

# GraceNotes



A Monthly Publication of the Congregational Activities of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Newton, NC  
Volume 220, Number 7 July 2017

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## Vacation Bible School

### "Rebekah & Her Family"



Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup>  
through  
Thursday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>

**5:30 PM Supper**

**6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Classes**

*There will be a food drive for Safe Harbor Rescue Mission from now until July 30<sup>th</sup> (the beginning of VBS). The older children will use this food to make meals and take them to Safe Harbor. Any extra food donations will also be taken to Safe Harbor.*

*During VBS a service project for Grace will take place. Attendees will be planting flowers and spreading mulch around the church yard. Donations of perennials and mulch would be greatly appreciated.*

# From the Pastor's Pen.....



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ at Grace Church,

June has been mixture of rain and sun, heat and sun, rain and cool weather, and more rain. It seems that we can't figure out what season we are in. It makes us question global warming! Or is it something else? Some say, "When the end times come, we will not know the difference between the beginning and ending of the seasons." But that is not found anywhere in Scripture. But it certainly is perplexing to see 65 degrees in June and so much rain!

What do we make of it all? How do we adapt to these changes? I once had a church member tell me that he was not happy with all the changes going on in the church? I was confused because we, nor the Leadership, had made any major changes! But it was all about misperceptions which were gained by a few careless comments made by other members. And that's how the ball begins to start rolling!

We are admonished in scripture by our Lord to watch what we say, how we say it, and to whom we say it. We are to guard our tongues, lest we fall into sin...according to St. James. Paul puts a positive spin on the same subject by inviting us to... build up one another for the sake of the Gospel. When you think about it, we can choose to behave like this June weather. We can go with wherever the wind blows us, complaining about the rain, speaking whatever seems like juicy tidbits of information...or we can stand firm in the changing winds and do what is right in God's eyes, by guarding our tongue. Let the Holy Spirit guide your behavior by the renewing of your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. I pray that this will be so.

In Him,  
+ Pastor Gil Gilbert



## WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR JULY

- ❖ Communion Assistants - James Hall, Michael Hall
- ❖ Ushers - James Norman, Dan Panek, Wayne Powell, Alan Shull
- ❖ Greeter - n/a
- ❖ Altar Preparation - Joy Heavner, Lulu Ingle
- ❖ Children's Church and Nursery - Shelly Scronce
- ❖ Offering Tabulators - Joe Momier, 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 JULY



7/02 - OPEN  
7/16 - OPEN  
7/30 - OPEN

7/09 - OPEN  
7/23 - Helen Smith

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 memorial for this wonderful gift of beatification of the worship.

## ATTENDANCE AND GIVING TO OUR LORD'S WORK FOR MAY/JUNE 2017

	5/28/17	6/04/17	6/11/17	6/18/17
Learning Hour	31	28	41	33
Worship	62	78	92	71
General Fund Offerings	1,056.24	4,854.00	2,056.55	1,801.00

General Fund **Offerings, May** 2017 = \$13,115.62  
 General Fund **Expenses, May** 2017 = \$11,290.18  
 Difference = + \$ 1,825.44 (offerings exceeded expenses)

Needed Each Week = \$3,257.94

**THE FRED T. FOARD SENIORS** will meet at Noon on Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, at Blackburn Baptist. Everyone is invited to these gatherings. (LH)

**MEN OF GRACE PRAYER BREAKFAST** will be held on Saturday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 AM at the Blue Moon. We invite all Men of Grace to join us for discussion, prayer, and great food.

**THE JUNE ISSUE OF NALC NEWS** is available in the Narthex and online. This issue shares some of the artwork of Pastor Philip Gagnon offered to inspire mission. There is also much information regarding the 2017 NALC Convocation. The theme for this Convocation is "Holding Fast: Being Reformed". Pictures from recent Ordinations are included (look closely and you will find Pastor Gil in the one picture). The Bishop's letter is entitled "The nature of Christian relationships - Fair or unfair has nothing to do with it". Many other articles worthy of reading are included. Please take the opportunity to learn about the many ways God works through the Church. (KH)

**FIRST COMMUNION INSTRUCTION** was given to Sarah Leonhardt and Allison Russell. We welcome Sarah and Allison to the Lord's Table. (PG)

**HERB AND LIBBY TRAVIS** wish to express their appreciation for all the cards and prayers after the death of Herb's brother. The out flow of love and sympathy has been very meaningful.

