

GraceNotes



A Monthly Publication of the Congregational Activities of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Newton, NC
Volume 221, Number 2 February 2018

Forty days of Lent

prayer • penance • pilgrimage



Imposition of Ashes
February 14, 2018
7:00 PM
Union Church



will be held every
Wednesday in Union Church
at 7:00 PM

From the Pastor's Pen.....



Dear Disciples at Grace Church

This past month was a month of transition and planning. Following a vacation after Christmas that found us in sub-freezing arctic weather at the beach, it became evident that we should have stayed home. But the rest and relaxation in our little oceanfront cottage gave us the time to do just that. In my morning devotions while looking out at the ocean, I began to seek the reasons God might be forcing us to be quiet and set apart from the rest of the world.

For one, it was time for Karen and I to simply enjoy being together with very little to do. We spent time in prayer together and had fun with our boys (Michael and Gabriel are our two Golden Retrievers), we caught up with my brother who lives in Conway SC and enjoyed a wonderful evening over supper with him; and one evening, a pastor-friend and his wife joined us for a feast of oysters and king crab legs! And what our time away gave us was a time of thankfulness. Thanking God for each of you and the faithful participation in the life of the church.

Church congregations usually have tremendous admiration and respect for their pastors and are typically very helpful and supportive. There are many situations in which a pastor's appreciation does not always find its way to the ears and hearts of every congregational disciple. But I realized that appreciation for you while we were on that freezing cold vacation. And the thankfulness I have in my heart made it a very warm vacation!

We even met a man at one of the local breakfast spots who was in the booth next to us while having breakfast. He and his wife had moved to the beach some years ago from Charlotte. I struck up a conversation with him and discovered through our sharing that he was the former owner of a restaurant in Charlotte where our Charlotte Lutheran Clergy used to meet every week for breakfast! I mentioned the name of Pastor Steven Lorimer (a good friend recently deceased) to which the man replied that Pastor Steven was his pastor when they lived in Charlotte. WOW! Again a God-moment in which to give thanks. It then occurred to me that the last time I ate at this beach restaurant for breakfast where we were, Pastor Steven was with us, God rest his soul!

Thankfulness and appreciation is key! I know that many of you spend countless hours volunteering for anything from teaching Learning Hour classes to replacing light bulbs to erecting and dismantling manger scenes, removing snow from sidewalks, preparing the Altar for worship, etc. and it is important for pastors to make sure their congregations know that their efforts are appreciated. I DO appreciate you and I thank you for your prayers and your wonderful kindnesses during my bout with the flu these last two weeks. Your prayers got me through. Let's make Grace a place where we continue to encourage and support one another. When we do that, God will bless us with wonderful surprises! Grace Church needs to be known in the community as "the church that encourages!" God bless you all. Peace!

Pr. Gil Gilbert, STS

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR FEBRUARY

- ❖ Communion Assistants - James Hall, Michael Hall
- ❖ Ushers - Carl Beam, Todd Childers, Wayne Powell, Joe Whisnant
- ❖ Greeter - Lorene Heavner
- ❖ Altar Preparation - Joy Heavner, Nicky Jarrett
- ❖ Children's Church and Nursery - Tricia Panek, Kim Parker
- ❖ Offering Tabulators - Mike Pisko

Please be mindful of your commitment to serve. If you are unable to fulfill that commitment, be reminded that it is your responsibility to find someone to serve in your place.

FLOWER CHART FOR FEBRUARY



- 2/04 - OPEN
- 2/11 - OPEN
- 2/18 - Betty Wilfong
- 2/25 - OPEN

If you wish to give the flowers for a given Sunday, please list your name on the chart in the narthex. *You are responsible for ordering the flowers from a florist of your choice; we do not have a standing order with any florist.* The liturgical color of the day is listed to assist you in selecting flowers appropriate for that Sunday. You should contact the Church Office so that the correct information is placed in the bulleting for that Sunday. Please notify the Church Office the Thursday prior to your selected Sunday. You can call the Church Office between 9 AM and Noon each weekday, leave a note on the desk, or send an email to let us know the occasion or memoriam for this wonderful gift of beatification of the worship.

