

July 26, 2026

Pentecost 9



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

11 East Dawes Avenue, Somers Point, NJ 08244

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Reverend ✝ Elizabeth Frey, 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!

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Glenn Schoenberger

PRELUDE

Chorale Song

by Wesley

Please stand as you are able.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose compassion endures forever.
Amen.

Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God, **we confess to you all our sins. Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves. In your mercy, call us back to you. Your yoke is easy and your burden is light. Restore us to dwell in your peace. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.**

Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

In the name of God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven.
Rest in God's love. **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty

ELW #533

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 S138

HYMN OF PRAISE*This is the Feast*

ELW S140

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

GREET YOUR NEIGHBOR*Please be seated.***FIRST READING: 1 Kings 3:5-12**

Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶ And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹ Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?"

¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ God said to him, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you."

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

PSALM 119:129-136 (*read responsively*)

- ¹²⁹ Your decrees are wonderful;
therefore I obey them with all my heart.
- ¹³⁰ **When your word is opened it gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple.**
- ¹³¹ I open my mouth and pant
because I long for your commandments.
- ¹³² **Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as you always do to those who love your name.**
- ¹³³ Order my footsteps in your word;
let no iniquity have dominion over me.
- ¹³⁴ **Rescue me from those who oppress me,
and I will keep your commandments.**
- ¹³⁵ Let your face shine upon your servant
and teach me your statutes.
- ¹³⁶ **My eyes shed streams of tears,
because people do not keep your teaching.**

SECOND READING: Romans 8:26-39

These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

²⁶ The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

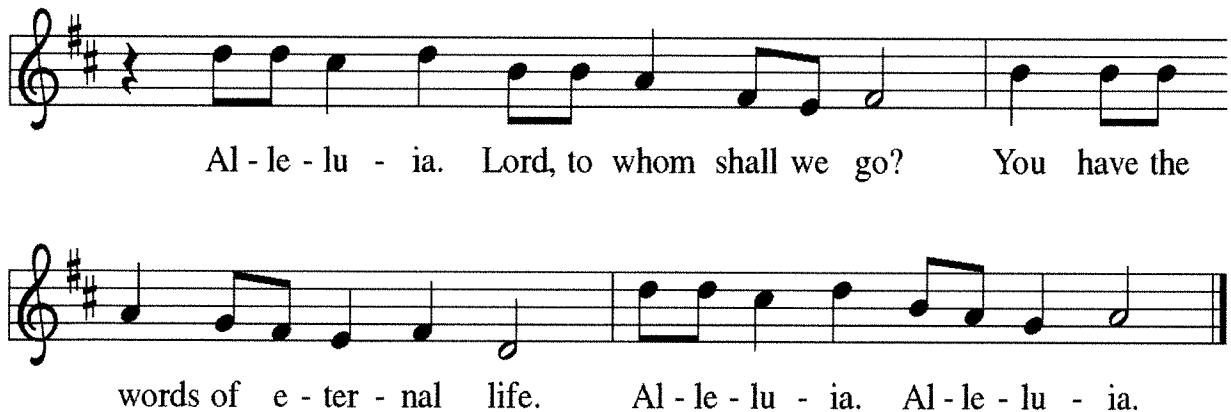
“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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 Matthew the 13th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good

news that “the kingdom of heaven is near!” Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people’s lives.

³¹ [Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

³³ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

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

Please be seated.

SERMON

Rev. Dr. Glenn Schoenberger

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

God of Grace and God of Glory

ELW #705

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.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Minuet

by Gluck

Please stand as you are able.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Create in Me a Clean Heart O God* [WOV #732](#)

OFFERING PRAYER

Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P: Trusting in God's steadfast love for all God has made, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation. *Brief silence.*

A: God our wisdom and our song, we pray for bishops, candidacy committees, those preparing for seminary, those awaiting call as deacons or pastors, and all who seek to lead your disciples in any way. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: God our breath and our heartbeat, help us to recognize signs of your presence among us. Protect and support diverse ecosystems, from national parks to family farms, from ranches to wild places. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: God our peace and our guide, help civic leaders hear all their peoples' stories with compassion and curiosity, and remind us of your love from which we can never be separated. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

P: God our intercessor and our lawgiver, dismantle the barriers to care and recognition of all who live with chronic illness, mobility struggles, pain, and uncertainty. *We pray especially for all who are on our prayer list and all those we name aloud or in our hearts . . .* God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: God our redeemer, may we trust your love above and beyond all else that distracts, annoys, frightens, exhausts, or divides us. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A: God who seeks, finds, and saves, for our community's part in the ongoing gift of creation, and for the riches of faith and hope which came before, we give you thanks. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

P: Grateful for your abundant provision and trusting in your goodness, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundant grace of Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW S144

PREFACE

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW S144

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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

Heaven has come near. Come, share in the feast!