**THE LATEST NEWS FOR WOMEN OF THE NALC** is posted on the bulletin board behind the Altar. This issue contains information about the Annual Gathering which will be held August 8<sup>th</sup> in Nashville, TN. There are also many articles regarding Outreach Ministries. Take a copy, read it, and return it to the bulletin board for others to read. (KH)

**ADDITIONAL GRADUATE** information was received in June. Wesley Shook, Rachel Heavner's great grandson, graduated from Bandy's. (JH)

**A BLACK SWEATER** was left outside several weeks ago. It is now hanging inside the lower level door. If you lost your black sweater, size medium, please take it home. (KH)

**FLOWER VASES** of the small or bud vase sizes would be greatly appreciated. Our supply is almost depleted due to the generosity of all in sharing their flowers with the members on our prayer list. Please give your donations to Joy Heavner. (JH)

**"GRACE YOUR TABLE"** cookbooks are still available. Just THREE cookbooks remain at \$15.00 each. Please contact the Church Office if you wish to purchase one. All proceeds go to the Sanctuary Project Fund (carpet, painting, removal of bee hives, etc.). (KH)

**MAKAYLA HALL** has begun her Confirmation studies which will continue through Campfirmation Week at Lutherock the third week of July with The Exodus Cluster which consists of 5 pastors and, this year, 28 youth/campers. Upon satisfactory completion of her studies she will be confirmed on Reformation Sunday.

**CORRECTIONS TO YOUR CHURCH DIRECTORY:**

*Sondra Watts* - new address is 1155 Shady Valley Lane, Claremont, NC 28610

*Dr. Gary Barger* - current address in Church Directory is incorrect. His current address is unavailable.

**Turn the despair of being alone into the wonder of being alone with God.**

## **A REQUEST**

In any congregation, there are times when emergencies arise, unexpected hospitalizations, planned upcoming surgical procedures, the report of a birth or death, and opportunities when the pastor and prayers are needed. In any case requiring the pastor, he is our first line of prayer and assistance.

In cases as such, we are to call him first on his mobile phone (704-236-5483). If you cannot speak with him directly, please leave a message and he will get right back to you. During Church Office hours (9 AM-12 noon), call him at the Church Office (704-462-1035). If he is not in, Kathy will know how to get in touch with him.

Please do not call other members or the congregational grapevine and depend on them to get word to him. That has not worked in the past and some misinformation has unfortunately been communicated causing some hurt feelings. Call the pastor directly, regardless of the need. It is part of his Call to this congregation to shepherd the flock. He cannot do that if we do not give him the information he needs to care. He can also place it on the Phone Tree to get the word out to all members of the congregation quicker than word of mouth. Thank you.

---The Staff Support Ministry Team

**JULY FELLOWSHIP OUTING** will be held on Saturday, July 8<sup>th</sup>. The Grace Church Tour Bus will be traveling to Mount Airy, NC as we take a step back in time to that great old TV town of Mayberry. We will visit the Andy Griffith Museum. If you need a haircut, you can visit Floyd's Barber Shop. We will look for Goober at Wally's Service Station and maybe have a bite at the Snappy Lunch. And for those who want a special treat, you can take a Squad Car Tour with Barney in the Mayberry Police Car. The bus will leave the church parking lot at 10:00 AM and we will return in the afternoon. Walk the streets of Mayberry and even do some shopping! Come and join us for this great day remembering Andy, Barney, Opie and Aunt Bea and all the nostalgia of Mayberry. To reserve your seat on the bus, please indicate on your Worship Today Form or call the Church Office and let us know you will be going with us.

**FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY:** We have a critical need for pastors to serve our growing denomination. The North American Lutheran Seminary is preparing competent, evangelical, and confessional pastors for the future mission of our church and our congregations. We have a body of students who are committed to Christ and his mission.

- ❖ When we look at the statistics concerning current pastors in the NALC, approximately 90% are over age 40. When we take a closer look we see that over 70% of our pastors are over age 60.
- ❖ Since our NALC constituting convention in 2010 we have grown from a handful to 400+ congregations.
- ❖ In order to meet the pastoral and missional needs of the NALC we need to grow our student body exponentially. This also means increasing the faculty and staff, as well as working towards Extension Sites to provide on-site seminary education.
- ❖ Our current NALC pastors also are in need of continuing education in order to remain vibrant in the midst of cultural changes and ever-mobile communities.

