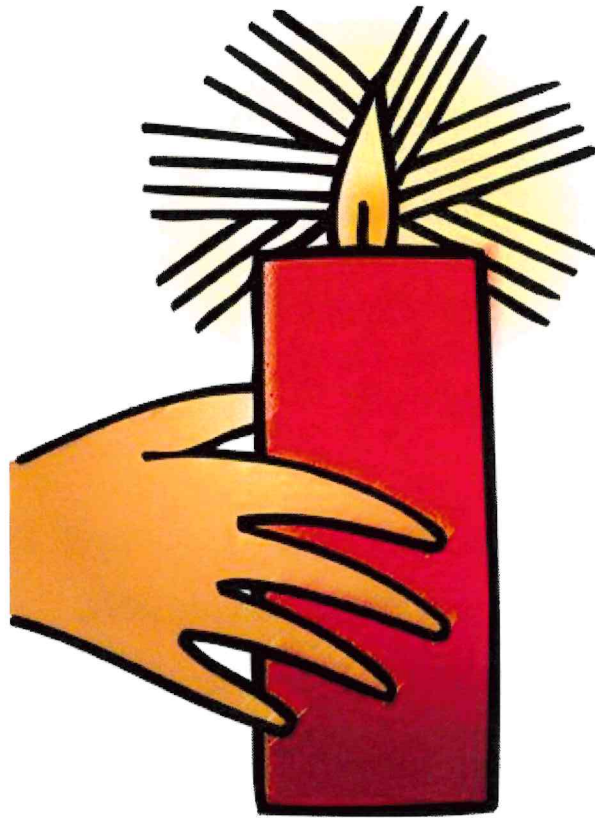


January 4, 2026

2nd Sunday of Christmas



## 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](http://www.GraceLutheranSPNJ.org)

**E-mail:** [office@GraceLutheranSPNJ.org](mailto: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.  
Most of our hymn songs are found in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship  
red hymnal found in the pews.*

*S=service music in the front part of the hymnal.*

## GATHERING

**Thank you for joining us as we worship our Lord together!**

### INTRODUCTION

*Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.*

### WELCOME

Rev. Jeffrey Eaton

### PRELUDE

*Divinum Mystrium*

by T. Frederick H. Candlyn

*Please stand as you are able.*

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace. **Amen.**

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

**Reconciling God, we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; we have not always embraced your message of peace. We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear. We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones; our reluctance to embody your good news. Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.**

God's grace upon grace flows over you. + Christ's presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad! **Amen.**

**OPENING HYMN**

*When Long Before Time*  
Verses 1, 2, & 3

ELW #861

**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**

ELW S156

**HYMN OF PRAISE**

ELW S159

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, 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.*

**FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:7-14**

*God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gift of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.*

<sup>7</sup> Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,  
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;  
proclaim, give praise, and say,  
"Save, O LORD, your people,  
the remnant of Israel."

<sup>8</sup> See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north  
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,  
among them the blind and the lame,  
those with child and those in labor together;  
a great company, they shall return here.

<sup>9</sup> With weeping they shall come,



and with consolations I will lead them back;  
 I will let them walk by brooks of water,  
 in a straight path where they shall not stumble,  
 for I have become a father to Israel,  
 and Ephraim is my firstborn.

<sup>10</sup> Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,  
 and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
 say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him  
 and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock."

<sup>11</sup> For the LORD has ransomed Jacob  
 and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

<sup>12</sup> They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
 and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,  
 over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
 and over the young of the flock and the herd;  
 their life shall become like a watered garden,  
 and they shall never languish again.

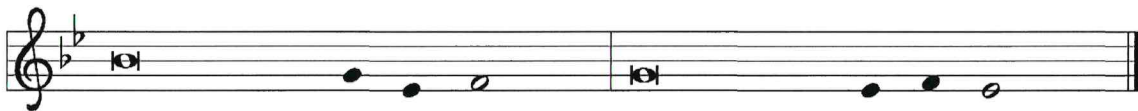
<sup>13</sup> Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
 and the young men and the old shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy;  
 I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow.

<sup>14</sup> I will give the priests their fill of fatness,  
 and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,  
 says the LORD.

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

## PSALM 147:12-20



<sup>12</sup> Worship the LORD, <sup>1</sup> O Jerusalem;  
 praise your <sup>1</sup> God, O Zion,

<sup>13</sup> **who has strengthened the bars <sup>1</sup> of your gates**  
**and has blessed your chil- <sup>1</sup> dren within you.**

- <sup>14</sup> God has established peace | on your borders  
and satisfies you with the | finest wheat.
- <sup>15</sup> **God sends out a command | to the earth,  
a word that runs | very swiftly.**
- <sup>16</sup> God gives | snow like wool,  
scattering | frost like ashes.
- <sup>17</sup> **God scatters | hail like bread crumbs.  
Who can stand a- | gainst God's cold?**
- <sup>18</sup> The LORD sends forth the | word and melts them;  
the wind blows, and the | waters flow.
- <sup>19</sup> **God declares the | word to Jacob,  
statutes and judg- | ments to Israel.**
- <sup>20</sup> The LORD has not done so to any | other nation;  
they do not know God's judgments. | Hallelujah!

## SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:3-14

*In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.*

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup> He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup> In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup> so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were

marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup> this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

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

*Please stand as you are able.*

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**C: Allelujah!**

P: Lord, to whom shall we go?

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

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

## **GOSPEL: John 1:[1-9] 10-18**

*John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.*

[<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") <sup>16</sup> From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> The law indeed was given

through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

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

*Please be seated.*

**SERMON**

*"Light"*

Rev. Jeffrey Eaton

*Please stand as you are able.*

### **THE APOSTLE'S 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.**

*Please be seated.*

### **JOYFUL NOISE OFFERING**

*Our monthly special noisy offering for the month of January is Beacon Animal Rescue.*

### **OFFERING**

### **OFFERTORY**

*Welcome The Star*

by Ian Higginson

*Please stand as you are able.*

**OFFERTORY RESPONSE**    *Create in Me a Clean Heart*    **WOV #732**

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

**God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the**



world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. Amen.

*Please be seated.*

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P: Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need. *Brief silence.*

*At the end of each prayer petition when the worship assistant or pastor says, "Hear us, O God," please respond with "Your mercy is great."*

P: With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. 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

God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

COMMUNION HYMN *Lamb of God* ELW S164

COMMUNION HYMN *When Long Before Time* ELW #861  
Verses 4, 5, & 6

## DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*We will have continuous communion in front of the steps today. EVERYONE IS INVITED to come down the center aisle at the direction of the ushers and return to your seats via the side aisles. There is white grape juice in the center of the circular tray and red wine in the outer part of the tray. If you are unable to come up to the front, you may remain seated and the pastor will bring you communion after everyone has come forward.*



*Children or those who have not received a first communion are welcome to come for a blessing. Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available.*

### **COMMUNION BLESSING**

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

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us. **Amen.**

### **SENDING**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Please stand as you are able.*

### **BLESSING**

The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy. **Amen.**

### **SENDING HYMN**

*Christ Be Our Light*

ELW #715

Verses 1, 3, 5 ALL, Verse 2 WOMEN, Verse 4 MEN

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

### **POSTLUDE**

*In Dulci Jubilo*

by Gilbert Martin

**DISMISSAL** Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.  
**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: Ruth Bowden**



**The flowers sponsor this week is: Roberta Blumenthal, praising God for His blessings for everyone in the new year!**

*Special thank you to Pastor Eaton for leading us in worship today!*

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

#### **Book Exchange throughout the month of January**

Take a book, leave a book, it's that simple!

For the month of January, tables will be set up in our upstairs social hall. Most any kind of book is fine - fiction, nonfiction, cookbooks, inspirational books, history, mystery, even romance. The only rule is: no books that would make the Pastor blush! At the end of the month, we will donate any remaining books to an appropriate charity.

**The deadline for the hats, gloves, and mittens donations for elementary school children is next Sunday, January 11 so they can be distributed for use in the cold weather!**

#### **Youth Re-Launch January 11**

10:15 Service - Sunday School grades K-12

12:00-2:00 Youth Pizza Lunch and Photo Service Project at Grace  
Grades 6-12

#### **Budget Hearing January 18**

10:15 AM worship service.

#### **First Annual "United in Praise" Choir Festival Sunday, January 18, 2026 (snow date January 25)**

The First Annual United in Praise Choir Festival will be held here at Grace Lutheran Church in celebration of Christian Unity Week at 3:00 PM

#### **ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING FEBRUARY 1**

immediately following the 10:15 AM worship service.

# **“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**

# HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

## January 4, 2026-January 11, 2026

### 2nd Sunday of Christmas 1/4/26

8:00AM Spoken Worship  
10:15AM Traditional Worship  
**Joyful Noise Offering:**  
**Beacon Animal Rescue**

### MONDAY 1/5/26

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

### TUESDAY 1/6/26

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

### WEDNESDAY 1/7/26

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

### THURSDAY 1/8/26

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry  
12:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous  
5:00PM Choir  
6:00 AA 12-Step  
7:00PM Al-Anon

### FRIDAY 1/9/26

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

### SATURDAY 1/10/26

7:30AM & 8:30AM Weight Watchers

### Baptism of Our Lord 1/11/26

8:00AM Spoken Worship  
8:45AM Adult Forum  
10:15AM Traditional Worship  
**Coffee Hour/Fellowship**  
**Youth Re-Launch**

### CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

**This week:**

**Mon-Tues 10:00-3:00**

**Thurs-Fri 10:00-3:00**

### 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