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

EVERYONE IS INVITED to receive Holy Communion. The ushers will invite worshippers forward to receive communion in front of the altar steps. Once you have received the wafer and the red wine/white grape juice, place your empty cup in the tray and return to your pew via the side aisles. If you do not wish to receive communion, or are worshipping with children who have not had First Communion, we welcome you to come forward for a blessing and cross your arms over your chest to show your preference to the pastor.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever. Amen.

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as you are able.

BLESSING

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, + one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always. Amen.

SENDING HYMN

In Thee is Gladness

ELW #867

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

POSTLUDE

Psalm XIX

by Marcello

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: Ruth Bowden**



**The flowers sponsor this week is: Roberta Blumenthal, in
celebration of Laura & Doug Siteman's anniversary!**

**Special thank you to Rev. Dr. Glenn
Schoenberger for leading us in worship today!**

**Special thank you to H. Ray Hunsicker for
providing the music for worship!**

Please be sure to sign up for a time to meet with Pastor Liz if you have not done that yet. She would love to get to know everyone, even if she has already met you. The sign-up sheets are in the narthex (back of the church). You may also call the church office to set up a time with her.

We are in the process of updating our prayer list. A current prayer list has been posted in this bulletin. If you or a loved one have been on our prayer list, please call or email the church office at your convenience to give us an update on how you/they are doing, and let us know which names can be removed and which names you would like us to keep. Thank you!

PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following people in your daily prayers:

Members of Grace: Debbie K., Renee P. & sister, Bettie C., Bonnie C., Ruth K., Lois R., Barry L., Don B., John Sa., Family of Chris D., Scott B, Donna M., Sally S., Jonelle, Joe M., Meg L., Jim F., Clare B., Meg M., Bart B and family

Our family and friends: Alex, Jeff, Skip, Donna, Tom, Rachel (Ruth T.), Cody, Logan, David (Ruth B.), Marilyn, Houston (June J.), Nadine, Todd, Drew, Catherine, (Corinne R.), Family & Friends of Carrie, Family & Friends of Sally (Ray H.), Linda, Dana (Edna C. & Patty D.), Bruce (Brenda T.), Jody M., Audrey M. (Mary Ann G.), Karen H. (Mary G.), Tyler, Megan (Carol G.), Barbara B., Hank (Vickie C.), Bridget K. & Patrick, George M., Ronald G., Rossanne and Ronald, Byonka (Renee P.), Abril, Kyle, Randy, the Garmin Family (Chris D.), Donna Bishop-Chaporino, Reverend Pat J. (Jim F.), Kyri (Meg L.), John M., Dan (Sue S.), Eileen (Linda S.), Joan W. (Mary Ellen F.), Lisa M. (Pastor Liz), Pastor Althea Albright, Lillian D.

Those serving our country: Matthew Bilello, ANG, Cainan Johnson, USAF, & Daniel Casner, 3rd USN, Liam Johnson, USN

The Shores at Wesley Manor: Eleanore Guire

Please notify the church office of any changes or additions to our prayer list.

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

July 26, 2026-August 2, 2026

9th Sunday of Pentecost 7/26/26

8:00AM Spoken Worship
10:15AM Traditional Worship

MONDAY 7/27/26

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

TUESDAY 7/28/26

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

WEDNESDAY 7/29/26

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

THURSDAY 7/30/26

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

FRIDAY 7/31/26

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

SATURDAY 8/1/26

7:30AM & 8:30AM Weight Watchers

10th Sunday of Pentecost 8/2/26

8:00AM Spoken Worship
10:15AM Traditional Worship

Office Hours:
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
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