For these reasons, your support, through prayer and monetary gifts, is a critical component for the Seminary to fulfill the mission to which we are called, and to insure that you will have faithful pastors who will eagerly serve you in the decades to come. (PG)

**DISASTER RELIEF SUPPLIES** are needed by the NALC. With current disaster response supplies depleted, your tangible donations of quilts, flood buckets, health kits, school kits, layettes, Bibles, and gift cards from Home Depot, Lowe's, Target and Walmart are urgently needed. They will have a gathering spot for the supplies at the NALC Convocation in August. If you could bring donations to the church NO LATER than Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, Pastor Gil or Kathy Hefner will see that they get to the Convocation in August. (KH)

# STUFF THE TRUCK!

~ 2017 Lutheran Week in Nashville ~

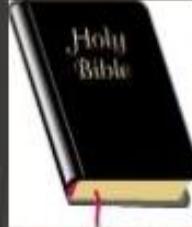
*Sponsored by Women of the NALC and NALC Disaster Response*

## Quilts

ANY size quilt or blanket, including fabric printed with religious, patriotic or military symbols



## Bibles



## Health Kits

- 1 Bath towel
- 1 Wash cloth
- 2 Bars soap (in original wrapping)
- 1 Toothbrush
- 1 Tube toothpaste (2 if sample size)
- Deodorant

## Flood Buckets

- 5-gal. bucket w/lid
- 1 gal. bleach
- 3 black trash bags
- Cleaning liquid (Murphy's, Pine Sol, etc.)
- Comet
- Scrub brush
- Dust masks (N-95)
- Gloves,
- Rags/sponges



## School Kits

- Cloth backpack/bag
- 1 Ruler
- 1 Blunt scissors
- 6 New pencils
- 1 Sharpener
- 1 Eraser
- 1 Box of 16 or 24 crayons
- Calculator (H.S. age)
- 12 sheets of construction paper
- 4 Notebooks (wide or college ruled; no loose leaf)

## Gift Cards

Home Depot, Lowe's, Target, Walmart

## BOARD NOTES FOR JUNE

June Meeting was held June 11, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. Devotions were given by Johnny Moss.

\* Report made that the Grace congregation is now incorporated. Legal work was done by Mr. Thomas Hannah, Esq. of Hickory. Certificates will come from Raleigh.

\* Cemetery Open House was a great success. Two plots were sold.

\* Some mechanical issues with the Church Bus were reported.

\* Activities of the Fred T. Foard Seniors Group should be in the newsletter on a regular basis. Some may have the perception that this is for those who are in the Fred T. Foard school area only.

\* Report made to investigate the possibility of selling two parcels of property owned by the church. The church has no plans for these parcels and are currently paying taxes on them. Comments and suggestions from the congregation are welcome and will be taken into consideration.

\* VBS planning is well underway. VBS meeting on June 21 at 6 p.m.

\* Board expressed thanks to Carl Beam for removing the stumps in the front yard of the Church.

\* Duke Power inspected lights in parking lot. Trees must be trimmed around the lights.

\* Choir making trips to see members who are homebound and in nursing homes.

\* Hymn Sing scheduled for October.

\* Finance/Stewardship Team added members: Michael Pisko, Tim Eckard, Herb Travis, and Alan Shull. Ricky Bivens thanked these new members for stepping up.

\* Homecoming will be August 27. Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder will be the Guest Pastor.

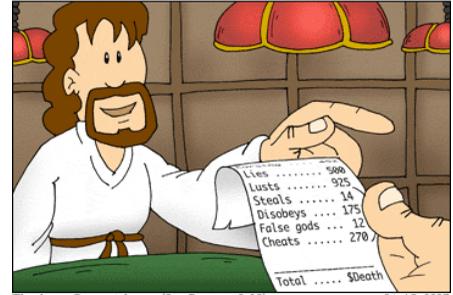
\* A monthly fellowship activity has been implemented. The bus will be provided to travel to various events/places in the coming months. Simm's BBQ is planned for June.

\* Pastor Gilbert is applying for a grant as he plans to take a sabbatical in 2018, as per NALC guidelines.

\* Stephen Ministry Training will begin June 12 with 4 trainees from Grace and 1 from St. Mark's/Claremont. Pastor Gilbert is a certified Stephen Ministry Teacher/Leader.

\* Next meeting: July 9 at 4:00 pm. Carl Beam has devotions.

