

WELCOME TO HOLY SPIRIT LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, New Jersey Synod
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 Vicar Vince Piekarski can be contacted at any time for conversation or prayer
 through call or text at 412-225-0287, or through email at vpie8282@gmail.com.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14TH, 2025
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
10:30AM WORSHIP SERVICE WITH HOLY COMMUNION



THIS WEEK AT HOLY SPIRIT + NEXT SUNDAY							
Sun, 12/14	Mon, 12/15	Tues, 12/16	Wed, 12/17	Th, 12/18	Fri, 12/19	Sat, 12/20	Sun, 12/21
9AM-10AM Here We Stand Confirmation Class 10:30AM Worship Service		6PM Church Council		10AM-1PM Food Pantry 6PM-8PM Church Office			9AM-10AM Here We Stand Confirmation Class 10:30AM Worship Service



We, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, are People of God, who are called by the Holy Spirit to pray, worship, joyfully proclaim Jesus Christ, and compassionately witness and serve others in Christian Love.



We are glad that you joined us for Worship today! Thank you for enriching our time together! We would like to get to know you better, and for you to get to know us better too. Brochures, welcome gifts, prayer shawls, Bibles, and other items are available throughout the church. We would be happy to show you around and share about our ministries. Please do not hesitate to speak up and ask questions. Also, please make sure you sign-in on our clipboard on the podium in the lobby.



Our Worship Services are conducted in coordination with our Conference Call. Join us at 657-390-7423 or 701-802-5170, with access code 8221190#. You may need to dial 1 first depending on your phone plan. After logging in please announce your name and feel free to talk with others until we get started.

In Loving Memory



*Candles cost \$10 each.
 Sign-up sheets are located on the bulletin board between the church offices.*

SANCTUARY CANDLE FOR DECEMBER
 Given to the Glory of God & In Memory of JOHN KIROW
 by Rose Lang, Vicar Vince & Heather Piekarski.
ALTAR CANDLES FOR DECEMBER
 Given to the Glory of God & In Memory of WALT MILLER
 by Jean, Phil, & Bob Zimmerman.

CONFERENCE CALL CHECK-IN, WELCOME, & ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Vicar (V), Assistant (A), Reader (R), and Congregation (C).)

INTRODUCTION

A. A note of joyful expectation marks today’s worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God’s reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ’s advent among us.

PRELUDE

(Music offered by our Organist at the start of our Worship Service.)

O Come All Ye Faithful

CHIMES

(Music offered by our Organist at the start of our Worship Service.)

What Child is This?

V. We invite you to stand as you are able.

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

(All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.)

V. Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God,
whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

C. Amen.

V. Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

V. Long-expected God,

**C. we confess that we look to ourselves
for the peace and security only you can provide.
We reach for swords and spears,
reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.
We become impatient while waiting
and weary of keeping awake.**

**Free us from self-reliance,
and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.
Increase our trust in God’s timing,
and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised.
Amen.**

V. God judges us not as we deserve,
but according to God’s own righteousness.
✙ You are freed and forgiven,
saved by grace,
and ready to welcome the Savior.
C. Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

(We invite you to sing along.)

Lutheran Book of Worship—Green Book
87—Hail to the Lord’s Anointed

APOSTOLIC GREETING

V. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
C. And also with you.

KYRIE

V. In peace, let us pray to the Lord.
C. Lord, have mercy.

V. For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
C. Lord, have mercy.

V. For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.
C. Lord, have mercy.

V. For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord.
C. Lord, have mercy.

V. Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.
C. Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE



A Glo-ry to God in the high- est, and peace to his peo- ple on earth.

B Lord God, heav- en- ly king, al- might- y God and Fa- ther:

We wor- ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo- ry.

Lord Je- sus Christ, on- ly Son of the Fa- ther, Lord God, Lamb of God:

You take a- way the sin of the world; have mer- cy on us.

You are seat- ed at the right hand of the Fa- ther; re- ceive our prayer.

For you a- lone are the Ho- ly One, you a- lone are the Lord,

you a- lone are the Most High, Je- sus Christ, with the Ho- ly Spir- it,

in the glo- ry of God the Fa- ther. A - men

PRAYER OF THE DAY

V. The Lord be with you.
C. And also with you.

V. Let us pray,
Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C. Amen.

(We invite you to be seated for our Readings and Psalm.)

FIRST READING

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God’s coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

R. Our First Reading is from the 35th Chapter of Isaiah (Verses 1-10).

R. 1 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus 2 it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.]]

3 Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.

4 Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
6 then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;
7 the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

8 A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
9 No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
10 And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

R. This is the Word of the Lord.
C. Thanks be to God.

PSALM

R. Our Responsorial Psalm is from the 146th Psalm (Verses 5-10).
C. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)

R. 5 Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the Lord their God;
6 who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps promises forever;
7 who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.
The Lord sets the captive free.
8 The Lord opens the eyes of the blind;
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;

the Lord loves the righteous.

C. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)

R. 9 The Lord cares for the stranger;
the Lord sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.
10 The Lord shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

C. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)

SECOND READING

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

R. Our Second Reading is from the 5th Chapter of James (Verses 7-10).

R. 7 Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. 9 Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! 10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

R. This is the Word of the Lord.

C. Thanks be to God.

V. I invite you to stand as you are able, and I invite you to announce the Gospel
Acclamation with me.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

C. Alleluia. I am sending my messenger before you, who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia. (Matt. 11:10)

GOSPEL READING

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

V. The Holy Gospel According to Matthew, the 11th Chapter (Verses 2-11).
C. Glory to you, O Lord.

V. 2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” 4 Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. 6 And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9 What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written,
‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

11 “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

V. This is the Gospel of the Lord,
C. Praise to you, O Christ.

(We invite you to be seated.)

