

# HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

## April 28, 2024—May 5, 2024

### 5th SUNDAY of EASTER 4/28/24

8:00AM Spoken Worship  
 8:45AM Adult Forum Group  
 10:15AM Traditional Worship  
**Confirmation of  
 Zavier Shea & Alex Piskun**  
 4:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

### MONDAY 4/29/24

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

### TUESDAY 4/30/24

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

### WEDNESDAY 5/1/24

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

### THURSDAY 5/2/24

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry  
 5:00PM Choir Rehearsal  
 7:00PM AI-Anon

### FRIDAY 5/3/24


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

### SATURDAY 5/4/24

*No events*

### 6th SUNDAY of EASTER 5/5/24

8:00AM Spoken Worship Service  
 8:45AM Adult Forum Group  
 10:15AM Traditional Worship  
 4:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous


<p>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%.</p>
<p>Shore Diner          6710 Tilton Road          Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234          609-641-3669</p>

April 28, 2024

5th Sunday of Easter

## Confirmation Sunday



**Celebrating Alex Piskun and Zavier Shea as they  
 Affirm their Baptism**

## 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.comcastbiz.net](mailto:office@gracelutheranspnj.comcastbiz.net)

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.*

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## GATHERING

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

### INTRODUCTION

*The image of the good shepherd shows us how the risen Christ brings us to life. It is the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep, one of mutual knowledge and love, that gives the shepherd authority. The shepherd's willingness to lay down his life for the sheep shows his love. First John illustrates what it means to lay down our lives for one another by the example of sharing our wealth with any sibling in need.*

### WELCOME

Rev. Althea Albright

### PRELUDE

*O Blessed Spring* setting by Robert Buckley Farlee

*Please stand as you are able.*

### THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation. **Amen.**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

**We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.**

Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

**We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.**

*All are invited to attend the reception  
for our confirmands,*

*Alex and Zavier*

*immediately following the  
worship service.*



*You're invited to our June  
Community Event!*

*June 9, 2024*

*It will feature hot dogs, strawberry  
shortcake, and ice cream.*

*Tickets will be available  
beginning in May.*

## BABY SHOWER for Shore Memorial NICU



will be hosted by Grace Lutheran Church along with our brothers and sisters from Reformation Lutheran Church, Absecon

**Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 PM**

Lunch will be served for Shore Medical Center nurses and guests.

Donations needed: New clothing (preemie-2T), diapers, knitted and crocheted clothing and blankets

**Deadline for donations: Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup>**

Corinne will be out of the office on vacation until April 30. There will be a volunteer checking mail, email, and voicemail occasionally while she is away. Please contact Pastor Althea directly for any urgent needs.

To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

**OPENING HYMN** *Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!*

**ELW #377**

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

### 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

*white booklet page 1*

### THIS IS THE FEAST

*white booklet page 2 & 3*

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot live. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and know the fullness of your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

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## WORD

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### FIRST READING : Acts 8:26-40

*Led by the Spirit, Philip encounters an Ethiopian official who is returning to his African home after having been to Jerusalem to worship. Philip uses their encounter to proclaim the gospel to him. Upon coming to faith in Jesus, he is baptized by Philip.*

<sup>26</sup>An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) <sup>27</sup>So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship <sup>28</sup>and was returning home;



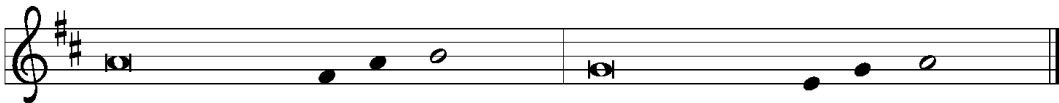
seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup>Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” <sup>30</sup>So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” <sup>31</sup>He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. <sup>32</sup>Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. <sup>33</sup>In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.”

<sup>34</sup>The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” <sup>35</sup>Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup>As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” <sup>38</sup>He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. <sup>39</sup>When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup>But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

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

### Psalm 22:25-31



<sup>25</sup>From you comes my praise in the | great assembly;  
I will perform my vows in the sight of those who | fear the LORD.

<sup>26</sup>**The poor shall eat | and be satisfied,  
Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts | live  
forever!**

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn | to the LORD;  
all the families of nations shall bow | before God.

<sup>28</sup>**For dominion belongs | to the LORD,**

**SENDING HYMN** *Awake, O Sleeper, Arise From Death* **ELW #452**  
VERSE 1, 3, 5 ALL, VERSE 2 MEN, VERSE 4 WOMEN

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

**POSTLUDE** *Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!* by Keith Kolander

**DISMISSAL** Go in peace. Share the good news! **Thanks be to God.**

*May the peace of the Lord be with you always!  
We are glad for your presence today.  
We hope you come again soon!*

**We thank all those serving in worship today:**

**Reader:** James Ehrhardt

**The flowers sponsor this week is:** John Staples,  
in memory of John and Katherine Staples.



## 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.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread. Come and eat at God's table. **Amen.**

**COMMUNION HYMN**      *Lamb of God*      *white booklet page 4*

## DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*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

**Shepherding God, you have prepared a table before us and nourished us with your love. Send us forth from this banquet to proclaim your goodness and share the abundant mercy of Jesus, our redeemer and friend. Amen.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Please stand as you are able.*

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## SENDING

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## BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace. **Amen.**

**who rules o-<sup>l</sup>ver the nations.**

<sup>29</sup>Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow<sup>l</sup> down in worship; all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel be-<sup>l</sup>fore the LORD.