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Thanks to Carey Adams (See Romans 6:23)

04-19-2005

I'LL GET THIS ONE

# iPod

# iPad

# iPhone

# Try iPray

# God is Listening!

## **LIKE A ROARING LION SEEKING TO DEVOUR**

By Rev. Roger McArthur, Church Consultant, writer, pastor, and Member of the Alban Institute

I'm in the midst of Pastor Eugene Peterson's fourth volume (of a 5 volume series) on Spiritual Theology. It has been an excellent series and Peterson's ability to combine Christian depth with probing prose never ceases to amaze me. In his discussion on the parable of the barn-builder, Luke 12:13-21, Peterson writes probing words about the life of the Christian that is often seduced and deceived by evil pretending to be good:

"There is nothing more common among those of us who hang out in the company of those who follow Jesus than using what everyone agrees is a good thing and essential to the kingdom of God to disguise our sin. Those of us who have committed ourselves to following Jesus and being taught by him are not conspicuously liable to overt sin. We do not want to sin. We do not deliberately set ourselves in the way of evil. But our good intentions are no sure protection from the wiles of the devil, the seductions of the tempter. Nearly all the sins that we get drawn into are packaged as virtues. We think we are asking for or doing something that is biblical and true and right."

The devil doesn't waste his time tempting us to do something that we know is evil. He hides the evil in something good and then tempts us with the good. We have been well warned that the devil comes as an angel of light.

One of the wonders of the world is the rampant sin that flourishes in Christian communities and organizations. Ambition and pride are given places of honor and then "supported" with a proof and sealed with a prayer. We all must be careful of listening to one who is always "in the know", who has the need to spread gossip, which is full of half-truths and negativity. We call these people "busy-bodies"! On the surface, they are the magnets of gossip, all the while thinking they are goodie-two-shoes, while spreading the venom to seemingly win the attention of God and local church leaders. This is a tool of Satan and will kill a church in short order.

Jesus is NOT pleased with this type of behavior. He has been through this before. Those forty days and nights of desert temptation allowed no room for complacency in these matters. Everything that the devil put before Jesus was wrapped in Scripture packaging. Jesus was not tempted by the obvious evil, but by the apparent good. He saw through it and stood fast. We can't be too careful in these matters.

I am no longer in parish ministry, but the longer I am a pastor of His Church, the more I see that the obvious, and "clear and present" evil is rarely the seduction I fall prey to. It is more the evil that pretends to be a good that sinks its claws into my heart. Remember at the beginning of the Word when the serpent asks – "Did God really say . . . ?"

We must be on our guard against the "one who prowls like a lion looking for someone to devour." When we are confronted with gossip or hearsay, we must call it out for what it is. When we hear negativity, we must immediately seek accountability.

It must start from honestly acknowledging that we often don't "see through it" and are not "too careful in these matters." This is the heart of Christian confession and repentance. When that is real, the Holy Spirit can really begin to clean house and hearts.

## **CONCERNING PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS FROM FRANKLIN GRAHAM**

As you may know, we recently concluded the World Summit in Defense of Persecuted Christians in Washington, D.C. It was a powerful and moving event, with over 600 participants from 136 countries. It is not easy for people living in America to wrap our minds around what many of our brothers and sisters in Christ must endure in some other countries. A woman in America who followed reports on the summit wrote us afterward: "Thank you for bringing this issue to everyone's attention. Living in my little bubble in the U.S., I had no idea things were this bad all over the world!"

I met and talked with a woman from Iran whose father was hanged to death because of his faith. I spent time with two men whose brothers were among the Coptic Christians marched out on the beach in Libya and viciously beheaded by ISIS for refusing to deny Christ—then the video distributed for all the world to see. I met a dear pastor from Uzbekistan who was arrested and imprisoned for four years for proclaiming the Gospel. A delegate from Mexico—a nation right next-door to our own—was repeatedly beaten, his church burned, and people from the congregation made to walk barefoot over broken glass as they were forced to leave town at gunpoint.

The stories go on and on. Today, believers in many countries face persecution and martyrdom on an unprecedented scale. In fact, throughout the world the number of Christians facing hostility, maltreatment, and even death is greater than at any time in history.

An organization that monitors and tracks persecution estimates that 215 million Christians experienced high or extreme levels of persecution last year in the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That's as many people as two-thirds of the entire population of the United States. Of those persecuted, tens of thousands die. It is not possible to know exactly how many, but some researchers report 90,000 or more in the past year.

Persecution has many sources, and no part of the world is exempt. In some places the persecution is caused by intense anti-Christian movements that have grown within Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. In other parts of the world, believers face political ideologies that are openly hostile to their faith, or they die as the result of civil wars or tribal conflicts in which Christians are treated as the enemy. Still others face intimidation and violence in societies riddled with corruption, drug cartels, and lawlessness, where anyone committed to Biblical values is seen as a threat to power or profit.