SERMON

(Delivered by Vicar Vince Piekarski.)

(Following the Sermon, we invite you to stand as you are able.)

HYMN OF THE DAY

(We invite you to sing along.)
With One Voice—Blue Book
626—People Look East

APOSTLES’ CREED

V. God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope let us confess our faith together using the Apostles’ Creed.
**C. 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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

(The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion.)

V. In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

(A brief silence.)

- A. God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace,
C. hear our prayer.
- A. When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower,

and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace,

C. hear our prayer.

- A. When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace,

C. hear our prayer.

- A. When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. We pray especially for . . .

BettyAnn Rich-White (Church Member)
Chip & Marie Hand (Church Members)
Lynn Bargstadt (Church Member)
Frank Ford (Church Member)
Carol Amundsen (Church Member)
Kim McGinley (Church Member)
Anthony DeLuca (Church Member)
Frank Brunner (Church Member)
Joan Sommerman (Church Family)
Arleen Kinka (Church Family)
Rick Lang (Church Family)
Suzie Clark (Rose Lang's Friend)
Francis Clock (Dianna DeNote's Family)
Andrew Hudak (Rose Lang's Friend)
Viena Murtha (Bob Fritsch's Friend)
Sharon Waicus (Skip & Bonnie Millard's Friend)
Karen O'Brien (Paul Bowker's Friend)
Dustin Irizzary (Mary Melnicoff's Family)
The Bryan Family (Wanda Bryan's Family)
Craig Brearey (Judy Brannan & Mary Melnicoff's Friend)
Sarah Dutton (Frank Ford's Family)
Christina McNasby (Fran Green's Family)
The Kinkson Family (Judy Brannan's Friends)
Mark Stephen Dennis (Diana DeNote's Family)
Bill Lodge (Skip & Bonnie Millard's Friend)
Ron Anderson (Bill Kelly's Friend)
Bud Brearey (Judy Brannan & Mary Melnicoff's Friend)
Mary Skain (Kathy Poehler's Friend)
Robert Chaplin (Mary Melnicoff's Friend)
Jack Wieckouski (Theresa & Kim McGinley's Family)

Carolyn Santarpio (Bob Fritsch's Friend)
Harry (Judy Brannan's Friend)
Janet K (Philomena Noak's Friend)
Michael Hart (Diana DeNote's Friend)
Rocco Leonard DeNote (Diana DeNote's Family)
Al Singer & Family (Frank Ford's Friends)
Sherri Lynn (Bob Fritsch's Friend)
John Bannco (Bob Fritsch's Friend)
Nancy Pazarinie (Bob Fritsch's Family)
Jane & Paul Eiben (Rose Lang's Friend)
Joe DiMassimo (Judy Brannan & Mary Melnicoff's Friend)
Tommy Stanford (Sue Waltz's Family)
Audrey McAlister (Sue Waltz's Family)
Joe Waltz (Sue Waltz's Family)
Denny Papst (Rose Lang's Friend)
Mike & Alice Rhoades (Rose Lang's Friends)
Chris (Judy Brannan's Friend)
Helen Ehlers (Judy Brannan's Friend)
Leanne Bueth (Joan Kilcoyne's Family)
Janett MacFarlane (Carol Amundsen's Friend)
Patrick Davenport (Sue Waltz's Friend)
Thish Kelly (Theresa & Kim McGinley's Family)
Edward Chapleski (Allison Call's Family)
Scott Levin (Rose Lang's Friend)
The Family & Friends of Lynne Curlett (Del McKenna's Family)
Alice Ann Dennis (Diana DeNote's Family)
Nancy Taylor (Ted & Diane Bell's Family)
Santa Isabel Lutheran Church (Elizabeth, NJ)
Messiah Lutheran Church (Oakland, NJ)
Carol Brand (Skip & Bonnie Millard's Friend)
Joyce Thompson (TDPWC Member)
Barbara Paynter (Leon Stitt's Family)
Ruth (Anthony & Vincent Bruno's Family)
Tom M (Philomena Noak's Family)
William T Hodgetts (Pastor William Hodgetts' Family)
Paul Bowker (Church Member)
BettyAnn & Bill Whitman (Mary Melnicoff's Friends)
Bob Poole (Kathy Poehler's Family)
David Smith (Heather & Vicar Vince Piekarski's Family)
Joe Smith (Heather & Vicar Vince Piekarski's Family)
Barbara Hoitink (Lucas & Sabrina Munson's Family)

Kathy Raynor (Philomena Noak & Mary Melnicoff's Friend)
 Ed Cox (Church Family)
 Audrey Knott (Judy Brannan's Family)
 Jordan (Carol Amundsen's Friend)
 Myrna (Brookdale Resident)
 Jeremy Pochatko (Vicar Vince Piekarski's Friend)
 Ann Wieckowski (Theresa & Kim McGinley's Family)
 Rich (Kim McGinley's Friend)
 Gloria Sutton (Church Member)
 Elizabeth McCafferty (Mary Melnicoff's Friend)
 Amy Johnson (Ted Bell's Sister)
 Jerry & Marlana (Carol Amundsen's Friend)
 Diesel (Vicki Rinier's Dog)
 (Additional Names Added Prior to the Worship Service.)

