

September 20, 2026

Pentecost 17



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

11 East Dawes Avenue, Somers Point, NJ 08244

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

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Reverend † Elizabeth Frey, Pastor, 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!

Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.

WELCOME

Rev. Elizabeth Frey

PRELUDE

Aria in F Major
Arr. By Felix Alexandre Guilmant

by G. F. Handel

Please stand as you are able.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God, we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others.

Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hear this good news: We have peace with God through + Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace. **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN

Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading

ELW #401

Verses 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

ELW S138

HYMN OF PRAISE*This is the Feast*

ELW S140

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

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

GREET YOUR NEIGHBOR**CHILDREN'S SERMON****CHILDREN ARE DISMISSED FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL***Please be seated.***FIRST READING: Jonah 3:10-4:11**

After Jonah's short sermon in 3:4, the Ninevites all repented and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive: You, Jonah, are all worked up about a bush, but shouldn't I be concerned about a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites?

¹⁰ When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.

^{4:1} But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ² He prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. ³ And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴ And the

⁶ **They shall tell of the might of your | wondrous acts,
and I will re- | count your greatness.**

⁷ They shall publish the remembrance of | your great goodness;
they shall sing joyfully | of your righteousness.

⁸ **The LORD is gracious and full | of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love.**

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:21-30

Paul writes to the Philippians from prison. Though he is uncertain about the outcome of his imprisonment, he is committed to the ministry of the gospel and calls on the Philippians to live lives that reflect and enhance the gospel mission.

²¹ For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose.

²³ I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵ Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶ so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

²⁷ Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, ³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

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 20th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 20:1-16

Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹ “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ ⁹ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who

have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?’¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you.¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

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

Please be seated.

SERMON

Rev. Elizabeth Frey

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

As Saints of Old

ELW #695

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

Christ, the Vine

by Robert J. Powell

Please stand as you are able.

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

OFFERING PRAYER

God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. Amen.

Please be seated.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P: Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us. *Brief silence.*

A: Hold your church accountable for our unwillingness to share your good news and our anger at your generosity to others. Nourish us by your grace to be witnesses to your love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Guide scientists and researchers studying responses to climate change so that all your creation may inspire us to give thanks for your great goodness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Show employers the benefits of equal pay standards for all their employees. Reconcile conflicts between employees. Fill places of employment with camaraderie, and bring an end to employment disparity. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: Encourage any who cannot work or who cannot work a full day with the truth that their value comes from your everlasting love for them. Provide for those who are injured, ill, and for all in any need *especially all who are on our prayer list and all those we name aloud or in our hearts...* Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Strengthen all those in this congregation whose labor serves the needs of others in the community. Inspire all in this congregation to support community endeavors with our time and talents. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Comfort us with the promise of the resurrection as we remember all our loved ones whose desire to be with Jesus is fulfilled. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name. **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

Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

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

Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as you are able.

BLESSING

The God of grace + bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

Rise Up, O Saints of God

ELW #669

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

Allegro

(from G. F. Handel's Concerto No. 8)

[Arr. by Homer Whitford]

DISMISSAL Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.
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: Sharon Ehrhardt**



**The flowers sponsor this week is: Kathy Ruffenach, in loving
memory of Ruth Rumble.
From the Ruffenach, Rumble, and Kellenberger Families**

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

ATTENTION ALL WORSHIP ASSISTANTS AND ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE A WORSHIP ASSISTANT:

Please plan to attend one of our Worship Assistant Trainings
Today, September 20 or Sunday September 27
following 10:15 AM worship in the sanctuary.

October:

The Installation for Pastor Liz will be on October 11
at our 10:15 worship service with Bishop Compton. We will have a special
luncheon for Pastor Liz following that worship service at 11:30. We are
asking all who attend to please RSVP so we know how much food to order
and please bring a can of soup for our food pantry in honor of our SOUPer
pastor!

4th Annual Oktoberfest

Tickets are now on sale: \$30 for adults and \$15 for children under 12
Friday October 16 from 5:00-7:00

Volunteers are needed to prepare German potato salad, German honey
cookies and apple strudel for Oktoberfest! A sign-up sheet, recipes and
containers are in the church office. Please stop by during office hours to
sign up and pick up what you need for what you wish to prepare.

HAPPENINGS AROUND GRACE THIS WEEK

September 20, 2026-September 27, 2026

17th Sunday of Pentecost 9/20/26

8:00AM Spoken Worship

10:15AM Traditional Worship

**Worship Assistant Training following
worship**

MONDAY 9/21/26

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry

6:30PM Grief Support Group

7:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

TUESDAY 9/22/26

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry

6:30PM Narcotics Anonymous

7:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

WEDNESDAY 9/23/26

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry

11:30AM Bayside Duplicate Bridge

6:00PM AA Book Study

7:00PM Narcotics Anonymous

THURSDAY 9/24/26

9:00AM-11:30AM Food Pantry

9:30AM Bible Study

12:00PM Alcoholics Anonymous

5:00PM Choir Rehearsal

5:30PM AA 12-Step

7:00PM Al-Anon

FRIDAY 9/25/26

10:30AM Grace Stitchers

7:30PM Alcoholics Anonymous

SATURDAY 9/26/26

7:30AM & 8:30AM Weight Watchers

18th Sunday of Pentecost 9/27/26

8:00AM Spoken Worship

10:15AM Traditional Worship

**Worship Assistant Training following
worship**

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