**ATTENDANCE AND GIVING TO OUR LORD'S WORK
FOR DECEMBER 2017/JANUARY 2018**

	12/24/17 PM	12/31/17	01/07/18	01/14/18	01/21/18
Learning Hour	N/A	36	37	31	33
Worship	120	85	89	83	71
General Fund Offerings	2,151.00	4,707.00	2,686.30	1,908.00	911.00

General Fund **Offerings, December** 2017 = \$ 17,896.63
 General Fund **Expenses, December** 2017 = \$ 14,463.08
 Difference = + 3,433.55 \$ (offerings exceeded expenses)

Needed Each Week = \$3,257.94 for 2017 and \$3,340.73 for 2018

THE FRED T. FOARD SENIORS will meet at Noon on Wednesday, February 7th, at Ebenezer. Everyone is invited to these gatherings. (LH)

FIRST SUNDAY BREAKFAST will be held February 4th at 9:00 AM in Fellowship Hall. Harvey & Helen Leatherman and Family and Dan & Tricia Panek will provide the breakfast. Suggested freewill offering is \$3.00. (HL)

THE MEN OF GRACE will meet on Saturday, February 10th, at 9:00 AM at Four Peas in a Pod Restaurant on Hwy. 70 in Conover (in the shopping strip beside Walgreen's and Cook Out).. Bring a friend! (PG)

SECOND SUNDAY LUNCH will be served February 11th in Fellowship Hall following Worship. This will be served by the Christian Education/Learning Ministry Team and will be more than just a lunch. This will be a special "Valentine Lunch". The theme is "Boots and Bling". Come dressed in your cowboy boots and all of your bling! A great time is planned with lunch and games. There will also be a photo corner and other things to entertain you. The menu will be a hamburger bar, hot dog bar, chicken bar, and salad bar, and of course dessert. Come and have a great time. Suggested freewill offering is \$3.00. (NL)

THE GRACE SENIOR LUNCHEON GROUP will meet on Wednesday, February 21st, from noon until 2:00 PM. Come join the fun and fellowship. All are welcome!

THE LEADERSHIP MINISTRY BOARD OFFICERS were elected at the January 14th meeting: Alan Shull, President; Herb Travis, Vice-President; Martha Johnson, Secretary; Ricky Bivens, Treasurer; and Mike Pisko, Financial Secretary. Please pray continually for these leaders.

THE NALC PASTORS CONFERENCE will be held in San Antonio, Texas January 30th through February 1st. Kathy Hefner and her husband will be attending. Therefore, she will NOT be in the Church Office this coming Monday through Thursday. She WILL be in the Church Office on Friday, February 2nd. If you need her for anything, please leave a phone message, email, or place a note in the Church Office mail slot just outside the Church Office. Please keep the Conference in your prayers that it may be a time of spiritual renewal and prayers for safe travel for all of those attending.

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATES:

*Jonathon Stainback, Bethany Bivens & River Stainback - 1029 15th Street Drive NE,
Hickory, NC 28601*

Alicia Wilfong - 154 20th Avenue NE, Hickory, NC 28601

THANK YOU to those that came out to help put away the Christmas decorations: Joy Heavner, Lulu Ingle, Doug and Jackie Jarrett, Nicky Jarrett, Malinda Leatherman, and Dan and Tricia Panek. Thanks also to David & Belinda Wilfong who came in the cold wind to bring in the outdoor nativity set and Lorene Heavner who put away the decorations in the Fellowship Hall.

CONGRATULATIONS to Ricky & Cindy Bivens on the birth of their Great Grand-Daughter, Zelda Aerabella Bivens. She was born on January 3, 2018. The parents are Travis Bivens & Brittney Kincade. All are doing great.

HERB TRAVIS wishes to express his thanks to everyone for their concerns, cards, and especially the many prayers since his accident. He is home and slowly improving. Please continue your prayers for healing. Calls and visits are welcome.