A. In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace,

C. hear our prayer.

A. When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant. God of grace,

C. hear our prayer.

A. As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace,

C. hear our prayer.

(Here other intercessions may be offered.)

V. Watch over all of us who are worried and suffering, and especially those whose names we now say aloud or hold within our hearts (pause). God of grace,

C. hear our prayer.

V. Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

C. Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

V. May the peace of the Lord be with you always.

C. And also with you.

V. Now, let us share God's Peace with one another.



(Please respect your neighbor if they desire to still only offer a peace sign or wave.)

(Following the Sharing of the Peace, we invite you to be seated.)

OFFERING

V. We now worship God with our tithes and offerings, wine and bread for use in holy communion, and monetary gifts to support our ministry for service in God's name. Our Ushers will be around to your pews to pass the Offering Plates.

(Ushers come forward to get the Offering Plates from the Assistant.)

(Vicar and Assistant prepare the Altar for Communion.)

OFFERING SONG

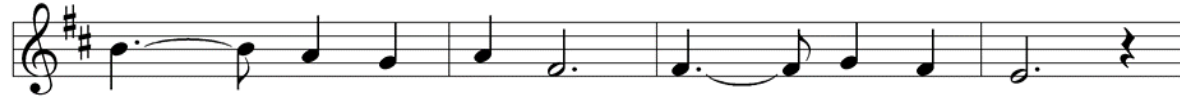
(We invite you to sing along.)

Worship & Praise

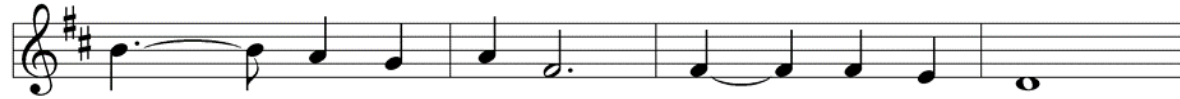
156—What Have We to Offer?



1 What have we to of - fer? What have we to share?
2 What have we to of - fer? What have we to bring?
3 What have we to of - fer? What have we to give?



Coins from the cof - fer, hearts filled with care.
Love, ripe with laugh - ter; hope that we can sing;
Eyes that are wide o - pen; lies that we won't live;



God will not fal - ter; so let us dare
dreams of what we're af - ter; prom - is - es of when.
truth that must be spo - ken; jus - tice some - how.



lay it at the al - tar there.
Lay it at the al - tar then.
Lay it at the al - tar now.



4 What have we to of - fer? What have we to



give? Lives we will live.

Text: Ray Makeever

Music: LET US ENTER IN: OFFERTORY, Ray Makeever

Text and music © 1982 Ray Makeever, admin. Augsburg Fortress

V. We invite you to stand as you are able.

OFFERING PRAYER

V. Let us pray,
Nourishing God,
you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
Through this meal, satisfy our parched places,
that we may rejoice and be for the world
signs of your kingdom come.

C. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

V. The Lord be with you.

C. And also with you.

V. Lift up your hearts.

C. We lift them to the Lord.

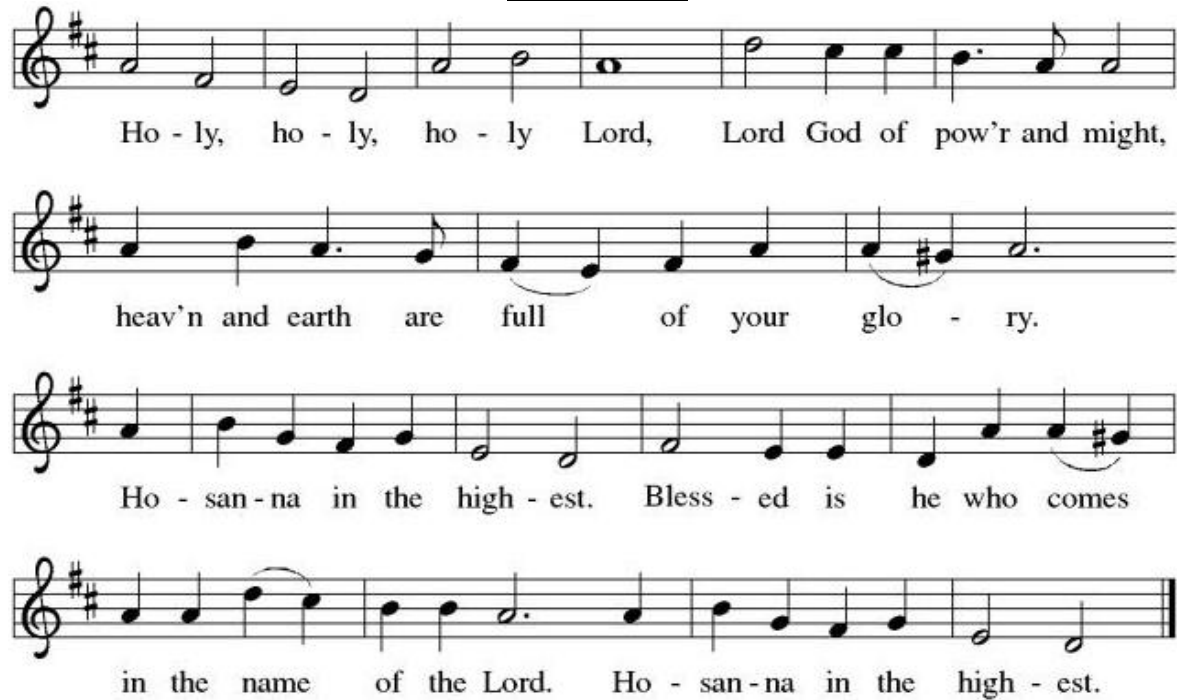
V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C. It is right to give him thanks and praise.

