| 12/1 | Edna Cordery |
| 12/8 | June Jordan |
| 12/15 | Kevin Thomas |
| 12/22 | James Ehrhardt |
| 12/29 | Stephen Gring |



December

| | |
|-------|------------------------|
| 12/4 | Adalynn Bilello |
| 12/8 | Jim Merce |
| 12/9 | Holly Henry |
| 12/10 | Elizabeth Hoelter |
| 12/11 | Bob Grant |
| 12/13 | Chris Dennis |
| 12/13 | Erica Johnson |
| 12/15 | Ruth Bowden |
| 12/17 | Wendy Dolan |
| 12/22 | Pastor Wendolyn Trozzo |
| 12/25 | Eddie Thompson |
| 12/28 | Inger Reynolds |
| 12/31 | Robert Bartholomew |

January

| | |
|------|----------------------|
| 1/1 | Rev. Dr. Eric Trozzo |
| 1/7 | Robin Johnson |
| 1/7 | Heidi Toth |
| 1/10 | Kathi Krattenmaker |
| 1/10 | Ruth Kruger |
| 1/13 | Nancy Thinschmidt |
| 1/14 | Linda Rihl |
| 1/17 | Bernie Somers |
| 1/18 | Meredith Henry |
| 1/23 | Sherril Kleuser |
| 1/25 | Dick Fetter |
| 1/28 | Stephen Gring |
| 1/31 | Rich Krattenmaker |