THANK YOU to those that contributed to the offering at the First Sunday Breakfast in January. \$70.00 was given to the Learning Hour Jar Fund. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. These funds are used to provide extra items for the Learning Hour classrooms. The Jar is set out in the downstairs lobby every Sunday for your contributions.

THANKS to Bobbie Brendle for utilizing her pottery skills and repairing our shepherd and lamb from the nativity scene that is always placed beneath the Chrismon tree. This nativity set was originally given to Grace by Tim and Eloise Eckard many years ago. Eloise hand painted the individual pieces back in the 1980's. We continue to be thankful for not only this gift, but for having talented individuals among the Grace family who continue to keep our treasured items in good repair.

THE NALC NEWS FOR JANUARY is now available in the Narthex and online at www.thenalc.org. The articles in this issue include:

- + **High school student personalizes disaster relief as graduation project.**
- + **Lutherans join in three-year effort to read the Word of God together.**
- + **Seeds of faith grow into major gift for North American Lutheran Seminary.**
- + **Lenten devotions from Pastor Wendel.**
- + **Life Conference precedes March for Life.**
- + **Photos from 2018 March for Life in Washington, D.C.**
- + **Annual reports from congregations.**
- + **"Epiphany - Image vs. Identity" - Message from Bishop John Bradosky.**
- + **"Temples and Priests - Before and after Christ's resurrection" - Part 6 by Pastor Mark Chavez.**
- + **Mark Ryman accepts call to Sola Publishing.**
- + **Created Male and Female - An Open Letter from Religious Leaders.**
- + **LWR Farmers Market Coffee.**
- + **"Church leadership new year's resolutions" - "Ministry Matters" by Pastor David Wendel.**
- + **Faithwebbing.com Youth and Family Ministry Update.**
- + **LWR provides resources for Lent.**
- + **Canadian Rockies Theological Conference.**

SEE "TORTURED FOR CHRIST - THE MOVIE". The Voice of the Martyrs has released this movie and it will be shown in many theaters across the country. This movie gives the dramatic testimony of Pastor Richard Wurmbrand, a Lutheran Minister, and the founder of "Voice of the Martyrs". Fourteen years in communist prison could not break his faith. The movie was filmed on location in Romania, Pastor Wurmbrand's homeland. It will be at AMC Hickory 15 on Monday, March 5th at 7:30 PM. Tickets are \$12.50. It will only be shown if a minimum number of tickets are sold. Go to **torturedforchrist.com**. to order your tickets. If you do not have access to a computer, the Church Office can order the tickets on your behalf. A percentage of every sale will be used to help persecuted Christians through VOM's Families of Martyrs Fund. And, as a **SPECIAL BONUS**, each person who preorders one or more tickets online will receive a free copy of the 50th anniversary edition of the international bestselling book *Tortured for Christ*.

2017 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS have been mailed. If you did not receive yours and need a copy, please contact the Church Office or Mike Pisko.

THOSE THAT SPONSOR THE FIRST SUNDAY BREAKFAST and Second Sunday Lunch have the right to name the recipient of the funds given at the meal. The funds can be used for a particular outreach project/mission such as Samaritan's Purse as we did last year. You are asked to decide ahead of time where you wish the funds to be used and give that information to the Church Office so it can be published in the monthly newsletter and weekly bulletin. You are also asked to submit to the Church Office the menu ahead of time so that can also be published.

THE WOMEN OF THE NALC NEWSLETTER for the new year is now available online at www.wnalc.org and on the bulletin board across the hall from the Pastor's Office. This issue includes a challenge from the chair, Linda Brower; Mission Bank recipients; online devotions and Bible apps; Lutheran World Relief vs. Disaster Response; mission examples; and other interesting articles. Please share the copies posted on the bulletin board, but do take time to read about some of the things happening throughout the NALC.

ASH WEDNESDAY is Wednesday, February 14th. The service of Imposition of Ashes will be held at 7:00 PM in Union Church. Mid-week Lenten services will be held every Wednesday at 7:00 PM in Union Church. These services provide a special time to focus on the road to the Cross and the great victory on Resurrection Day.