V. It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who rose beyond the bounds of death and, as he promised, poured out your Spirit of life and power upon the chosen disciples. At this the whole earth exults in boundless joy. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

(Usher(s) brings the Tithes and Offerings up front to the Assistant.)

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

V. Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth, in mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as He comes to us in His holy supper.

C. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. In the night in which he was betrayed our Lord Jesus took bread, he 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.

V. Again, after supper, He took the cup, he 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.

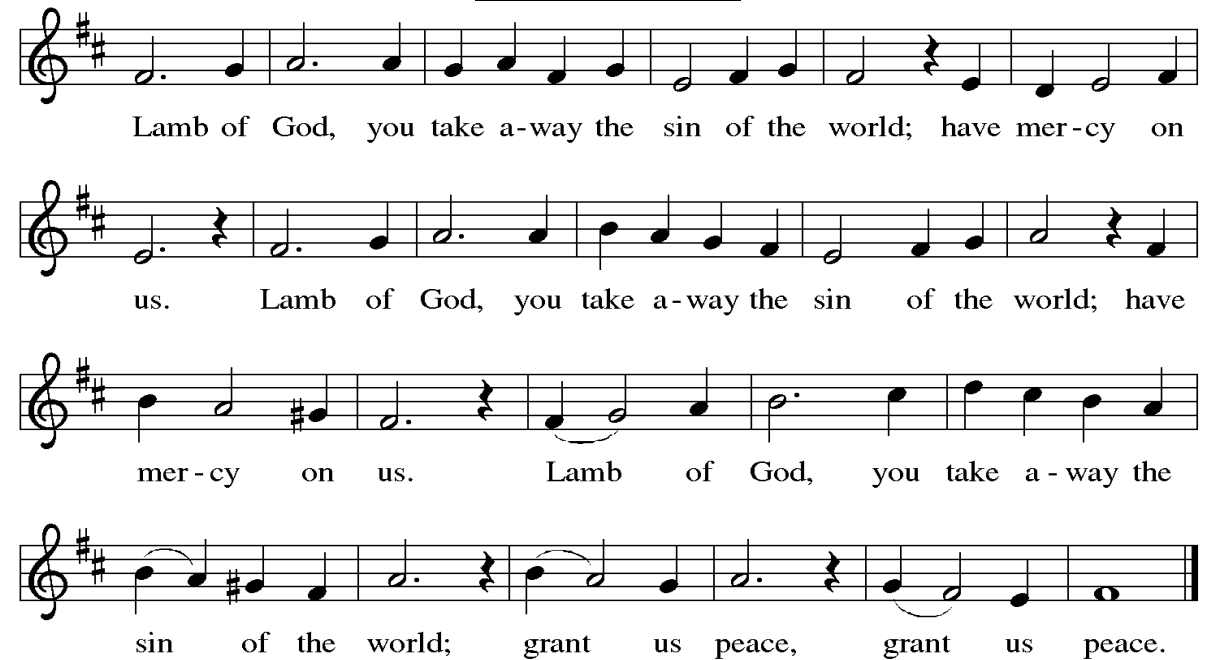
THE LORD'S PRAYER

(We ring the bell throughout the Lord's Prayer at all services to invite those in the community to join in praying the Lord's Prayer.)

V. May we now join with one another and pray together as Jesus has taught us.

C. 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.

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

(We invite you to be seated.)

HOLY COMMUNION

V. Communion here is pretty simple, and all who are baptized and believe in Jesus Christ are welcome at the table.

"Do this for the remembrance of me."

LUKE 22:19

Holy Spirit
Lutheran Church

SUNDAYS @ 10:30AM

Communion here is pretty simple. All who are baptized and believe in Jesus Christ are welcome at the table.

Bread or wafers are utilized, and the option of individually wrapped gluten free wafers is present. Pre-filled red wine and white grape juice cups are in the Communion Tray to choose from.

The Usher offers the option to leave your pew, and you can proceed forward on the right side of the aisle. Following Communion, place your empty cups in the basket and process back on the left side of the aisle.

Children who have not had their First Communion instruction, and adults who do not wish to receive Communion, are welcome to come forward and give a sign in order to obtain a special blessing.

If you are unable to leave your pew for health or other related reasons, please inform the Usher of your desire to remain in your pew and have us come to you.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

V. Here is life. God is with us.
Come, receive what God has promised.

C. Amen.

(Distribution of Holy Communion)

COMMUNION HYMN

(Please enjoy various music offered by our Organist during your quiet time, prayer, and reflection following Holy Communion.)

(Vicar and Assistant remove Communion Vessels from the Altar.)