<sup>30</sup>**Their descendants shall<sup>l</sup> serve the LORD, whom they shall proclaim to genera-<sup>l</sup>tions to come.**

<sup>31</sup>They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people<sup>l</sup> yet unborn, saying to them, "The<sup>l</sup> LORD has acted!"

## SECOND READING: 1 John 4:7-21

*We love God and others because God first loved us. We cannot say we love God, whom we have not seen, while hating fellow Christians, whom we regularly see. Love toward God is to be matched by love toward others because the essence of God is love.*

<sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. <sup>9</sup>God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup>By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup>God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. <sup>16</sup>So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. <sup>17</sup>Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. <sup>18</sup>There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. <sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup>Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a

brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup>The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

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

*Please stand as you are able.*

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the

words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Gospel according to John the 15th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

### GOSPEL: John 15:1-8

*On the night of his arrest, Jesus taught his disciples about the relationship they would have with him. Those who abide in his word and love bear fruit, for apart from him, they can do nothing.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>1</sup>“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. <sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

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

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## HOLY COMMUNION

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### GREAT THANKSGIVING

*white booklet page 3*

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, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, who gave himself to take away our sin; who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life.

And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

### HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

*white booklet page 4*

### THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

We give you thanks for Jesus' coming into the world to fulfill for us your holy will and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

On 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.

Together as the body of Christ, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

We pray for the gift of the Holy Trinity: in our gathering; within this meal; and in the many ways you make yourself known to your people throughout the world. May all blessing, praise, and thanks be to you, holy God, through Christ Jesus, and by your Life-giving Spirit. **Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news. *Brief silence.*

A: We pray for the church around the world, for all ministers, and for the mission of the gospel. Keep all the newly baptized and confirmed in your care. Cleanse our hearts with your word and help us to abide in you always. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: For the well-being of the earth and of all created things: for rivers and lakes, streams and estuaries, melting glaciers and polluted waters. Renew the face of the earth and shower us with your goodness. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: For the nations and all those in authority: for local, state, and national leaders, for elected representatives at every level, and for international organizations, that justice and peace may reign. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

P: For all those in need: for any experiencing homelessness or unemployment, for those fleeing from oppression or seeking asylum, and for all who are ill or suffering *especially all those we name aloud or in our hearts...* God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: For this congregation: for the caring ministries of this faith community, for all who visit and minister to one another, for all who take communion to homes or care centers, and for all who seek to share your love with the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: With thanksgiving for the saints who rest from their labors. Help us, like them, to bear much fruit and to become your disciples, and at the last, bring us to that heavenly banquet where all will feast together at your table. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

P: Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord. **Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

## SERMON

Rev. Althea Albright

*Please stand as you are able.*

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*O Blessed Spring*

ELW #447

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

## AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

*Pastor:* The following persons have been instructed in the Christian faith and desire to make a public affirmation of their baptism. As I read their names, I ask them to come forward and face the congregation.

*Zavier Dennis Shea  
Alexander Joseph Piskun*

*Pastor:* Let us pray: Merciful God, we thank you for these brothers in Christ, whom you have made your own by water and the Word in baptism. You have called them to yourself, enlightened them with the gifts of your Spirit, and nourished them in the community of faith. Uphold your servants in the gifts and promises of baptism, and unite the hearts of all whom you have brought to new birth. We ask this in the name of Christ. **Amen.**

*Pastor Althea addresses the confirmands:*

*Pastor:* I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the Church, the faith in which we baptize.

*Pastor:* Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God, the powers of this world that rebel against God, and the ways of sin that draw you from God?  
**I renounce them.**

*Pastor:* Do you believe in God and the Father?

*Confirmands and Congregation:*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

*Pastor:* Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

*Confirmands and Congregation:*

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

*Pastor:* Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

*Confirmands and Congregation:*

**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.**

*Pastor:* You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,

to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,

to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,

and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

**I will, and I ask God to help me and guide me.**

*Pastor:* People of God, do you promise to support these brothers and pray for them in their life in Christ?

*Congregation:* **We do, and we ask God to help us and guide us.**

*Parents of the confirmands are invited to join Pastor Althea in the laying on of hands.*

*Pastor:* Almighty God, for the sake of Jesus, stir up in *Zavier Dennis Shea* the gift of the Holy Spirit. Confirm his faith; guide his life; empower him in serving; grant him endurance during hard times and with worldly suffering,

give him hope and encouragement in times of questioning or doubt, give him joy and comfort in his relationship with You, and bring him to † everlasting life.

*Pastor:* Almighty God, for the sake of Jesus, stir up in *Alexander Joseph Piskun*, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Confirm his faith; guide his life; empower him in serving; grant him endurance during hard times and with worldly suffering, give him hope and encouragement in times of questioning or doubt, give him joy and comfort in his relationship with You, and bring him to † everlasting life.

*Pastor:* Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for these confirmands. By your Word and Spirit, we pray that you would lead them forth in a life of faith and obedience to you. We give you thanks, through the water of baptism and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin and raise us to eternal life, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

*Congregation:* **We rejoice with you in the life of baptism. Together we will give thanks and praise to God and proclaim the good news to all the world.**

*Please be seated.*

## OFFERING

**OFFERTORY ANTHEM**      *Christ, The Vine*      by Robert J. Powell

*Please stand as you are able.*

**PRESENTATION OF GIFTS** *Create in me a Clean Heart* [WOV page 732](#)

## OFFERING PRAYER

Risen One, **you call us to believe and bear fruit. May the gifts that we offer here be signs of your abiding love. Form us to be your witnesses in the world, through Jesus Christ, our true vine. Amen.**

*Please be seated.*