SAMARITAN'S PURSE is celebrating 25 years in 2018. They are asking you to resolve to get involved. Faithful supporters like you enabled Samaritan's Purse to collect 11 million Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts worldwide in 2017! That's 11 million opportunities to share God's love with boys and girls in need. They are excited to bless even more children in 2018 as they celebrate their 25th anniversary of bringing Good News and great joy to the nations. As we head into this new year, have you considered if God may be calling you to get even more involved with Operation Christmas Child? Many year-round volunteer roles are available and one could be a perfect fit for you! Contact them at 828-262-1980 or Samaritanspurse.org for more information.

SENIORS HAVE FUN TOO! Each month, from September through May, seniors meet for food, fun, and fellowship. Following the December meal, the group played "Silly Santa". Numbers were drawn and each person was allowed to choose a prize (gift). Pictures show the group enjoying the fun. During other months the group either plays Bingo or enjoys another activity. Come join us on the third Wednesday of each month and bring a friend!



TRIP TO GERMANY AND OBERAMMERGAU IS BEING PLANNED

Do you know about the Oberammergau Passion Play? The little village of Oberammergau, Germany was gripped by war, poverty and the Black Plague. The plague was sweeping across Europe killing thousands of people. The people of this small village prayed to God that he if would spare them, they would tell the gospel story put on a 'passion play' every ten years...

That was back in 1633. They survived, and performed the first Oberammergau Passion Play in 1634. Ever since, their descendants have carried out that pledge. For the past four centuries the tradition has continued, every ten years. Only villagers have been allowed to take part. And that is what will happen yet again in 2020, from May until October.

They devote a year of their lives to re-enacting the life, death and resurrection of Christ. All performers are laymen and pursue their usual careers as wood carvers, house wives and so forth...In real life for instance Jesus is a psychologist and Mary Magdalene works as a flight attendant. By taking on their roles in the Passion Play, they are fulfilling the promise to God made by their ancestors, celebrating their faith and sharing it with the world... **...as Oberammergauers have for some 375 years.**

The first performance is on May 16, 2020 and the final one on October 4, 2020. The play starts early to mid afternoon and, following an interval and included dinner, ends at around 10:30 P.M. The tours we offer include an official one to two-night Oberammergau Package depending on the tour selected. The tours include:

- 1 or 2-night stay in the Ammergau Alps (3-star hotel or 4-star guest house/pension)
- Breakfast each morning
- 3 course dinner on the night of arrival
- Lunch in Oberammergau before the performance
- **Category 1 or 2 theatre seats****
- Play text book in English
- 3 course dinner in Oberammergau during the play interval
- Shuttle bus services in Oberammergau and nearby villages

If you are interested, please call the Church Office or speak with Pastor Gil. The Passion Play always sells out months before the play begins. So get your name on the list now. We will also tour the sights of Germany in the footsteps of Martin Luther.

VARIOUS ENVELOPES FOR OFFERINGS are offered. The pre-printed envelopes are given out each year to giving members. It makes it much easier for accurate recording of your giving if these envelopes are used. When a check that is not in an envelope is placed in the offering plate, the counters write up a record of the information on that check, so the offering can be recorded by the Church Office. So please try to remember to use the envelopes that have been purchased when at all possible. If you did not receive a set of envelopes (whether or not you are a member at Grace), please let the Church Office know. We have extras that can be used.

There are two envelopes in the pews with two different purposes. The one that says "Welcome" on it is mainly for visitors who wish to have their contribution recorded as coming from them. They can also be used for members that have forgotten their envelope and have cash to give. Be sure to put your name on the outside of the envelope to have it recorded properly. If you wish to

give a cash offering but do not care to have it recorded as coming from you, just put the cash in the plate, without using the envelope. We have been receiving many of these pew envelopes lately with no name on the outside. Therefore we have no way of recording from whom the offering was given.

The other envelope in the pew says "In Memory Of". This is meant to be used to give an offering for a Memorial Gift in memory of a member of Grace that has died. This money goes into the Memorial Fund, not the General Fund. If you intend your offering to go the General Fund, please do not use these envelopes. Again, when using the pew envelopes, if you wish your offering to be recorded under your name, please be sure to complete the outside of the envelope with your name, as well as the member's first & last name so we can apply it to the correct Memorial Fund.