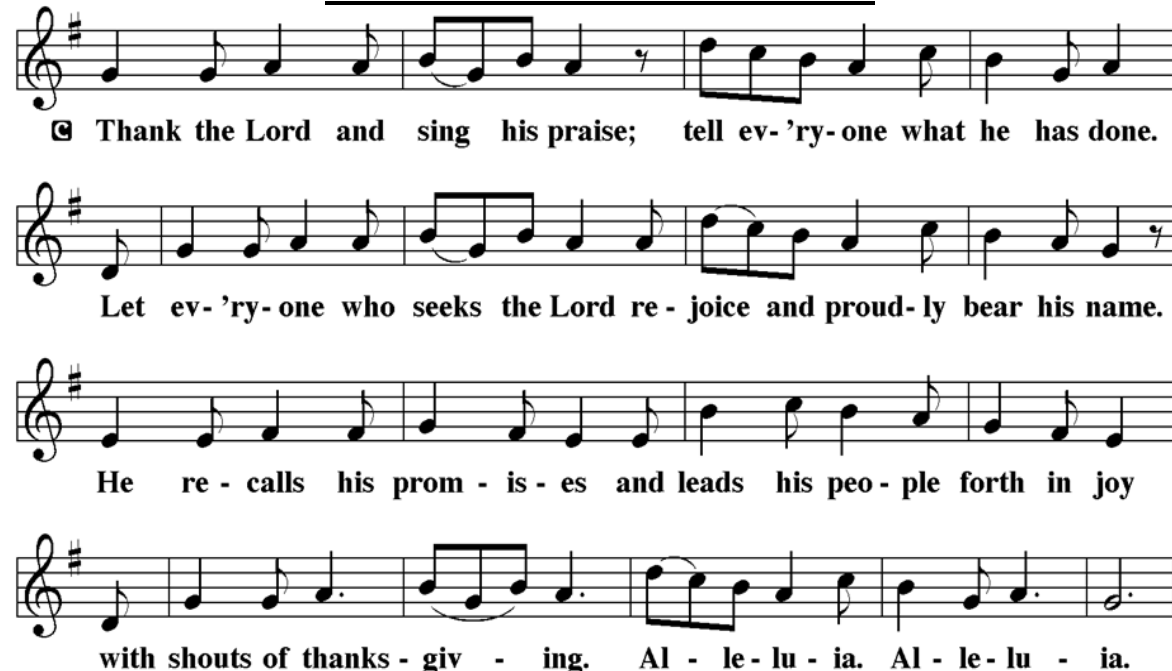
V. We invite you to stand as you are able.

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

V. May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us always in His grace.

C. Amen.

POST COMMUNION CANTICLE



☩ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.

Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.

He re-calls his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy

with shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A. Let us pray,
God our host,
at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.
Send us forth, eager to share the feast,
welcome the stranger,
and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

C. Amen.

BLESSING

V. May God who comes among us,
Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.

C. Amen.

SENDING HYMN

(We invite you to sing along.)
Lutheran Book of Worship—Green Book
28—Savior of the Nations, Come
(4 Verses)

(Assistant extinguishes the Altar Candles half way through the Sending Hymn.)

(Vicar processes out once the Altar Candles have been extinguished.)

(We invite you to be seated.)

BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES, & ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Offered by Assistant and Congregation.)

BIRTHDAYS

17th Vicki Rinier
19th Mary Melnicoff

DISMISSAL

A. Go in peace. Keep awake.
C. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

(Music offered by our Organist as we depart following our Worship Service.)
How Great Our Joy!

DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVICE ATTENDANCE				
7th	14th	21st	24th	28th
29				

LICENSES & EXPIRATION DATES

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CONFIRMATION & SUNDAY SCHOOL

“Here We Stand” allows our young folks to go through a 2-year process while focusing on the Bible and Luther’s Small Catechism. Studies for year two of our program have resumed. We meet on **Sundays from 9-10AM.**

WORSHIP MINISTRY

The most important thing we do each week is gather together as God's people to Worship. God is the center and focus of everything we do. Participating in Worship is active, as Liturgy means the work and actions of the people gathered. Everything we do during the week to prepare for Worship, and everything we do as we Assist in leading Worship is important. We are thankful for all the wonderful work being done. If you have questions, or are interested in any position, reach out to Vicar Vince. Sign-up sheets are located on the bulletin board between the church offices.

Date	Worship Leader	Assistant	Conference Call	Reader	Greeter/Usher
December 14th	Vicar Vince	Vicki	Vicki	Kathy	Bonnie
December 21st	Vicar Vince	Vicki	Vicki	Wayne	Fran
December 24th Christmas Eve 6PM Service	Vicar Vince	Vicki	Vicki	Bonnie	Heather
December 28th	Vicar Vince	Vicki	Vicki		Heather

PREACHING AT BROOKDALE

Vicar Vince preaches at Brookdale Senior Living in Cape May Court House, **TODAY, Sunday, December 14th, at 1PM.** Holy Communion will follow the service. We are blessed to have **True Deliverance Praise & Worship Center Caroling** too.

NEWSLETTER

Collect info, stories, pictures, and reports for our next seasonal publication. Winter starts on Sunday, December 21st. All info needs submitted to Vicar Vince in-person or via email at vpie8282@gmail.com **no later than TODAY, December 14th.**

CHURCH COUNCIL

Share your comments, concerns, questions, or joys with one of our Church Council Members who can bring them back to our meetings. Visitors are always welcome to attend and listen to what is going on in and around the church. Join us In- Person or on our Conference Call at our next Meeting on **Tuesday, December 16th, at 6PM.**

FOOD PANTRY

Open every Thursday, and the **last Saturday of every month**, from **10AM to 1PM.**

134 people were served in November and 868 people have been served in 2025. Donations can be dropped in the outdoor drop-box, in the money jug in the back of the Church, mailed into the Church Office, or placed in the Offering Plate. Volunteers are needed. Sign-up sheets are located on the bulletin board between the church offices. If you have questions or need training see Heather, Vicar Vince, or Bonnie.

