

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

January 7, 2024—January 14, 2024

1st Sunday of Epiphany 1/7/24

8:00AM Spoken Worship

8:45AM Adult Forum Group

10:15AM Traditional Worship

4:00PM Catechism Class at Grace

4:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

MONDAY 1/8/24

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry

7:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

TUESDAY 1/9/24

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry

12:00PM WELCA

6:30PM Narcotics Anonymous

7:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

WEDNESDAY 1/10/24

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry

11:30AM Bayside Duplicate Bridge

7:00PM Financial Support Meeting

7:00PM Narcotics Anonymous

THURSDAY 1/11/24

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry

5:00 Choir Rehearsal

7:00PM Al-Anon

FRIDAY 1/12/24

10:30AM Grace Stitchers

7:30PM Alcoholics Anonymous

SATURDAY 1/13/24

No events

2nd Sunday of Epiphany 1/14/24

8:00AM Spoken Worship

8:45AM Adult Forum Group

10:15AM Traditional Worship

Fellowship Hour Sponsored by WELCA

4:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

MON-WED 10:00AM-3:00PM

FRI 10:00AM-2:00PM

PASTOR OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Althea is often in the office and she is always available by appointment.

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

January 7, 2024

1st Sunday of Epiphany



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Church Office: 609-927-3082 **Food Pantry:** 609-927-9982

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Rev. Althea Albright, Pastor ☩ 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 ~

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

Introduction

The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.

WELCOME

Rev. Althea Albright

PRELUDE

Wachet Auf

by: Bach

Please stand as you are able.

GREETING

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the Word made flesh, our life and our salvation. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God, our Savior, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of life, **you promise good news of great joy for all people, and call us to be messengers of your peace. We confess that too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security. We nurture conflict and build barriers. We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation. Have mercy on us. Where we are self-centered, open our hearts. Where we are reluctant, give us courage. Where we are cynical, restore our trust. Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you. Amen.**

We thank all those serving in worship today!

Reader: Ruth Bowden

Special thank you to Stephen Gring for sharing his musical talents with us in worship!

The flowers sponsor this week is: Meg La Spina, in memory of loved ones.



Pastor Althea, Scott, and Corinne thank all of you for your thoughtful, kind, and very generous Christmas gifts! The three of us enjoy working aside all of you in ministry!

WELCA will be collecting hats, gloves, and mittens

throughout the month of January to be distributed to a local elementary school. There will be a basket in the narthex for this collection. Deadline is January 21, 2024.

2/4/24 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

immediately following the 10:15 AM worship service. *There will be no 8:00 AM worship on this day.* We hope everyone will come together to worship at 10:15 AM and attend the meeting.

STRONGER TOGETHER Grief Support Group

is starting this month. All who are grieving are invited to attend. If interested in participating, please fill out and turn in the information sheet in the narthex or email the church office so we can choose a day and time that fits everyone’s schedules.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table of Christ and be fed and renewed. **Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION *Lamb of God* ELW (front) p.153

EVERYONE IS INVITED to come forward at the direction of the ushers. If you are unable to come to the altar, you may remain seated and the pastor will bring you communion after everyone has come forward. Children may come forward to receive a blessing.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God our redeemer, **you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as you are able.

SENDING BLESSING

God bless you and keep you, + Jesus grant you grace and truth, and may the Holy Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN *We Three Kings* Celebration Hymnal #288

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

POSTLUDE *Now Let Every Tongue Adore Him* by John Sabastian Bach

DISMISSAL Christ the Savior is born! Proclaim this good news.
Thanks be to God.

*We are glad for your presence today.
We hope you come again soon!*

Hear the good news. We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In + Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God. **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN *Angels, From the Realms of Glory* ELW #275**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 (front of hymnal) p. 147**HYMN OF PRAISE** ELW (front) p. 148**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our 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

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

~ **WORD** ~

FIRST READING: Isaiah 60: 1-6

Jerusalem is assured that nations will make a pilgrimage to her because the light of God's presence is in her midst. The bountiful food of the sea and the profits of international trade will come streaming to Jerusalem and thereby declare God's praise.

¹Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

²For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

³Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

⁵Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

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

PSALM 72:1-7, 10-14 (*read responsively*)

¹Give the king your jus- | tice, O God,
and your righteousness to | the king's son;

²**that he may rule your | people righteously
and the | poor with justice;**

³that the mountains may bring prosperity | to the people,
and the | hills, in righteousness.

⁴**Let him defend the needy a- | mong the people,
rescue the poor, and crush | the oppressor.**

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

Your mercy is great.

A: You have redeemed the lives of your faithful departed. Through the love of Christ, gather us into one body with them, and reveal to us the mystery hidden for ages in the One who created all things. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

P: Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace. **Amen.**

~ **HOLY COMMUNION** ~

GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW (front) p. 152

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW (front) p. 153

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.

Please be seated.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves. *A brief silence.*

A: Humble the hearts of your faithful people, that we seek to be servants of your gospel and witnesses to your mysteries. Give us boldness in faith, that we make the good news of Christ's birth known to all people. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Establish justice on earth for all its inhabitants. Lead us to protect fragile ecosystems and endangered species. Empower the work of all who research, engineer, and make accessible alternative and renewable sources of energy. Make us careful stewards of your creation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: Nations shall come to your light and kings to your dawning. Remove corruption and fear from the hearts of leaders and authorities. Lead governments to expand policies and resources that care for refugees and all migrants. Strengthen the work of resettlement agencies, we especially pray for all those in refugee camps in Israel and Palestine. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: Defend the cause of all who are in need, all facing poverty, and all who are oppressed. Come quickly to those who feel that their lives and livelihoods are fragile. We pray for all those who are sick in mind, body, or spirit, *especially all those we name aloud now or in our hearts...* Give them strength and lead them forth with hope. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: As the magi offered gifts to the Christ child, empower us to give generously. Prosper the work of ministry partnerships in our community of Somers Point. Together, help us share what we have to ensure that our neighbors have enough food, resources, and opportunities. Hear us, O God.

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

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

¹⁰May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles pay tribute, and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.

¹¹May all kings bow down before him, and all the nations do him service.

¹²For the king delivers the poor who cry out in distress, the oppressed, and those who have no helper.

¹³He has compassion on the lowly and poor, and preserves the lives of the needy.

¹⁴From oppression and violence he redeems their lives, and precious is their blood in his sight.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 3: 1-12

What had been hidden from previous generations is now made known through the gospel ministry of Paul and others. In Christ both Jews and Gentiles participate in the richness of God's promised salvation.

¹This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—²for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, ³and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. ⁸Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; ¹⁰so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly

places. ¹¹This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

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

Please stand as you are able.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 2nd chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12

God's promise shines bright in the night as magi follow a star to honor a new king. Strangers from a faraway land, they welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and

myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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

Please be seated.

SERMON

Rev. Althea Albright

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY *As With Gladness Men of Old* ELW #302

VERSE 1, 3, & 5 ALL, VERSE 2 MEN, VERSE 4 ALL

THE APOSTLES' 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.**

OFFERING

OFFERATORY *Fantasy on Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

Please stand as you are able.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS *Create in Me a Clean Heart* WOV #732

OFFERING PRAYER

**God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered.
Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table**