In our country, as well as in many Western nations, the rapidly rising tide of secularism is strongly anti-Christian. Secularists are especially opposed to those who stand firm on the unchanging moral and spiritual standards of God and His Word.

This hostility toward Christians—and toward the One we serve as Lord and Savior—is hardly a surprise. Jesus, who endured the greatest persecution of all, said to His followers, “If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20, ESV). It is an inevitable part of our world. But that does not mean we can overlook it or stay silent when others are persecuted. We are the body of Christ. As believers, what harms one of us hurts us all.

What can you do? Here are some basic action steps suggested at the summit that any believer can take:

- Take time to learn more about what is happening to believers and churches who face severe persecution. One good place to start is with this 28-minute video highlighting stories of persecution around the world.

- Pray for those facing persecution, for their families, for our churches in America to rise up in support of them, and that world leaders would do all they can to combat the persecution. Pray also for the persecutors, as Jesus Himself instructed us to do (Matthew 5:44).

- Encourage your congregation to become more aware of and more active in earnest prayer for those who are being persecuted. The Bible says, “Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them” (Hebrews 13:3).

- Finally, make the proclamation of the Gospel to a lost and dying world a priority in your life, your giving, and your prayers. Only the power of the Gospel can sustain those who are persecuted and change those who carry out persecution. Thank you for your continued prayers and for all you do for the Kingdom.

May God richly bless you,  
Franklin Graham

## **THE NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP HOME: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MINISTRY**

Many have inquired about the Group Home just down the street from the Grace Church campus on Hickory-Lincolnton Highway. Some of you have donated furniture and other items to help make this house a home for the young people who are challenged by their current living conditions or emotional challenges. We thank you for the gifts you have given to help make this group home a place where these youth can live and deal with the challenges they have.

I recently spent some time with the director, Richard Macon, who is the Executive Manager of the group homes in Alexander County and now, Newton. The name of the group home organization is "Changing Lives Now" (see [www.changinglivesnowllc.com](http://www.changinglivesnowllc.com)) and is a new residential program serving Level 2 DSM IV youth as young as the age of 8 and above in Alexander, Catawba and surrounding counties. These "at risk" youth live in the group home community, but for a number of reasons, are unable to reside with their families. Upon admission they may be experiencing emotional, behavioral, learning difficulties, mental retardation, compulsive disorders, ADHD, and or ADD.

The Changing Lives Now staff pays close attention to the behavioral structure and provides balanced/healthy meals, daily exercise, and a comprehensive system that caters to the specific need of each youth. We believe each one of these components will support a stable and strong mental and/or emotional health. Our counselors have accumulated over 50 years of experience with the "At Risk Children" and various special needs populations. Some of our counselors have provided treatment, taught in the public schools, worked in juvenile justice, shelters, and other support-based programs. We will bring this wealth of knowledge together and give each youth the very best service that we have to offer.

The home on Hickory Lincolnton Highway is awaiting inspection and final approval from the State of North Carolina which will certify this home as a an official group home and will allow it to operate as a group home for children in this area. This has been a long and tedious process, but by summer's end, the home should have 4-6 youth and full staff. Hopefully, in the next few weeks we can welcome Mr. Macon to Grace to give a brief Temple Talk to the Grace congregation about the Group Home and the needs they have to which Grace may contribute. - Submitted by Pastor Gilbert

## **ADVICE FROM AN OLD FARMER**

Your fences need to be horse-high, pig-tight and bull-strong.  
Do not corner something that you know is meaner than you. Every path has a few puddles.  
Life is simpler when you plow around the stump. Meanness don't jes' happen overnight.  
Words that soak into your ears are whispered... not yelled.  
Forgive your enemies; it messes up their heads. Always drink upstream from the herd.  
Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in. You cannot unsay a cruel word.  
It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge. Don't judge folks by their relatives.  
When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty. The best sermons are lived, not preached. Sometimes you get, and sometimes you get got.  
Most of the stuff people worry about ain't never gonna happen anyway.  
Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.  
Live a good, honorable life... Then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time.  
Don 't interfere with somethin' that ain't bothering you none.  
Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a Rain dance. Keep skunks and bankers at a distance.  
If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.  
Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Leave the rest to God.

## ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

On May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1987, Pastor Gil was ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Many came to help him celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of this event on Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Thanks to all that helped put it together and for those that attended.



# Grace Notes

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church N.A.L.C.  
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