A special thank you goes out to all who donate, pray, and help in any way!

Thursday, 12/18	Thursday, 12/25	Saturday, 12/27
Patti, Kim, Theresa, & Garnet	Closed due to Christmas	Vicki & Heather

COMMUNITY FOOD DONATIONS, DELIVERIES, & MORE

Our local North Cape May Acme provides us with Expiring Soon, Recently Expired, and Slightly Damaged Food and Items weekly. Kathy helps those in need by delivering items each Saturday in the community, brings leftover items to the Church for church members in need, and those who visit the food pantry during the week. Additional items are taken over to the Branches Outreach in Rio Grande on Monday.

BULLETIN ENTRY DEADLINE

The Bulletin is printed on **Thursdays** during Church Office Hours. Changes need to be submitted to Vicar Vince or Heather no later than **Thursday by 4PM.** Thank you!

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Open **Thursday from 6PM to 8PM** to serve the Congregation, the Community, and to continue handling the business of the Church. Feel free to stop in to talk, pick-up or drop off something, pray in the Sanctuary, or for whatever reason.

PREACHING AT BROOKDALE

Vicar Vince preaches again at Brookdale Senior Living in Cape May Court House, on **Wednesday, December 24th, at 1PM.** Holy Communion will follow the service.

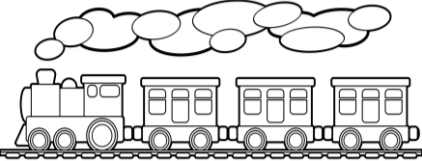


TITHES, OFFERINGS, & ENVELOPES

2026 Offering Envelopes will be available in the back of the church starting on Christmas Eve. We do indeed worship God with our tithes and offerings. We hear this in scripture, “Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7) Feel free to drop your envelopes in the offering plate, mail them to the church, or drop them off in the locked mailbox. Thank you for your continued support in the mission of our church, its ministries, the New Jersey Synod, and other needs!

DONATION STATION

Get on the train and place all purchased items in the specified project donation bins located on the counter by the front doors. See Heather for more information.



	Food Pantry	Back-To-School
December	Mac & Cheese	Pocket Folders
January	Cereal	Erasers

BIBLE STUDY & FAITH DISCUSSIONS

Bible Study & Faith Discussions was started in order to focus on various readings, books, Bible verses, people of faith, and other general topics. Group Members offer various points of view while reviewing the Bible and various aspects of faith while being respectful and supportive of each other. **We are on break until January 6th.**

Coffee Hour Hosted By The Women of The Church



Sunday, January 11th,
following our Worship Service

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ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

As 2025 winds down we will be wrapping up the books and reports in preparation for a new year. 2026 will bring about several new things and changes I am sure, but one thing is for certain, we will be meeting as a Congregation for our Annual Meeting. We will discuss and review things, as well as vote on a new budget. I know it is rather early to think about things, but please start compiling your committee reports and make sure **Sunday, February 8th** is on your calendars, in your planners, or in your phones to meet after our Worship Service together.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

The 2025 Church Directory is by the Church Office on the bookshelves. We continue keeping it updated, but we undoubtedly miss a few changes or have made a few errors. The printed church directories have spaces for changes in info, new people's info, notes, and your favorite Bible verses. If you have changes or updates please inform the Church Office to keep us up to date. **Our 2026 Church Directory will be made available to you the week following our Annual Congregational Meeting.**

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

They will be on Winter Break and will Resume Meetings on **Monday, March 2nd, at 6PM.** New members are always welcome to attend! Contact Judy for more info.

PRAYER LIST

Our Prayer List continues to lengthen and we realize the important need for prayers and healing. Sometimes the unfortunate result is that someone has passed away, and the words "The Family & Friends of" appear before someone's name. However, sometimes we forget names are still on the list and their health has improved or the they are no longer struggling, and they can be removed. Please share the good and bad stories as we continue to pray for strength and healing. Names can be added or removed from the list on the clipboard in the Narthex prior to the Worship Service, by calling the church office, or addressing it on the Conference Call. Please let us know the relation to the person(s) you listed so we can be more mindful with our prayers.

Names will stay on the list until removed by the person(s) who requested prayer.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Prayer Shawls, Lap Quilts, Scarves, and other items have been made with love. Blessed items are located in the Narthex, and are free for anyone. Members of the group continue working at home on new stitches and patterns. We are blessed to be able to continue collecting new items. We have a donation station of yarn and other items located in the Narthex. You can find some new supplies for your next creation!

HOME COMMUNION MINISTRY

A Minister is available if you have a loved one, or if you desire services. We look forward in sharing the Word and Holy Communion! Please inform Vicar Vince, Kathy, or the Church Office so plans can be made for visits.

SPACE AVAILABLE

Do you know anyone interested in utilizing our Fellowship Hall for a Party or Event? It is a suggested \$50 refundable security deposit, and \$250 for facility use. There is no alcohol or games of chance permitted due to ELCA policy. Please contact Vicar Vince or the Church Office with questions, for info, or to reserve a date and time.