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER FROM FRANKLIN GRAHAM: At Samaritan's Purse, whether we are responding to hurricanes in the U.S. and Caribbean, treating the sick at mission hospitals around the world, handing out Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts, or helping others who have wound up in the ditches of life, we bear witness to Christ as we seek to build up the local church.

I never cease to be amazed at what the Lord can do through churches who obey and trust Him. We're excited to hear the stories of how God is using churches like on in the village of Wild Peach, Texas, where a little country church packed a total of 8,091 shoebox gifts this year! For a church of only 30 people, this is a tremendous feat. It is even more incredible when you hear the rest of the story.

Wild Peach was one of many places across Texas that was hit hard by Hurricane Harvey. Seven families at Grace Baptist Church had their homes severely damaged, including the pastor and his wife, Mark and Cherry Brumbelow. Amazingly, the thousands of shoeboxes they had already packed were not destroyed. No one would have blamed Grace Baptist if they had decided to stop packing shoeboxes for the rest of this year to take time to recover from their devastating losses. But the Brumbelows and their small flock would not be deterred from reaching children around the world with the Gospel. Just weeks after the hurricane hit, Grace Baptist held a packing party that resulted in another 1,000 shoeboxes!

"We know God has a special purpose for every shoebox, but we felt there was something different about these," said Mark. We decided to send some of their shoebox gifts on a special early shipment to 250 children from Barbuda whose homes were demolished when Hurricane Irma tore across their small Caribbean island. Their families are living on the nearby island of Antigua. They lost everything in the storm, so we didn't want these children to wait any longer to have something to celebrate. As Mark and Cherry went with us and placed shoebox gifts into the hands of eager children, they said they were thankful that the Lord put it on their hearts to participate in Operation Christmas Child despite their own loss. "Seeing this makes me want to do all I can while I can," said Mark. Cherry then added, "It's beyond words how excited I feel. I can't wait to get home to pack some more shoeboxes!"



To You Who Bring Small Children to Church

Copied: (Author Unknown)

There you are sitting in worship or Bible study. Your child, or toddler, is restless. Perhaps they're even a little boisterous. You try to silence them, and nothing. You try to pacify them with food or toys, and nothing. Eventually, you resort to the last thing you wanted to do: you pick them up, and before a watching audience, you make the march out of the auditorium. All the while, you're a little embarrassed. Maybe you're a little frustrated too. You might even think to yourself, "There's no point in coming to church. I get nothing out of it because I have to constantly care for my kid."

I want you — you mothers and/or fathers — to know just how encouraging you are to so many. The little elderly woman who often fills alone beams with a smile at the sight of you wrestling with your little one. She's been there before. She knows how hard it can be, but she smiles because to hear that brings back precious memories. To see young parents and their small children brighten her day, and she may have just received bad news this week about her health, but seeing the vitality of young ones removes — if but for a moment — her fears.

The older man who always seems to be grouchy notices you too. He's always talking about how children in this day have no respect or sense of good. But, he sees you — a young family — in church, and you don't miss any gathering. Like clockwork, he can depend on the sight of you and your young family. You give him hope that maybe the church isn't doomed after all, because there are still young parents who love God enough to bring their restless children to worship.

Then there's everybody else. Some people will honestly become frustrated by noisy children in church. They have this warped idea that reverence includes absolute silence. It doesn't. When parents brought their children to Jesus, the disciples rebuked them (Matt. 19.13-15), but Jesus rebuked His disciples. He said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." The term translated "children" in Matthew and Mark is *paidon*. The root of the word "pedagogue" is from this word. It defined children of either an infant state, or more particularly, it was with reference to those who were half-grown and could be either males or females.

When Luke wrote his account of this narrative, he used the word *brephos*; which means "infants." Luke wasn't contradicting Matthew and Mark's account, because Luke wrote that they brought the infants "also" (Luke 18.15-17). They would have squirmed, maybe even cried. This was likely why the disciples rebuked the parents; as well as that they might have thought that the children were too young to understand the blessing Christ pronounced over them.