ED GREEN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND

We continue raising money for unforeseen costs or repairs. Kathy has been selling Wawa Tickets for \$6, but we have learned the program will end in 2025. Please use your tickets that you have purchased before the end of the year. We will seek out a new fundraiser. We still have the donation bin in the back of the church and our Church Rummage Sale. Thanks for your continued donations, prayers, and support!

FAVORITE HYMNS

Carol is willing to play some of your favorite hymns for the Prelude & Postlude each Sunday during our Worship Service. Feel free to let her know of your suggestions.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A NEW MEMBER

Have you been attending our church for a while? Have you just recently returned to church after being away for a bit? Maybe you transitioned from another church, or just started to recently attend our church. We are glad to have you, and would love to have you as a member of our Congregation. See Vicar Vince for more info.

BAPTISM

We are a church whose unity is in Jesus Christ, who gathers us around word and water, wine and bread. Baptism is a significant part of our faith journey as we come from the baptismal waters to live a new life as children of God. Our baptism sets us out on a lifelong journey that is characterized by our relationship to God, our relationship to our faith community, our relationships in our community and the wider world. Living our baptismal covenant means living a life of growth in the faith practices of discipleship. Please see Vicar Vince for more information.

FIRST COMMUNION

Although no particular age for first communion is prescribed by The Use of the Means of Grace, one guideline is offered. Because admission to the Sacrament is by invitation of the Lord to the baptized, "baptized children begin to commune on a regular basis at a time determined through mutual conversation that includes the pastor/vicar, the child, and the parents or sponsors involved, within the accepted practices of the congregation." Each congregation is encouraged to ask the question of readiness for first communion, establish their own policies regarding age and practice, and accompany that practice with catechesis appropriate to the age of the communicant. If anyone has questions, please see Vicar Vince.



New books are added to our library from time to time. Several are borrowed and read and exchanged. Who knows, you might find one particularly interesting and share that with someone as well. Reading is a great way to pass spare time, learn, and explore. You may find some fresh ideas for prayer, ways to grow more spiritually, ways to grow closer to God, or some opportunities to understand our faith more. We also have an extended library located in Vicar Vince's office. There are Bibles of various translations, books from his personal collection, books inherited from Pastor Leah, movies, past Bible Study Curriculums, and more. Visit the library between the church offices, or just ask to be able to check things out.



There is a weekly e-newsletter connecting our synod together with weekly prayer, upcoming events, synod and churchwide activities, mission stories, congregational activities, & more. Sign up at www.njsynod.org/stay-connected or download the app.

VICAR APPOINTMENT ON MARCH 19TH, 2023

A Memorandum of Understanding on the Matter of Pastoral Appointment
In Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) Candidacy
TO: Congregation Council, Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Villas
FROM: The Rev. Tracie L. Bartholomew, Bishop, New Jersey Synod

Dear Brother and Sisters in Christ,
This memorandum is in support of your discussions with Vincent Piekarski as pastor of Holy Spirit, Villas. Because this is not the usual pattern for completing the educational and candidacy requirements for ordination, it is my hope that this memorandum will both provide guidelines and engage in conversation with those who are invested in this process.

I would say at the outset that because Vincent is an outstanding candidate for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, we will all want to do whatever is necessary to assure that his placement serves the mission of the church in the best possible fashion.

The following notes reflect my own understanding of this matter:

- (1) The appointment for Vincent will begin on April 1, 2023. At this time, Vincent will assume all responsibilities of a regularly called pastor, including presiding at the Sacrament of Holy Communion and Baptism at Holy Spirit, Villas.
- (2) A pastoral appointment in the TEEM process is an option for completing seminary educational requirements and the steps of the candidacy process. Upon completion of the candidacy process and seminary education, the candidate may receive and accept a call to ordained ministry from the congregation where the appointment is being served.
- (3) This appointment is jointly supervised by the Office of the Bishop and the TEEM pastor's seminary. A mentoring relationship with a local pastor is required for the length of this appointment.

- (4) The synod of candidacy origin will be responsible for the approval process.
- (5) Upon approval for ordination, the congregation would be expected to extend a call to the pastoral appointee.
- (6) Compensation for the TEEM pastor will be according to the guidelines of the New Jersey Synod. All normal forms of compensation should be in place for the term of the appointment, including stipulation that base salary and housing shall be in accord with synod guidelines for first call at time of ordination.
- (7) The ELCA Portico benefit plan for lay persons in full-time church service should be used for the pastoral appointee up to the time of ordination, whereupon the benefit package is to be converted to the plan for ELCA clergy.
- (8) A decision for Pastoral Appointment is made with the agreement of a synod and its candidacy committee, and the ELCA, normally represented by the regional staff person of each in consultation with the seminary and its Director for Contextual Education.
- (9) Pastoral Appointment in a TEEM Candidacy is an option that is to serve the mission of the Church in a particular and vital way and is not to be viewed or used as a means to circumvent the normal candidacy process and/or first call placement process.

In the specific case of Vincent, the New Jersey Synod remains responsible for the candidacy and approval process, and has agreed to this proposal for Appointment at Holy Spirit, Villas.

Continued blessings to both Holy Spirit and Vincent Piekarski as you embark on this journey of mutual ministry. As partners in ministry, we walk with you and rejoice in this new relationship.



VICAR VINCE'S DAY OF REST

A day of rest can have physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. "Mittwoch," German for mid-week, or Wednesday, is the day that Vicar Vince will use to recharge and do some other things. Please do not hesitate to reach out if there is an emergency!

VICE PASTOR UPDATE

Pastor William Hodgetts continues to attend our Church Council Meetings and provides Supervision and Support to Vicar Vince.

TRUE DELIVERANCE PRAISE & WORSHIP CENTER

Reverend Maria Brooks and True Deliverance Praise & Worship Center utilize our facilities from **1-4PM on Sundays**. TDPWC hosts or assists with other events throughout the year. TDPWC hosts a **Prayer Line on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays at 5PM** on the **Conference Call 1-657-390-7957**; & **Bible Study on Thursdays at 6:30PM** on Zoom. See Rev. Brooks for more information.

ADDITIONAL OFFERINGS FROM OUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

<p><i>Tuesday Sewing Circle</i></p> <p>COFFEE, CHIPS, FELLOWSHIP, QUILTS!</p> <p>You all—men included—are warmly invited to join us Tuesday morning at 10 AM.</p> <p><i>No sewing skills required!</i></p> <p>We welcome anyone looking to be part of a friendly group that enjoys doing a variety of activities together.</p> <p>We meet in the front room of the Parish Hall at 2810 Atlantic Ave. There's parking available behind the church, and you can enter through the rear door. Just bring a sandwich or snack for lunch!</p> <p>For more information, please contact: Louise McHugh at tillie26@verizon.net Martha Neff at marthaneff1@yahoo.com</p> <p> Holy Trinity Lutheran Church A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 2800 Atlantic Avenue Corner of Atlantic & Poplar Avenues Wildwood, New Jersey 08260 Proclaim the Gospel • Work for Justice • Serve People</p>	<p>Grief Support Group</p> <p>Meeting In-person on the 2nd Wednesday of the month 11:00 am - 12:00 pm</p> <hr/> <p>The support group is open to all adults grieving loss. Join us as we support each other. This group provides a welcoming and confidential environment for you to share with others in a similar situation</p> <p></p> <hr/> <p>St. John's Lutheran Church</p> <p>1001 Central Avenue Ocean City, NJ <i>Corner of 10th & Central Ave.</i> <i>Parking available in the church lot on Central Ave.</i> <i>Enter thru the alley door off 10th Street.</i></p> <p>For questions, contact Beth Gebhart (609) 760-6073, bgebhart@lsmnj.org or Michele Musto (609) 391-6321, meroclan@umccommunities.org</p> <p> Journey HOSPICE.</p> <p> THE SHORES a UMC Community</p> <p> St. John Lutheran Church Ocean City, New Jersey</p>
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JUST FRIENDS

Promotes a spirit of fellowship among adults 50 years and older. Bring your own lunch to enjoy, beverages and deserts are provided. Everyone is welcome regardless of faith or parish affiliation. The group meets in Our Lady Star of The Sea Parish Hall on the **last Wednesday of the month from 12Noon to 2PM** from **September through May**. For more info call Martine Simonis 609-884-5312 x 110.

ST. BARNABAS CARES THRIFT STORE

Are you a person who enjoys staying active, interacting with others, likes the flexibility of working an hour or two per month and would like to support a good cause? If so, then St. Barnabas Cares Thrift Store is looking for you! The store in the Villas is looking for friendly, outgoing people to volunteer and sell clothing. There is no heavy lifting, but instead you would be arranging clothing attractively for sale. The Thrift Store is open **11-3 Monday through Saturday** so even volunteering a few hours a month will help. If interested, please call Maureen Kersch 609-425-1317.

WHAT IS THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA?

The ELCA was formed in 1987 by the merger of three Lutheran Church bodies – the ALC (American Lutheran Church), the LCA (Lutheran Church in America), and the AELC (Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches). Learn more at elca.org.



WHAT IS THE NEW JERSEY SYNOD?

The New Jersey Synod is a geographical grouping of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) congregations that share the mission and ministry of the Church on the New Jersey territory. It is one of 65 synods in the ELCA. The NJ Synod is comprised of 143 congregations, which include over 45,000 baptized members.

2025 FINANCIAL STANDING	
NOVEMBER INCOME	\$6,310.00
NOVEMBER SPENDING	\$10,833.05
NOVEMBER GAIN OR (LOSS)	(\$4,523.05)
2025 INCOME	\$71,202.38
2025 SPENDING	\$76,475.25
2025 GAIN OR (LOSS)	(\$5,272.87)
ED GREEN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND	\$1,658.55
FOOD PANTRY FUND (SOCIAL MINISTRY)	\$11,918.19
CD	\$26,245.92

CHURCH STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

VICAR, BIBLE STUDY & FAITH DISCUSSIONS, NEWSLETTER, & WEBSITE

Vicar Vince Piekarski

VICE PASTOR

Pastor William Hodgetts

ORGANIST & PIANIST

Carol Amundsen

CHURCH OFFICE, SUNDAY SCHOOL, & FOOD PANTRY

Heather Piekarski

CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Mary Melnicoff

CHURCH COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT

Judy Brannan

CHURCH COUNCIL TREASURER

Bonnie Millard

CHURCH COUNCIL SECRETARY

Vicki Rinier

CHURCH PROPERTY

Frank Ford & Wayne Rand