Bring your children to church. If you don't hear crying, the church is dying. As hard as it might be for you as a parent who's half-asleep, keep on doing what you're doing. You are an encouragement, and you're starting off your children's lives as you should.

THE SERVICE OF INSTALLATION for Cassandra Boehringer as Associate Pastor at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Lexington, SC (1130 St. Peter's Road, Lexington, SC 29072: 803-359-2470) will be on Sunday, February 18th, at 4:00 PM.

BOARD NOTES FROM JANUARY

(Leadership Board Meeting Highlights from January 14, 2018)

Devotions were given by Pastor Gilbert.

Meeting called to order by Tim Eckard.

Old Business: The One Day Leadership Retreat for Leadership Training and Goal-Setting will be January 27 at Catholic Conference Center. (Alternating years will be a weekend retreat. This year is a one day retreat).

New Business: Elections were held for Board Officers: Elected were: President- Alan Shull; Vice President – Herb Travis; Secretary – Martha Johnson; Treasurer-Rick Bivens; Financial Secretary - Michael Pisko. Congratulations to the new slate of officers for 2018.

Property: New carpet has been installed in nursery and play room.

Cigarette container was placed outside lower level entrance door.

Two trees have been removed from cemetery.

Lighting problems and possible short in the light in Narthex.

Lights need attention in Union Church.

Noisy ballast in Fellowship Hall. Action being taken.

Worship/Music: Request for dowels to be purchased for banners. Approved.

Fellowship/Hospitality: Starting to make plans for Homecoming which is August 26

Cemetery: Pine needles needed behind Union Church. Action being taken.

Finance/Stewardship: Added new line items to better track Office Supplies.

Pastor's Report: Pastor reports an effort by several pastors to join congregational youth together to begin a Youth Ministry for the youth of our congregations. Name will be Luther League. Target group to begin will be 6th through 12th grades. Organizational meeting in late January.

Treasurer's Report – Received and approved as information.

Motion to Adjourn. Next meeting: Retreat on January 27.

(Next Regular Monthly Meeting is February 11th at 4:00 PM.)

THE 2018 VIA DE CRISTO WEEKENDS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED.

THE WEEKENDS ARE:

Women's #76 February 22 - 25

Men's #75 April 19 - 22

Mixed #46 April 26 - 29

Women's #77 - To Be Determined

Mixed #47 - To Be Determined

(A Mixed Weekend has both men and women pilgrims.)

SPRING 2018 WEEK-END COSTS

Women's #76 Cost: \$90 Men's #75 Cost: \$55 Mixed #46 Cost: \$90

(Prices are different due to the charge of the venue used for the weekend.)

Those desiring to attend a VdC Weekend should contact Pastor Gil for an application or speak to one of those who has already attended a weekend: Rick/Cindy Bivens, Sheila Drum, Don/Nicky Jarrett, Mike Pisko, David/Iris Sigmon Herb/Libby Travis. It will be a weekend you will treasure for the rest of your life.

Grace Notes

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church NALC
4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway
Newton, NC 28658

LUTHER LEAGUE BEING RENEWED

The Catawba District of the Carolinas Mission District, NALC, has appointed a Youth Initiative Team to begin work on forming a multi-congregational Youth Ministry for the Cluster. Twelve appointees representing most of the NALC congregations in the Catawba Cluster gathered at New Jerusalem Lutheran Church to discuss the plans to being the first stage of the youth ministry. It will be known as "Luther League" and its tentative first meeting will be on April 22nd at New Jerusalem, 3:00 to 5:00 PM. Supper will be served and all youth, grades 6-12 are invited and are urged to bring their friends. The plan as it currently stands will enable all NALC congregations in the Catawba District to host Luther League on a rotating basis. Each host congregation will be responsible for providing a meal. The Youth Ministry Team will plan the program and events each month. Please pray for this Team and for the exciting new beginning of Luther League.